

**RE-READING THE NOVELS OF HERTA MULLER:
A FREUDIAN STUDY**

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
award of the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

ENGLISH

By

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Declaration

I do hereby acknowledge that:

- (i) The present thesis entitled “**Re-reading the Novels of Herta Muller: A Freudian Study**” is a presentation of my original research work done under the guidance of my thesis supervisor. The contribution of others is indicated clearly, and acknowledged.

- (ii) The thesis is free from any plagiarized material and does not infringe any rights of others. I also confirm that if any third party owned material is included in my thesis, which required written permission from the copyright owners, permission for the same has been taken from concerned authorities.

- (iii) I have carefully checked the final version of the softcopy of the thesis for completeness and for incorporation of all suggestions of the RAC.

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I hereby affirm as under that:

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- 2) He has pursued the prescribed course of research.
- 3) The work is the original contribution of the candidate.
- 4) The candidate has incorporated all the suggestions made by the RAC during the ETPs.

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Abstract

Introduction

The present research work entitled “Re-reading the Novels of Herta Muller: A Freudian Study” has explored Muller’s novels using Freudian concept of psychoanalysis. Concepts like trauma, mourning, repression, melancholia, mourning, neurosis and psychosis have also been studied. Muller’s characters confront cruelty, torture, violence, fear, terror, suffering, guilt, trauma, loss of identity, exile, suicide and death while living under a totalitarian regime. Her characters belong to the minorities, especially the German minority, who are put under strict surveillance and have to suffer at the hands of the secret police if they do not conform to the collective ideal of Totalitarian Romania. They become the victims of state sponsored terrorism, genocide, political repression and violence. The life of characters like Leo Auberg, Lola, Windisch, Amalie, Katharina, Irene, Adina and Clara is traumatized and as a result they develop a sense of loss of identity, listlessness, depression, neurosis, melancholia and various other psychological problems.

After the fall of Hitler, Romania sided with Russia whereas previously it was Hitler’s ally. It was portrayed by the Romanian regime that the German minorities are to undergo punishment for what Hitler had done to Jews and others. The reality was that the Romanian government itself was guilty of torturing and murdering Jews as Romania was on Hitler’s side in the beginning and changed position at the very last moment. As a result of this hypocrisy, the minorities tried to preserve their culture by enforcing traditional roles. The members of the German minority who went to cities to get higher education turned dissidents. They had to suffer double oppression, both from the traditional society as well as the hegemonic dispensation. They became doubly victimized and were demoralised and dehumanized. The study has analysed the impact of such horrible events happenings in the lives of characters. Furthermore, people of the German minority who fled Romania for Germany were not considered Germans but Eastern Europeans. They were discriminated against in this regard also.

Totalitarianism is considered to be the complete and monstrous form of authoritarianism. Authoritarian governments are content with having complete political supremacy and are not keen on changing the psyche of their citizens. Totalitarian regimes on the other hand aim to

control the whole social life of their inhabitants ranging from control over education to domination over private life and morals.

In totalitarianism people are merely seen as material and the concept of the unique self is totally falsified. The difference between life and death and action and inaction becomes devoid of any meaning and the self-consciousness of the individual hangs in a state of limbo. They appeal to the past and promise that they would restore the nation and culture to the previous pristine glory. In reality, they lead the masses towards racism and xenophobia through their emotional speeches. They instil the feeling in the people that history is somehow leaving them behind and that they should work collectively for some utilitarian greater good. For this, the ends justify the means and the only rule of the law is about the process of following and creating laws to achieve the ultimate good.

Psychoanalysis emerged as a promising field in the beginning of the 20th century. Various concepts expounded by sociologists like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Otto Rank led to the psychological analysis of literary texts. Psychoanalysis was initially developed by Freud for the treatment of patients who suffered from neurosis. He brought about a catharsis of his patients by bringing their suppressed thoughts from the unconscious to the conscious level. From the medical field psychoanalysis entered into psychology and gradually it was used in other fields like religion, warfare and literature. Psychoanalytical criticism has been used by literary critics to interpret literature and alongside literature also has used psychoanalytical criticism to expand its creative potential.

Objectives:

- a) To study Herta Muller and her contribution to English Literature.
- b) To trace the historical roots and the contemporary progress of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis.
- c) To apply Freudian theory in the novels of Herta Muller.
- d) To analyze neurosis, psychosis, mourning, uncanny and melancholia in the novels of Herta Muller.
- e) To examine totalitarian regime and its effect on the psyches of the characters in the novels of Herta Muller.

Nature and Scope of the Work:

The present study has explored depression, fear, frustration, anxiety, neurosis, psychosis, mourning, trauma and quest for identity in Muller's characters who had to lead a dreadful life under the Romanian totalitarian regime of Nicolae Ceausescu. This study also demonstrates how Muller creates situations that reflect the plight of human beings under such a demeaning dispensation and how she tries to cure and redeem them, thus opening the doors to their survival, endurance and accomplishment. The study also entails an injunction that forbids humans from indulging in such brazen acts. This study encompasses qualitative research in the nature of a psychoanalysis done from the Freudian perspective. All the novels in question will be critically analysed in order to have a better understanding of the topic under question. Detailed psychoanalysis of totalitarianism in Ceausescu's Romania is not available and therefore this study becomes all the more pertinent.

Contribution Made to Knowledge:

The novels of Herta Muller have not been studied from the psychoanalytical perspective. This study has added new dimensions to the research domain and has provided new understanding of the psyche of the characters portrayed in her novels. This study has exposed the pitfalls of totalitarianism and has also brought to light the horrendous effects of a totalitarian regime on the people of Romania in particular and on humanity in general. The study has underlined the importance of human free will and has generated consciousness that human personality cannot bloom under a totalitarian system. The study also entails an injunction that forbids humans from indulging in such brazen acts. It has focused on inclusiveness of different cultures, races and nations in this contracted yet complex world of the present time. The study has also underlined the importance of tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual cooperation and respect for the individual as the guiding principles in every country, irrespective of the system of government. It would be much better if a world federation is formed in the near future. This world federation should comprise all the nations as member states and should have a democratic framework. This would minimize the use and proliferation of weapons and would put an end to many economic and humanitarian problems.

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Signature of Candidate

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Re-reading the Novels of Herta Muller: A Freudian Study

Introduction

The present research work entitled “Re-reading the Novels of Herta Muller: A Freudian Study” is an attempt to decipher and analyze psychoanalytical elements in the novels of Herta Muller from the perspective of Freudian Psychoanalysis. There is a need to re-read her novels because the novels have not been deconstructed extensively from the psychoanalytical perspective. Her works have been studied from the social, political and historical viewpoints. But no extensive reading has been done on these works from Freudian perspective and new elements have not been explored. In particular, no work has been done from the perspective of mourning, melancholia, neurosis, hysteria and psychosis although the characters have suffered terribly due to these psychic disorders. The characters in her novels confront cruelty, torture, violence, fear, terror, suffering, guilt, loss of identity, exile, suicide and death while living under the totalitarian Romanian regime. They suffer from neurosis, psychosis, trauma, mourning, repression, hysteria, melancholia and various other psychological disorders. Re-reading is defined in the following manner, “An act of reading something again especially from a different perspective.” (“Merriam-Webster”). In re-reading, a text is explored with a particular aim in mind. Through re-reading a researcher is able to re-think the messages and features in a text. A text is analyzed from a new angle and all the details and implications are deliberated upon. Re-reading leads to an improved comprehension of the text. The structure and semantics of a text are visualized in a novel manner and this leads to the formation of a new point of view about the text. It leads to a new avenue as far as the perceptual and the conceptual processes of reading are concerned.

Muller’s characters belong to the minorities, especially the German minority, who are put under strict surveillance and have to suffer at the hands of the secret police if they do not conform to the collective ideal of Totalitarian Romania. They become the victims of state sponsored terrorism, genocide, political repression and violence. Hence, it becomes imperative to study the unconscious processes involved in the minds of the characters. Not only the characters but the unconscious and subconscious underpinnings of the author’s own mind also need to be explored. This leads to a captivating dialogue between psychoanalysis and literature. When the characters and the author are viewed through the psychoanalytical lens, the horizon of

interpretation gets expanded. The mutual insights of literature and psychoanalysis greatly augment the process and pleasure of reading.

The present thesis analyzes Herta Muller's novels in an attempt to uncover the psyche of characters who become the victims of an extreme form of nationalism. The life of characters like Leo Auberg, Lola, Windisch, Skinner, Amalie, Katharina, Irene, Adina, Edgar, Kurt, Paul and Clara is traumatized and as a result they develop neurosis, loss of self, hysteria and various other psychological problems. This study also attempts to reveal the situation in the Russian Gulags where German minorities are forced to work at the reparation camps. This happens during the Soviet occupation of Romania and the characters pass through horrendous bodily experiences while working at such forced labour camps. This study delves deep into the internal life of these characters, who have been dehumanized, traumatized, and demoralized. As a result, the characters have developed fractured psyches and have developed distorted human relationships.

After the fall of Hitler, Romania sided with Russia whereas previously it was Hitler's ally. It was portrayed by the Romanian regime that the German minorities are to undergo punishment for what Hitler had done to Jews and others. The reality was that the Romanian government itself was guilty of torturing and murdering Jews as Romania was on Hitler's side in the beginning and changed position at the very last moment. As a result of this hypocrisy, the minorities tried to preserve their culture by enforcing traditional roles. The members of the German minority who went to cities to get higher education turned dissidents and, in the process, had to suffer double oppression, both from the traditional society as well as the hegemonic dispensation. They became doubly victimized and were demoralized and dehumanized. Furthermore, people of the German minority who fled Romania for Germany were not considered Germans but Eastern Europeans. They were discriminated against in this regard also. The study will analyze the impact of such horrible events in the lives of characters.

Thus, this research will deconstruct Herta Muller's *The Passport* (1986), *Travelling on One Leg* (1989), *The Fox was Ever the Hunter* (1992), *The Land of Green Plums* (1993), *The Appointment* (1997) and *The Hunger Angel* (2009) to find out the impact of a totalitarian rule on the psyche of people. It will uncover the psyche of characters who become the victims of an extreme form of nationalism.

The first chapter "Psychoanalysis and Its Theoretical Framework" analyzes the theoretical framework of Psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is the study and investigation of the

repressed thoughts of the human psyche. It explores the unconscious part of the human psyche. It is a broad term that consists of techniques as well as psychological theories, which give prominence to the unconscious part of human mind. Psychoanalysis is not a single term. About two dozen different approaches are studied under it. Freudian psychoanalysis is a prominent approach among all the other approaches. The Jungian approach and the Lacanian approach are also studied for their intellectual value. It was in the start of the 20th century that Psychoanalysis was taken seriously and was considered a potential tool for the study of human mind. Sociologists like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Otto Rank formulated different concepts to analyze literary texts. Initially this approach was developed by Freud to treat neurotic patients. Freud attempted a catharsis of the patients and helped them bring their suppressed thoughts to the conscious level. Psychoanalysis was primarily a medical endeavour. Then, it entered into psychology and slowly but surely other fields like warfare, religion and literature couldn't escape its influence.

The second chapter "Herta Muller: Her Life and Works" deals with Herta Muller as an author and a person. She has written novels, poems, short stories and essays that deal with the experiences of subjugation in a totalitarian state. She talks of exile, of homesickness, of conforming to family and of coming to terms with oneself. Her novels depict the effects of violence, cruelty and terror, which bring physical suffering and repression. Muller's works portray rich characters in a language that seems light from the outside but is extremely profound when read closely. Her persistent interest in language and reflexivity towards writing has led her to develop sophisticated metaphors. These metaphors are used by her to illuminate language and its functioning in an atmosphere full of subjugation. Her novels portray sincerely and in hewn detail a disturbing period in the recent history of Europe and have been translated into more than 20 languages. Her work is the mingled product of a number of factors including her obsession, her fear of being followed and persecuted and her fight with an incomprehensible enemy. Herta Muller has seen the dictatorship in Romania in two variants. She has experienced the Stalinist variant of communist dictatorship as well as the national-communist variant. The national-communist dictatorship was exemplified by the Ceausescu regime. Herta Muller was called a prostitute, a black marketer and was given death threats. She was labelled a parasitic element especially when she spoke against the Romanian regime in the Frankfurt Book Fair. Muller stood

for the freedom of the individual and became a voice of all those people who are subjugated in a totalitarian form of government.

The third chapter “Exploring the Problem of Mourning and Uncanny” deals with mourning and uncanny as experienced by Muller’s characters. It analyzes as to why mourning develops in characters like Windisch, Lola, Edgar, Kurt and Adina who have to suffer in the dictatorial Romania. Both mourning and melancholia happen after an individual experiences the loss of a loved one. In mourning this loved one need not be a person. It can be a close-held idea or an ideal that has been thwarted by the circumstances or by the government. This close-held idea can be the notion of liberty, the right to pray in public spaces and the bond with a particular community. Mourning is considered a normal process that is required if one is to recover from the loss. It is not considered pathology and psychoanalytical intervention is not required in this case. In melancholia on the other hand, a person develops suicidal tendencies and needs medical intervention in order to lead a normal life. In melancholia the subject is not able to identify the object that has led to loss in his life. If he is made to identify the loss, he is unable to explain to himself as to what is so disturbing and distressing in this loss. He experiences loss of appetite and is not able to digest his food properly. He also finds it difficult to sleep and seldom has a sound sleep. The subject considers himself worthless and starts hating himself. Characters like Windisch who are not able to flee the totalitarian regime develop mourning in them. This mourning is on the verge of becoming a melancholic condition as Windisch indulges in acute self-criticism at times. Uncanny is linked to compulsive repetition as well as to trauma and infantile anxiety. Freud used this word to refer to the human ego which in an uncanny sense is not at home in itself. The characters in Muller’s novels feel traumatized and witness uncanny feelings in their life. Irene finds another woman looking at her whenever she sees her photograph. It’s a kind of alter-ego that follows her wherever she goes. This is her doppelganger because she is experiencing uncanny after leading a tumultuous life.

Chapter four “Analyzing Neurosis, Psychosis and Hysteria” discusses the problems of neurosis, psychosis and hysteria as seen in the characters. Neurosis happens because of the return of the repressed. It shows through behavioural or psychosomatic symptoms. The only difference between the neurosis that is commonplace and the neurosis that needs treatment is the severity of symptoms. A person who is neurotic and needs treatment does not enjoy life and does not participate in it actively. He loses his urge for any kind of achievement. Psychosis, on the other

hand, is a complete loss of touch with reality. In neurosis, the efforts that the ego makes to deal with its desires through different defence mechanisms, fail. A person usually does not fall ill in the case of neurosis but if the person's ego fails to allocate the libido, then illness happens. This failure of the ego and the activity of the libido produce symptoms. Neurosis can be caused in two ways. It can be caused internally as well as externally. It can be caused internally when the ego is not able to repress the internal impulses in a proper way. These impulses which are not repressed properly find a different expression. Neurosis can also be caused externally when a person encounters traumatic events. These traumatic events can be related to war, sexual abuse or a sexual encounter. Hysteria is the result of psychic trauma and defence. The pathology of hysteria is determined by external events to a great extent. It is the accident which brings about the symptoms of traumatic hysteria. In common hysteria, there can be a long gap between the occurrence of symptoms and the actual traumatic event.

Chapter five "Deconstructing Totalitarianism and its Reflections" deals with the ramifications that the characters face while living under a totalitarian regime. German political theorist Carl Schmitt and Italian fascists like Benito Mussolini glorified the concept of totalitarianism as the supreme form of nationalism. The reality is, however, contrary to what they claimed. Totalitarianism is a form of government that does not permit any kind of political opposition and advocates complete control over the lives of its inhabitants. The state designs its own goals and every individual is supposed to be subservient to them. Totalitarianism is considered to be the complete and monstrous form of authoritarianism. Authoritarian governments are content with having complete political supremacy and are not keen on changing the psyche of their citizens. Totalitarian regimes on the other hand aim to control the whole social life of their subjects ranging from control over education to domination over private life and morals. The characters who are forced to live under the totalitarian regime find their life to be devoid of any meaning or substance. Characters like Lola, Windisch, Katharina, Irene, Adina, George and Curt feel that their freedom has been subjugated by the regime and they have to live life like the parts of a grand machine. A machine that is only concerned with increasing the national wealth with no concern for the emotions, feelings and individuality of the citizens.

Chapter I

Psychoanalysis and Its Theoretical Framework

Psychoanalysis is the study and investigation of the repressed thoughts of the human psyche. It explores the unconscious part of the human psyche. It is a broad term that consists of techniques as well as psychological theories, which give prominence to the unconscious part of human mind in studying human behaviour and adaptation. Psychoanalysis is defined in the following manner “Psychoanalysis is both a theory of the human mind and a therapeutic practice. It was founded by Sigmund Freud between 1885 and 1939 and continues to be developed by psychoanalysts all over the world.” (“International Psychoanalytical Association”). Psychoanalysts deal with the complexities of their patients as well as try to fathom the mysteries of the working of the human mind.

Psychoanalysis is not a single term. It is a collective term for about two dozen different approaches or theoretical orientations, which aim at understanding human nature and development. Freudian psychoanalysis is a prominent approach among these. Psychoanalysis is a modern theory to be employed in English Literature. The American psychoanalyst Henry Lothane in his article “Reciprocal Free Association: Listening with the Third Ear as an Instrument in Psychoanalysis” describes the functions of psychoanalysis:

Psychoanalysis as a science fulfills two tasks: On the one hand, it is a cumulative body of knowledge stemming from observations made on countless case histories that provide data for generalizations of the science of psychoanalytic psychology. On the other hand, paradoxically, it is a historical science of the particular, it is a reconstruction, a recreation, of the history of the individual, in the course of many months and years of analytical work, that, hopefully, transforms the fragmentary and distorted history obtained in the beginning of the analysis into the trustworthy and complete picture at the end. (11)

Psychoanalysis has all the attributes of scientific endeavour. It's based on observation, analysis and falsification. Some persons like the philosopher Karl Popper consider psychoanalysis to be a pseudo-science. However, Henry Lothane is certain about its scientific authenticity. People, who criticize psychoanalysis to be unscientific, say so because as per them psychoanalysis has

produced many hypotheses that cannot be verified empirically. But Henry emphasizes that psychoanalysis is based on innumerable observations from myriad case-histories. He says that it functions as a science as well as a historical science.

Psychoanalysis is also an important and powerful tool for the analysis of any text. There is a close connection between literature and psychoanalysis. Psychoanalytic criticism came to the fore in the 1960s. It is considered a very rewarding approach as far as interpretative analysis is concerned as it is instrumental in finding out the hidden meaning of a literary text. In it, the text is equated with the psyche. A deep understanding of the unconscious of the author concerned is attempted. It also aims to find out the different factors that lead to the development of the author's personality, especially focusing on the interplay of the conscious and the unconscious. It stresses on hidden motives both in writing as well as life of the author. Psychoanalysis tries to find connections between meaning and psychic and cultural forces. Thus, it says a lot about the meaning of literature as well as its intricate relationship to culture. Psychoanalytical criticism has been used by literary critics to interpret literature and alongside literature also has used psychoanalytical criticism to expand its creative potential. "Psychoanalytical criticism adopts the methods of reading employed by Freud and later theorists to interpret texts. It argues that literary texts like dreams, express the secret unconscious desires and anxieties of the author, that a literary work is a manifestation of the author's own neuroses." ("Washington State University"). It is often said in psychoanalysis that whenever an author writes something, unconscious and repressive forces come into play. The repressed wishes, feelings and traumas of the author come into full play and these find expression in the work of the author.

This happens without the author knowing about it. So, it becomes incumbent on the psychoanalytic critic to decipher the hidden workings of the author in his text. Anthony Storr in his book *Freud: A Very Short Introduction* writes, "Very early in its history, psychoanalysis left the narrow confines of the consulting room and made incursions into anthropology, sociology, religion, literature, art, and the occult. It became, if not a philosophical system, at least a *Weltanschauung*" (15). Various fields of inquiry could not escape the influence of psychoanalysis. It became a *Weltanschauung*- a view of life. The way Freud treated this subject, paved its way for inclusion in other fields of inquiry. It can also be defined as a psychotherapy that brings about a neurotic transference by interpretation. In psychoanalysis, a successful interpretation done by the psychoanalyst ties together the manifest as well as the latent content of

the patient's talk. Through dream analysis technique and exploration of the unconscious part of the psyche, a person's inner psychic agony is studied. The manifest or the conscious content of a dream is concerned with the patient's recent concerns and needs whereas the latent or unconscious content deals with the patient's childhood worries regarding wish fulfillment. Thus, free analysis, analysis of dreams, interpretation of childhood traumatic memories and transference are the chief elements through which psychoanalysis is done.

It is to be noted that "Psychoanalysis promotes awareness of the unconscious, maladaptive and habitually recurrent patterns of emotion and behaviour, allowing previously unconscious aspects of the self to become integrated and promoting optimal functioning, healing and creative expression." ("American Psychological Association"). The APA asserts that psychoanalysis has a remedial effect on the personality of an individual, who is experiencing psychological problems. The unconscious tension that is troubling the patient unknowingly is resolved by the trained psychoanalyst. It leads to a better quality of life for the person concerned and is beneficial to his family and society in general. Psychoanalysis is a theory that has changed our perspective towards human beings. Human psychological function and behaviour is systematically studied through psychoanalysis. Prior to Sigmund Freud, man was considered the greatest creation of God, way superior to other animals. It was Freud who brought forward the idea that human beings are basically animals and animal instincts are at the core of their being. He proved that man is inherently irrational and his animal instincts are at constant war with his civilized self. When Freud was four years old, *The Origin of Species* was published by Charles Darwin. This book presented a new world view in which man was not seen as a special creation of God. Man was considered an animal that was a part of the natural order just like other animals. The only difference being his increased structural complexity. Thus, humans and human nature was now brought in the ambit of scientific study as the aura of divinity was removed. Freud also accepted this scientific view that originated in the nineteenth century and he began to unravel the mysteries of human mind in a scientific way.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, discoveries in physics revolutionized our thinking about energy systems. This understanding was initiated by the principle of conservation of energy, formulated by Herman Helmholtz (1821-1894), German physician and physicist. This principle states that the total energy of a physical system remains constant. This energy can be changed but can never be destroyed. Moreover, any energy that is moved from a part of any

physical system must reappear in another part of that system. Freud came to the University of Vienna and worked under the supervision of German physician and physiologist, Ernst Brucke (1819-1892) who published a paper which suggested that all living beings are energy systems. The principle of conservation of energy applies to living organisms as well. This led to the development of dynamic physiology and Freud subscribed to this view. Freud henceforth considered human personality as an energy system that runs on psychic energy. He maintained that it is the field of psychology that is to look into the interplay of psychic energy in the personality of human beings. This idea was the bedrock of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Psychoanalysis emerged as a promising field in the beginning of the 20th century. Various concepts expounded by sociologists like Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Otto Rank led to the psychological analysis of literary texts. It was initially developed by Freud for the treatment of patients who suffered from neurosis. He brought about a catharsis of his patients by bringing their suppressed thoughts from the unconscious to the conscious level. Heinz Hartmann, Ernst Kris & Rudolph M. Loewenstein in their paper "Comments on the Formation of Psychic Structure" say the following about the development of psychoanalysis:

Psychoanalysis has developed under social conditions rare in science. Small teams of private practitioners everywhere formed the nuclei of larger professional groups. During the early stages of team work, written communication was supplemented to such an extent by personal contact on an international scale - mainly by training analyses with the few instructors - that mutual understanding was not endangered by uncertainties of terminology. (11)

Psychoanalysis in its beginning did not indulge in much Jargon. It was a practical field and the experiences of individual psychoanalysts formed the theory by and by. It was not the case that first psychoanalysts pondered over some theory and then applied it to their subjects

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), popularly called the father of psychoanalysis was a medical doctor, physiologist and a psychologist. He considered human mind to be a complex energy system and gave new insights into the unconscious, repression and infantile sexuality. According to Freud our mind has three regions that are distinct from each other. These are the unconscious, the preconscious and the conscious. It is the interplay of these three that defines our personality,

with the unconscious playing a major part in it. These concepts are so complex that major modifications resulted in this field with the passage of time. Any understanding of psychoanalysis is incomplete without taking into picture its detailed historical journey. Heinz Hartmann, Ernst Kris and Rudolph Loewenstein in their paper “Comments on the Formation of Psychic Structure” say:

Psychoanalytic hypotheses have undergone far-reaching modifications in Freud's own work and in that of his earlier collaborators... In order to grasp the systematic cohesion of psychoanalysis as a theory, the student has to study its development. This detour alone seems to guarantee full understanding; it is a detour which only a few devoted workers choose. Yet without it, there is some danger that part of what has been presented in many years of psychoanalytic writings is lost to the student, that rediscoveries of what once was discarded for valid reasons may occur ever more frequently, but also that the degree of relevance if various hypotheses may not always clearly be established and a systematic understanding of hypotheses seems to indicate that shifts in emphasis are unavoidable.

(12)

Though, it's a scientific fact that scientific theories and hypotheses tend to encompass major changes with the passage of time, this trend is particularly evident in the case of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis may not seem relevant to the person who focuses on a particular epoch in its history without taking into account the complete picture.

Freud was deeply influenced by the French neurologist Joseph Breuer (1842-1945) and the Viennese neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893). Both of them were teachers of Freud and they had pioneered the treatment of neurosis. Charcot used hypnosis to cure hysterical neurosis. The contemporary medical personnel thought that hysterical neurosis had some physical cause but Charcot thought differently. He treated his patients who suffered from fugue states and paralysis of various body parts through hypnosis and was quite successful at it. Breuer improved upon Charcot's technique and started talking to his patients while they were under hypnosis. It was Breuer who first pointed out that the traumatic experiences that a child experiences in his childhood have a far-reaching influence on his adulthood.

Both Freud and Breuer claimed that they were able to cure their patients through the processes of abreaction and insight. Abreaction is a process which leads to patient's catharsis and

thus his emotions which were repressed get released. Insight is the process through which the conflicts in the patient's unconscious mind are brought into his consciousness. Freud says in his book *The Ego and the Id*, "The division of the psychical into what is conscious and what is unconscious is the fundamental premise of psychoanalysis; and it alone makes it possible for psycho-analysis to understand the pathological processes in mental life..." (3). In fact, this very premise distinguishes psychoanalysis from other disciplines like neurology, which only look at the physical aspects of the brain. To the practitioners of neurology, psychical is just a manifestation of the physical reactions going on in the brain. They are of the opinion that any change in the neurology of the brain through medicine or operation can cure the mental disorders. But Freud emphasized that conscious and unconscious are not physical parts of the brain. As per Freud, the unconscious can be manipulated by an expert psychoanalyst and the disease can be cured without any physical intervention in the brain.

In the beginning, Freud also used hypnosis to cure his patients but was not impressed by the results. But later, Freud developed the technique of free association. In this technique, the patient is given full freedom to say whatever occurs in his mind. Freud even allowed his patients to say the most trivial of things. This technique had a good success rate. His patients who suffered from neurosis were given free play and their wandering mind soon expressed the conflict in the unconscious, which was the cause of the problem. Thus, Freud showed that it was some psychological problem and not a physical problem that was the cause of neurosis. Freud was also troubled by the observation that some patients could be hypnotized very easily where as in some cases hypnosis was achieved with great difficulty. According to Freud this is the result of resistance and transference. In resistance, the psychological force blocks the hypnotic process where as in transference there is an open relationship between the therapist and the patient, which facilitates the process. In modern times also, the openness of the patient is considered a key factor in the success of any kind of talk therapy. In the current practice of psychoanalysis, transference is considered very important. It is through transference only that a parent-child relationship develops between the therapist and the patient. Then, the patient is able to transfer his old or childhood memories and emotions onto the therapist. Neurotic anger and neurotic self-deception are dealt with in this way in a very successful manner.

Breuer was a distinguished Austrian neurophysiologist who laid the foundation of psychoanalysis. He worked with his patient Bertha Pappenheim aka Anna O using the talking

cure or the cathartic method. Anna O suffered from various ailments like paralysis of the limbs and disturbance in her speech and eyesight. Her symptoms reduced dramatically when she talked about them to Breuer. After detailed enquiry, Breuer came to the conclusion that neurotic symptoms that were surfacing in Anna O were a result of unconscious processes. These symptoms abated when the unconscious processes were brought to the conscious mind. Young Freud was a protégé of Breuer and he was very impressed by this cathartic method. He deliberated upon the cause of Anna O's hysteria and thought sexual conflict to be the main source of her suffering. The book by Freud and Breuer titled *Studies on Hysteria* (1893) can be said to be the beginning of psychoanalysis as a theory and as a form of treatment. In this book they presented the view that the cause of hysteria is not neurological but psychological. They also dealt with various viewpoints regarding psychoanalysis and reached at the working definition of it. However, they could not arrive at a consensus as to the true nature of the psychical. Freud stressed that sexual experiences in the early childhood went a long way in determining the personality of any individual. He developed his theory of infantile sexuality taking cues from Breuer's work.

Breuer thought that different factors like various kinds of trauma and sexual conflicts lead to psychological ailments. However, eventually an estrangement resulted in their relations and Freud went ahead alone on his path of decoding the vagaries of the unconscious. In 1909, Freud delivered a series of lectures at Clark University and gave Breuer the credit of being the discoverer of psychoanalysis. But, in 1914, while speaking at the International Psychoanalytic Association, Freud took the whole credit for psychoanalysis. Freud was also inspired by the French psychiatrist and hypnotist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893). Freud published a number of books about his theory and its various concepts. Freud suffered deeply after the death of his father and had numerous unpleasant dreams as a result. Freud analyzed himself and this led to his seminal work *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). This book deals with the idea that dreams are actually our unfulfilled wishes. When Freud analyzed himself, he came to the conclusion that he had unconsciously wished for the death of his father because his father was his rival as far as his mother's affection was concerned. He even analyzed the dreams of his children and came to the conclusion that wish fulfillment was the major driving force behind them. He studied the dreams of his patients as evidence to reach this conclusion. But he was not overconfident in his findings.

He held a cool mind and was open to questions and interpretations. He said that what we call dreams are actually messages from our unconscious mind. It is the result of wishes being controlled by our internal stimuli. Freud says in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, “All the material making up the content of a dream is in some way derived from experience, that is to say, has been reproduced or remembered in the dream—so much at least we may regard as an undisputed fact” (44). The material of our dreams is related to our own life including our wishes and fears. This material from our day-to-day lives is produced in the dreams in an indirect way. Often, it’s masked in forms that may not seem to have any resemblance to our daily lives. A good psychoanalyst can reveal the real picture behind the dream, which has connection with the wishes and desires, whether repressed or not, of an individual. It is a result of our unconscious mind dealing with the internal conflicts in its own way. To find the true meaning of dreams four steps are required. These are condensation, displacement, symbolism and secondary revision. Freud was of the opinion that symbolism is the most important step in dream formation. All the dreams are symbolic and have a core meaning. In most of the cases, the symbolic stage focuses on sexual connotations because sexual drives and desires are at the base of our psychological existence.

Our wishes appear in different forms and symbols in our dreams. Freud studied the dreams of his patients as evidence to reach the following conclusion. In his book *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901), Freud explains different deviations that occur in our daily lives. These aberrations include forgetting of names, concealed memories and slips of tongue. His book *On Narcissism* (1914) puts forth the idea that all human beings are narcissistic. This narcissism is the energy that gives us the power to survive in this world. His book *Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1917) outlines his detailed theory regarding psychoanalysis, dreams and neurosis. In the book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud explores his theory of instincts in great depths. He talks about our basic drives that keep us alive and links these drives to life and death instincts. In his book *Civilization and its Discontents* (1930), Freud expounds upon the causes of tension between the individual and civilization. He concludes that there are many basic desires of human beings that are against what is the best for society. This incompatibility leads to tension. In 1905, Freud wrote *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*. These essays created a lot of uproar everywhere because of the radical ideas they presented. These essays dealt with child development and adult sexuality. Children are usually considered

to be innocent and pious. But Freud broke this image of a pure and innocent child. Freud called children polymorphously perverse because they are bent upon taking pleasure at any cost and from any part whatsoever of their body. According to these essays, all our sexual desires and thoughts are aberrations rather than some divine plan to further the human race. Such aberrations and pathologies are quite normal to children.

In 1915, Freud wrote his essay *Thoughts for the Times on War and Death*, wherein he studied collective phenomena. This was also his attempt to understand cultural and political thinking. He tried to understand as to what mindset and political conditions lead to human tragedies and catastrophes like wars and massacres. He also suggested in this essay that literature has a great function to perform because it lets us experience death vicariously. In this way, literature performs an important therapeutic function. Before World War I, Freud was of the opinion that most of the neurotic cases were a result of repression that occurred during the infantile period. However, after 1920, Freud changed his opinion and started considering traumatic experiences to be the cause of neurosis and other psychological problems. He observed PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) in soldiers who had returned from the First World War. The traumas of war and the constant struggle for survival had a lot of similarities to the anxiety that is associated with infantile helplessness. This similarity invokes the suppressed infantile conflicts and this leads to traumatic neurosis. However, theorists like John Bowlby and Donald disagreed with Freud. They were of the opinion that infantile traumas could be avoided and healed by the love and care of a devoted mother. Freud did not agree with them and maintained his conviction that the processes of abreaction and catharsis are necessary for any patient to recover from the traumas that are related to repression in the infantile period. He maintained that this was the only cure for hysteria and neurosis. Motherly love and care did not stand a chance in this regard.

In 1919 came Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. This was a small book that contained Freud's drive theory and dealt with traumatic and post-traumatic disorders. Peter Gay, Freud's biographer, called this book a turning point in psychoanalytical theory. According to drive theory, our life-preserving instincts are opposed by extremely strong destructive desires and impulses. These destructive desires form our death drive. It is this death drive that compels us to do foolish and dangerous things. This was a very controversial idea and Freud reached at this idea after working with soldiers who got injured in the war. These patients had recurring

nightmares, which according to Freud were a result of their traumatic neuroses. This development changed Freud's ideas about dreams as postulated by him in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Previously, Freud had thought that dreams served the basic purpose of wish fulfillment only. The nightmares of the soldiers made Freud think that there is a compulsion in each and every one of us that wants to repeat the traumas of life. This compulsion is evidenced even in day-to-day psychic life. Freud talks about the confusing nature of psychological disorders in *The Interpretation of Dreams*:

If a pathological idea of this sort can be traced back to the elements in the patient's mental life from which it originated, it simultaneously crumbles away and the patient is freed from it. Considering the impotence of our other therapeutic efforts and the puzzling nature of these disorders, I felt tempted to follow the path marked out by Breuer, in spite of every difficulty, till a complete explanation was reached. I shall have on another occasion to report at length upon the form finally taken. (125)

Freud advocated psychoanalysis because other physical methods were not successful in curing the patients. Other people who thought that the nightmares of the soldiers were a result of some shock to the brain of the person concerned, were not able to provide substantial evidence for this thought. So, Freud chose to follow the path, which was pioneered by Breuer.

Freud's psychoanalysis focuses on the fact that problems in adulthood can be solved by tracing their origins to certain traumatic incidents which occurred in childhood and adolescence. Our unconscious wishes coupled with our experience in our childhood influence our behaviour throughout life. He proposed different psychosexual stages and believed that the influences gained in these stages affect us deeply. These insights led Freud to divide our mind into three different regions. These are the conscious mind, the preconscious or the sub-conscious mind and the unconscious mind. Conscious mind means our awareness. This is that part of our mental processing that we can talk about and that we are aware of. Preconscious mind refers to that information, which lies outside of our conscious awareness. The information in the subconscious mind is available for cognitive processing but we cannot be aware of it. However, this information can come into our conscious awareness. Below it lies our unconscious mind. Information in the unconscious mind can be understood through dreams. It does not come into

our awareness like the information in the subconscious mind. The dreams need to be analyzed in order to decipher the real meaning of the unconscious. Other than dreams, Unconscious can also be unravelled through free association and hypnosis. A dream has two components to it. The actual scenes and thoughts contained in the dream are the manifest content of the dream. The underlying undercurrent of meaning that these images denote is the latent content of a dream. This latent content provides insights to our unconscious, which is the repository of our true emotions and thoughts. Freud's greatness was that he formulated a rigorous theory. Lois Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* says:

The unconscious is the storehouse of those painful experiences and emotions, those wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about because we feel we will be overwhelmed by them. The unconscious comes into being when we are very young, through the repression, the expunging from consciousness, of these unhappy psychological events. However, repression doesn't eliminate our painful experiences and emotions. Rather, it gives them force by making them the organizers of our current experience: we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to "play out," without admitting it to ourselves, our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress. (12-13)

It is repression which is responsible for the formation of our unconscious. This repression happens unconsciously and starts at an early age. We keep on repressing things throughout our lives. Our behaviour happens in accordance with our repressed thought, without our having an inkling that the unconscious is guiding us. The slips of tongue and pen, unexplained personal behaviour and recurrent dreams are the ways in which we can have a glimpse of the working of the unconscious.

Freud's theory is greatly deterministic because determinism was the most preferred idea in the nineteenth century science. He was indeed the first thinker who applied deterministic principles to the mental sphere. He maintained that human behavior can be fully explained by mental states and there is nothing inexplicable in it. Prior to this, it was believed that neurotic behavior cannot be explained in causal terms. Freud tried to explain the mental behavior of individuals by looking at the causes that led to their behavior. He developed an explanation for

mental phenomenon and gave a lot of importance to dreams, slips of tongue and obsessive behavior. He maintained that these happenings occur because of hidden causes in a person's mind. These dreams and slips of tongue and pen tell us about a person's mental phenomena in a covert way, there being no other way to decipher the workings of human mind. This also means that our free will is not totally an illusion. Our freewill is dependent upon hidden mental processes which are beyond our control. Freud held that the presence of such hidden mental states is a necessity because our conscious mind offers nothing as the cause of neurotic or other behaviour. According to Freud, these unconscious mental processes can only be brought to the fore through protracted psychoanalysis. He was aware of the objections that science would raise on his method. The unconscious mind is like the hidden part of an iceberg that influences the visible part i.e., the conscious mind. When the mind coalesces different thoughts into a single image, condensation takes place. Then displacement occurs and the significance of the true emotional meaning of the dream is lost. After this, latent thoughts are represented in a visual form through symbolism. Finally, in secondary revision, the dreams are made sensible as they are converted to manifest content.

Freud's theory is based on the concept of the unconscious. From unconscious, he derived two concepts of hidden meaning and repression. In fact, Freud considered repression to be the prototype of the unconscious. By prototype he meant that repression is the mental process that leads to the formation of the unconscious. It is a defence mechanism that leads to the exclusion of the unconscious material from the conscious mind. However, the repressed material is emotionally charged and tries to express itself in our conscious activities. Teresa Fenichel in her book *Schelling, Freud and the Philosophical Foundations of Psychoanalysis* writes, "If the unconscious is the timeless origin where fantasy and reality cannot be differentiated, then its truth must be radically reconceived. Insofar as the unconscious is the ground of consciousness, to begin is to find ourselves already divided. And yet it is only because we are divided that the beginning can speak to us—can belong to us—at all" (150). This repressed material affects our behaviour and is expressed in slips of tongue, dreams, jokes and symptoms. Freud called it the return of the repressed. This was the first of Freud's methods and was called affect-trauma model. This model finds favour with psychoanalysts even today. Freud achieved the insight regarding return of the repressed feelings through his psychoanalytical method. It meant that the hidden meaning of the symptoms that were being experienced by the patient was to be

uncovered. Then, these symptoms were to be re-experienced consciously along with their effects. When this was done, the patient started moving on the road to recovery.

In 1923, Freud developed his structural model and introduced three structures namely Id, Ego and Superego. The structure of our personality is three tiered and is the result of the psychological energy that is present in all of us. These three elements are the Id, Ego and the Superego. These elements form the different levels of our mind and have specific roles to perform. We all are id at birth, which is the home of unconscious drives and impulses. Id is that part of our personality that is concentrated on primitive desires and needs and exists since we take birth. Need for sex, food, water etc. come under Id. It is dependent on a number of things like the way our cells get organized and the genes that we inherit. It operates in a very different way from conscious thought and secondary process thinking. It has no sense of order, rationality or chronology. It is fantasy-driven and employs visual imagery for its functioning. With the development of the child, ego comes into play. It is the rational part of human personality and it tries to maintain a balance between the irrational demands of Id and the controlling force of the superego. It is that part of the personality which a person recognizes as me. The ego develops defence mechanisms like repression to protect itself from the unconscious. It helps a child in dealing with disappointments and teaches him compromise and delaying of gratification. There is always an unconscious part of ego because the process of the development of defence mechanisms by ego is an unconscious process. Ego develops when we are still in infancy. It is our sense of self and develops from the Id following the reality principle. The Id creates anxiety in us when it is not able to fulfil its primitive needs because of the constraints of society. The job of ego is to mediate between the Id and the constraints of society i.e., the superego. The superego is driven by the morality principle and starts to develop when we enter early childhood. The purpose of superego is to act according to the rules and morals of society. No doubt, superego is quite a relative and a flexible term because every society has different morals, values and rules of behaviour. If a person does not follow the dictates of the superego, guilty feeling is bound to arise in him in most of the cases. Superego keeps on trying to control the sex urges, aggression, taboos and the like.

As per Freud's theory, superego develops in a child when he is of four to six years of age. It is a result of the values that parents and society impart in the child. This becomes the person's conscience. From the conscience an ego ideal is formed. A human being measures himself via

this standard. Freud writes in his book *The Ego and the Id*, “The ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is not merely a surface entity, but is itself the projection of a surface” (20). It is our bodily experiences like pain which help us gain knowledge of our body and organs. During a bout of painful illness, we come to have a new knowledge of our organs and we arrive at an idea of our body. In the same way, our ego cannot exist independent of our bodily experiences. The concept of transference postulated by him is an important concept in this regard. In transference, the patient re-experiences his emotional life in his relation to the physician. In normal circumstances, the patient cannot recall this emotional life in his memory. Freud did not derive his technique from his theory. His technique followed from his clinical observations and his intuition. He used theory to explain what he had observed in his interactions with his patients. With the development of the child, ego comes into play. It is the rational part of human personality and it tries to maintain a balance between the irrational demands of Id and the controlling force of the superego. It is that part of the personality which a person recognizes as me. The ego develops defence mechanisms like repression to protect itself from the unconscious. It helps a child in dealing with disappointments and teaches him compromise and delaying of gratification. There is always an unconscious part of ego because the process of the development of defence mechanisms by ego is an unconscious process.

The next technique used was free association. It has a long history and cannot be attributed exclusively to Freud. During Greek times, the instance of this technique comes in a play *The Clouds* by the playwright Aristophanes. In the play a character is told to lie down on a couch and freely speak about whatever came to his mind. Freud gave great importance to free association and discarded the methods of hypnosis and abreaction that were previously used by him. In this technique, free flow of various emotions and images is allowed to emerge in the mind of the patient or analysand. The patient becomes a watcher of his or her own stream of consciousness. If a defensive blocking of such emotions takes place in the mind of the analysand, it is called repression. If this blocking occurs as a result of transference, it is termed as resistance. Both of these, repression and resistance, can be exposed and cured through free association. In fact, the new term psychoanalysis was coined by Freud after seeing the successes of the process of free association. The technique of interpretation was also used. In interpretation, connections between the disjoint utterances of the patient are made by the analyst. The patients are asked thoughtful questions and their dreams are interpreted. In addition to this, the analyst points out

the omissions of the patient and clarifies and corrects their misrepresentations. Silence also serves an important function in interpretation. It is used by a successful analyst to heighten the frustration of the analysand so that he is able to reach the repressed material in his unconscious mind. In this way, the patient becomes aware of his own repressed thoughts. But this awareness is not straightforward. The patient unconsciously resists the process because he does not want to become aware of the repressed desires and impulses. Here, a different process called counter-transference also needs to be mentioned. Counter-transference means the effect on the unconsciousness of the analyst, which occurs as a result of the analyst's analyzing his patient.

Freud also talked about instincts, which are the motivating force that provides energy to our mind for its functioning. These instincts are primarily of two types, Eros and Thanatos. Eros refers to the self-preserving and the erotic instincts whereas the Thanatos refers to self-destruction and cruelty. Actions which happen because of Eros are mostly sexually motivated whereas the actions that occur because of Thanatos are not sexual in nature. Freud said that libido or sexual energy is the most important determinant of adult behavior. But here it should be kept in mind that Freud redefined sexuality to mean any kind of bodily pleasure, not just sexual pleasure. Thus, his theory of instincts maintains that human beings are driven from birth to attain and augment different kinds of bodily pleasures. Freud tried to find out those things that influence our daily actions at a conscious level. Our unconscious mind is governed by instincts. These instincts act on the conscious mind through the process of meaning and intention. However, he was also criticized for such ideas. Margaret Muckenhoupt in her book *Sigmund Freud: Explorer of the Unconscious* avers, "Psychoanalysis, the therapy Freud developed for treating mental illness, has been criticized as being both too dangerous and completely ineffective. His writings on children's sexuality and the "death instinct" have horrified many critics" (10). Freud faced criticism because his ideas were new to the times. He gave central role to sex even in children's lives. Sex was considered a taboo back then and bringing children within the ambit of sex was utter profanity for some people.

According to Freud, since the moment of birth the child craves for bodily pleasure. This is nothing but release of the mental energy by the child. The first stage in this pleasure seeking is the oral stage, where the infant sucks milk. The second stage in the development of a child is the anal stage. In this stage the centre of energy release is the anus, particularly in the act of defecation. Then comes the phallic stage. In this stage, the child gets attracted to the sexual

organs. The child also develops a strong sexual attraction for the parent of the opposite sex and side by side develops hatred for the parent of the same sex. This phenomenon has been termed by Freud as the Oedipus complex. A sense of guilt also develops in the child for doing these things as such things are socially prohibited. The boy child also develops a fear of castration because he fears that he might be castrated by his father for having feelings of love for his mother. This happens around the age of five and whole of this process is repressed. The conflict that arises because of the Oedipus complex is resolved by the child by identifying with the parent of the same sex. After this a latency period ensues in which the sexual motivations of the child get reduced to a large extent. This latency period continues up to puberty. Once a child attains puberty, the pleasure drive present in the unconscious again focuses on the genital organs.

Freud's paper *Mourning and Melancholia* hypothesizes about new ways in which our mind works. Melancholic states, which are a common occurrence in humans, are also theorized and explained in this paper. Both mourning and melancholia happen after an individual experiences the loss of a loved one. In mourning this loved one need not be a person. It can be a close-held idea or ideal that has been thwarted by the circumstances or by the government. This close-held idea can be the notion of liberty, the right to pray in public spaces, the bond with a particular community etc. Mourning is considered a normal process that is required if one is to recover from the loss. It is not considered pathology and psychoanalytical intervention is not required in this case. In melancholia on the other hand, a person develops suicidal tendencies and needs medical intervention in order to lead a normal life. Freud writes in *Mourning and Melancholia*, "The distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment" (244). These features have certain similarities with mourning but the intensity of these features distinguishes melancholia from mourning. A correlation of mourning and melancholia seems justified by the general picture of the two conditions. Moreover, whenever it is possible to discern the external influences in life which have brought each of them about, this exciting case proves to be the same in both. In melancholia the subject is not able to identify the object that has led to loss in his life. If he is made to identify the loss, he is unable to explain to himself as to what is so disturbing and distressing in this loss. He experiences loss of appetite and is not able

to digest his food properly. He also finds it difficult to sleep and have a sound sleep. The subject considers himself worthless and starts hating himself. Freud says in *Mourning and Melancholia*, “If the love for the object—a love which cannot be given up though the object itself is given up—takes refuge in narcissistic identification, then the hate comes into operation on this substitutive object, abusing it, debasing it, making it suffer and deriving sadistic satisfaction from its suffering” (251). A person who takes recourse to narcissistic tendencies ends up humiliating and ill-treating himself. Sadism comes into operation and he starts enjoying his suffering, which worsens his condition all the more.

The subject who is melancholic does not feel shameful in front of others. Normally, a person who experiences remorse and guilt feels shy and remorseful in others’ presence. But a person who is experiencing melancholia does the opposite. He wants to expose his condition and wants sympathy from others. He also experiences a loss of self-regard. The part of his ego that accuses and criticizes him seems to be an outside agency. But, in fact, it is a split-off part of his own ego that criticizes the rest of his ego. This split-off ego is called the ego ideal. This ego ideal keeps a watch over the ego at all times and it censors whatever decision the ordinary ego takes. This condition is similar to paranoia. Paranoia is a pathological condition in which the patient thinks that other persons are dictating him what to do. In fact, it is his divided ego which dictates him. All this happens unconsciously in the person and this phenomenon is in contrast to mourning, which is a conscious activity. Though, both mourning and melancholia have certain similarities also. In both of these, the individual loses interest in the external world and experiences inhibition. He also experiences absorbedness of the ego.

Mourning and melancholia happen because the libidinal cathexis is fixed on the love-object. When, the love-object is available no more, the person finds himself in a very strange condition. This usually leads to mourning. If he finds another love object, his mourning comes to an end. However, if his love object is not replaced shortly, the patient internalizes his former love-object. He identifies the lost love-object with his ego and starts hating his own ego for what the love-object has done to him. This is the condition of melancholia. It can also be the case that the person receives insult and hate from the love-object. He is rejected by the love-object and his ego kind of hangs, as there is now no object where the ego can place itself. When this happens, the libido ceases its interest in the love-object. There can also be a feeling of uncertainty in the person regarding his love-object. This uncertainty when combined with insult from the love-

object leads to an unpleasant and heightened effect on the subject. In such a case there are two opposing forces operating in the subject. On one side the person has lost love and respect for his love-object and on the other hand his libidinal drive coaxes him to stay connected with his loved one. The person whose libidinal drive is very strong returns to his love-object in a hallucinatory state. In psychoanalytical terms it means that the person is suffering from psychosis. Freud says in *Mourning and Melancholia*, “If one listens to melancholic’s many and various self-accusations, one cannot in the end avoid the impression that the most violent of them are hardly at all applicable to the patient himself, but with some significant modifications they do fit someone else, someone whom the patient loves or has loved or should love” (248). His being in psychosis can easily be demonstrated to him but this act has no therapeutic effect on him and he continues to experience this state of psychosis.

Freud’s paper *The Uncanny* tries to fathom the puzzling phenomenon of uncanny. Uncanny is the psychological experience when we feel something to be strangely familiar. The thing which causes this feeling in us is not merely mysterious to us but induces an irreducible anxiety in us. This concept was first put forward by the German psychiatrist, Ernst Anton Jentsch. Freud elaborated upon this concept in his paper. He was much perplexed by the phenomenon of uncanny. The analysis of this concept prompted Freud to refine his views and it became instrumental in pushing Freud towards his later views. He, in this paper links the concept of uncanny to compulsive repetition as well as to trauma and infantile anxiety. This essay is written in two parts. In the first part Freud discusses the words homely and unhomely. It is discussed in detail as to how these words are used in the German language and other languages. In his German essay he mentioned the German word ‘Unheimlich’, which means uncanny as well as home-like. He used this word to refer to the human ego which in an uncanny sense is not at home in itself. The second part deals with those feelings, expressions, situations, things and people which can be called representative of the uncanny feeling. Here Freud takes the story *The Sandman* written by E.T.A. Hoffman as an example.

In the story a boy Nathaniel is often narrated the story of the Sandman whenever he has to go to sleep. It is told to him that if he does not sleep the sandman will take out his eyes. In the story the boy loses his eyesight and becomes mad. Eventually, he loses his life also. According to Freud, the fear of taking out the eyes is an allusion to the castration fear that is experienced by an infant. In this story, the castration fear is masked. It has been masked by the fear of losing a

sensitive organ, namely eyes. We also have uncanny feelings when inanimate things seem to come alive or when we think that the mind is moving things. Gregorio Kohon in his book *Reflections on the Aesthetic Experience: Psychoanalysis and the Uncanny* says, “The uncanny may also emerge when something is present but has not yet become explicit; it might refer to a feeling of anxiety that something is pending, is about to be revealed. There may be contradictions and pauses in our perception, cracks and interruptions, spaces and breaks that remain unsolved” (13). Similarly, if one sees one’s double i.e., doppelganger or a ghost, one is indulging in uncanny. It is nothing but the return of the repressed feelings of our childhood. According to Freud, when a person comes across his childhood narcissism in his life, he returns to that primitive stage and hence experiences uncanny. During his early childhood, a child makes many projections of itself in the mind. Later, when a child develops ego, such things go away. But, sometimes in adult life such repressed feeling surface and cause uncanny. Theoretically speaking, we should not be afraid when we meet our double. But people usually get afraid. What is the reason behind this? Here also, narcissism of the self comes into play. When a person sees his double, he unconsciously criticizes his self. The double represents the unacceptable part of his ego and hence is not liked by the person. In other words, the double is the fear of the person. He fears becoming like the doppelganger at the unconscious level. Freud also links uncanny to the formation of the superego. Superego, in a way, is the repressed projection of the multiple-selves of the child. This also links uncanny to the concepts of the self and the other.

Freud published *The Studies* in 1895. This book dealt with the sexual aetiology of neurosis. But, even before the publication of this book, Freud’s thinking had shifted from a general theory of trauma to a sexual aetiology of trauma. He proposed that simple neurosis was caused by unsatisfying discharge of libido. This book can be called Freud’s first formulation of universal sexual theory of neurosis. Dino Felluga says, “Freud also distinguished between actual neuroses and psychoneuroses; actual neuroses pointed to actual problems in sexual functioning...Psychoneuroses, by contrast, are the result of past events caused by unrelieved sexual stimulation.” (“Modules on Freud”). Earlier he had proposed that every traumatic hysteria that is not hereditary is sexual. Thus Freud sees hysteria a result of passive sexual experience like abuse and seduction. However, according to him obsessional neurosis is a result of an activity that has given pleasure to the patient. Thus, as per the psychoanalytical method developed by Breuer and Freud, illness in the case of neurotic and hysterical patients is related to experiences

which belong to their childhood and are related to sexual experiences. This is also true for those patients in which an ordinary emotion has triggered the illness. This undertaking of finding a sexual core was by no means an easy task. In fact, Freud also put forward the idea that even in the case of normal persons, their infantile history is similar to that of a neurotic, as seduction has a role to play in it. Thus in Freud's view, all that matters is sexuality. He further proposed two types of primal instincts to develop his theory. The first type is the ego or the primal instinct. The second type is the sexual instincts. However, he made it clear in his *The Studies* that what he proposed was not a necessary postulate but a working hypothesis. Jung also noted that sexual theory for Freud was a sacred thing, which he did not want to abandon at any cost. For Freud, sexuality was not only the cause of neurosis but also the essence of it. Thus Freud saw the defence mechanism like repression to be an organic defence as opposed to being just a psychological defence. Here Freud also developed his idea of the Oedipus complex. He considered it a universal phenomenon in early childhood when the child falls in love with his mother and starts hating his father.

Breuer and Freud started their *Preliminary Communication* to study the psychic mechanism that underlines hysteria. They were of the view that it is some kind of accident that leads to symptoms in case of traumatic hysteria. Then they talked about traumatic neuroses and said that the operative cause in this case is not the trifling physical injury but the psychical trauma, which creates excessive fright in the individual. Similarly, the investigation of common hysteria also reveals certain underlying causes. These causes can be called as psychical traumas. There is a thing to note that in the case of common hysteria, such causes take a long time to surface. Sometimes there is a time interval of many years between the traumatic event and the occurrence of hysterical symptoms. This was a revolutionary thought at that time. Freud and Breuer extended the physical trauma to the psychical trauma. Previously also it was acknowledged in medical circles that physical life events can cause suffering. The new thing was to acknowledge that life events not only cause suffering but hysterical illness also. The idea of defence was also extended by both of them. They brought in the new understanding that the body produces a psychical defence in addition to the physical defence.

Freud put forward a hypothesis in mid 1890s to solve the problem of neurosis and hysteria in his patients. He called this theory as the seduction theory. In *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* Freud writes, "The closer one approaches the deeper disturbances of

psychosexual development, the more unmistakably the importance of incestuous object-choice emerges. In psychoneurotics, psychosexual activity in finding an object remains, in large part or entirely, in the unconscious, as a result of their repudiation of sexuality” (110). As per this theory, the cause of symptoms of hysteria and neurosis was the repressed memory of an incident of sexual abuse or molestation that the patient encountered during her childhood. In case of obsessional neurosis, Freud asserted that the patient had an active sexual experience up to the age of eight. He published three seduction theory papers in 1896, in which he claimed to uncover the past sexual abuse that all his patients had suffered. This past traumatic memory was not related to him by his patients. Rather, Freud used his analytic representation of the symptoms of his patients to reach at such a conclusion. He claimed that the patients were actually reliving those experiences by the use of his analytical methods. He also exerted a lot of pressure on his patients for this type of interpretation, so that they were able to reproduce their repressed memories. Freud also told in his lectures that his patients were not convinced as to the results of the psychoanalytic sessions. They did not believe that the experiences they had in the sessions meant that they were actually sexually abused in their childhood.

However, after a few years in 1897-98, Freud changed his mind and gave up the seduction theory. He did not publish any article explaining the reasons of his abandoning the theory. However, he wrote a letter to his confidant Wilhelm Fliess on September 21, 1897, outlining the reasons for the abandonment of the seduction theory. He confessed that he was not able to reach a real conclusion in any of the cases. If his seduction theory was correct, in each case, including Freud’s own case, the father had to be accused of the perverse sexual attack on the child. In those times the cases of hysteria were quite frequent, but perversity by fathers in such a large number of cases was not seen to be probable. Then, he expressed another view point to Wilhelm Fliess regarding the inability of the unconscious to distinguish between fact and fiction. It was only in 1906 that Freud publicly admitted the abandonment of his seduction theory. Then, Freud came up with his new theory of infantile sexuality. In it, the sexual abuse that was previously attributed to a caretaker, especially the father, now turned out to be the figment of imagination of the child’s mind. He theorized that, the memories that his patients had of a sexual trauma in their childhood were actually imaginary fantasies. This led to a lot of criticism from other therapists. However, the theory of infantile sexuality led to the creation of

terms like repression, transference, and resistance. Through it, the psychosexual stages of a child also got formulated.

According to Freud, there is a complementary series in the causes that lead to neurotic illness. This complementary series consists of sexual constitution and experience. If there is preponderance of one element, the other element gets reduced. The sexual abuse and the scenes of seduction that become the main elements of neurosis can be real as well as fantasized. Freud also linked neurosis to anxiety that results from unsatisfactory sexual life. Later he revised his views and said that this anxiety is not the product of repression of the libido but is a result of reaction to a situation of danger. This situation of danger can be castration or something traceable to castration. For his whole life Freud wrestled with sexuality, heredity and trauma. Each of these three was alternatively and changeably considered the major cause of neurosis and hysteria. However Harald Schjelderup was not convinced by Freud's explanation of Neurosis and Hysteria. As per his view, traumatic experiences of non-sexual nature also contribute to neurosis and hysteria. In fact, he was sure that behind expressions of oedipal and castration complexes, lay traumatic experiences which were mostly of non-sexual nature.

He proposed that any kind of trauma that leaves a child in a helpless situation leads to neurosis. Similarly, oppressive upbringing and constitution also contributed to neurosis. Morris Eagle in his book *From classical to contemporary psychoanalysis: A critique and integration* describes Freudian Psychopathology as, "the product of conflict between sexual and aggressive wishes and prohibitions and defences against them" (190). But Freud did not place sexuality alongside aggression as is evidenced in most of his writings. In fact he never gives aggression an independent role in the aetiology of neurosis. Freud is also called a drive theorist. But, drive theory is not a theory that attempts to explain neurosis. Rather, it's a theory to conceptualize motivation. Freud was considered different from other theorists like Adler and Jung not because of drive theory but because of the importance he gave to the discharge of sexual drive. In the present times, the idea of affect regulation is accepted. Freud was of the opinion that stimuli create a state of excitation in the body. When this excitation is discharged, the body returns to the state of zero excitation. When, W.B. Cannon brought in the idea of optimal regulation of body states. As a result, the notion of discharge of excited body states took a back stage. These days, the cure is aimed at optimal body regulation and this includes physiological and emotional body states.

In 1897 Freud discarded his seduction theory while explaining the aetiology of neurosis. Morris Eagle in his book *From Classical to Contemporary Psychoanalysis: A Critique and Integration further* writes, “In replacing his seduction hypothesis with positing fantasy and endogenous wishes as the primary source of neurosis, Freud moved from a trauma theory of neurosis in which an external event constitutes the trauma to an inner conflict theory of the etiology of neurosis” (67). Neuroses were also labelled by Freud as actual neuroses and psychoneuroses. Actual neuroses are the result of some actual problem in the sexuality of the patient. For example, the patient may develop neuroses if he is indulging in sexual excess or is experiencing sexual stimulation, which he is not able to relieve. Psychoneuroses, on the other hand, are the result of psychological conflicts that arise in the unconscious. These are mostly the result of bygone events. Freud also developed a relationship between neurosis and creativity and gave primary importance to the unconscious in any work of art.

The psychoanalyst treats neuroses in a very subtle way. First, he brings some of the unconscious elements of the patient into the conscious zone. Then, the conflict in the patient's mind, which has attained pathological state, becomes a normal one. A normal conflict is more prone to solutions than a pathological conflict. It is not enough, if the analyst simply states the reality of the neurosis to the patient. The patient may not believe what the analyst is saying or his mind may allow the illness to co-exist with the truth. For example, the patients who suffer from fetishism show this kind of dual behaviour when they allow the truth coexist with the illness. In fetishism, the sexual desire of the patient is transferred onto body parts or objects. A patient of, say shoe fetish, knows that it is his phantasy that has led to attraction to shoes in sexual acts. On the other hand, he continues to believe in this phantasy. The fact that the person has come to know the truth that the fetish is his fantasy only, in no way lets the phantasy loosen its grip on him. Hysteria is a result of psychic trauma and defence. The pathology of hysteria is determined by external events to a great extent. It is the accident which brings about the symptoms of traumatic hysteria. In common hysteria, there can be a long gap between the occurrence of symptoms and the actual traumatic event. Freud and Breuer in their book *Studies on Hysteria* write, “Observations seem to us to establish an analogy between the pathogenesis of common hysteria and that of traumatic neurosis, and to justify an extension of the concept of traumatic hysteria” (5). In the beginning Hysteria was considered a neurological disorder. It was Freud who termed it a psychiatric disorder. Jean-Martin Charcot, a famous neurologist of his time

worked on Hysteria as a neurological disorder. Freud was immensely interested in this area and took a fellowship with him. However, with the passage of time Freud's work took a different turn and it outshined the work of Jean-Martin Charcot.

Freud's model worked in two steps. The first step dealt with the individual experiencing a traumatic event and the second step consisted of the conversion of this trauma into physical symptoms. In normal circumstances, we are aware of the things that trouble and upset us. But, sometimes we become troubled and don't know the cause of it. This points to the existence of unconscious ideas. Freud and Breuer used the metaphor of a foreign body in flesh to describe the notion of unconscious ideas. Freud and Breuer write in *Studies on Hysteria*, "Her love...was present in her consciousness like a foreign body, without having entered into relationship with the rest of her ideational life" (165). Freud had faith in the cathartic model. According to him cure happens when the repressed ideas are articulated. Freud also talked about the conversion that takes place in hysteria. According to his view, all kinds of stimulation leads to excited state in the patient's mind. On the contrary, motor activities like talking and walking tend to decrease this excitation. This happens because in every person there is a propensity to keep this kind of excitation at a constant level. Similarly, when a person gives replies to insults or indulges in the acts of revenge this excitation is decreased and the person's condition tends to become non-pathological. Otherwise, his mental makeup may pose a risk to such a person. Elaine Showalter in the book chapter "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender" says, "Contemporary analysts agree that for a variety of reasons psychoanalysis could only have been developed out of work with hysterics" (319). Freud used various ideas like hysterical disposition and disassociation in order to define the special state of mind the patient develops. This special state leads to the emergence of symptoms in the patient. During the First world war numerous people developed neurological symptoms. It led to the confirmation of the fact that hysterical symptoms were not limited to gynecological reasons only. Similarly, sexual trauma and libidinal fixation were also not considered to be the sole cause for such symptoms. A debate also raged among doctors whether these symptoms operated at the conscious or the unconscious level. The soldiers who were shell shocked were seen to be similar to the persons who had hysterical symptoms. But, Freud didn't equate the two. Though, he said that there was a similarity between the two. The similarity was that in both the cases there was a fixation to the experience that started the illness. Here, Freud advanced the idea of death instinct to provide an explanation. In psychoanalytical circles, the

discussion regarding hysteria always led to the include death wish, oedipal and pre-oedipal development stages.

In the 20th century, an integration of psychiatry with medicine was tried in the light of new scientific advancements. As a result, Freud's model of Hysteria became problematic. Researchers found it very difficult to combine the neurological and psychological aspects of hysteria. Hysteria was renamed conversion disorder but it still remained unexplained. Psychiatrists like Robert Spitzer considered hysteria to be a neurological disorder that had some strange origins. By the 1960s the word hysteria disappeared altogether from the psychiatric circles. But, in reality, the problem of hysteria is very much here. Even today, neurologists face hysteria many a time but it's not considered a core of psychiatry either at the conceptual or the clinical level. Studies by persons like Eliot Slater gave weight to the idea that in a vast majority of cases, hysteria has neuropathological origins that have not been understood by the neurologists. These days whenever psychiatrists come across cases of hysteria, they simply don't see it as psychiatric. Even if hysterical cases are recommended to the psychiatrists by the neurologists themselves, the psychiatrists return the cases labelling them as non-psychiatric. The modern view is that psychoanalysis is not about diagnosis but about understanding patients. Modern psychiatrists are also not much inclined towards psychoanalysis because they know that sometimes the analyst may not be able to offer an interpretation for many months. In the recent past, there have been attempts to study hysteria through neuroscientific investigation but these attempts have not borne much fruit.

Psychoanalytical theorists including Carl Jung and Jacques Lacan read and followed Freud with great interest and used the examples given by Freud as illustrations in their critical work. However, differences arose between Freud and his followers as regards certain fundamental points. The primary difference was that as per Freud sexuality was the major cause behind psychopathology whereas his opponents gave primacy to interpersonal causes and nurture for this malady. Gradually persons like Carl Jung, Alfred Adler and Otto Rank developed their own theories. Carl Jung added another dimension to this field when he tried to explore human nature and behaviour in myths and legends. Philippe Coster in his book *The Collective Unconscious and Its Archetypes* writes that the major contribution of Jung was "his rejection of Freud's psychosexual aetiology for neuroses, and his corresponding emphasis on client's here-and-now conflicts. This method he referred to as analytical psychology" (4). Jung's analytical

psychology concentrates more on the present, though it doesn't negate infantile repression. Alfred Adler saw man as a responsible agent who is self-conscious and can improve himself and the world. They took a part of the original psychoanalytical theory and treated it as a whole. Jung focused on spirituality and mysticism. Adler emphasized aggression and power and Otto Rank gave importance to infancy and the birth process.

Lacan, the French psychoanalyst, however gave prominence to ego in his version of psychoanalysis. Bruce Fink in his book *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique* avers, "Lacan does not deny the existence of countertransferential feelings: everyone who has ever seen patients in a therapy setting has felt drawn to or angered by, sympathetic toward or frustrated by patients at one time or another. Lacan's originality lies in the fact that he requires analysts to put these feelings aside when interpreting or otherwise intervening in therapy" (6). His method of psychotherapy was more objective. He was of the view that the analyst should never reveal his feelings about the patients to anybody; especially he should never reveal it to the patients. He also gave the concept of the mirror stage. He used the mirror stage to explain the development of ego in human beings. According to him ego is formed when there is a conflict between what one comprehends visually and what he experiences from within. He also differentiated between desires and drives. Drives can be thought of incomplete expressions of our desires. He brought structuralism into picture and interpreted Freud on this basis. Terry Eagleton in his book *Literary Theory: An Introduction* asserts, "In Lacanian theory, anyone who is unable to enter the symbolic order at all, to symbolize their experience through language, would become psychotic" (164). He also talked about the pre-oedipal stage when the child lives in a symbiotic relationship with the mother's body. The child does not consider itself different from the mother and has no sense of an independent self. In this stage the child also is not able to draw any distinction between the external world and himself. Then, Lacan talked about the mirror stage when the child develops a rudimentary sense of self and moves towards the acquiring of language.

Carl Jung founded the school of analytical psychology. His thought was markedly different from that of Freud because he gave importance to both the conscious as well as unconscious processes. He also focused on mysticism and spirituality. Jung talked about the collective unconscious whereas Freud focused only on the personal unconscious. According to Jung our personal unconscious is just a part of our total unconscious. The personal unconscious

consists of the repressed fears and memories but the collective unconscious is a repository of all those instincts, which are shared by the human race in general. He gave the example of the fear of the dark being such an archetype that is common to all the human beings. According to Jung darkness was a thing of great disadvantage to the primitive man. He was at constant danger of attack by other animals of the wild as he could not see their movement in the dark. This fear is shared by the modern man also even though now darkness is not that threatening to him owing to the advancement that he has made. Jung observed that the dialogue between the conscious and the unconscious is necessary for the healthy development of any person's philosophy. In the absence of such a dialogue, the unconscious part of our psyche can spoil our personality. He also classified people as inward-oriented or outward-oriented. An inward-oriented person is more concerned as to how the outer world affects him. An outward-oriented individual is more interested in the impact that he can make on the outer world. Though, nobody is a pure introvert or a pure extrovert. Jung also gave the concepts of the anima and the animus. Anima is the female personality that resides in a male unconscious whereas animus is the male personality that resides in the female unconscious.

There are three different approaches to psychoanalysis: namely, Freudian approach, Lacanian approach and the Object Relations approach. Freudian approach stresses on analyzing the behaviour of persons who are neurotic or suffer from other kinds of psychological problems. Previously, a physiological cause was supposed to be behind such abnormal behaviour. Freud proposed that neurotic behaviour is not meaningless but has a hidden goal or purpose behind it. He proposed certain characteristics of human psyche, namely the preconscious, the conscious and the unconscious. He also gave three structures of the human mind i.e., Id, Ego and Superego. Freud relates all these things to art in general and literature in particular. He understood creativity employing fantasy and dreams in a work of art. Freud was of the opinion that behind a work of art is an unfulfilled wish of the author and this leads to the improvement of hitherto unsatisfactory reality. Freud's method of psychoanalysis of any work of art can take four forms. It may deal with the author and his life. It may concern itself with the motivations and psychological makeup of the characters. It may try to decipher the appeal of any work on the audience and it may even analyze the language and symbols of the text itself. Usually, one or more of the above-mentioned forms is applied for psychoanalytical criticism

Object relations approach is based on the idea that the psychological makeup of human beings is based on his interactions with other human beings. Melanie Klein was the first proponent of this theory. For him, an infant's inner world does not have chronological memories and it is not based on images of reality. Rather, an infant's inner world is based upon the concept of a good and bad breast. These internal introjected objects are only available to the child's ego and they help a child negotiate with the external reality. This approach talks about the physical birth and the psychological birth. The physical birth happens over a set period of time whereas the psychological birth of a child happens in the first three years of his life when he interacts with the persons around him. These object relations always lead to the development of certain traits, linguistic skills and motor skills in the child. This theory gives less importance to biological drives as far as the development of personality of a human being is concerned.

During the last 20 years of his life, Freud tried to develop a new idea. This idea was that the patients somehow learn to adapt to their inherent conflicts. They do not run away from them and do not always indulge in defence mechanisms. Near 1914, Freud focused on the defence mechanisms of his patients. The defence mechanisms were employed by the patients mind in order to block unpleasant and unbearable happenings from the consciousness. However, Freud found out that adaption occurred in the patients and this made it very difficult for the therapist to alter those conflicts. The conflict ceased to be alien to the self, rather it became syntonic to the self. This led to the development of ego psychology in the hands of Heinz Hartmann (1894-1970), Rene Spitz (1887-1974) and Anna Freud (1895-1982). Spitz gave a lot of importance to the role of mother in the development of the child and gave many new critical insights to it. He also talked about the reciprocal relationship in the mother infant dyad.

Ego psychology is different from psychoanalysis because in ego psychology the focus is on changing the personality style whereas in psychoanalysis the focus is on altering the symptoms of the patients. The change in personality style of the patient is achieved through a process that involves altering the defences employed by the ego. Psychoanalysis deals with the catharsis of the patient. In catharsis, the repressed energy that is defended against by the ego is released. However, ego psychology maintains that some of these defences employed by the ego might actually be needed by the patient. Thus, the patient now becomes the focus and it is studied by the ego psychologist as to how the patient is defending against his traumatic experiences. Another model is that of self-psychology developed by Heinz Kohut (1913-1981).

According to him human experience is not characterized by repressed desires, conflicts and guilt but it is characterized by self-experience of isolation and alienation from oneself and others. This alienation leads to meaninglessness and loss of vitality in life. He believed in the power of empathy and attunement in curing his patients and did not put much emphasis on insight and interpretation. Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby. He rejected the concepts of libido and regression. He also rejected the role of mother in giving drive gratification. His views influenced a lot of psychoanalysts like Frances Tustin and Thomas Odgen but his theory has no rigorous observational or research basis.

During the 1980s a new approach called the relational approach became popular. It was not a solitary reflection but a relational struggle. This approach focused on the real as well as imaginary relationships that shape a person's personality. These relationship patterns were the focus of interaction between the psychoanalyst and the patient. Their successful re-enactment was instrumental in finding a cure for the patient. The analyst's personality and reactions were also considered important. Frank Summers in his book *Object Relations Theories and Psychopathology: A comprehensive Text* writes, "The contributions of the various object relations theories to the psychoanalytic process remain unclear. This obfuscation may be due partly to the cumbersome and difficult language often used by theorists. A large share of the difficulty, however, is due to the fact that object relations theories were developed by clinicians dissatisfied with the clinical and theoretical limitations of the classical psychoanalytic models" (2). Object relations theory was markedly different from the Freudian Psychoanalysis where only the patient's personality and personal reactions were of main focus. It was developed as a new way of looking at the psychological problems. Development ego psychologists like Margaret Mahler (1897-1985) focused more on the patient's real life. In psychoanalysis of the recent times, focus has shifted to the object relational approach. In this approach, the real relation that occurs between the patient and the psychoanalyst is seen as the best tool to make sense of the psychopathology of the patient's childhood.

This is a post-Freudian age. In this age our conception about human psyche, its functioning as well as the processes of the brain has changed a lot since Freudian times. There have been various strains of psychoanalysis over the decades and various attempts have been made at synthesizing them. F. Pine in 1988 came up with four types of psychologies that psychoanalysis has produced. He talked of the psychologies of ego, drive, object relations and

the self. The psychology of drive relates to the infantile wishes, fantasies, conflicts and defences. The ego psychology is concerned with ego defects and adaptation. The psychology of object relations deals with internal images that are etched in our memory, conscious or unconscious. These images and memories get repeated in our current relationships. The psychology of the self focuses on our experiences of the self in the present time. It deals with fragmentation and self-esteem. Beebe and Lachmann researched in 2002 that adult psychoanalysis cannot be complete without analytic empathy and emotional availability. Rotenberg in 2006 reached the conclusion that psychoanalysis cannot be achieved without corrective relational experience. In this approach the analyst's personality plays a crucial role in any psychoanalytical activity. Anthony Storr in his book *Freud: A Very Short Introduction* avers,

Modern psychoanalysts are particularly concerned with analysing transference. The patient who, in early childhood, has been misunderstood, rejected, or ill-treated will tend to go through life expecting similar treatment from those he encounters. How can he possibly make a satisfactory sexual relationship if, at some level of which he is probably unconscious, he treats every woman as if he was expecting her to criticize or reject him? Moreover, he will exhibit similar attitudes towards the psychoanalyst... The task of the psychoanalyst is to point out such repetitions, and, by continually drawing the patient's attention to the false assumptions which he is making about the analyst, provide a corrective emotional experience, gradually transforming the relationship between them into one in which the patient feels accepted and understood. (136-137)

In modern times, the focus is on enabling the patient to lead a healthy life. Clear cut cure for hysterical or obsessional symptoms is not the focus these days. Rather, general problems of life like a general dissatisfaction in life or incompatibility in interpersonal relationships are the focus of psychoanalysts these days. Psychoanalysis as a tool of literary criticism is also dear to many analysts these days. Psychoanalytical literary criticism is the one that takes inspiration from the rich tradition of psychoanalysis. The method, theory, concept and form or a combination of these four is strongly influenced by psychoanalysis. In psychoanalytical criticism, the critics equate a text with a dream. In other words, like a dream, a text has a manifest content and a latent content. The manifest content is the obvious meaning of a text whereas the latent content is its real but

hidden meaning. It is also generally assumed that the characters in any literary production are the projections of the author's own psyche. Thus, psychoanalysis brings to the fore the hidden anxieties and conflicts of the author. Author's own neurosis is the factor behind a literary piece and it's the task of the critic to unfold the secrets of that neurosis. Even when a single character is psychoanalyzed, it is broadly assumed that the author's psyche is being put to the test.

In the current time, psychoanalysis is seen to be best suited for the problems of attachment and intimacy. Modern psychoanalysts focus on the understanding of mental states. They are not much concerned about the hidden desires and drives. Emotional availability and analytical empathy are the key elements in adult psychoanalysis in the modern times. A meta-analysis of the efficacy of psychoanalysis as a technique has provided ample evidence that psychoanalysis is instrumental in effecting important changes in persons suffering from complex mental problems. Depression, anxiety and personality disorders can be effectively treated with psychoanalysis. Empirical research, which has been aided by psychoanalytical theory, has led to an in-depth understanding of the human psychology. In the present times, psychoanalysis has become a vibrant technique capable of alleviating human misery and suffering.

Chapter II

Herta Muller: Her Life and Works

Herta Muller, born on August the 17th, 1953 in a village of the Timis County in Romania, is a writer of international repute who currently lives in West Berlin, Germany. She was born in Nitzkydorf, a German Speaking village in the Banat region of Romania. The village was inhabited by the German-speaking minority. This region had passed to Romania from the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the First World War. In the Second World War, initially, Romania was an ally of Germany. During that period many of the Romanian Germans volunteered for the Hitler's SS i.e., the military police and Herta's father was one of them. However, before the close of WWII, Romania sided with Russia. As a result, in January 1945, all Romanian Germans, who were in the working age group of 17-45 years, were sent to the Soviet Union for reparation work for 5 years. This reparation work was forced labour where the prisoners were made to live in inhumane conditions and given only bread and soup for subsistence. Herta Muller's mother was one of such labour camp prisoners who survived 5 years of toil, hunger and torture. In her novel *The Hunger Angel* Herta Muller observes, "Hunger devours nearly all the artistry" (74). Artistry is normally possible only when the basic human needs are met. Satisfaction of hunger is inevitable for the flowering of the creative spirit in humans. She was a part of the linguistic and ethnic minority that survived in a communist state. She learnt Romanian as a second language in her teenage. Her village was backward and was greatly influenced by National Socialism. Narrow-minded ethnocentrism also characterized her community.

She has been awarded the Nobel Prize in 2009. The Nobel Prize summary read, The Nobel prize in literature 2009 was awarded to Herta Muller "Who, with the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose, depicts the landscape of the dispossessed." ("The Nobel Prize in Literature 2009"). Herta Muller's works depict cruelty, violence, terror and dehumanization of masses, especially the minorities, in the repressive regime led by Nicolae Ceausescu. Her novels depict the modern history of Germans in the Banat and Transylvania. Terrible repercussions of the communist regime on the people are portrayed in vivid detail using language that is frank and intense at the same time. The themes of exile, censorship, persecution, loss of identity, psychological trauma, neurotic existence, mourning and hysteria find stunning portrayal in her

writing. Muller has a strong affinity with writers like Imre Kertesz, Primo Levi, Inge Muller, Jorge Semprun and Paul Celan. All these writers have written extensively about the Holocaust and the totalitarian forms of government. Herta Muller, like these writers, rejects Socialist Realism as a viable form of government. She is also critical of the utopian meta-narratives that communism strongly believes in. Her style is straightforward and definitive and closely matches the experiences of her life in the totalitarian Romania. Brigid Haines and Lyn Marven praise Muller's style in their book *Herta Muller* in the following words:

Muller is often praised for her precise yet poetic style. Katrin Kohl elaborates the close relationship between lived experience and literary expression in Muller's works, drawing on the author's many reflections on her poetics and situating her in a discourse inaugurated by Plato and Aristotle. Muller does not espouse theory as such but practises poetics as 'an ongoing process that is responsive to life and work. Resisting all forms of teleological thinking, she draws power from the precise observation of concrete details and a heightened sensitivity to language and silence and the independent life of words. Her literary works exploit poetic intensification, the metaphoricity of ordinary language, and the slippage between different languages and registers. (10)

Herta Muller's poetics is related to the practical aspect of writing and life. She does not want to advocate any theory but simply wants to depict the horrors of a totalitarian state. She uses silence as a metaphor for life and trauma in a totalitarian setting. She knows the knack of using precise words to express the bodily as well as psychological suffering of the minorities in the Totalitarian Romania. She easily shifts between different languages to prove her point. To take an example; The word pheasant in the German language stands for arrogance and pride as the pheasant struts all around. Whereas, in Romanian language, this word stands for weakness and subjection as anybody can shoot this poor creature easily. In her novel *The Passport*, she uses the second connotation as she compares all the minorities to pheasants who are leading fearful lives in a subjugating environment.

Herta Muller said the following in her speech held at the Nobel Banquet in the Stockholm City Hall on December 7, 2009, "Literature speaks with everyone individually-it is the personal property that stays inside our heads. And nothing speaks to us as forcefully as a book which

expects nothing in return, other than that we think and feel.” (“Herta Muller: Nobel Lecture”). However, certain eyebrows were also raised at the Nobel committee’s decision for choosing her for the coveted prize. Frank Wilson in an article in *The Atlantic* said, “She may be a wonderful writer. I also think it is great to celebrate the collapse of communism. But it is no way to choose the winner of a literary prize.” (“Raising Eyebrows at Herta Muller’s Nobel Prize”). Apart from this, she has received more than 20 literary awards including Kleist Prize (1994), The European Union’s Aristeion Prize for Literature (1995), the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award (1998), the Franz Kafka Prize (1999), the Berliner Literaturpreis (2005) and the Franz Werfel Human Rights Award (2009).

Her grandfather was very wealthy and possessed a lot of land as well as a goods store. He frequented Vienna every month in connection with his business of a grain merchant. He dealt mainly in wheat and corn and their house had a big machine to lift grain and corn. This grain elevator was placed on the roof and was about four stories in height. But, after 1945 the totalitarian government confiscated all their property. Their family didn’t possess even a single thing. The goods store that his grandfather owned was also taken away by the socialist government. The store had different kinds of things and was managed by Muller’s mother as well as grandmother. Later they were moved to a collective farm. Her grandfather could not repose faith in the new socialist government because it took away everything that he had worked hard for his whole life. Her grandfather was also sent to a camp in Romania. He was a kulak and hence was branded as being the member of the exploiting class. Muller had to mention this fact of his grandfather being a kulak, whenever she filled out a form. Her grandfather also had a lot of horses as he had served in the First World War. All the horses were confiscated by the socialist government. They received a death notice for each and every horse that listed the place where each horse had fallen. In reality, all this was a farce. The horses became the property of the socialist government. However, the things started deteriorating with time. Under the Stalin regime, countless people died or disappeared. But no death certificate was filled in such cases.

There were villages that belonged to different minorities. There were German villages, Serbian villages and Hungarian villages. The inhabitants of these villages did not mix with each other. Each group of minorities had its own way of dressing, its own religion and its own language. The German village, to which Muller belonged, spoke a particular dialect of the German language. This dialect was different from the German dialect that was spoken in other

German villages. Muller's village was initially a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. So, they were pressured by the Hungarians to assimilate into the Hungarian culture. As a result, her grandparents went to a Hungarian school and studied most of the subjects in Hungarian. But her grandparents could never learn Romanian because by the time Romanian was made compulsory under the socialist regime, they already had turned sixty years old. Muller also found it difficult to understand the medium of instruction during her school time because the dialect she spoke in her village was different from what was taught at school. As a result, she came to believe that no language was really her own.

During the period 1973 to 1976, Herta Muller studied Romanian and German literature in Timisoara. Here, she came in touch with a group of writers called Aktionsgruppe Banat who opposed Nicolae Ceausescu's dictatorship and the brand of literature that the regime wanted to propagate. Herta's father who had voluntarily joined the Hitler's SS proved to her beyond doubt that blind adherence to ideology and opportunism can corrupt people to the core. So, she was naturally inclined to such writers who were fighting repression of any kind. No wonder, the German Minority in Romania was officially called coinhabiting nationality. When, Herta had completed her studies, she got the job of a translator in a tractor factory Tehnometal. Here, in 1979 she was pressurized by the Securitate i.e. the Romanian secret police to spy on her colleagues. She refused outrightly, was turned out of the job as a result and couldn't get regular employment afterwards. At the factory she was told to hold 'two recruitment tests' with the secret police officer Stana. She refused this and as a result her office space was taken away from her. One morning, she found her dictionaries on the floor outside her office. Her office was given to an engineer. But she remained strong and continued her work of translating the machine manuals, while sitting on a concrete staircase, with her dictionaries beside her. She did not want to be blamed that she did not want to work. Nobody, except her friend Jenny, sympathized with her. She gave her space on her desk to continue with her translations. But, after some days, Jenny was told by the authorities not to allow Herta into her office.

Herta was called a spy by other colleagues. This time she could not control herself and cried. Actually, people who whistled after her and called her an informer were acting on the instructions of the authorities. All this activity was designed to force Herta to resign. It was a strange and pitiful situation for Herta. She had refused to spy on her colleagues and now the same colleagues were calling her a spy. Only some colleagues could see through the trick of the

authorities but they were helpless. Other colleagues who did not know her were completely tricked into the schema of the authorities. Karsten Iversen and Christopher Sand-Iversen translate Muller's pain in their article in the Prague Writers' Festival website in the following way, "You can defy anxiety to the depths of your soul. But slander steals your soul. You just feel surrounded by horror." ("Herta Muller: Securitate in all but name"). The narrator was more pained by the fact that the authorities were defaming her. This feeling of losing respect was tormenting her more. After some days, when she refused to surrender to the pressure of the authorities, she was sacked. After that her interrogations started. False allegation of prostitution was leveled against her on the flimsy pretext that she was not looking for any job and hence must be living from prostitution. She was called a parasitic element and a black marketer. The charge of espionage was leveled against her because she was an interpreter at the German embassy. No summons was issued in her case. She was just plucked off the street.

In those difficult times, her father died and that left her broken and depressed. Her ego refused to acknowledge her existence. She says, "At the beginning of these turbulent times my father died. I no longer had a grip on things; I had to reassure myself that I really existed in the world, and began to write down the story of my life." ("Herta Muller: Securitate in all but name"). These writings formed the basis of the short stories in *Nadirs*. She made both ends meet by taking up the job of a teacher in a kindergarten and by giving German lessons to individuals. In 1972, she started publishing poetry in the Anthology of the Modern Lyrics of the Banat. In 1979 she began publishing short stories in various Romanian German newspapers and was awarded a prize. In 1982 she wrote her first book *Niederungen* aka *Nadirs*, which was her literary debut. It is a collection of short stories. Actually, she wrote *Niederungen* in 1980. But its publication took place in 1982 primarily because of the over-active Romanian literary censorship. The uncensored version of this book was published in Federal republic of Germany in 1984. It was translated into English as *Nadirs* in 1999. All these stories were written from the perspective of a child and talk about the lifestyle of Danube Swabians. The German language newspapers in Romania were highly critical of this book because the newspapers had a very conservative outlook. However, some German language critics like Rudolf Herbert showered praise on her work.

This book was instrumental in making her presence felt in the German community in Germany. Even the top-notch German publisher of the time Rotbuch took interest in her work,

even though she lived in Romania at that time. Other Romanian-German authors like Rolf Bossert were ignored by the German publishers. In Germany her works were taken to be self-critical and were liked much by the people who were inclined towards the left. Though, most of the English commentators took her work as political commentary. The English translation of the story book *Niederungen*, called *Nadirs*, which was published in 1999, however was ignored by the English-speaking people. In 1984 came her second book *Druckender Tango* and in 1986 she published her first novel *The Passport*. This was translated into English language in 1989. Lyn Marven in his book *Body and Narrative in Contemporary Literatures in German* states, “The structure underlying Herta Muller’s work is the notion of trauma, which unites the representation of the body with language and narrative strategies. In her work, the body remains the predominant and primary concern. Traumatic events evident in Muller’s texts are caused by, and rooted in, physical experience: torture and interrogation, threat of violence, and, ultimately, death” (53). She criticized communism in her stories and novels because she had to face trauma and suffering under the totalitarian government of Romania, which was a variant of communism. This criticism kindled the imagination of people in the Great Britain and her works were liked far and wide.

She was always followed by the Securitate persons. She knew this and before the publishing of her book *Nadirs*, she and her editor decided to meet in the Carpathian Mountains as winter sports enthusiasts. She gave the manuscript of the book to her husband Richard Wagner and he took the script to Bucharest. She was to reach Bucharest without the manuscript. She was interrupted by two men at the station but she refused to go with them without an arrest warrant. Then she was jostled and pushed to the ground by the two men. Her clothes became dirty but she picked herself as if nothing had happened. The onlookers also behaved as if nothing had happened. The two men followed her in the train even. In her desperation, she went to the toilet and hid a letter, which she had written to the Amnesty International, behind the sink. She was not able to sleep the whole night fearing that she might be thrown out of the train. Such incidents were missing from her file under the name Cristina. Her friends also had to bear the brunt of the regime’s anger. She gave a reading of *Nadirs* at the Bucharest Goethe Institute and there she met a friend of hers. After this meeting, the friend also came under the regime’s lens. He was spied upon and a file was opened on him also. She even did not apply for a telephone fearing that it would be tapped. In Romania, it took years to get a telephone connection. Still, she was offered a

connection. She refused because she feared that the phone would be tapped. But such a thing was pointless because her flat was already bugged and she was constantly being spied upon.

Her harrowing experience when she was picked from the street by a policeman is described in the article *Herta Muller: Securitate in all but name*, which was published on Prague Writers' Festival website:

I was on my way to the hairdresser's when a policeman escorted me through a narrow metal door into the basement of a hall of residence. Three men in plain clothes were sitting at a table. A small bony one was the boss. I had never seen him before. He said I was having sex with eight Arab students in exchange for tights and cosmetics. I didn't know a single Arab student. Time and again he would throw my identity card on the floor, and I had to bend down and pick it up. Thirty or forty times maybe; when I got slower, he kicked me in the small of my back. And from behind the door, at the end of the table I heard a woman's voice screaming. Torture or rape, just a tape recording, I hoped. Then I was forced to eat eight hard boiled eggs and green onions with salt. I forced the stuff down.

Being pulled in from the street was more terrifying than a summons. No one would have known where you were. You could have disappeared, and never shown up again or, as they had threatened earlier, you could be pulled out of the river, a drowned corpse. The verdict would have been suicide. The secret police regularly used to visit her house, when she was not at home. They left deliberate signs of their presence like cigarette butts and moved chairs. This was done to put psychological pressure on her. She had a fox skin lying on the floor of her room. Once she was cleaning the room, she noticed certain cuts in the skin. They had very cleverly cut its tail and paws. Finally, one day they cut off the head and laid it on the fox's belly. They had encroached upon her privacy and this was very disturbing for her. She often wondered at mealtime, whether the food she was going to eat was poisoned. This psychological terror was a regular feature in Herta's life but not even a word about it got mentioned in her file.

Herta Muller was not allowed to participate in the Book Fair in Germany and she was also not allowed to meet her publishers. Other writers like Anna Jonas were against this and wrote a letter to the Romanian Society of Authors in protest. In another incident, The Journalist

Rolf Michaelis wrote her a telegram announcing his visit. But the telegram was intercepted by the authorities. When, Rolf reached their place he found a locked house because Herta and her husband Richard Wagner had gone to the village to meet Richard's parents. Rolf returned to his place. There, three Securitate men were waiting for him and they beat him brutally. His toes were broken and he had to crawl down from his apartment into the street. This became a source of personal humiliation for Herta for a long time.

In 2009, Muller wrote a book *Cristina und ihreAttrappe*. In this book she describes how she was victimized by the Securitate even when she had migrated to Germany. The Romanian Securitate had planned of framing a charge against her. They were planning to implicate her in a false charge of being a spy. Herta Muller was persecuted and victimized even after she had immigrated to Germany. But, her reputation in Germany protected her from such a trial. The totalitarian government that Muller criticized in her works was bent upon taking revenge in one form or the other. In another incident she was called to the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. Here, a photo of a Romanian man was shown to her. The officer told her that the man was arrested because he was a Securitate agent and had travelled to Germany to carry out murders. He even had Herta's name and address in his notebook. However, Muller's publicity in Germany saved her from being implicated in any case. Her books got positive reactions and got several literary prizes in Germany. For this reason, she was not arrested.

Muller suffered mental agony at every step in her life. Every questionnaire that she filled contained a column where she had to mention that she was a part of the German minority. In official parlance they were not called a minority but a cohabitating nationality. This term had the connotation that the German people were graciously being allowed to live with others in Romania. Though, the Germans had been living there for over three hundred years. She was a victim of defamation campaigns, which were run against her on the insistence of Romanian authorities. She received death threats and her life was put under ever increasing surveillance. In order to escape persecution and trauma, she made up her mind to leave Romania in 1987. A bilateral agreement had been signed in 1978 between the Romanian and German governments regarding giving about 12000 exit visas to ethnic Germans every year. She immigrated to Germany along with her husband, the writer Richard Wagner. She was placed in a transitional camp in Germany because she could be allowed to become a German citizen only after the completion of all the paper work. She requested the German authorities to accept their

applications as being from political refugees. This insistence delayed their immigration process because the German authorities accepted people on the base of their German Ethnicity only. She penned all her books and novels from there only. In the meantime, she travelled as a guest professor to various universities and colleges in Germany, the United States, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Ulrich Baron praises Herta Muller in the following words, “A political voice that also sings poetically: Herta Muller’s writing combines the great virtues of literature. Your work advocates justice across national borders. This is one of the reasons why the Nobel Prize is a right and important decision.” (Baron). Herta Muller works got critical acclaim from far and wide because she wrote against state sponsored oppression and terror. When she visited Romania after a long time, it seemed to her that she had come to the past of her life, when it was not possible for her to distinguish between co-incidences and staged events of her life. She had demanded on various occasions that she should be given access to the secret files that the Romanian government prepared on her life, while she was in Romania. But, the access to those files was always denied to her.

While in Romania, a friend of her told that both of them were followed the day she arrived in Romania. He also told her that the owner of the hotel where they were boarding was a former Securitate man and that he followed the same old working style. These people spied on every foreign person and tapped their phones. He also told her that such was the scheme of things in almost all the good hotels of Romania. About forty percent of the former Securitate personnel were recruited into the SRI-Romanian Information Service. The remaining personnel were now retired and lived on pensions which were about three times higher than other people. Some of the former Securitate personnel were given high posts and made the economic policies of the country. Only the diplomatic corps was the place where the former personnel could not get any job. Obviously, it was to show the international community that Romania had nothing to do with its past. But, in reality such a claim was only a farce. Thus, she found that even after so many years after the fall of the Ceausescu’s dictatorship, things had not improved much in Romania. Even the Romanian intellectuals were silent on the matter. It might be that they did not want to get persecuted by the new dispensation. The EU pressurized the Romanian government to set up a national Council for studying the secret files. Finally, such a council was set up but with the personnel of the former Securitate as its members. They refused the access to files even on very flimsy grounds. Muller got an appointment fixed with the head of the council so that the

access to her file could be expedited. But the concerned person pretended to be not at the place. Such was the fear of the former Securitate members.

Finally, she was able to see her file. It was under the name of Cristina and had three volumes. There were 914 pages in total. The file was opened on March 8, 1983 but contained documents from earlier years also. The file was opened because it was alleged that Muller had distorted reality in her book *Nadirs*. It was also written that spies of the Securitate had corroborated this ill effect by analyzing the text of the book. It was also mentioned in the file that Muller belonged to a group called Circle of German-language Poets', which was notorious for its hostile works. The file was 'worked upon' and tampered with. Much of the content was removed from the file. Even after the fall of the Ceausescu dictatorship, the Securitate had become an abstract monster.

The Passport is a novel by Herta Muller. She wrote it in 1986, before she left Romania for good. It was published in English in 1989. It is her third novel but the first one that is published in Berlin and it is her first book to be translated into English. It is more political in nature and its reviews as well as its marketing reveal its nature. It was well received in Germany for its writing style and linguistic ability but was criticized by the Romanian-German community for being a product of her personal obsessions. In England this novel did not receive much attention in the English-language media and critics like Pryce-Jones were critical of the use of very short sentences. The fanciful titles of the chapters also did not augur well with them. It is a small novel of 85 pages that tells the story of a man named Windisch, who is desperate to immigrate to Germany. Windisch feels stifled in his Romanian village because of the prevalent corruption in almost all the spheres of daily activity. In the passport, Herta portrays the hollowness of the society in a totalitarian regime and reveals the demeaning effect of the superstructure of totalitarianism that tends to crush the life of a common man beyond repair. She exposes the corruption of the village and shows how the officials, right from the postman to the priest indulge in corruption and demand material and sexual favours from the people who are desirous of leaving the country. The night watchman says to Windisch, "Your wife is too old for him. He will leave your Kathi in peace. But then it'll be your daughter's turn. The priest makes her Catholic, and the militiaman makes her stateless" (49). Corruption is evident even in the religious sphere. The corrupt officials go in for young girls to satisfy their lust.

This novel was published in Berlin and is a socio-political account of the society under a communist regime. Windisch bribes the officials but to no avail. In the end the family has to prostitute their daughter. The daughter sleeps with the official and Windisch finally gets the passport. The noted critic Karin Bauer in her book chapter “Gender and the Sexual Politics of Exchange in Herta Muller’s Prose” says that in Herta Muller, “The women’s descent into madness thus presents not only a way to escape the pressures of normality and the restrictive moral code of the village, but also a means of evading the subjugation to power. The escape is paid for, however, with mental derangement and death” (162). Women want to escape the tortures perpetrated by the Romanian officials but it’s not an easy task and they have to pay a heavy price for it.

Katharina, his wife, has become an embittered soul. Extreme climatic conditions and insatiable hunger never let her lead a normal life while she was in a labour camp. She was forced to offer sexual favours to people for small favours. She slept with a cook for hot and sweet potatoes, lay down with a doctor who declared her ill and she was saved from working in the mine for three days. Another winter she went to a grave digger and got leftovers of the funeral meal from him. She is the representative of many such women who withdraw themselves from the society. This serves as a blow to the financial condition of their household as they also get withdrawn from the village economy and hence become a burden on their families in particular and society in general. In some cases, such a scheme of affairs also leads to mental derangement and death.

The plot begins with the protagonist Windisch cycling along the road to the flour mill. He passes in front of the war memorial and then by the poplar trees. He counts years and days as he cycles along the path. In the evening when he locks the mill, he again counts the years and days. He has been counting time because he wants to emigrate from the country and has applied for a passport. One night, Windisch goes to the mill to take a sack of flour. He awakens the night watchman, Konrad. The night watchman was a soldier who has been put on guard duty. He knows that Windisch has taken the sack of flour for the mayor and that Windisch frequently bribes the mayor for his passport. Windisch is greatly worried. He suspects, “My daughter, my Amalie is no longer a virgin either...I can’t look her in the eye anymore. There’s a shadow in her eyes” (6).

Both Windisch and the night watchman believe in superstitions. An owl flies over the pond beside the mill. The widow Kroner, joiner’s mother, is on her death bed. The joiner has

already made a coffin for her and has written her name over it. The night watchman says, “She can’t die. The owl hasn’t settled on any roof yet” (6). The villagers take recourse to superstitions to bring some calm to their disturbed minds. Windisch had been a prisoner of war in Russia. He loved Barbara but she died in Russia. Windisch’s wife Katharina also had returned from Russia. There, she wanted to marry Joseph. Unfortunately, Joseph also died in the war. Both of them have held to life in spite of losing their loved ones. They tie their life to each other in order to put an end to their mourning.

Windisch had delivered flour twelve times and had paid ten thousand lei since then. Easter also had long been past. The skinner gets the passport. He sells everything in his house, including the curtains. He has a son Rudi. Rudi is an engineer and he has worked in a glass factory for three years. The glass factory is in the mountains. The skinner goes to visit his son and plans to stay there for one week. He returns after three days. He could not sleep there because of the noise of trains going through the tunnels cut into mountains. He tells Windisch, “I have never experienced so many rattling nights and so many bright days. At night, in bed, I heard the tunnels. They roared. Roared like the pit wagons in the Urals” (18). This shows that the dictatorial administration of the country has exploited nature to the extreme to fulfill its dream of increased national wealth and production.

There is only one owl in the village. It does not belong to the village but comes from a neighbouring village. Windisch is sure about it because the last owl in their village had been stuffed by the skinner. The skinner has given the stuffed owl to the priest as a gift. The owl circles an apple tree but does not complete the circle. Windisch thinks that the owl can smell the birds that are kept in the skinner’s loft. All the stuffed animals that skinner has were expropriated by the government. Two men had come in a white car and they remained in skinner’s house for the whole day. The men said, “These stuffed animals are part of the wildlife population of our forests” (28). The communist government wants to take away everything from the people. They also threatened heavy punishment for this act. The skinner gave them all his sheep skins as a present. Then they said that everything was alright. This shows the rampant corruption that is prevalent in the totalitarian regime, which calls itself the supreme form of nationalism. The skinner had applied for the passport later than Windisch but got it prior to him. He had bribed the officials in the city. He is immigrating to Munich where his brother-in-law lives. His brother-in-law has married a German woman. The village people are very superstitious. This is exemplified

by the incident of the tree that ate its own apples. This tree stood behind the church before the war. It is burned by the villagers and the bishop because they think it has a devil in it. Their superstition is also linked to their state of mind which seeks to find comfort even in superstitions. Windisch is traumatized by the fact that his daughter has to sleep with the priest and the military official of the village. He couldn't help it because he was not getting his passport despite giving flour sacks and money. Amalie, her daughter, gets the job of a kindergarten teacher in the town. She comes home every Saturday with two bags with her. One bag contains food items and the other bag is full of items made of glass. These glass items are presents given to her by the school children.

Amalie is in relationship with Dietmar. He has planned to join the army. He knows that Amalie's family is emigrating and also that Rudi is attracted towards Amalie. They watch a Russian movie for the last time. Here also Amalie is not able to find the mental peace and stability that she earnestly desires. The joiner advises Windisch to meet the gardener in connection with his passport. He tells him that Windisch will have to pay fifteen thousand lei for each passport. Windisch does as is told by the joiner. After a few days, the post woman tells them that the militiaman has thanked them for the flour and has called Amalie for hearing on Sunday. It is clear that he wants to exploit Amalie. Katharina tells him that she knows that he will not get far enough with his flour. The night watchman tells Windisch that the skinner's house is to be turned into a prayer house for the Wallachian Baptists. The Germans in Romania use the word 'Wallachian' as a term of abuse for the Romanians. The night watchman is also full of hatred for women and Jews. He says, "The Jews are the ruin of the world. Jews and women" (77). The prejudice of the night watchman is self-evident in his utterance. It's partly because these people themselves are being prejudiced against.

One morning, Windisch and his wife are selling the articles of their house to whosoever is interested in buying them. The gypsy girl takes the cooking-pots for twenty-five lei. She also takes Amalie's red dress and a teapot as alms. The milkmaid and her companion buy the bed, the bedding and other furniture in the house. A man with a small hat buys the television set. The post woman takes the curtains. The refrigerator is bought by the tractor man. Skinny Wilma, their neighbour, buys the hens and the carpet is bought by the tailor. Windisch gives some shirts, jackets and trousers to the night watchman as a present. A new miller, a Wallachian from a water mill, has arrived in the village. He has been sent by the mayor and is to live in the house. The

new miller was promised a furnished house but he gets an empty one as the furniture belongs to Windisch and he had sold all of it. Nevertheless, the new miller is happy because he likes the mill. The next summer they come to visit their native town. They find their house strange because now it has sloping red roofs. They meet the post woman. The night watchman comes to greet Windisch. He is wearing Windisch's shirt and jacket. The night watchman has married and has dropped his idea of emigrating from the country. They meet the tailor and Skinny Wilma. Both of them go to the church to pay homage. Skinny Wilma looks at Windisch's grey suit and says to the tailor, "He got that suit from the army. They're taking communion and haven't confessed" (113). The other people in the village are living their life as usual because they don't have the means to immigrate to another country.

Travelling on One Leg, originally *Reisende Auf Einem Bein* (1989) is Muller's fifth book that has been published in Berlin. The name Romania is not mentioned in the novel but it has been hinted that she has immigrated to West Germany to escape the political persecution that she had to face in an eastern bloc country. Similarly, neither of the characters is given a last name. The novel has the third person narrative and a highly subjective style.

There are soldiers in the villages and radar screens revolve in the sky. The villages are poor and everybody from children to elders eats fish in all the meals of the day. The soldiers of the other country go up and down on the high cliff. They are far away from their city lives. One evening when Irene is looking for this man, she sees a drunken man in front of the little bar by the railway tracks. He is completely inebriated and he leans his head against the chair, while the rock group plays its deafening music. He is Franz, a German citizen. His eyes are half-open and he looks open-mouthed to the sky. He speaks to the children around him as well as to himself in German. The children try to learn words of the other country's language. The band stops playing and leaves. Franz does not move from his place. Irene immigrates to Germany. She is called at the office of the Federal Intelligence Service. There she has to fill various kinds of forms and answer quite a lot of questions. They want to make it sure that she has emigrated from her country not for any wrong reason. Franz does not come to meet her. He always sends Stefan instead to take care of her. This brought Irene even more close to Stefan. Stefan knew Franz through his sister. He and Franz's sister were friends once. Irene gets an apartment in the city. It was an empty apartment with just a stove and a jar of pickle. Franz finally calls her. He tells her that he was busy at some work in the university and therefore couldn't come to meet her. He also

tells her that the university professor calls him a waverer because he is in the habit of procrastinating the paper that he is writing.

At one such place Irene meets Thomas. Stefan had introduced Thomas to her. Thomas is reticent and is very gloomy because his friend has left him. Thomas is gay but is not consistently gay. He is married to a woman previously and has a son with her. He owns a book store but gives it up and since then he has been out of work. A strange kind of relationship starts to grow between Thomas and Irene. They mostly talk over phone but one day Irene decides to go over to his place. Irene is short of money and has to subsist on whatever she gets from the German government. Whenever a new season begins, fashionable clothes swarm the shops. Irene wishes she has more bodies so that she is able to wear all the clothes in the store windows. After some days Irene lays in bed with Thomas. Though Thomas is gay, he does make exceptions sometimes. Gradually, a rift starts developing between Franz and Irene. He visits Irene but the passion is gone. Irene says to him:

I imagined, before I came here, I'd often imagine the distance between you and me from the other country. There had been many distances. A different one every day. And all of them were right. They were right even after I landed because Stefan was at the airport. They stopped being right only when I saw your face weeks later... We were two when we left. But I arrived alone. I constantly write postcards to you. Postcards filled with writing. And I was empty. (111-112)

Irene's love is divided between Franz and Thomas. Irene's neurotic state of mind does not let her have a stable relationship. One day both of them walk her home. At parting, one of them kisses Irene. Muller writes, "Not even after the long French kiss did Irene know Whether Thomas or Franz had kissed her" (139). Once Irene thought of writing a postcard to Franz. Muller writes, "Irene's hand was limp when she wanted to write Franz's address on the postcard. She wrote down Thomas's address" (145).

The *Fox was Ever the Hunter* (1992) tells the readers as to how life can be terrifying and full of betrayal in a totalitarian regime. The story is not linear but it is a collage of insightful images and profound stories. The story is interplay of four main characters Adina, Clara, Paul and Pavel. Adina and Clara are friends. Pavel is a married person who becomes Clara's lover but

works for the secret police and spies on her beloved secretly. Adina's apartment is broken into by the secret police a number of times. Each time they take away a piece of the fox fur hearth rug that Adina and her mother bought together. This gets on Adina's nerves and she becomes extremely disturbed when she thinks of the time when the final paw will be cut by the secret police. Adina's friend Abi is being interrogated by Pavel. This infuriates Adina who blames Clara that she has ditched her. She accuses Clara of sleeping with an enemy. But Clara helps her escape to the southern part of the country, where Adina lives a secret life with her former friend Paul. There, one day they hear commotion in the village and learn that Nicolae Ceausescu's oppressive regime has been overthrown.

This novel is one of Muller's difficult books and that's why it was translated much later, though it was published in 1992. Herta Muller writes for a community, which has lost its sense of identity and which feels left behind. This community in general can be found anywhere, wherever there is suppression, censorship and suffering. Giorgio Agamben talks about a community without presuppositions in the following words:

If instead of continuing to search for a proper identity in the already improper and senseless form of individuality, humans were to succeed in belonging to this impropriety as such, in making of the proper being-thus not an identity and an individual property but a singularity without identity...then they would for the first time enter into a community without presuppositions and without subjects, into a community without the incommunicable. (64)

The characters in the novel have been given surreal attributes, heightened metaphors have been used in the depiction of the totalitarian regime and psychological realities have been portrayed through physical detail. This raises the stature of this work and it ceases to be a mere matter-of-the-fact book that just depicts the events in the life of the author. The whole newspaper is rough to touch except the shining image of the dictator with his shining forelock. Muller writes, "The forelock shines. It peers into the country every day, and it sees. The black inside the dictator's eye stares out of the newspaper every day, peering into the country" (18). Even the newspapers are devoid of the freedom of speech. They have become the instruments of political propaganda in a dictatorial country. The city is practically divided into two parts. One part of it shows

poverty whereas the other part has posh houses with pointed rooftops. These are the quiet streets of power where directors, mayors, secret police officers and army officers live. Muller writes, “The quiet streets of power, where even the wind is afraid when it starts to blow. And when it blows it is afraid to eddy” (21). Mostly widows work as servants in these houses of power. Not only have their husbands died, their children also have left home. They live in cellars underneath the houses and are prone to bugs and mice. Adina has a colleague at the school who is the daughter of one such servants. She has got job at the school because her mother had requested the officer’s wife, where she is a servant. She tells Adina that the wives of the officers don’t trust their husbands as the officers often have illicit relationships.

The seamstress has woven a dress for Adina, which has trees woven in the upside-down direction. This dress with the falling trees is worn by Adina for many summers. As Adina is still growing, the dress becomes short after some years. She also goes to the barber shop every week because her hair grows very fast and she is not permitted to let the hair cover her ears. On the way to the barber shop, she passes by the display window that has stovepipes, watering cans and crosses. The tinsmith waves her inside and gives her different fruits in different months. Paul, a doctor, is Adina’s friend and is prone to heavy drinking. Adina tries to find some respite from her frustrated life in Paul but the liquor takes the better of him. Clara meets a married lawyer, Pavel in the market place. Both get attracted to each other. Pavel is married and has an eight-year-old daughter. Actually, Pavel is not a lawyer at the court. He works for the secret police and he interrogates Paul’s band member Abi in order to know the composer of the song that the band plays. Here, the grim reality of relations under a dictatorship is exposed, where one is not certain of the person whom one loves. Adina receives vulgar letters from Ilie, who is a soldier in the southern part of the country. Adina had a relationship with Ilie but later befriended Paul. Adina remembers when she went to meet her soldier friend. She found him dejected and depressed. Ilie had said to her, “You have it good. You can still feel fear, my head is dark, I haven’t had any dreams for a long time” (156). Ilie has faced so much fear that now he has stopped having nightmares and other dreams. He has attained a state of saturation as more suffering does not seem to affect him. He wanted Adina to come with him. This irked Ilie and he took to writing vulgar single-sentenced letters to Adina. Here also the Danube cuts this part from the rest of the country. But it flows crooked here. Here also, the distant shots are regularly heard by the villagers.

Adina remembers, when she was a child, her father brought her small apples when he came back from his duty at the slaughter house. She used to keep them out in the frost so that they became frozen. Then, in the morning she thawed them and ate them as they had turned soft and brown then. After a few days Paul sees Clara at the hospital near the ward where abortions are done. He tells Adina about it and Adina enquires about it from Clara. Clara admits that she has had an abortion. She tells Adina that she has managed to get abortion because Pavel knows a doctor. Otherwise, it could have been a very dangerous situation. Adina finds out that the man with whom Clara is having a relationship is in fact in the secret police. Clara however is confident that Pavel will not harm her. She says, "He gave me his word, he knows the only way I can love him is if nothing happens to you" (184). But, Adina shouts at Clara, breaks all her relations with her and does not let her inside her apartment. Clara realizes her mistake and wants to help Adina. Some days later, she writes on a piece of paper and passes the note through a crack in the door. The note reads: "people are being arrested...there are lists you have to hide...no one will look for you at my place" (200). Clara feels guilty that she has done wrong to Adina. She, therefore, wants to help her at any cost. This feeling of hers operates at the unconscious level.

One day early in the morning they hear voices coming from the village. Liviu comes running into the house, turns the key to the door and tells them to come into the living room. He is panting and his hands are shaking. He turns on the television and tells both of them that people have overthrown the dictatorship of Ceausescu. Adina cannot control herself. Her cheeks flush hot and she starts crying with a variety of emotions going around in her mind. The TV live cast shows that thousands of people have gathered in front of the Central Committee Building. They scream and shout and the dictator starts running away. Paul shouts in front of the TV screen, "He's dead, if he runs, he's dead" (221). The dictator has now become afraid. He is unable to handle skillfully the anger and opposition of the masses. Then, a helicopter hovers above the balcony of the Central Committee Building. Eventually, it gets smaller and smaller and finally disappears. Adina and Paul return to the city. They go to Abi's apartment but do not find him there. The apartment is unlocked and the key is in the door from the inside. The wardrobe is open and the soup in the pot on the stove has developed a layer of mould. It seems Abi has been forced to leave his apartment. Pavel has managed to escape the city. He is at Vienna and calls Clara to come right away to him. Clara has a passport and asks for Adina's advice regarding

going to Pavel. Adina tells her to leave the place in an indirect manner. She says, “I don’t know. You have no business here” (235).

The Land of Green Plums (1994) is set in Nicolae Ceausescu’s totalitarian Romania. It is perhaps her best-known work that was translated in 1996. The characters in this novel are based on real life authors to a large extent. Authors like Rolf Bossert (1952-86) and Roland Kirsch (1960-89) committed suicide either after immigrating to Germany or while waiting for the immigration process to complete. However, these suicides could have been staged by the Romanian authorities who allegedly killed such writers. It is the story of a poor girl, Lola, who has left the provinces to study Russian. It begins in the dormitory of a women’s university. Lola is essentially a village girl, who is not conversant with the city life. She has brutal sexual encounters while in the city. Finally, she commits suicide by hanging herself from a belt. To add insult to injury, she is posthumously excluded from the university. The novel is fraught with flashbacks and time shifts. Four young people who live in a totalitarian state pass through various vicissitudes of life in this novel. The Romanian police guards eat green plums with utmost greed. It is a symbol of the greed of Ceausescu’s regime that devours everything it can lay hands on. Green plums are not fit to be eaten and children are rebuked for eating them as they are somewhat poisonous. The policemen know every plum tree in the vicinity and loot plums from wherever they can get them. It makes them look foolish, childish and gluttonous. But, unmindful of such sentiments they continue with their work. The city, in fact the whole country, is lacking in consumer goods and the girls can only dream of whisper-thin nylon stockings. In reality they have to make-do with whatever they have. This novel is narrated by one of the roommates of Lola. She also comes under suspicion and ridicule from the other girls. This novel is a graphical description of the horrors and brutalities of Communist Romania. It is, however, not written in Romanian because it was written after 1987-the year in which Muller left Romania and immigrated to Germany. It is in Germany that her novels got published and acclaimed. In Romania, the communist government had censored much that had been written by Herta. Ceausescu, who wanted to mobilize Romanian nationalism, had started harassing the German minority in his country.

Merciless police persecution was experienced by the young author in the decades of 1970 and 1980 and this very repression and trauma has become the force that urges her to write novels in order to tell the whole world the brutalities of a communist form of government. Katrin Kohl

in his essay “Beyond Realism: Herta Muller’s Poetics” says, “Herta Muller’s writing is rooted in her life, and her works gain their force from the experience of resisting institutions intent on eliminating personal identity. Her reflections on the practice of writing and the role of literature return again and again to this source, providing an ongoing commentary on the biographically specific processes that have shaped her literary work” (16). She uses her mother tongue to express the profound alienation that she has faced in Romania. This novel has been translated superbly by Michael Hofmann, though it is quite natural that the significance of the work in the original language is somewhat obscured by any kind of translation. This book gives precise detail of the life in communist Romania. For that matter, by extension, it depicts life in any part of Eastern Europe during the totalitarian years. The major characters in the novel are Lola, Edgar, Kurt, Georg and the narrator of the story. They meet at a provincial college and destiny takes them on varied paths. This novel shuns any kind of regular plot. Readers are so engrossed in the lines and pages that they don’t think as to what will happen in the story sometime later. The captivating language and the poetic rendition of the matter-of-fact things capture our attention by themselves.

This novel also points to the fact that the German minorities try to preserve their culture through enforced traditional rules. But the people who immigrate to Germany suffer a shock when they reach there. They are not considered as Germans but Eastern Europeans. They have become cultural outcasts in the land for which they left their home country. In Romania plumsucker is not considered a good word. It connotes abuse, opportunism and sycophancy. The dictator is also termed a plumsucker in the novel. In communist Romania, you could be persecuted and branded as a dissident if you lacked even a wee bit passion for the collective future of communist Romania. If you wanted to maintain even a little bit more privacy than was granted by the regime, you could end up being persecuted by the police forever. Whole of the Romanian society is depicted in this novel. The life of peasants is full of hunger sprinkled with occasional police brutality. The industrial workers work in dangerous conditions and are indulged in making such articles as are wanted by nobody.

In the beginning of the novel, the story is being narrated by a character who is sitting with Edgar. The persons are sitting and staring at the pictures on the floor for a long time. Person in each picture is dead and, in each case, it is a suicide. Each of the living has to live in the country in abject fear. Even, if they have to fall in love they have to fear if it was the right person whom

they are falling in love with. Then, there is a flashback and the story moves to the character Lola. Her face indicates that she comes from a poor province because it is sunken. Although each province in the country is poor, the province from which Lola came is poorer than the rest. Then, the narrator talks about Lola's diary. In her diary Lola writes about a drought that devoured everything, except sheep, melons and mulberry trees (2). Lola has come from her village to the city to become somebody. She has come to the city for four years to study Russian. The entrance exam is easy and the seats are abundant. She gets admission in a school. She has to share her small cubical with six girls. The room has one window, one closet, six beds and a loudspeaker fitted in the ceiling. From the loudspeaker comes the voice of workers singing choruses, till night falls. There are forty such identical rooms in each dormitory. Lola has fewer dresses than the other girls. She wears all of theirs. The girls crave for nylon stockings because they have heavy stockings that come cheap all over the country. Then Lola thinks of her childhood when she was tied to a chair with the belts from her dresses. She was tied in this way by her mother because Lola did not want her nails to be cut. As her mother cuts her nails, Lola fears that her fingers would also be cut by the nail-clippers. She further thinks that then her mother would pick her cut fingers and throw them in the courtyard. This shows her imaginative state of mind as a child and the fear that is instilled in her mind. Lola has the least number of whisper-thin nylons. The few she has are patched together with nail polish at the ankles, thighs and calves. The narrator reads from Lola's diary that she had craving for white shirts. Lola also used to board a tram during night time. In the tram, she cut her nails and filed them. She looked for a man. She also went into the scruffy park at night time in search of men. She wore the whisper-thin nylons at that time.

Then, the story moves to the dormitory, where Lola changed the newspapers in the glass display case. Each newspaper had the speech of the dictator. When the old ones were changed, the new ones too had speeches by the dictator of the country. Then, the story again moves into flashback and Lola thinks about her father who used to hack away at the plants mercilessly. This action of his shows his guilty conscience at work. Lola writes in her diary, "Father knows something about life. Because father stashes his guilty conscience inside the damn stupid plants and then hacks them down" (14). The child Lola wishes that the plants could flee this merciless activity. She has natural kindness in her as a child, but the circumstances of her life make her callous. Her father was in the Hitler's SS. When Hitler's army lost the war, her father came back and had guilt in his mind for the people he had killed while he was in the army. He was fond of

drinking schnapps made from the darkest plums and sang songs for the Fuhrer when he became drunk. Just then, Lola starts to eat green plums. Her father admonishes her and says, "You can't eat green plums, their pits are still soft, and you'll swallow your death. No one can help you then-you just die. The raging fever will burn your heart up from the inside (15). Lola is still a child but is surprised how her father, who has made graveyards, loves her like crazy. But she wishes death and eats loads and loads of green plums when her father is not looking at her. The death wish Thanatos is clearly visible in her. The narrator again continues the story. She says that Lola brought tongues and kidneys of animals from the men with whom she had her nocturnal encounters. Then, one day Lola fried eggs on the hot iron and gave a bladeful to the narrator to taste. At the gym, Lola was not able to do exercise properly. This gave opportunity to the gym instructor to hold her tight at different places of her body. Lola did not feel embarrassed, rather she made herself heavy so that the gym instructor had to hold onto her even more tightly.

There were fleas all around the cubicle. Even, the cafeteria, the trams, the shops and the movie theatre were infested with fleas. Lola was very ambitious. She went to the department head quite often and was quite attached to the title. She also got herself attached to the Party and got her red book, which had her photograph on the first page. Party leaflets started piling beside Lola's bed and the girls started talking about her in whispers. Late in the afternoon, the same day, the narrator finds Lola's diary in her suitcase. It is clear that Lola had hid the diary among the narrator's nylons before taking the belt. The narrator takes the diary, boards a tram and starts reading the diary from the last page. Lola had written that she had a sexual encounter with the gym instructor at the gym. But she followed him to his house. Later the gym instructor complained against Lola to the department head. Lola wanted to make contacts with high-positioned men because she did not want her kids to live in poverty. On coming back, she put the notebook back in her suitcase, under the nylons. The next day, she locked the suitcase and took the key along with her. She knotted the key into the elastic of her underpants because there was a gym class right in the beginning. The story again moves into a childhood flashback where the narrator thinks that she has two grandmothers; one who sings and the other who prays. In fact, she has only one grandmother. The grandmother has stopped recognizing anyone in the house and is only concerned with her singing now. The narrator now comes in the present and admits that after Lola's death, she did not wear a belt with her dresses for two years. She wanted to talk

about Lola to her roommates but everybody was afraid of doing it. Therefore, she just kept on reminding herself what she had read in Lola's notebook.

Edgar gives the hazelnuts to his three friends but does not eat any himself. He gives the narrator the key to the summerhouse for the first time. The next day they are sitting in the bodega eating something. The narrator's father becomes seriously ill. His liver has got enlarged and damaged from excessive drinking. Some days later he dies. She puts everything that belonged to the father in his coffin. Although, she does not consider her father a good person, yet she does not want to insult him in his death. It snows the day his father dies. She says, "People say it snows only when a good person dies. That's not true" (65). Her singing grandmother, who has not recognized anyone for years, recognizes her son at death time. Some days later, Edgar again gives the narrator the key to the summer house. She goes to her seamstress. She talks to her about her family and her grandmother. She reveals to her seamstress that her grandmother started singing because she could not bear the trauma when their field was expropriated by the government after the war. She places the key to the summerhouse on the seamstress's windowsill. The three boys have told her that the seamstress is not reliable but she thinks that the key is quite safe there. She reassures the seamstress that the key is from her house at the village.

The three of them are interrogated by Captain Pjele regarding the poem. He has a dog whose name is also Pjele—a wolfhound. He has this poem written on a piece of paper. He crumples it up and stuffs the crumpled paper into Kurt's mouth. Kurt has to eat the paper and he gags as a result. His gagging excites the dog and he jumps upon Kurt twice and tears his trousers. Edgar is made to stand in a corner of the room without any kind of movement for full one hour. The dog sits in front of him and watches every movement. Even if Edgar moves a little bit or even takes a deep breath, the dog growls. Captain Pjele complains about his kidneys and tells them that they are very lucky to have him. Georg is also humiliated in the same way. He is told to lie on his belly, with his hands behind his back. All this time, the dog sniffs him and licks his hands. After this incident, Edgar gives the key of the summerhouse back to the owner. They divide the books, photographs and the notebooks equally among themselves. They decide to leave the dormitory. The narrator is the last one to leave the girls' dormitory.

Edgar shares his apartment with a gym instructor. Edgar is suspicious of the instructor as he noses around in Edgar's room. He has not made that place his proper home as all his clothes

are in the suitcase only. He is prepared to leave the place if conditions so warrant. Kurt works as an engineer in a slaughterhouse in a village not far away from the city. A dozen workers work under him and their task is to lay heating pipes in the slaughterhouse grounds. The narrator is again interrogated by Captain Pjele in a very humiliating way. She is called a whore and all the four are called bad seed by him. She writes letters to Edgar and Georg with a comma after greeting. Dear Edgar, and Dear Georg,. The comma means a life threat. She keeps her books and letters at the factory where she translates machine names and procedures that are in German into the language of the country. She takes her material to the seamstress and keeps it there till she can find a safe place for it. There she meets Tereza who also works at the same factory. The seamstress is famous as a fortune teller. People come to her to ask as to when luck would favour their escape. They pay a lot of money so that the seamstress can find the right luck for their escape through her cards.

The seamstress feels sorry for them because she can only tell and not change their fate. Kurt tells the narrator every week about the happenings at the slaughter house. He tells her how the workers drink warm blood of the animals that they slaughter and how they steal organ meats and brains. At night, the workers throw joints of beef or pork over the fence, where their relatives wait in their cars to collect those pieces. The corrupt regime has made every one corrupt because people are not able to see anything good happening in their lives. Kurt helps a convict who has escaped from the prison. The convict was hiding in the bushes and asked for some clothes. A while later, Kurt dropped a jacket and a pair of trousers in the bushes. The same night a body of a person is found who has drowned in the river. Kurt is overcome with fear suspecting that the body might be of the same person who had his clothes on. Tereza comes to meet the narrator in her office at the factory daily. Tereza is not inclined to join the party. Moreover, she has the choice of refusing the membership of the party because his father was a former official in the factory and had cast almost every monument in the city. Shamsodin Royanian and Omid Etemadi in their paper "The land of Green Plums; A Comedy of Terrors" conclude, "Herta Muller's narrative is dark and soulless which perfectly matches the subject matter she is tackling. The reader does not expect a big laugh from the work but she ably introduces shreds of humor to add comical tastes to her novel. Tereza's vulgarism during her short presence at the Presidium gives a fresh perspective to the discussion of death apathy in a totalitarian regime" (8). The indifference of characters like Tereza towards death is the result of a large number of deaths. The

frequency in which common people die while trying to escape the country has made death commonplace and trite. The narrator tells Tereza about her roommate Lola and her tragic suicide and feels mentally relieved in the process. Other women have become envious of Tereza because she has many items like sweaters and lipsticks, which are from countries like France, Turkey and Germany. One day the narrator keeps the parcel of books from the summer house in Tereza's office. The parcel has letters from Edgar and Georg too. She fears that Captain Pjele might come to her office.

The narrator has rented a room from Frau Margit, an old Hungarian woman from Pest. She has come to this city along with her sister because of war. She tells the narrator how Mojics, the Russian soldiers came to the city and went from house to house taking people's wristwatches. Many of them even wore a dozen wristwatches on each arm. Kurt comes to visit the narrator in Frau Margit's house. Frau does not like it and sulks and stops talking to the narrator for two days. Kurt has red hair and Margit is of the opinion that he is not a gentleman but a real Don Juan, especially because he has red hair. The narrator receives a letter from her mother. Her mother has written that the grandmother has stopped sleeping at nights. She even does not let the grandfather sleep. After sometime she comes to know that her grandmother has slipped back into her childhood. The grandmother runs away from home and keeps looking for her mother all through the village. She has now become a three-year-old girl. Then, the grandfather dies and the grandmother has to be kept in her room by the barber lest she should disrupt the funeral. The mother of the narrator comes to meet her in the city. She tells her that the grandmother has started staying outside in the fields even at night time and eats whatever grows in the wild. Some days later, the narrator goes to Tereza's house and meets her family. She learns that Tereza is suffering from a disease. A nut has started growing under her arm. Her disease and her incapability of being a mother has led her boyfriend leave her. Then, the four of them decide to leave the country. All of them are interrogated by captain Pjele time and again and are humiliated. The narrator is called a prostitute and all of them are accused of indulging in subversive activities.

The Appointment (1997) tells the story of a young woman who is employed as a worker in a clothing factory in totalitarian Romania. She is summoned by the secret police because she has been sewing notes into the linings of men's suits carrying the message 'marry me'. These suits are to be sent to Italy and she hopes that she can get out of the country with the help of a

recipient who perchance gets interested in the offer. She says, "At the meeting, which I was not allowed to attend, my notes were judged to be prostitution in the workplace. Lili told me Nelu had argued for treason, but had failed to convince them" (46). Her own colleague Nelu is responsible for her torture at the hands of the authorities. Human relations have touched a low in the regime. The memories and thoughts of the narrator are followed meticulously in the narrative. Her second husband Paul gives her some strength but his habit of excessive drinking makes matters all the more complicated for her. Her efforts to strike a mental balance in her life always get thwarted. On the way to the interrogation, the narrator thinks about several incidents in her life. She remembers her grandparents and their burial. She remembers her father who had an adulterous relationship. She also thinks about her second husband Paul and her arguments with him. She also remembers her friend Lilli who was killed while she was attempting to flee to Hungary. All these thoughts convey her fragmented state of mind. She somehow manages to hold on to her sanity. She along with other people learns to cope with the atrocities of the communist regime.

The plot opens with the protagonist being summoned to appear at the Securitate. She is called on Thursday at 10 a.m. sharp. She is being summoned more frequently and has to appear at 10 a.m. sharp on Tuesday, Saturday, Wednesday and Monday. She always takes a tram to reach her destination. The tram does not run on a fixed schedule. While in the Tram, she thinks about Major Albu who is to interrogate her. She is terrified that he might take her down to the cell below his office. At home also, she remains terrified but Paul, her husband, cannot judge her terror. She has been listening to the alarm clock since three in the morning ticking ten sharp, ten sharp, ten sharp. She says, "Ever since my first summons, I have begun to distinguish between life and fortune. When I go in for questioning, I have no choice but to leave my good fortune at home" (15). The narrator is in the process of resigning to the circumstances. It seems to her that no amount of luck is going to help her. Paul is a drunkard and is fond of drinking liquor made from plums. Both of them live in a small flat. Paul usually gets drunk by mid-afternoon and becomes worse in the evening. He says to the narrator, "Don't fret, I'm not drinking out of desperation. I drink because I like it" (10). The reality is that his desperation is the very thing that makes him drink. Paul is her second husband. Her first husband was in military service. She did not leave him for another man. She left him because she wanted to leave him. The love between the two had become stale. At the interrogation, Major Albu lifts her

hand by the finger tips and squeezes her nails so hard that she is about to scream. He then taunts her by bringing up her grandmother in the conversation. He knows everything about her grandmother. Albu is wearing a perfume that the narrator's father-in-law used to wear.

The narrator sits on the table and rubs her fingers on her skirt to wipe off the saliva and to bring the feeling back into them. Albu has pressed her fingers so hard that they have turned blue. She and Paul used to rehearse the kiss that Albu places at her hand at every meaning. She rehearsed so that she could crook her knuckles in such a way that they could block Albu's gums and keep him from speaking. She sits at a small table and answers calmly every question asked by Major Albu. From within, though, she is nervous and afraid. Muller's language captures the narrator's nervousness and fear in every detail. Bettina Brandt and Valentina Glazar in their book *Herta Muller: Politics and Aesthetics* write:

The devil's circle is that of writing and all it implies in a repressive dictatorship, where independent expression tends to land its author in a captain's office, undergoing psychological and physical torture—if not death. But there is a larger devil's circle, which itself is a function of the circulation of metonyms as writing. Muller writes because speech is incapable of expressing what writing does. (17)

The excesses of dictatorship are too crude to be told in plain words. Herta Muller has devised a specialised language, which is full of metaphors for excruciating bodily experiences. Albu asks the same thing at least three times in order to confuse her. She has to answer the same thing again and again. Sometimes, Albu asks short questions. It means that he wants straight answers but these short questions often prove to be difficult. She and Paul live in a flat that is on the seventh floor and they cannot see what exactly is going down below. During summer both of them are suspicious of a man who walks under their building daily at 10 to eight. One day, Paul can't stand it any longer and goes downstairs to follow the man. Such things also do not escape the notice of Major Albu. He gets all their activities spied. Albu has a grandson who is teething. He loves his grandson so much that he keeps the pencils that are chewed by him on his table. But he never thinks about the inhuman way, in which he always interrogates the narrator.

The narrator had a friend at the factory named Lilli who always stops her from trying too many dresses, which are bound for the west. Lilli is extraordinarily beautiful and the narrator is a

little bit envious of her too. Nelu an employee at the factory is a symbol of exploitation that comes from within. He is also being exploited and suppressed by the totalitarian government but he chooses to inform on the narrator. She puts a note, with *tiaspetto* i.e., marry me written on it, in the back pockets of white linen suits. She signs these notes with her name and address. These linen suits are being packed for Italy and she thinks of marrying the first Italian who responds to her. This act of her is reported to the authorities by Nelu. It is considered an act of prostitution at the workplace. After about 3 months, Nelu fabricates some notes and puts them in the trousers that are to be shipped to Sweden. These notes are similar to the previous notes that were put in the trousers by the narrator. These notes read 'Best wishes from the dictatorship'. It was Nelu's mischief and she gets fired because of it.

Herta Muller *The Hunger Angel* portrays the fate of Transylvanian Saxons through a young person in the Russian Gulags, Romania. The title comes from a compound word *Hungerengel*, which describes the pervasive hunger that dominates prison experience. In fact, the fierce hunger becomes an angel that keeps people alive in this terrible ordeal. Leo says, "What can be said about chronic hunger. Perhaps that there's a hunger that can make you sick with hunger. That it comes in addition to the hunger you already feel. That there is a hunger which is always new, which grows insatiably, which pounces on the never-ending old hunger that already took such effort to tame" (17). The time period portrayed is the end of WW II and this novel talks about the excruciating experience of the young person in a totalitarian state that is to stay with him for the rest of life. This novel is based on the harrowing tale told by the poet Oskar Pastior and other such survivors of the Gulag. Oskar was imprisoned in the Gulags from January 1945 to January 1950. This novel deals with the plight of Romanian-German minority, while in labour camps in the Soviet Union. A poet named Oskar Pastior was initially Muller's collaborator in writing this novel. He had spent 5 years in a Russian labour camp. The protagonist Leo is fashioned on Oskar's experiences. Unfortunately, Oskar died while the book was still in its initial phase. Herta did not let the project fail and went on to write the book all by herself. This book is a tribute to Oskar, who through his experiences laid bare before Herta the inhuman treatment that was meted out to Romanian Germans.

This is not just about the lives of Romanian-German people who had to work as forced labour in the cold prison camps ordered by Stalin but it's about the cold and the warmth of the human emotions. In the labour camps, the prisoners reach the zero point of existence. Novelists

like Imre Kertsz and Jorge Semprun also wrote about concentration camps and they wrote from their own personal standpoint. Herta Muller never went to such a camp herself but the language she has used shows the horrors of starvation very vividly. Matter for this novel has also been taken from the author's mother who was also deported to these forced soviet labour camps. But her account was not much helpful to Herta because she spoke in puzzling and obscure sentences. Perhaps, this was what life taught her mother at the camp. The story-telling that is very basic to humans was replaced by such cryptic sentences. Still, these sentences are fraught with agony, frustration, repressed thoughts and despair that was the fate of people working in such camps. Such sentences sounded like science facts and were stolid like math theorems.

This novel is also an attempt to go behind such sentences so that the change that is produced in human nature by piercing circumstances can be highlighted. This habit of using pre-punched phrases had become second nature of almost all the Gulag survivors that Herta Muller surveyed. No one of them was capable of giving a vivid portrayal of life at the prison camps. It was only her friend and colleague Oskar Pastior who was vocal and informative in this regard. He was deported to Ukraine when he was just 17 years of age and spent 5 long and agonizing years there. Both of them planned to write the book together but unfortunately Oskar died in 2006. Muller had to complete this work alone but she did it in a way as to give voice to the memories that Oskar had shared with her. Therefore, she chooses the first-person narrative and gives the character the name Leo Auberg, who speaks in the first-person singular mode. Herta Muller's mother speaks through her and all the secrecies and mysteries are unravelled that are hidden in her mother's cryptic sentences.

The book speaks about the types of hunger that one suffers in addition to just feeling it. The hunger is called an angel because it has attained omnipresence as it is present in everybody. The hunger is also portrayed as an angel who guards all the occupants of the camp individually. Hunger is the evil spirit that adds grass and weeds to the Lord's Supper. It seems hunger has many eyes but just one mouth. The hunger also has attained many different forms. There is the hunger of stomach, the hunger of bugs, and the hunger of homesickness. The inhabitants, especially Leo make it a point that the hunger is not able to win. The hunger angel gives survival wisdom to everybody. The cold also attains many forms. There is the cold of ice nails in early winter rains, the cold at day break, the cold that makes the flaps freeze while at work in wooden shoes, the cold when people wait at appeals, the cold of the heart that has learnt to speak short

and obscure sentences and has forgotten the art of storytelling. The cold with which the eyes of the dead stare at people and the cold stares of the corpses, which are disposed of easily by chopping them into small portions so that they can be buried under the snow easily.

The language may sometimes seem too lyrical and too cluttered but the horrors of such camps are laid bare before us in every detail. Muller brings before our eyes, in a very artistic language, even the smallest belongings that the prisoners have in their cells. The reading is oppressive sometimes but her admirable visual language arouses pity for the victims in the hearts of the readers. The plot begins with the protagonist Leopold Auberg packing things for a journey. It is not a journey for pleasure. Rather, he is being shipped off to some place in Russia in the dead of winter. This journey is in fact a psychic journey of the protagonist. His entire psyche lays bare before us as he embarks on this journey. The time is January 1945 and the Second World War is still on. Everyone is keen on giving something to him that can be of some use. His father, grandfather, uncle Edwin, neighbour Herr Carp and aunt Fini give him their things. The toilet kit and the burgundy silk scarf only belong to him. Recently, homosexual tendencies have started erupting in him. He says, "Something had just happened to me. Something forbidden. Something strange, filthy, shameless and beautiful" (2). He has his first sexual encounter in the Adler Park. He vowed to never come in the park again because he didn't want to hurt his mother, who would have strongly objected to this kind of relationship. But he is not able to stop himself and frequently goes to the park for such kind of sexual encounters. His Id overpowers the ego despite his best efforts.

During autumn, the trees shed their leaves and these people move to the Neptune Baths. Here, he meets a Romanian twice his age every week. They use secret names for each other and stagger their arrivals so that they are not noted by anybody. This activity is illegal and can land him into prison. Some persons are caught, interrogated brutally and then sent to prison for 5 years. After that, they are sent to a penal colony from where almost nobody comes back. Leo says, "I know that almost nobody came back from there. The ones who did were walking corpses-old before their time and broken, of no use for any love in the world" (3). Leo knows that he is committing a wrong deed. But, the Id in him is able to overpower his ego and he continues with his illegal and immoral activity. The circumstances of his life are also responsible for this state of mind in him. Two policemen, a Romanian and a Russian go from house to house carrying a list that had the name of those persons who had to spend the next five years of their

lives in camps in Russia. Leo and his family improvise while packing things for him. A gramophone is made into a suitcase and Leo packs different things in it including four books. The two policemen told to come at midnight for him but come 3 hours late at three in the morning. It is 15th of January, 1945 and the temperature is minus 15 degree Celsius. When he was about to leave, his grandmother says, “I know you’ll come back” (8). Her grandmother is hopeful and has some kind of prophetic vision also as Leo is really able to survive the brutalities of the labour camp.

He is transported in a canvas-topped truck to an exhibition hall, which has been made the assembly camp. Vehicles arrive throughout the night from the nearby villages as well as the town and unload people who are to be sent to labour camps. By morning, there are about 500 people crammed inside the assembly hall. He says, “I sat like a spectator in the middle of all the legs and luggage” (9). Then they are transported in cattle cars to the station and from there the journey continues by train. The train moves for 12 to 14 days. The journey is very slow because the train stops for hours without moving. Nobody knows where they are heading to. People eat, drink and even flirt. Leo says, “Everyone was tipsy: some from drink, others from uncertainty. Or both” (11). The policemen accompanying them throw a half goat in the cattle car as their food. The goat is skinned, frozen and stiff. It looks like wood for burning. People in the train car break the carcass of goat into pieces and put it on fire. By and by, familiarity between people increases and they all feel one being. The cramped space has made them lose the traits that makes one distinct. Till now, they are still on the Romanian soil.

The kapo, Tur Prikulitsch, holds long lists having written on them the numbers of inmates. He calls out numbers while his chest wobbles like a rooster’s. Tur is not a Russian but he belongs to the Russians. He is interned along with them but is now the adjutant of the camp administration. Tur is representative of all those Germans who are on the side of the oppressors because they can’t dare to oppose the might of the invading Russians. Such people want to lead a life of comfort even if they have to betray and torture their fellow beings. Tur never works but rules the inmates and therefore he is always alert and disparaging. Bea Zakel is his mistress. He can speak Russian as well as German and translates the Russian commands to German. He even adds his own commands in German. The inmates are assigned various jobs like rubble removal and transport, construction, coal transport, coke battery, slag cellar, garage, and sand transport. Leo says, “Everything depended on what he wrote in that column. Whether we would end up

tired, dog tired, or dead tired. Whether we would have time and energy to go door-to-door after work. Whether we'd be able to rummage around in the kitchen waste behind the mess hall unnoticed" (22). The unbridled power that the authorities have at the camp make them rule over the inmates with impunity. They divide the duties arbitrarily without any concern for the health of the inmates. One of the eight brigades consists of women. They are called lime women. They have to haul the wagon with lumps of lime up the steep hill and then down to the edge of the construction site to the slaking pit. The wagon has a big trapezoidal wooden box that has wheels. Five women are harnessed on each side of the shaft with leather straps that run around their shoulders and hips. A guard always moves alongside to see that everything goes all right because it is an extremely strenuous job. Trudi Pelikan is one of them. She is very weak and therefore is harnessed at the rearmost position. She falls down because some alderflies enter her mouth. The wagon rolls over her toes.

Leo has only sugar and salt as valuables. He saves a little piece of bread from his mouth and keeps it under his pillow as a treasure for those times when hunger would cross the limits of patience. After work Leo goes for begging in the small Russian village. Other inmates also beg and Leo wishes that he should not run into another beggar from the camp. Everyone begs with coal. Towards the end of October, it becomes terribly cold. The guard and the site inspector give them quotas and go to their warm rooms. It is the first time when they work without the fear of shouted orders. Irma Pfeifer falls into the mortar pit and dies. She is declared a saboteur by the supervisor and her body is buried the same evening. Actually, she slipped while she was carrying a sack of cement in front of her. But nobody dares to oppose the supervisor's interpretation that she has committed suicide. Then, two heavily wrapped Russians throw shovels at their feet. Leo thinks they are to dig their own graves. But, then Shishtvanyonov orders them to dig holes for trees. They try to obey the command but the ground is frozen and too much hard. They can only dig knuckle deep after hours of labour and are then told to go back. He holds the hunger angel responsible for the causal principle of hunger and equates one shovel load to one gram bread. He feels as if the hunger angel set his breath to swinging back and forth. He says, "The breath swing is a delirium –and what a delirium" (77). To his mind, the hunger angel is disgustingly personal and is never absent. This reflects Leo's tortured state of mind. He is not able to banish hunger from his mind no matter what way he tries.

Each inmate is given ration for the whole day in the morning. The ration is bread, which is given to inmates according to the labour they put in the whole day. The group doing the heaviest labour is given 1000 grams bread. Normal labour means 800 grams and light labour like moving waste from the latrines earns 600 grams of bread. Leo comes in the 800-gram category. In the morning, all the inmates are given cabbage soup. People struggle with themselves so that they can save some bread for the evening because there is no lunch. People also struggle with themselves when they go to check in the barracks if the saved bread is under their pillow. They struggle as not to eat the saved bread then and there but to keep it saved till the evening. If Leo, cannot make up his mind to save bread for the evening, he fills his spoon only halfway and slurp deeply. He has also learned to swallow a little spit after every spoonful of soup. Leo says, “The hunger angel said: Spit makes the soup longer, and going to bed early makes the hunger shorter” (101). Leo, like other inmates has devised ways to deal with the endless hunger they have to face each day. But he wakes up constantly because of swollen and pulsing throat. The next day, after the anthem, the same struggle continues.

Leo never reads books that he has brought to the camp. He hides the books under some bricks behind the barracks because paper is strictly forbidden in the labour camp. Later, he auctions his books for one measure of salt, one measure of sugar, a tin comb, corn flour, lard and millet. Once, Leo gets a pass from Tur Prikulitsch on Bea Zakel’s recommendation for going to the market. Here, he wants to barter something for food or salt. At the market, he finds a crumpled banknote amounting to 10 rubles. It is a fortune for him. He cannot control himself and stuffs his stomach with corn-flour cakes, Russian pancakes, two pieces of sunflower-see cake, a canful of thick sour milk and two cups of red raspberry water and prunes. This overeating leads to stomach ache and giddiness and finally he throws up all that he has eaten. His eyes are filled with tears as he vomits the expensive food that he has eaten. As time progresses the inmates are allowed to dance outside in summer. During the last year they are even paid money for the labour that they put in. The release of psychic pressure that they had been subjected to all these years is too much for them. They just cannot stop themselves. They buy different things from the market and eat a lot. Eatables like dried prunes, Russian pancakes, fish, bacon, cheese, corn-flour cakes and oily sunflower halva renourishes them quickly and they become fat and plump like a sponge. They even buy fashionable clothes and other such items. They even go to the cinema which shows films from Russia, America and requisitioned German films.

Leo comes home from camp at the beginning of January 1950. His grandfather is dead and grandmother has started playing crossword puzzles. His mother keeps herself busy knitting woolen socks for her second son, Robert. He keeps light on all night because he feels afraid of the dark without the old barrack light. Nobody asks him about his life in the camp and he is secretly offended by this also. He says, "I knew they'd been more frightened than surprised when I came back-there had been relief but no joy. By staying alive I had betrayed their mourning" (260). Leo's parents also have resigned to their circumstances. They have had a new baby because all their hopes of their son coming alive had died with the passage of time. Towards the end of January, his uncle Edwin, who works in a crate factory, introduces Leo to his boss. Leo gets a job in the crate factory but is not happy with his life. He is so saddened by life that sometimes he thinks of squeezing Robert's neck. He receives a letter from the barber Oswald Enyeter who has migrated to Vienna. Oswald discloses that somebody has killed Tur Prikulitsch by splitting his forehead down the middle with an axe.

He is not even happy with his job. He does it just in a matter-of-fact way. He roams through the town and he makes it a point to reach home when everybody else has finished eating. He does not want others to see him eating because he has forgotten to eat politely. He has forgotten how long to chew and when to swallow because he learned at the camp how to make food last and then to gobble it down. He even avoids Trudi Pelikan, who also lives in the same town, though secretly he wants to embrace her and wants to tell her that he agreed with her that they should act as if they don't know each another. He starts writing his experience at the labour camp in lined notebooks. The foreword that he starts to write expands into three notebooks in a few weeks. He writes each and every detail in it. He scratches out foreword and writes afterword above it. Afterwards, he hides his three notebooks under his bed in his new wooden trunk. Leo works at the crate factory for one whole year. He is an expert in his job and can nail 800 nails per hour into the crates. The next year Leo gets enrolled in a night class on concrete manufacture and does the job of a concrete expert during the day at a construction site. In the late summer of the second year Leo again has a sexual encounter with a man nick named Titi. The following winter he again engages in homosexual encounters at the Neptune Baths. Sometime later he meets Emma and marries her after four months. Emma's father is on death bed and so they move in with Emma's parents. After about six months, they move to the capital Bucharest. Here they own a small apartment on the fifth floor. A park is nearby and Leo cannot resist his temptation and

takes a shortcut to go to the park. But here he is afraid that he may get caught. So, he starts visiting a park which is far away from their apartment and takes the name The Piano. According to Freud, human personality is a result of conflict between the innermost desires and the constraints imposed by the social norms. These two conflicting forces define Leo's personality. His sexual drive wins and he decides to leave his wife to satisfy his innermost cravings.

By this time police also becomes very active and starts arresting homosexuals. Fearing that he might also be caught, Leo moves to Austria. From there, he writes a postcard to Emma that he will not be coming back. Their marriage has lasted 11 years. Emma remarries sometime later. Towards the end of the novel, Leo is an old man. Still, he, the Piano, searches for his customers, though age has ransacked him and he is of not much interest to most of the men. This shows that Leo's conflict with evil does not seem to bring any kind of spiritual relief in him. In fact, this traumatic experience in his life coupled with his family's indifference towards him, leads to a loss of self for him. He becomes a broken person who is torn asunder in body and soul. He could have led a good life after he was able to survive the horrors of the labour camp but he chooses a life of frivolous homosexuality over a productive and purposeful family life. This shows his self-destructive behavior that has made him a shattered person who does not want to commit himself to any serious relationship. The characters in this novel have become the victims of the dictatorial dispensation of Romania. They have become dehumanized and their lives have been traumatized.

Herta Muller's novels have been praised far and wide. Her works have seized the attention and admiration of critics and scholars alike. Lyn Marven in his essay *Life and Literature: Autobiography, Referentiality, and Intertextuality in Herta Müller's Work* analyzes the autobiographical element in Muller's work:

Muller often appears to deal with memories first through fiction and only later reveals biographical details in interviews and essays. The reiteration marks these as traumatic, recurring images, and one might view this trajectory as an illustration of the working of trauma into a narrative. But yet it is those traumatic events that are the political imperative behind her writing, as well as its source. The imbrication of life and writing in Muller's case is, moreover, intimately linked to the traumas under the Ceausescu regime. (209).

Her works have contributed a lot to literature as her works study in meticulous detail the political, ideological, social and cultural ramifications of life in the Totalitarian Romania. Trauma is at the base of whatever viewpoint she espouses in her narrative. Her narrative strength is exceptional and she has used incidents from her life to impart verisimilitude to her writing. She has given a unique dimension to her storytelling technique by using silence as a potent means of personifying phenomena. She has successfully used silence as a central reference point to depict fear, guilt, suppression, suffering and trauma in her characters. In her works she has tried to merge history and fiction. Herta Muller had herself been the victim of totalitarianism when she lived in Romania. Totalitarianism was a historical reality for the people of Romania from 1947 to 1989. Herta Muller escaped this barbaric reality in 1987 but continued to write about her harrowing and distressing experiences after immigrating to West Germany. The harsh realities of a totalitarian regime have been successfully brought forward by her through her characters. The characters have been shaped by her own experiences and the experiences of her family members and acquaintances. She has exposed the evil that is inherent in humans through her narrative style. The totalitarian regime becomes an embodiment of evil in her novels. Side by side her novels also depict grit, determination, purpose and the striving for good through the characters. The ideology and politics of the totalitarian governments, which create a rift between the majority and the minorities, have been exposed in her novels. The worries, conflicts, anxieties and psychological problems of her characters find a vivid portrayal in her story-telling method. The literary intensity and complexity of her works have led scholars to explore her works from varied dimensions.

CHAPTER III

Exploring the Problem of Mourning and Uncanny

Sigmund Freud wrote a paper *Mourning and Melancholia* in 1915, which he published in 1917. In this paper he proposed new ways in which the mind works and grows. He also offered a consistent theory that attempted to explain the origin and progression of melancholic states in humans. The object relations theory that is prevalent today has its origin in this essay by Sigmund Freud. Through this paper, Freud was able to integrate his clinical and theoretical findings. Both Mourning and melancholia are different responses to loss. In mourning, grieving for the loss happens in the conscious mind. Whereas, in melancholia, grieving happens at the unconscious level and the person is not able to fully comprehend his loss. Mourning is healthy and is a normal way of lamenting a loss. Melancholia is considered to be pathological. Mourning ends in a kind of acceptance of the reality of life and the mourner manages to participate in the world around. It's not that the world is the same for the mourner before he experiences the loss. The world surely has changed for the mourner but he tries to find and create meaning in this changed world. The person finally understands that his love object is gone and he that he has to replace or move away from something that is gone forever.

In melancholia, a person feels his pain internally. He feels the pain deeply but the significance of the loss is not obvious or evident to him. In melancholia, the loss is too much for the griever and it gets moved to the unconscious of the griever. As a result, the conscious mind is not able to process the loss. When, the conscious mind is unable to detect and process the loss, it gets directed towards the self. The person might think of a similar situation that happened in his childhood and he was rebuked and shamed by everybody for that. Thus, he does not verbalize his feeling this time also for the fear that he might be considered worthless and a failure. Such a person feels shame and hollowness and starts to think as if the loss is his own fault. This feeling of being guilty becomes a part of the person's unconscious. Such a situation is pathological and the person is not able to live his life in a healthy manner. People who live in subjugating and excruciating circumstances often fall prey to melancholia, where they continue to feel listlessness, indifference and guilt throughout their lives.

In 1919, Freud wrote his paper titled *The Uncanny*. Freud was much perplexed by the phenomenon of uncanny. The analysis of this concept prompted Freud to refine his views and it

became instrumental in pushing Freud towards his later views. He, in this paper links the concept of uncanny to compulsive repetition as well as to trauma and infantile anxiety. Uncanny is not a strange or an alien concept. In it, the familiar things of the mind become repressed and hence seem to be alien to us. Uncanny is a very subjective experience and is based on our own experiences. But it seems alien to us and thus haunts us time and again. Freud based this paper on everyday experiences and tried to explain as to why we feel certain things as stressful, worrying, repulsive and frightening. Freud's concept of Uncanny deals with the return of the repressed and our confirmation of what can be called the surmounted primitive beliefs. All of us inherit certain beliefs that deal with the animistic and magical phenomena. These beliefs belong to our individual as well as the collective past. We, even as adult human beings, have not fully surmounted these beliefs. So, whenever we come face to face with something in life, which confirms a surmounted primitive belief, we experience uncanny. At such a juncture, it's very difficult to make out the difference between reality and fiction. An analysis of the uncanniness of our life is necessary in order to decipher neurosis and various other mental illnesses.

In the novel *The Passport* various characters like Windisch, Skinner, Katharina, Amalie, Joiner and the night watchman lead miserable lives. They feel that their lives have lost meaning while living in Totalitarian Romania. The main character Windisch is desperate to leave Romania and move to Germany. The fact that he has not been able to get his passport for more than two years now has developed mourning in him. This mourning is on the verge of becoming a melancholic condition as Windisch indulges in acute self-criticism at times. He feels stifled in the present country and his love for Germany does not lead him live a normal life. The protagonist Windisch always cycles along the road to the flour mill. He passes in front of the war memorial and then by the poplar trees. He counts years and days as he cycles along the path. In the evening when he locks the mill, he again counts the years and days. He is counting time because he wants to emigrate from the country and has applied for a passport. Muller portrays the fractured psyche of the protagonist:

Every morning, as he cycles alone along the road to the mill, Windisch counts the day. In front of the war memorial, he counts the years. By the first poplar tree beyond it, where he always hits the same pot hole, he counts the days. And in the evening, when Windisch locks up the mill, he counts the years and the days once again.....Every day when

Windisch is jolted by the pothole, he thinks, “The end is here.” Since Windisch made the decision to emigrate, he sees the end everywhere in the village. (1-2)

The loss of his ideal of liberty has made Windisch a mournful character. He belongs to the German minority and therefore commands no respect in the Romanian totalitarian regime. His self-respect has taken a huge blow and he has started feeling guilty for what is happening to him and his family.

One night, Windisch goes to the mill to take a sack of flour. He awakens the night watchman, Konrad. The night watchman is a soldier who has been put on guard duty. He knows that Windisch takes sacks of flour for the mayor and that he frequently bribes the mayor for his passport. Windisch is greatly worried. He suspects, “My daughter, my Amalie is no longer a virgin either...I can’t look her in the eye anymore. There’s a shadow in her eyes” (6). The thought that he will finally have to prostitute her daughter torments Windisch day and night. His psyche has fixed itself on this very thought. This fixation has become a source of mourning for Windisch. Windisch had been a prisoner of war in Russia. He loved Barbara but she died in Russia. Windisch’s wife Katharina also has returned from Russia. There, she wanted to marry Joseph. Unfortunately, Joseph also died in the war. Both of them have held to life in spite of losing their loved ones. They have tied their life to each other, having passed through depression and mourning. Katharina had been in a labour camp at Russia for five years. Her head was shaved and she worked in a coal mine. She slept in a hut with iron beds. She gradually sold her winter coat, her woolen blanket and other belongings for bread as she was unable to bear the pungent hunger. The third year she had nothing to sell. She slept with a cook for some hot and sweet potatoes. The cook died that year. The next year Katharina slept with a doctor. He gave her a white slip declaring that she was ill. She was exempt from mine work for three days. The next winter, the doctor also died. Katharina went into another man’s iron bed. He was a gravedigger. He gave her meat from the funeral meals in the village. In the fifth year the gravedigger died. She put on his coat and crawled through the fence along the snow. She went to an old Russian woman in the village. She stayed with her and milked her goats. In this way, she continually tries to postpone her suffering but the suffering has become a part and parcel of her life. The mourning for her previous days never leaves her, until she is able to move out of the labour camp.

Skinner takes pride in that he belongs to the Swabian community. He says, “The worst Swabian woman, is still worth more than the best German woman from there” (40). This is evidence to the fact that despite immigrating to Munich, he is still attached to his roots. His mourning for his own native place has become a subconscious reality for him. His psyche has created a defence mechanism for him. Through this defence mechanism, he subconsciously tries to hide his sorrow by taking pride in the thought that the women of his native place are much better than the women of Munich. Windisch does not like the German society as reported to him by the skinner, who has already immigrated to Germany. But, Windisch still wants to immigrate to Germany to escape the mourning, repression and trauma that he has to face in the totalitarian Romania. His ideals of a free and respectable life cannot be met in totalitarian Romania. The skinner says, “Women there follow the latest fashions. They would prefer to walk naked on the street if they could. The skinner says, even school children read magazines full of naked women” (77). Skinner also feels subjugated in Romania but something deep within him does not want to shun the love for the country of his birth. He is critical of the German society because his subconscious mind still loves the place where he was born. The skinner also wrote that he felt homesick for Romania while in Germany. Windisch says, “One thing is hard, says the skinner in his letter. An illness we all know from the war. Homesickness” (80). Thus, we see that the prime desire of all these people is hidden deep within them. This desire is the love for their motherland, no matter how difficult their life has become there. Yet, the desire for respect, status and freedom, which is very basic to humans, is the driving force behind their decision to immigrate to Germany. It’s their Id that keeps on fighting with their ego.

One day, Amalie gets ready to go to the militiaman for hearing. Herta Muller depicts Amalie appearance and her father’s agony in the following words:

Amalie is standing in front of the mirror. Her slip is pink. White lace points show under Amalie’s navel. Windisch sees the skin above Amalie’s knee through the holes in the lace. There are fine hairs on Amalie’s knee. Her knee is white and round. Windisch sees Amalie’s knee in the mirror yet again. He sees the holes in the lace run into one another. Windisch’s wife’s eyes are in the mirror. The tips of Windisch’s eyelashes are beating fast, driving into his temples. A red vein swells in the corner of Windisch’s eye. (81)

This moment is worse than death for both Amalie and Windisch. Parents are witnessing in detail as to how their daughter is getting ready to be prostituted. Such anguish, torture and Trauma is making Windisch insane. He is unable to bear the weight of his existence. His self-respect has got torn into myriad pieces and melancholia has started overpowering him. After some time, Amalie sprays two large clouds of perfume under her armpits. She dabs mascara on her eye shadow with her finger tip. Her mother says, “Not too much, otherwise people will talk” (82). Her mother, Katharina, had to prostitute herself at the Russian labour camp in order to escape the torturous cold. But she is also weeping deep inside her heart and wants that the matter should remain hushed. Amalie wears white sandals and keeps a strip of pills in her bag. Her mother is not able to understand why Amalie has pills with her when she was not ill. Amalie just said, “I take it just in case” (83). These pills are birth control pills, but Amalie’s illiterate mother is not able to grasp the function of the pills. On hearing about the pills this, Windisch presses his hand against his forehead and leaves the room. His perturbed state of mind is self-evident. His mourning is on the verge of becoming melancholia as he indulges in self-criticism. It seems that he will fall into a pathological state. But somehow, he does not lose his mental balance.

Even religion is used as a crushing tool in the novel. Religion is to guide and enlighten people. But the church gates are always locked and people have nowhere to go to-not even to God. People are poor and they have nothing to offer the priest except their bodies-which the priest accepts with satisfaction and aplomb. This speaks volumes about the level of morality in such a subjugating and corrupt dispensation. Windisch says, “I wanted to go into the church and pray. The church was locked. I thought that was a bad sign. Saint Anthony is on the other side of the door. His thick book is brown. It’s like a passport.” (58). The passport has become a veritable love-object for Windisch. It is visible to him even in the church. Radka Denemarkova, the Czech writer and translator has showered praise on Muller in the following words, “Her book goes down like a bitter pill. She saturates her prose with lyrical images. She steers clear of the well-trodden path...Herta Muller’s books expose human beings, strip them down to the bone, showing terror with a smile on its face, surrounded by preserving jars, hairdressers, meetings, suicides, blooming orchards, dilapidated parks and ubiquitous blood-guzzling.” (“On Translating Herta Muller”). The psyche of the protagonist, Windisch, is explored in minute detail and his moroseness in life saddens many a reader. Windisch takes the sack to the mayor’s house and keeps it under the roof. He does not knock at his window. A long time back the mayor had said,

“Why do you still knock? Put the flour in the yard. The gate is open...Another five deliveries, Windisch, then the money at new year, and at Easter you’ll have your passport” (12-13). The corruption of the totalitarian regime and Windisch’s desperation is self-evident. But, Windisch has delivered flour twelve times and has paid ten thousand lei since then. Easter also has long been past. The frustration and mourning of Windisch has reached to the point of breaking him. The totalitarian regimes want to get hold of the psychology of the people. This method is more effective than physical suppression of people as it changes the thinking process of the masses. Once the thoughts are changed any opposition to the regime becomes a rarity that can be controlled easily.

It has been explored that in the novel *The Passport*, people have become hard hearted and their sensibilities have degraded. They suffer from mourning and melancholia. They find joy when somebody else falls in danger because the feeling of mutual trust and respect has altogether diminished from the society. People are solely judged on the basis of their economic status. The protagonist has developed fractured psyche and mourns his condition throughout the novel. His mourning borders on melancholia. He experiences acute self-criticism, extreme loss of self-respect and hallucinations in the course of the novel. The anguish, torment and trauma coupled with the loss of ideal of liberty leads to psychological problems in the characters. The writer also points out that political instability is a major factor that demeans and frustrates people. When people know that their fate is not going to improve, they resign to their circumstances by and by. Their fighting spirit gets fatigued and the revolutionary thoughts die a slow death. They don’t want to fight. They don’t want to pick new attachments but just want to flee the place.

In *Travelling on One Leg* Herta Muller has successfully depicted the effect of a totalitarian regime on the psyche of characters like Irene, Franz, Stefan and Thomas. The characters have lost interest in living life. They try to cling to objects like their past and the habit of drinking in order to make sense of their lives. In this novel, Herta Muller talks about the physical as well as psychological difficulties that one faces while trying to find a grip in alien surroundings. It tells the story of a young German speaking woman in her mid-thirties who has come to Berlin after emigrating from Romania. She remains a stranger in West Germany like she was a stranger in Romania. Mourning and uncanny have become a part of her mental makeup. The name Romania is not mentioned in the novel but it has been hinted that she has immigrated to West Germany to escape the political persecution that she had to face in an eastern bloc

country. Similarly, neither of the characters is given a last name. Here, Irene has unsuccessful relationships with three men and gets into the habit of making collages from newspaper cuttings to escape her traumatic experiences that she underwent in the totalitarian Romania. In this way she wants to get rid of her mourning that she developed while living in a stifling regime. She is in constant search for human relationships through love, fashion and newspaper collages but all her attempts bear no fruit.

This novel also deals with the themes of identity, homeland and exile. It is a story of dislocation that delves deep into the human psyche. It portrays the bitterness of existence and brings forth the despair that accompanies a life of waiting. It hints at the viewpoint that in one way or the other, all of us are alone. The main character Irene sees the other Irene in her photograph—a kind of alter ego that has followed her everywhere. This is her doppelgänger because she is experiencing uncanny after leading a tumultuous life. She was always sad in the other country and has valid reasons for her sadness. The author portrays Irene's longing for the country she has left:

Irene often thought of the other country. But these thoughts didn't well up in her throat. They were not confused. They were comprehensible. Almost orderly. In her forehead, Irene could take them out. And push them back into the back of her head. Like flies. What had to move around in her head to be labeled home-sickness. Irene's thoughts remained dry. Tears never came. Irene sometimes had the suspicion that she was both crumpled up and smoothly ironed...Irene had been living here for months. The months were in the calendar. There wasn't anything here that could prove it, except for the seasons. (67)

Irene mourns the country where she had been living since her birth. She had to leave the country because she could find nothing there that encouraged human aspirations and emotions. But, she doesn't find comfort in Germany as well. She fails to understand as how an individual can be sad in the country to which she has immigrated. The effects of mourning and melancholia that she suffered while living in a dictatorial country are still alive in her memory.

Travelling on One Leg is a story of dislocation that delves deep into the human psyche. It portrays the bitterness of existence and brings forth the despair that accompanies a life of

waiting. It hints at the viewpoint that in one way or the other, all of us are alone. The main character Irene sees the other Irene in her photograph—a kind of alter ego that has followed her everywhere. This behavior hints that she has become a melancholic character and is unable to decipher as to what is troubling her. She is always sad in the other country and has valid reasons for it. But she fails to understand as how an individual can be sad in the country to which she has immigrated. The action in the novel is not much but the internal life of the characters is vividly and magnificently portrayed throughout the novel. In the beginning of the novel, Irene wants to go to the other country. She has developed mourning for her ideal country because she has always earnestly desired to go there for a long time. Whenever she goes to the sea shore, she sees for a long time the steep shore that rose up high in the sky. It is the border of the other country. The writer says, “This loose summer Irene felt for the first time that the water is flowing away, far out, was closer than the sand under her fee (1).” William Ferguson admires Muller’s novel *Travelling on One Leg* in The New York Times as follows:

Travelling on One Leg, a superb short novel first published in German in 1989 and ably translated here by Valentina Glajar and Andre Lefevere, traces the disorientations of exile through the troubled mind of Irene, a 30-year-old woman whose circumstances are partly drawn from Muller's life. Like her, Irene emigrates to West Berlin from "the other country" (in the novel, Romania is never identified directly). Certain elements introduced in the first chapter -- bushes, fingernails, crumbling earth, the sucking of the tide -- become symbols of intense sexual longing that reappear throughout the book. The narration is spare to the point of madness, a poetry of anguish built upon images of division or inversion ("Irene walked on her head"). When she is photographed, it seems to her that the picture shows "the other Irene," an alter ego that shadows her life; when she walks through an apartment for the first time, the rooms are said to walk through her instead.

Irene has a troubled mind and a fractured psyche because she suffers from the loss of self-regard. She suffers from low self-esteem and this is because her depression is turned on the self. She has also lost interest in the activity of the outside world. Her sense of self has depleted and she thinks that she has become worthless. The character Irene is modelled by Muller’s on her own life

experiences, when she experienced obsessed mourning and depression. Furthermore, Irene also experiences uncanny because of the repression she is suffering from. She experiences an alter-ego whenever she looks at her picture. It seems to her that some other Irene is looking at her through the picture. This points towards her disturbed and split state of mind. The alternative personality that she sees in her picture is the actual Irene that she had desired to become. But her agonizing circumstances haven't allowed her the full flowering of her personality.

Irene walks along the shore for two hours every night. While walking, she hears the music of a rock group that plays in a small bar close to the village. Irene wants attention and this attention is desired by her at the subconscious level. Every evening, when she roams on the beach, she is seen by a man from behind the bushes. He looks at Irene and masturbates. Irene, always walks at the same time on the beach as is frequented by that perverted man. Herta Muller writes, "It could have been a love affair. But on those days, when it happened, between the nights, Irene could find only the word habit. She had a feeling of loss" (3). Irene has turned into a mournful character. She isn't able to smile even when getting her photograph clicked for the passport. She wants to go to Germany to meet Franz. Irene puts makeup but she does not want to look beautiful. She says to the photographer, "I put on makeup because once I wanted to be beautiful. It stayed that way" (11). This shows her mental condition which is on the verge of getting melancholic. When she looks at her picture, she finds a stranger in the picture. Her fractured psyche is evident, which she has developed while living in a country that doesn't care even a wee bit for its citizens. The stranger that she sees in her picture is her doppelganger, a product of her fractured psyche. Herta Muller depicts her torturous state of mind:

Then Irene had felt like holding the passport pictures in the rain, but she hadn't. She had walked under the roof of the first house entrance. She had taken a picture out of the envelope and looked at it. A familiar person, but still not like her. And where it mattered, where it mattered to Irene, the eyes, the mouth, and the groove between nose and mouth belonged to a stranger. A stranger had slipped into Irene's face. The unknown in Irene's face was the other Irene. (11)

Irene has turned delusional. The feeling of uncanny arises in her even when she witnesses her own picture. She experiences a paradox in which she encounters oneself as another. What she sees in the picture is her doppelganger—a painful duality that has become a reality for her.

The next morning Irene has a sexual encounter with Franz. After that, Irene goes with Franz to the station because Franz is leaving for Marburg. Franz gives her his address. Irene has developed a love relationship with Franz, which is strange. She writes to Franz, “I don’t really want you to write me. Because then I would answer you. But it’s me who wants to write to you. There is a difference” (8-9). The internal dynamics of her psyche has been brought to the fore. She is going through grief and doesn’t want to commit her into any serious relationship. She has developed a wavering state of mind. Finally, one day Irene goes to the other country. She lands at the airport. There is a lot of humming here. She sees an older man with a big gold ring on his little finger. She imagines sleeping with him. She hears herself saying, “The gold ring must be there when you do it” (15). She has begun to indulge in delusions and this is indicative of her unhealthy state of mind. The agonizing circumstances that she finds herself in has affected her psyche in a negative way. She is expecting Franz but he is nowhere to be seen. She sees a man holding a sign board in front of him. Irene is written on the board. But Irene thinks that the sign is not meant for her because her name is very common. The man with the sign comes close to Irene and tells her that Franz has sent him to fetch her. He is Stefan. Irene looks into Stefan’s eyes but he turns his head away. “Irene knew these avoiding eyes from the other country. This avoiding.” (17). Normal relationships, which come very naturally to most of the human beings have been skewed under the weight of the totalitarian regime.

Franz comes over for a visit. His psyche has become such that he cannot stand silence. He says to Irene, “...I’m not at peace and I cannot stand this silence. You don’t know what I mean. You have good nerves” (48). Franz again leaves and Irene thinks that he will never come back again. Irene is feeling homesick in Germany though she does not like the other country. She keeps her homesickness hidden in her head so that she herself wouldn’t recognize it. The melancholy arises in her time and again and she always tries to undercut it. Irene has been living in Germany for months. Irene often felt homesick knowing very well that she had willingly left her country, which was in the claws of a totalitarian regime. Irene thinks, “Maybe homesickness has nothing to do with the head. Maybe it exists independently and is caught up in the structure of your thoughts. Maybe it’s a feeling, if you know how it ends. And how you get rid of it. Like

sometimes you feel too light on the streets and sometimes too heavy. If this is homesickness, I must be fake” (68). Her mournful state is obvious. This reveals that she has been torn apart between the two countries and her psyche had become fractured. She often thinks of graves when she sees leaves. Her Id wants to take her back to her home country but her ego always confronts this choice and settles for the new country. This is also the state of the mind of the countless refugees who have immigrated to Germany.

The characters in *Travelling on One Leg* prolong the lost object in their psyche. Herta Muller has depicted a tale, which explores exile and identity in the lives of Irene, Franz, Stefan and Thomas. These characters confront mourning, melancholia and uncanny. They feel traumatized and develop fractured psyches. The main character Irene never talks about her native country but always keeps it alive in her memory. She cuts ties with Franz as a defence and tries to move ahead in life with a new partner.

In *The Fox was Ever the Hunter* the characters Clara, Paul, Liviu and Ilie feel loss of love. The person of their affection of these characters doesn't die but their love in the other person dies because of the suffocating circumstances they are compelled to live in. They feel depression to varying degrees of severity. They find life terrifying and full of betrayal in a totalitarian regime. Adina and Clara are friends. Pavel is a married person who becomes Clara's lover but works for the secret police and spies on her beloved secretly. Adina's apartment is broken into by the secret police a number of times. Each time they take away a piece of the fox fur hearth rug that Adina and her mother bought together. This gets on Adina's nerves and she becomes extremely disturbed when she thinks of the time when the final paw will be cut by the secret police. She, as a result, all the more mourns her privacy and the freedom of her life. Adina attempts to survive in this reality that is worse than a nightmare. She suffers under the weight of the totalitarian regime and her soul seems to be wrung out by despair.

Children have lost sensitivity towards life and death as they have seen so much death all around. When, Adina stops a girl from putting a frog in her pocket as it would die, the girl laughs and replies, “That doesn't matter, doesn't matter at all” (51). The cruel totalitarian regime and its way of functioning has taken away love and sensitivity even from young impressionable minds. The children have witnessed so much misery and death all around that they have become hardened and callous. The school administration where Adina teaches does not even care for the teachers. Muller describes the callousness of the totalitarian authorities in the following words:

At the faculty meeting the cleaning woman announced there was no toilet paper for the teachers' toilet. For three days in a row, she said, I set out a new roll, but each roll was stolen within fifteen minutes on each of the three days, so now three rolls have to last for three weeks. Well, corncobs and beet leaves were good enough for you in the bourgeois-aristocratic regime, the director said. Back then, the only people who had newsprint were the estate owners. Now everyone has a newspaper at home. But all of a sudden newsprint's too rough for such sophisticated gentlemen and ladies. (63)

The toilet papers for teachers get stolen and they have to use newspaper instead. The teachers first rub the newspapers between their hands so that it does not scratch. When they complain about it to the director of the school, he snubs them. The totalitarian regime does not care about the dignity of its subjects. People mourn their condition where they don't have access to even the basic facilities. For such a cruel regime, people are mere cogs in a grand machine. A physics teacher is interrupted from the class and told by the director to move a wardrobe away from the wall so that the director can find the buttons of his suit. The director even tries to exploit Adina sexually but Adina thwarts her sexual advances. Such scheme of things leads to despair and moroseness in the masses. They develop a sad outlook on life and always mourn the good old days when they were alone. Nobody dares discuss such things in public.

Almost all the officials are corrupt. The warehouse supervisor Grigore sexually exploits the women who work in the factory. The women have to condescend to his demands because they get warm jackets in return, which can protect them in the severe cold. The gate woman of the warehouse says, "The women's children all look like Grigore. Thank God the mothers don't bring them to the factory...They're all different but every one of their faces has a palm-sized piece of Grigore" (79). The government officials misuse their power and position to exploit women sexually. They exploit their feelings, wishes and force them to sell their bodies for a pittance. The children in this regime suffer from sleeplessness right from their birth. This is attributed to machine oil by the doctors as the women who work in the wire factory are exposed to it continually. When the children grow, they too work in the factory. They do not wish to do so but don't have any other job avenues. Muller depicts the pathetic life of these children in the following manner:

From the tip of their noses to the tips of their toes they never find another way because there is no other way for them to find. Nothing but this gutter of poverty, hopelessness and tedium, from mother to child and on to that child's children....at first they are angry and loud, then eventually they become soft and quiet, pattering from one day to the next. The tang of the machine oil still stings their nostrils, their hands are long since rimmed with black. (81)

The children of the factory workers are ill-fated to have a life of poverty and drudgery. They show resentment in the beginning but resign to their circumstances by and by. They come to understand that their fate is not going to be different from the fate of their mothers. The supervisor's mother and the gate woman's mother also work in the factory. In the wire factory, a worker, Crizu, meets with an accident. His hand gets stuck in the press and is cut. He ties off his sleeve with a filthy rag but later lays on the floor unconscious. He is taken to the dressing room. There, the director pours brandy inside the unconscious man's mouth. Sometime later, Grigore, the supervisor announces that Crizu met with an accident because he was drunk at work. When the doctor comes, he also pronounces that Crizu met with an accident because of his own fault because he was drunk at the work place. Such is the justice of the country that it does not want to take the liability of even a single worker. The state wants automated robots without any kinds of rights, to work for increased production in the country. The state is completely unmindful of the trauma, frustration, despair and depression that is gradually developing in the masses.

Pavel Murgu is the fearful face of the dictatorship for Adina. Clara is anxious about Adina and asks Pavel not to harm her. Clara says, "She's not after anything, she simply says things because she's angry" (141). Clara understands the tumultuous psyche her friend Adina has developed while living in the totalitarian Romania. She wants to protect her because she understands that the anger Adina has developed is a result of the tortured life she has had to lead. After a few days Paul sees Clara at the hospital near the ward where abortions were done. He tells Adina about it and Adina enquires about it from Clara. Clara admits that she had an abortion. She tells Adina that she has managed to get the abortion because Pavel knows a doctor. Otherwise, it may have been a very dangerous situation. Abi, a member of the band is interrogated and this incident makes Paul as well as Adina very worried. This makes them silent.

Muller writes, “Paul and Abi are silent, resting their heads in their hands, the shattered minds inside their skulls” (180). Paul and Abi are representative of those sensitive and self-respecting people who don’t want to allow the totalitarian regime to overshadow and crush their identities. Such people develop dilemmas and various psychological problems while fighting a farce that is too big for them to deal with. All of them are sitting inside a café sipping coffee in the harsh winter. Muller writes about the deadly winter, which has become a symbol of the equally merciless totalitarian regime:

It is a winter in the city, a winter grown old and slow, a winter that pricks people with its cold. A winter in which mouths freeze and hands absently drop what they pick up, because fingertips thicken into leather...a winter in which young people hate one another like poison whenever they detect the slightest hint of happiness...a winter walking along the river, where laughter freezes instead of the water. Where stuttering passes for speech and half-uttered words for loud shouts. Where every question dies away in the throat while silent tongues keep beating against clenched teeth. (181)

The totalitarian regime has hardened the sensibilities of people in general and the young in particular. They have lost trust in each other and don’t want to commit themselves into any serious relationship. They have lost trust in relations because the totalitarian regime has made friends and relatives spy on one another. Anyone who questions the workings of the regime is considered a dissident. Such a person is spied upon, humiliated, tortured and eventually killed if he does not bow before the totalitarian might.

In *The Fox was Ever the Hunter* the psychological ghost of the person or idea that the characters love and cherish is always present there to remind them of it. They have feelings of uncanny and melancholia because they are not able to mourn the loss properly. The circumstances of the characters have caused frustration in the lives of the characters. Adina, Clara, Paul and Liviu feel as if their soul has got corrupted under the totalitarian regime. They lead tumultuous and depressed lives. Their condition becomes pathetic under the oppressive totalitarian regime.

In *The Land of the Green Plum* the merciless and hopeless state of the characters is very poignantly described by Herta Muller. Lola, Edgar, Kurt, Georg and the narrator face horrors and

brutalities in Communist Romania. Merciless police persecution was experienced by Herta Muller in the decades of 1970 and 1980 and this repression and trauma became the force that urged her to write novels in order to tell the whole world about the brutalities of a communist form of government. She uses her mother tongue to express the profound alienation that she faced in Romania. This book gives precise detail of the life in communist Romania. For that matter, by extension, it depicts life in any part of Eastern Europe during the totalitarian years.

Edgar Says, “When we don’t speak, we become unbearable, and when we do, we make fools of ourselves” (1). People living in the dictatorial regime are not allowed to air their views, concerns and dilemmas. It is expected that they remain subservient to every move that the government makes. As a result, the characters feel oppressed. They cannot bear the situation they are in because they have to keep all their worries, frustrations and dilemmas up to themselves. This has developed mourning and depression in them. Even, if they dare to become vocal nobody comes for the redressal of their grievances. On the other hand, they start facing threats from the ruling party and hence feel as if they have befooled themselves by giving vent to their emotions and concerns. The guards also grab at women and the narrator conjectures that Lola might have been mauled by one such guard. Muller depicts the callousness and cruelty of the guards:

They would shout at one person because the sun was burning, the wind was blowing, or the rain was falling. They would grab another by the lapels and then let him go. They would beat up a third... When a young woman passed, they would stare at her legs. The decision to grab her or let her go was always made at the last minute. They wanted to make it obvious that legs like that didn’t need a reason-just a whim. People walked past them quickly and quietly. They recognized one another from before. That’s why they walked so quietly. (52-53)

The vulnerabilities, mental harassment and the excesses that women and people in general face in a totalitarian regime controlled by police force is aptly portrayed. Women, especially, those belonging to the minorities have become a plaything for the forces. Women dignity and self-respect seems to have become a thing of the past. This novel also points to the fact that the German minorities try to preserve their culture through enforced traditional rules. But the people

who immigrate to Germany suffer a shock when they reach there. They are not considered as Germans but Eastern Europeans. They have become cultural outcasts in the land for which they left their home country.

In Romania Plumsucker is not a considered a good word. It connotes abuse, opportunism and sycophancy. The dictator is also termed as a plumsucker. In communist Romania, you could be persecuted and branded as a dissident if you lacked even a wee bit passion for the collective future of communist Romania. If you wanted to maintain even a little bit more privacy than was granted by the regime, you could end up being persecuted by the police forever. Whole of the Romanian society is depicted in this novel. The life of peasants is full of hunger sprinkled with occasional police brutality. The industrial workers work in dangerous conditions and indulge in making such articles as are wanted by nobody. Muller writes, "But, here no one was a guest but all were 'refugees from a meaningless afternoon'" (30). They eat like beasts, stagger and yell and smash empty bottles on one another's heads. The tortuous state of mind of the citizens is depicted very well. The constant yelling and fighting is a defence mechanism that they employ to overcome the emptiness of their minds. The next day, if they remained sober, 'would go into the park alone to get a grip on themselves' (31). They look for easy sex in the park. They want to forget all their worries and tensions in the sex act. The characters also fear that in their inebriated state they might say something political and it might reach the authorities as the waiters report everything.

At seven in the morning, buses full of prisoners, drive into the city from a prison that is outside the city. At seven at night, the buses drive back to the prison. Some people like the dwarf lady at the Trajan Square, the old woman with a sled and the philosopher at the station have gone insane. The narrator writes, "Only the demented would not have raised their hands in the great hall. They had exchanged fear for insanity" (41). In the public voting in the hall, not even a single hand is raised against the government's decision of ex-matriculating Lola from the university. There are many who want to raise their hands but the fear of the government holds their hands down. They know that it is madness not to show resentment in such cases. But they have chosen to be on the government side. Fear has taken over their sanity. Edgar and Georg give vent to their feelings through poetry, which they hide in the summer house. The books that the four of them read were smuggled into this totalitarian country. A particular poem is considered to be an incitement to flee the country. The poem is a folk song but is not considered

to be fit to be sung in the new administration. Captain Pjele says that previously there was the rule of the bourgeoisie and the landowning class but now the country is supreme. Now, people sing different songs. The songs are in German-their mother tongue. The narrator says, “The books were in our mother tongue, but the silence of the villages, which forbids thought, wasn’t in them (47). The books are shown to be precursors of change. The government is afraid of such books and is bent upon banning them. These books can ignite the fearful and submissive minds of the masses. Most of the people in that country constantly think of fleeing the place. They dream of crossing this country via the river Danube or through the corn fields, which spread to the border. The people spend a lot of their money on detailed maps. They hope that they would be able to escape the country when there is fog on the river and in the fields. In this way, they would be able to avoid the bullets and the guard dogs. Some even try balloons made of bed sheets and saplings. They wait for strong winds to carry them to the other country. Some bribe the station master and board the freight trains that move into the other country.

Herta Muller writes, “The only ones who did not want to flee were the dictator and his guards...they will make graveyards with dogs and with bullets. But also with the belt, the nut, the window and the rope (48). The dictator and his guards command unbridled power and enjoy every moment of it. The thought of having control over such a large multitude is in itself satisfying and gratifying for the authorities. Any opposition, whatsoever, is crushed in a variety of ways. Somebody is mauled by police dogs; somebody is found hanging with a belt or a rope or someone dies of some debilitating ailment that has developed within him. Even if somebody does not die, the mournful and the pathetic state of mind makes life a veritable hell for him. A lunatic of the city dies. The guard who is at duty is very sad and speechless at this demise. He thinks of his village, his father and his grandfather who has probably died. He doesn’t thrash anyone that day. This shows the trauma that is there even in the people who made others toe the official line. Such guards are mostly village folk who have moved to the city in order to escape the demeaning poverty in the village and have become the part of a soviet imposed totalitarian government. Muller writes, “At the time I still believed that in a world without guards, people would walk differently from the way we do in our country. Where people are allowed to think and write differently, I thought, they will also walk differently” (118). The characters who suffer under the totalitarian regime have subjugation writ large on their faces. They can’t smile

properly, laugh properly and love properly. Their whole behavior has changed for the worse. They suffer from isolation, depression and a sense of loss of identity.

The narrator is so uneasy with her life that she cannot sleep. She waits for the other girls to fall asleep and then ventures into the streets and walks faster and faster to drown her mourning and depression. All four of them the narrator, Georg, Kurt and Edgar are afraid and cannot hide their fear. The narrator depicts their troubled state of mind in the following way:

We laughed a lot, to hide it from each other. But fear always finds an out. If you control your face, it slips into your voice. If you manage to keep a grip on your face and your voice, as if they were dead wood, it will slip out through our fingers. It will pass through your skin and lie there. You can see it lying around on objects close by. We could see whose fear was where, because we had known each other so long. Often we couldn't stand each other, because we were all we had. We had no choice but to lash out at each other. (74-75)

This depicts that the melancholic loss of characters is operating in their lives. The characters have developed strange relations. The agonizing state of affairs makes them lash out at each other. They cannot stand each other because they are all that they have. Their laughter has become hard and they use it to drill it into their pain. The fear of the totalitarian regime haunts them all the time. The narrator says, "Hate was allowed to trample and destroy. To mow the love that sprang up in our closeness like long grass. Apologies took back the insult in no more time than you can hold your breath" (75). The characters know that they cannot afford love and warm feeling, while they are on a war path. They want to harden themselves and have devised the way of abusing one another to achieve this hardness. It's a mechanism their minds have developed so that no love springs up between the four of them. The factory, where the narrator works, has a slogan hung from the gable, "Workers of the world, unite. And down on the ground walked shoes that could only leave the nation by fleeing." (131-132). This is a critical commentary on the working of the socialist government of Romania. The government talks of uniting the workers and raising their standard of living. In reality, it cares only about material production with no concern for the emotions and dignity of the workers. No wonder, people want to flee the country in large numbers.

Paul, a worker in the factory stops coming to work. Everybody gossips as to how he would have died-through corn, sky, water or a freight train. Many others before him also had stopped coming to the factory. The narrator writes, “A death as cheap as the hole in your pocket. You stick your hand in it, and your whole body has to go along. The more people died, the greater the obsession of those who remained” (132). Continuous deaths of people who tried to flee serves as a booster for the people who remain. Their psyches have been tormented in such a brutal manner that their desire of fleeing the country is increasing all the more. It can be said that the characters have internalized their death-drive. The death-drive complex is at work in these characters because they have turned melancholic. Their depression is turned on the self and they are dealing in death-principle. The narrator cannot bear the trauma of the interrogations she has to face. For no reason she tells Tereza how her interrogations took place. She wants to lessen her trauma by narrating the incidents to someone else. She tells Tereza that every single item she possesses is removed and she is made completely naked. Each item of her clothing and the items in her handbag are entered under different headings on a single sheet. Then, she is made to sing the forbidden song in the naked state. She also tells Tereza how she explained that the song was a folk-song. Then she is allowed to wear her clothes. She also tells Tereza that Captain Pjele has taken the address book that has Tereza’s address. Tereza asks the reason for all this. She replies that captain Pjele wants that she should fear him, the dictator and the state.

The narrator is also turned out of her job of translating descriptions and workings of the machines. She takes to private tuitions for subsistence. She gives German lessons to students. But she is forced to leave this job also as the people where she gave her lessons were approached by the authorities. She is in a very disturbed state of mind. She writes, “Ever since my dismissal, the days are dangling from a string of coincidences, swinging back and forth and knocking me down” (194). This depicts her fractured and vulnerable state of mind. She is feeling marginalized and isolated. She further writes, “Although we went through the whole list of justifications and found them all valid, we still felt we were failures...we were moving closer to obsession with flight, without even noticing it” (218). She also says, “Each of us imagined how we might desert our friends by committing suicide” (219). The death-drive in her case channels into aggression at the beginning. Later, it turns on internally on the self of the narrator and she thinks of committing suicide. After a couple of months, the narrator leaves the country and immigrates to Germany. But, here also the fear of the totalitarian state does not leave her. She

receives death threats from Captain Pjele here also. The threats come by mail as well as by long-distance telephone call.

In *The Land of Green Plums* the characters suffer from mourning, melancholia and loss of self-regard. The narrator, Edgar, Kurt, Georg and Tereza turn aggressive intermittently and also experience suicidal thoughts at times. They do not find fulfillment in the relationships that they make. They tend to fall in depression because they see that the other person is not attached to them fully. They do not experience emotional equilibrium. The characters go beyond the unconscious goal of sexuality when they look for functions like money, beauty, status and security in a loved one. Such forces always tend to operate in the background.

In *The Appointment* characters like the narrator, Paul, and Lilli experience death drive. Suicidal thoughts emerge in them and passive fantasies like I wish I were not here, arise in them. They develop tendencies to hurt themselves. The terrible repercussion of the communist regime is the loss of faith in human beings. Nobody is able to trust anybody, even their near and dear ones. Anybody could be spying on you either out of fear or for some better prospects in a bleak world. People secretly mourn freedom of speech and the ideals of liberty that give every person a chance to explore their personality. A young woman is utterly frustrated, demeaned and tortured by the totalitarian regime in *The Appointment*. She has to confront agony distress and frustration for raising her voice in a totalitarian regime. She constantly mourns the shape her life has taken and wants to flee the country for good. She is employed as a worker in a clothing factory in totalitarian Romania. She is summoned by the secret police because she has been sewing notes into the linings of men's suits carrying the message 'marry me'. These suits are to be sent to Italy and she hopes that she can get out of the country with the help of a recipient who perchance gets interested in the offer. She talks about the inhuman way in which she was being treated:

At the meeting, which I was not allowed to attend, my notes were judged to be prostitution in the workplace. Lili told me Nelu had argued for treason, but had failed to convince them. Since I wasn't a party member and since it was my first offense, they decided to give me a chance to mend my ways. I wasn't fired, which was a defeat for Nelu. The man in charge of ideological affairs personally delivered two written reprimands to my office. I had to sign the original for the records, the copy remained on my desk. (46)

The narrator is implicated in the case by her colleague only. The mutual respect and camaraderie have disappeared from the ranks of workers. The totalitarian government boasts of uniting the workers but fails grossly in this regard. People have started suspecting each other as the totalitarian authorities can force anyone to spy on their friends and relatives. It is the same Nelu who sometime later implicates the narrator in a similar fabricated case. This time the narrator is not that lucky and has to lose her job as a result of Nelu's scheming and fabrication. Richard Eder is all praise for *The Appointment* in The New York Times, "Betrayal is the fundamental theme of "The Appointment," unmistakable yet vague at the same time. Its particular instances are obscured by its universal presence. "Under the spreading chestnut tree, I sold you and you sold me." Orwell wrote in "1984." In Ceausescu's Romania the tree, twisted and starved, lacks the sap even to spread." The betrayal that the narrator faces in a totalitarian regime becomes a source of mourning and depression for her. Her friend is shot dead while he attempts to flee the country by illegally crossing the border. This has created obsessed mourning in her. She clings to the object of her desire and thinks that her life is no longer meaningful. Her predicament has universal undertones. People who live under suffocating circumstances tend to develop mourning, depression and listlessness towards life. Their tree of life gets starved and they lose interest in living.

The narrator has completely shunned the thought of going to Italy after she was caught for the first time. After she is implicated in a false case and is fired from her job, she feels as though she is filled with straw. The narrator's father has died and she often spots him sitting asleep at the wheel of a bus, either moving or parked. Her parents had a son who died in his infancy. After that, she came into this world. Her thoughts move back to her childhood. One day her mother whispered in her year, "If your brother had lived, we wouldn't have had you" (70). After this disclosure by her mother, she felt unwanted for and worthless. Such thoughts along with her present circumstances make her feel hollow, disillusioned and purposeless. The memories and thoughts of the narrator are followed meticulously in the narrative. Her second husband Paul gives her some strength but his habit of excessive drinking makes matters all the more complicated for her. Her efforts to strike a mental balance in her life always get thwarted. On the way to interrogation, the narrator thinks about several incidents in her life and feels deeply melancholic. She remembers her grandparents and their burial. She remembers her father

who had an adulterous relationship. She also thinks about her second husband Paul and her arguments with him. She also remembers her friend Lilli who was killed while she was attempting to flee to Hungary. All these thoughts convey her fragmented state of mind. She somehow manages to hold on to her sanity. She along with other people learns to cope with the atrocities of the communist regime.

The fate of Transylvanian Saxons is portrayed through a young person Leopold Auberg and other characters like Trudi Pelikan, Beatrice Zeakel and Irma Pfeifer in *The Hunger Angel*. Their melancholic loss operates unconsciously. They are forced to work in labour camps that have been set up with a view to rebuild Russia. All the people of the German minority in Romania, who are of the working age, have to spend five years in these camps. The title comes from a compound word Hungerengel, which describes the pervasive hunger that dominates prison experience. In fact, The Fierce hunger becomes an angel that keeps people alive in this terrible ordeal. Leo the protagonist depicts the devastating effects of hunger:

What can be said about chronic hunger. Perhaps that there's a hunger that can make you sick with hunger. That it comes in addition to the hunger you already feel. That there is a hunger which is always new, which grows insatiably, which pounces on the never-ending old hunger that already took such effort to tame. How can you face the world if all you can say about yourself is that you're hungry? If you can't think of anything else, your mouth begins to expand, its roof rises to the top of your skull, all senses alert for food. When you can no longer bear the hunger, your whole head is racked with pain, as though the pelt from a freshly skinned hare were being stretched out to dry inside. (17)

The lasting hunger in the labour camps gets on the nerves of the inmates. The persistent hunger dominates the personal experience of each and every inmate. It becomes a source of trauma for the inmates. The bodily experiences of the inmates prove to be too much for them and they suffer with each passing day.

The condition of the inmates is pathetic. They are respectable people who have to work in labour camps in inhuman conditions. They mourn their previous lives and are always in a fragmented state of mind- waiting to die or flee the place. They are given the bare minimum so that they can only just survive. They even have to steal and beg for survival. Leo writes, "We

stole before, during and after work, though never while begging—which we referred to as going door-to-door—and never from a neighbor in the barrack” (16). Respectable people are forced to indulge in deplorable acts like stealing. This is a great blow to their self-respect and conscience. They mourn the erstwhile days when they led respectable lives at their homes. Such deplorable conditions are the fate of all the inmates of the camp, many of whom are persons of respectable social standing. The inmates pick wild grasses and leaves for eating. The inmates face chronic hunger that comes in many varieties. Sometimes they felt sick with hunger. Sometimes, a new kind of hunger arises in them which pounces on the already existing never-ending hunger. Leo says, “When you can no longer bear the hunger, your whole head is racked with pain, as though the pelt from a freshly skinned hare were being stretched out to dry inside” (18). Leo writes, “Perhaps we had to stand so long to stop the time in motion. Our bones became heavy as iron, When the flesh of your body disappears, your bones become a burden, and the ground pulls you downward” (20). Hunger has twisted their conception of the world. Everything, except hunger, has become meaningless for them. Their lives have been reduced to bare and minimum living. The excruciating bodily experiences have instilled trauma, suffering and depression in them.

At the construction site, the inmates have to be very careful with the cement because it comes in sacks made of paper and it is very difficult to be sparing with the cement when the sacks tear easily. Six houses are being built for Russians at that site. The cement tower is a deadly place because loose cement is kept in it. The cement can move and drown anybody. Leo has become cement-sick. Inmates of the camp have to be very sparing with paper and have to keep it hidden well. If anyone is caught writing on paper, he is sent to detention. Detention is a narrow concrete box eleven steps belowground. It has so little space that one can barely stand. The detention has iron bars at the top, is full of vermin and stinks of excrement. Every inmate shudders at the thought of being confined in detention. Some men cry a lot when they see themselves in the mirror. Leo has only sugar and salt as valuables. He saves a little piece of bread from his mouth and keeps it under his pillow as a treasure for those times when hunger crosses the limits of patience. Often, after work Leo goes begging in the small Russian village. Other inmates also beg and Leo always wishes that he should not run into another beggar from the camp. Everyone begs with coal, that they barter for other things. Towards the end of October, it becomes terribly cold. The inmates fall into mourning all the more. They mourn the warmth of their houses and the freedom of the evening gatherings. The guard and the site inspector give

them quotas and go to their warm rooms. It is the first time when they work without the fear of shouted orders. Irma Pfeifer falls into the mortar pit and dies. She is declared a saboteur by the supervisor and her body is buried the same evening. Actually, she slipped while she was carrying a sack of cement in front of her. But nobody dares to oppose the supervisor's interpretation that she has committed suicide.

On the night of December 31, in the second year of labour, all the inmates are told to come outside and line up in rows along the brick wall and wait. Everybody thinks, they would be shot. Leo depicts the predicament of the inmates:

It was the night of December 31, New Year's Eve, in our second year. Halfway through the night the loudspeakers summoned us to the Appellplatz. We were chased down the main street of the camp, flanked by eight guards with rifles and dogs, and followed by a truck hauling a trailer. In the tall snow behind the factory, where the empty fields began, we were told to line up in rows along the brick wall and wait. We thought: This is the night we will be shot... I pushed into the front row so that I could be one of the first. That way I wouldn't have to load corpses onto the truck, which was already waiting off the road... We stood there, our faces aged, our eyebrows covered with frost, our lips shivering. Some of the women mumbled prayers. (62)

Leo wants the first one to die. He wants an easy death. He indulges in passive fantasies and wishes he were not here. According to Freud the fear of death is the biggest fear. Human beings have Eros- the inner drive for survival and pleasure seeking. The death drive always opposes the Eros. This was Freud's understanding in his book *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. But here we see that the traumatic experiences of Leo's life have taken the fear of death away from him. This can be explained by the fact that Leo's living conditions are a living hell and therefore he wants to embrace death first of all. Leo remembers her grandmother's words 'I know you'll come back' and doubts them all the more. Then, two heavily wrapped Russians throw shovels at their feet. He thinks they are to dig their own graves. But, then Shishtvanyonov orders them to dig holes for trees. They try to obey the command but the ground is frozen and too much hard. They are able to dig only knuckle deep after hours of labour and are then told to go back.

Whenever Leo is at work, he assumes that the hunger angel is also at work. This is his defence mechanism to escape from his torturous condition. He says, “Unloading was also a job for two or three people. Not counting the hunger angel, because we weren’t sure whether there was one hunger angel for all of us or if each one of us had his own” (74). He holds the hunger angel responsible for the causal principle of hunger and equates one shovel load to one gram bread. The Hunger Angel can also be understood as a kind of defence mechanism through which the protagonist draws strength. He feels as if the hunger angel has set his breath to swinging back and forth. To his mind, the hunger angel is disgustingly personal and is never absent. “The hunger angel doesn’t go away but comes back” (81). This personal feeling of having a Hunger Angel, which guards over him all the times can also be a delusionary tactic of his mind. The unbearable hunger at the reparation camps has created physical suffering, mourning, melancholia and death wish among the inmates. In such a scenario, it’s not surprising that delusionary thoughts occur in people’s minds.

One day Leo hits Karli Halmen and nearly strikes him dead. Leo writes, “My bloodlust had swallowed my reason. And I wasn’t the only one, we were a mob” (103). Karli spends two days in the sick barrack. After that he is back with them and does not hold his punishment against them because he knows that he has earned it. Others also do not hold the theft against Karli. Leo writes, “The bread court does not deliberate, it punishes. It knows no mitigation; it needs no legal code. It is a law unto itself, because the hunger angel is also a thief who steals the brain” (103-4). Herta Muller portrays the inner landscape of humans in a very vivid manner. This is exemplified by the above incident when an inmate is almost beaten to death because he steals bread. People who suffer atrocities and wrongdoings develop a kind of defence mechanism in them. This defence mechanism unites people and they all stand united against any kind of wrong doing that springs from amongst them. Three people try to escape from the camp. They are caught and are paraded at roll call. Their bodies are disfigured because they have received severe beating. Afterwards, they are not seen again in the camp. Either they are killed or are sent to a penal camp. At the beginning of November, Leo receives a postcard from home. He is overjoyed at receiving it but his joy soon fades when he finds that her mother has not written even a line about him. The postcard announces the birth a baby boy, his photo is sewn onto the card by Leo’s mother. Underneath the photo is written, ‘Robert, b. April, 1947.’ Nothing else is written at all. Leo cries a lot because he thinks that his parents have had a baby because they have given up

on him. The feeling of not being wanted gnaws at his soul. For the next two years, Leo forces himself not to answer her card. He says to himself, "Over the past two years the hunger angel had taught me how to beg, and in the two that followed he taught me tough pride, as rough and raw as being steadfast with bread" (203). Leo is, in a way, shunned by his own family even. This heightens his mourning all the more. He has some respite in the comforting view that his family is waiting for him. Now, this comfort is also gone and Leo gets mired in despair, melancholy and depression all the more.

The characters in *The Hunger Angel* suffer from a loss of self-regard and self-esteem. Herta Muller has very poignantly portrayed human life, when it is reduced to the bare minimum. Leo, Trudi Pelikan, Karli Halmen and Kobelian suffer from mourning and melancholia that is turned on the self. They also experience loss of interest in the outside activity. They consider themselves to be worthless and morally despicable. They wish they were dead and feel that they deserve punishment. Though, there is no objective reason for this.

CHAPTER IV

Analyzing Neurosis, Psychosis and Hysteria

Neurosis happens because of the return of the repressed. It shows through behavioural or psychosomatic symptoms. It is not always negative. Dino Felluga writes, “Neurosis is the formation of behavioral or psychosomatic symptoms as a result of the return of the repressed.” (“Modules on Freud”). The only difference between the neurosis that is commonplace and the neurosis that needs treatment is the severity of symptoms. A person who is neurotic and needs treatment does not enjoy life and does not participate in it actively. He loses his urge for any kind of achievement. Psychosis, on the other hand, is a complete loss of touch with reality. Dino Further says, “ The failure of the ego and the increased insistence of the libido lead to symptoms that are as bad or worse than the conflict they are designed to replace.” (“Modules on Freud”). In neurosis the efforts that the ego makes to deal with its desires through different defence mechanisms fail. A person usually does not fall ill in the case of neurosis but if the person’s ego fails to allocate the libido, then illness happens. This failure of the ego and the activity of the libido produce symptoms. These symptoms are worse because they worsen the conflict that they intended to replace. Because of these symptoms, the ego is able to avoid the conflict between the ego and the Id. The patient experiences pleasure but in a different way. This different way is often devastating for the patient because the symptoms don’t look like gratification but look like a compulsion. An example can be taken of the obsessive cleaning behaviour in some neurotic patients. Once such a symptom has developed in the patient, the ego of the patient takes advantage of this behaviour. The ego takes pride in cleaning things again and again and thus this symptom is reinforced all the more. The more deep-seated a symptom becomes, the more difficult it is for the psychoanalyst to relieve the patient of the symptom.

Neurosis can be caused in two ways. It can be caused internally as well as externally. It can be caused internally when the ego is not able to repress the internal impulses in a proper way. These impulses which are not repressed properly find a different expression. Neurosis can also be caused externally when a person encounters traumatic events. These traumatic events can be related to war, sexual abuse or a sexual encounter. Most of the times it happens that internal as well as external factors collectively lead to the development of neurosis. Here one thing is to be noted that in case of neurosis it’s almost impossible to distinguish between phantasy and

reality. It's because in case of neurosis only the psychological reality matters. A child may have seen his parents copulating or he might imagine so. A child may be the victim of incest with father or he might just imagine that to be the case. In both, phantasy as well as reality, the trauma is the same.

Neuroses can be of many types. Melancholia and megalomania come under narcissistic neuroses. Conversion hysteria, anxiety hysteria, obsessional neuroses come under transference neuroses. Traumas caused by war, rape etc. come under traumatic neuroses. In case of narcissistic neuroses, the subject usually does not interact with people and hence it becomes very difficult for the therapist to cure such a patient. In case of transference neuroses, the desire of the patient is transferred to phantasies. The actual desire is for an external object, which is replaced by fantasies. These phantasies take the place of actual sexual gratification. For example in case of conversion hysteria, the patient may feel psychosomatic illness as the symptoms are manifested in the body. Similarly in the case of obsessional neuroses, the sexual impulse of the patient gets substituted by compulsive behaviour. The patient may develop an obsession for cleaning or such related obsessions. In case of traumatic neuroses, the main cause of neurosis is a real traumatic event, which is in most of the cases an immediate one. The psychological conflicts and the unconscious of the patient have little role to play in this kind of neurosis.

In *The Passport* characters like Windisch, Rudi, Cooper, Wilma and Amalie cannot bear the trauma that the totalitarian regime has subjected them to. They feel emotional instability, shame, rage and mood swings. They even tend to panic in non-threatening situations and react negatively to events that are neutral. The militiaman has demanded the protagonist Windisch's daughter for the passport. His whole self feels disintegrated. He cannot bear his condition and shouts into the courtyard, "Far enough, for my daughter to become a mattress. It's disgusting, the shame of it" (73). This sorry state of mind becomes the fate of Windisch for a long time to come. He turns into a neurotic personality who is bordering on psychosis and partial insanity. Katharina urges him to forget the shame. She says, "You won't get far with 'it's disgusting' either. It's not a question of shame now. It's a question of the passport" (73). At this, Windisch becomes angry and accuses her that she lived from whoring while she was in Russia. He even says that Katharina would have gone on whoring if he hadn't married her.

He does not go to mass that day. He says to Katharina, "I'm not leaving the house. I don't want people saying to me: now it's your daughter's turn" (84). He says loudly, "A man is

nothing but a pheasant in the world” (84). Windisch cannot bear his frustration. He sees militiaman’s cap, jacket and then face in the mirror. He strikes the mirror with his fist. His wife silently sweeps the broken mirror. This is psychosis that Windisch is experiencing. He has lost touch with reality temporarily and has started experiencing hallucinations. Amalie returns home. There is a love bite on Amalie’s neck. It is redder than her dress. All of them eat noodles with soup. A white noodle gets stuck in Windisch’s throat. He vomits in his plate. His neurotic state of mind has become too much for him. Katharina remembers when she was at a Russian labour camp. After 5 long years, green military trucks drove into the countryside. Women climbed onto those trucks and she also climbed on one of them. The trucks did not go back to the mine. They stopped in front of a little station. She boarded one train and wept with happiness. At last, she was free to go back to her country Romania. Mining activity takes place all over the mountains. The mountain air has become dirty because of the mining activity but the dirt is not visible because of the forests. At the top of the highest mountain is a sanatorium with a lot of lunatics in it. A lunatic spends all his time looking for fir cones in the grass. He is a miner who had started a strike against the exploitative authorities. Another lunatic remains in the sanatorium for a week only, and then goes to work in the mines again. The skinner explains the condition in the mountains:

Everywhere you look there are mountains. On the way to the mountains are tunnels. They are black as night. The train goes through the tunnels. The whole mountain rattles in the train...Everyone sits and doesn’t even look out of the window. When it’s light, they read. They take care not to let the books slip from their knees. I had to be careful, not to touch them with my elbows. They leave their books open when it gets dark. (18)

People who are made to work in the mountains have turned neurotic. They are not able to find any meaning in their lives. They live their life without any enthusiasm. They live just for the sake of living. In some cases, the neurosis has turned into psychosis and lunacy. Rudi himself was interned in the sanatorium for some time. This is told to Windisch’s wife by the post woman of the village. There are cemeteries along the slopes of the mountains. Clouds hang low and frequent thunderstorms occur in the mountains. People get struck by lightning while working in the fields.

Rudi is the only German in the glass factory. He has a good relationship with a man from the secret police. The man from the secret police is big and blond and has blue eyes. He looks like a German. Rudi gifts him a glass tie-pin and cufflinks. This man helped Skinner a lot in obtaining the passport. Rudi gives all the glass objects he has in his flat to the man from the secret police, including a rocking chair of blue glass. Rudi sends a present for Amalie. It is a tear made of glass, with a hole at its tip. Inside its stomach, there is a groove. Rudi places a note in the box that contains the tear. It reads: "The tear is empty. Fill it with water. Preferable with rainwater" (22). Amalie's mental condition while she fills the tear with water is pathetic:

Amalie couldn't fill the tear. It was summer and the village was parched. And water from the well wasn't rainwater. Amalie held the tear up to the light at the window. Outside it was hard. But inside, along the groove, it quivered. For seven days the sky burned itself dry. It had wandered to the end of the village. It looked at the river in the valley. The sky drank water. It rained again. Water flowed over the paving stones in the yard. Amalie stood by the gutter with the tear. She watched as water flowed into the stomach of the tear. (22-23)

The tear has become the symbol of the invisible tears that sensitive people have to shed while living their lives listlessly in a dictatorial country. The tear also symbolizes Rudi's neurotic state of mind. Amalie sits on the floor with the box containing the crystal tear in her hand. Her cheeks are wet with tears. She is experiencing depression and neurosis because she is not able to cope up with the agonizing circumstances of her life. She thinks about the dead Dietmar and her sexual exploitation by the priest and the militiaman. Windisch thinks she is crying because she is leaving her home. He says, "Leave-taking is hard. It's just like in the war again. We go and we don't know, if and how and when we'll come back" (106). Windisch looks at the passports and puts them in his jacket pocket. All of them board a train that reaches a German town. Katharina says, "God willing, we'll come back for a visit next summer (110)". Windisch's love for his motherland is self-evident. He wants to leave the country because he cannot bear the suffering, trauma and loss of self-regard in the dictatorial regime. But he still doesn't want to cut all the relations with his motherland and all the people with whom he has shared his joys and sorrows.

The characters in *The Passport* find relationships difficult. They are not able to maintain stable relationships and react negatively to simple situations. The trauma, shame and guilt, which the minorities have to suffer have made life difficult for them. The characters suffer from neurosis and psychosis. They live life in a listless manner and even fail to take care of themselves. They experience unjustified sadness. Their anxiety affects their sleep as well as day-to-day activities.

Muller's novel *Travelling on One Leg* is all about the physical as well as psychological difficulties that one faces while trying to find a grip in alien surroundings. The characters Irene, Franz, Thomas and Stefan experience excessive levels of sadness over simple incidents. They often feel the need to cry. They experience envy and develop the habit of attention seeking. This novel tells the story of a young German speaking woman in her mid-thirties who has come to Berlin after emigrating from Romania. She remains a stranger in West Germany like she was a stranger in Romania. In Romania she was not able to find meaning in her life and in Germany she cannot banish the thoughts of her native country from her psyche. Her psyche is torn apart and she becomes a neurotic entity. She has unsuccessful relationships with three men and gets into the habit of making collages from newspaper cuttings to escape her traumatic experiences that she underwent in the totalitarian Romania. She is in constant search for human relationships through love, fashion and newspaper collages but all her attempts bear no fruit as her neurosis remains unresolved. This novel also deals with the themes of identity, homeland and exile.

Irene grows concerned for Franz whom she finds in an inebriated condition on the beach. She makes him stand up but finds it very difficult to balance him because he is very tall and heavy for her. He is quite young and she is already thirty. She wants to take him away because the police may come at that place anytime. The man says that he lives at Marburg and wants to go there. Irene takes him to his hotel and there Franz sleeps while talking to Irene. Irene is struck by nostalgia. Irene has started to develop psychosis because of the emptiness in her life:

Nostalgia overcame Irene. And it wasn't nostalgia. It was a condition of things that were not alive. The stones, the water. The freight trains, the doors, the elevator, things that were moving. The biting tracks of night were on the black surface outside. Irene felt by the wind in her face that the room was high up. The stars bored into her forehead. The water raged below. No, said Irene out of the window. She went to the sink. She drank

cold water out of her hand. She turned the light off...Out in the empty surface, the dark was even deeper. Irene couldn't cry in the dark. Irene disappeared into her sleep. (6-7)

This depicts Irene's psychotic state of mind that her made her hallucinate and imagine things even in ordinary day-to-day matters. She does not find comfort in anything. This is because her mind projects its grief onto everything else around it.

Irene wants to repeat the sentence spoken by Stefan that Franz has not come. This shows that Irene gets attracted towards Stefan in the very first meeting. This points to her twisted state of mind that has made her incapable of maintaining a single relationship. The totalitarian regime has made her incapable of reposing faith in a single individual. Irene is not happy even after immigrating to the other country. She is unhappy for no reason. Neurotic tendencies have starting building up in Irene. Muller writes, "Irene saw the ribs through the skin. The back was breathing. It was also warmer than the rest of the wall. Irene thought of Franz...The edge of the blanket lay around her neck. Irene felt as if she was buried" (33). Though Irene has come to the new country, yet she is not able to forget it. The other country simply lingers on in her.

Irene starts making collage from newspaper cuttings. It is a defence mechanism that her mind has invented. She wants to counter her loneliness through collage making. The first collage that she made, "was so strange that it reached the point where the smile of the girl in the rocking chair unveiled the same abyss as the corpse in its suit" (38). One day she uses the photomat to capture her pictures, "And there was an unknown person on these pictures, too, like in the other country, like on the passport pictures. The other Irene was also on the pictures out of the photomat" (41). Irene always finds an unknown person-the other Irene- in her photographs. She is beginning to lose touch with reality and is developing psychotic tendencies. There were certain places in Germany which were poor just like the other country from where Irene had come. In these places, poverty disguised itself as business. Irene feels afraid when she sees the other country's weeds in the city. Irene touches those weeds to ascertain that she is not imagining things. Irene is not able to make a stable relationship with Franz. Instead, she ends up in the bed with Thomas, who was intermittently gay. Their love has become mechanical, which lacks the tenderness and warmth of human emotions:

Irene lay naked in the bed next to Thomas. Hot waves under the skin...Everything else was washed away out of her head. It had gotten dark outside. The window was shimmering. Irene slowly put on her clothes. She wanted to remember how she had gotten naked. She smelled of sweat and traces of perfume. And she wished she didn't exist. Thomas put the pillow against the wall. I thought you were gay. I know it for a fact. Sometimes I make exceptions, Irene, I still had to make love to you quickly before you get too many wrinkles. (90).

Both Irene and Thomas find their life in a crisis. They don't want to enter any serious relationship. The occasional love between them springs from brute physical needs and is devoid of any emotion or sensitivity. Irene reached her apartment, 'The man sitting under the empty sky in the collage on the kitchen wall looked straight into Irene's face when she turned off the light' (93). Irene is not able to make healthy relationship with anyone because of the neurosis she has been experiencing for a long time. Irene's neurotic turn of mind grows all the more after she gets estranged with Franz. Muller depicts her state of mind in the following words:

Irene saw that the people close to her carried the city they were living in on their backs. In moments like these Irene realized her life had run down to observations. Observations rendered her unable to act. The actions Irene forced herself to undertake weren't actions. They got stuck in their beginnings. They were beginnings that fell apart. Not even individual gestures would remain complete. Consequently, Irene lived not in the things but in their consequences. Irene walked the paths she had walked with Franz or the others, alone this time. She needed pretexts and excuses to do this. Sometimes she even had to lie. (124)

Irene has started reacting negatively to situations, which are most of the times, neutral. Even minor events lead to sadness for her. Anxiety has started to become her permanent companion. These, neurotic tendencies in her lead to an unstable relationship with Franz. She boards a Taxi to go to Marburg to meet Franz. But she gets out of it. She finally decides that she will not see Franz.

Irene feels old on the outside and powerless on the inside. Muller writes, “For a moment Irene let Franz disappear. But then, with the edge of a thought, she had to think of Franz again. She only had to touch on his name and here was the powerlessness again. Irene blamed the other country for it...Irene felt she had been deceived for years. Provoked and cheated” (126). Irene’s neurotic behavior increases all the more. It is bordering on psychosis. She is feeling anxious, sad, provoked and cheated without any solid reason. Once she finds a pigeon’s feather in her bathroom. She passes the feather across her throat. The next moment the words pigeon murderer ring in her mind. She writes pigeon murderer on a postcard and puts the feather as well as the postcard into an envelope. She puts her own address on the envelope. Irene thinks herself to be guilty for the circumstances that she finds herself in.

Irene decides to go to the city where Franz studied. She is visiting Franz half against his will. Unpredictability and indifference have become Franz’s hallmark. Both meet but Franz hasn’t shunned his indifference. They walk in the market. Franz walks in front of Irene. Irene sees his back and thinks, “Now he’s changing. Now, he’s becoming gay on the path between leaves and the wood because he’s walking through these images. And it was jealousy that forced Irene to look to the ground with each step. Irene wanted Franz and wished he was gay, and forgot that she was a woman, not a man” (77). Irene wants to say Franz to kiss her, but she doesn’t. A rift has appeared in their relationship and Franz is completely unmindful of that. Irene’s neurotic state of mind has made her incapable of having normal and fulfilling relationships. Franz tells Irene that he has a good time with her but Irene doesn’t add anything. The good time has hurt Irene because it has been a good time and nothing more.

The characters in *Travelling on One Leg* become argumentative and whiny. Irene, Franz, Thomas and Stefan struggle to get with others in their daily lives as well as at work. They also tend to be dependent on others and develop obsessive thinking over things, which may not be that important. Herta Muller has portrayed the neurotic and hysterical state of characters in all its complexities.

The Fox was Ever the Hunter is the story of Adina, Clara, Paul, Ilie and Anna. The characters develop the habit of unjustified guilt over small things. Even if there is no fault of theirs, a kind of guilt feeling is visible in them. Adina, who is a school teacher, possesses a very depressed outlook on life. The leaves of the poplars that surround her apartment block look like knives to her. Adina has developed listlessness and gloominess in her outlook:

The foliage rises straight up on the poplars just like the branches, the wood cannot be seen. And where nothing else can reach, the poplars carve the hot air. The poplars are green knives. When Adina stares at the poplars too long, they dig their knives inside her throat and twist them from side to side. Then her throat gets dizzy. And her forehead senses that no afternoon is capable of holding even a single poplar for the time the light takes to sink behind the factory into the evening. The evening ought to hurry, the night might succeed in holding the poplars, because then they can't be seen. (03)

Her condition is described by images that have photographic precision and which coalesce into a kaleidoscope of terror. Then, the reader realizes, how difficult it is to keep mind and body intact in a repressive regime- a regime where the distinction between friend and foe and the difference between the victim and the perpetrator has blurred completely. She is given an apple by Clara. The first bite by Adina reveals a worm inside it which she eats along with the flesh of the apple. Her hunger has taught her not to worry about such small things anymore. The psychological reality of Adina's mind, who is living in a dictatorship is communicated through the physical detail. Adina tries to survive in the reality of Nicolae Ceausescu's Romania, which is worse than a nightmare for her. In this novel, the characters live their lives under the ever-watchful eyes of the state. Not the state alone, even common people help the state spy on the people whom they consider dissidents. People are bribed and threatened to spy on their friends and relatives.

One day the tinsmith commits suicide. His disillusionment that had caused a great amount of suffering in his mental life was too much for him. Herta Muller depicts his suicide in the following words:

Because the tinsmith was hanging all askew, right next to the door, and his body was so close to the floor he could have stood on his tiptoes and stepped out of the noose had he wanted to. The man who smelled like grass reached over the hanged man's head and said, pity to waste a good piece of rope, so instead of cutting the rope, he loosened the rope. The hanged man tumbled out, and his leather apron folded as he fell, but he himself did not...The man who smelled like grass then untied the knot and coiled the rope, drawing it

between his thumb and forefinger and across his palm and over his elbow. When he tied off the short end he said, this rope will come in handy in the slaughterhouse. (39)

He always mourned the good days when the country was not in the grip of totalitarianism. He hung by a rope but his body is so close to the floor that he could have stood on his tiptoes and stepped out of the noose had he desired to do so. His body is found hanging by a man who worked in the slaughter house. He loosens the noose and takes the rope because it will be useful him at the slaughterhouse. He had to take a stovepipe from the tinsmith, but he tucks three stovepipes under his arm. The seamstress comes and takes away a pair of pliers and a watering can. She says, "I'll take that for watering the grave" (40). The barber comes and pockets a small file into his smock. This greed and the sheer loss of faith in human relationships and human camaraderie that has crept into almost every person is the result of the dictatorship. The dictatorial dispensation does not care for feelings and emotions but is concerned solely with the economy and the production required for boosting the economy.

In this novel, the characters live their lives under the ever-watchful eyes of the state. Their lives have become neurotic and they experience emotional unsteadiness, anger and humiliation. Not the state alone, even common people help the state spy on the people whom they consider dissidents. The city in which Adina and Clara live is attached to a town with a bridge. The town has a large slaughterhouse where pigs and cows are slaughtered throughout the day. At night the horns and hooves are burnt and acrid stench covers the outskirts of the city. There is a wire factory also. Emaciated men and women work in these factories. They commute to the factories by streetcars. A cat, which lives at the wire factory, eats her litter of kittens every year without exception. She represents the dictatorial government that is bent upon killing its own citizens. Adina's seamstress lives in two small rooms. The seamstress calls the two rooms as the workshop. In one of the windows is a sign that reads 'Cooperatives of Progress'. From the windows, a shop of a tinsmith is visible that also has the sign 'Cooperative of Progress'. The people who travel in the street cars look at the items that are kept in the display window by the tinsmith with empty eyes.

Instead of Going to Clara's place, Adina and Paul decide to leave the city and drive to Liviu's place in a far-off village. They want to escape the continuous persecution. They also want to take Abi with them but he refuses. In the following summer, Liviu gets married to a

young woman of the village. After that, Paul's car is rolled into a barn and is covered with straw. Liviu uses sacks to hide the wheels. Now, they have to live in a dark room because everyone knows the room in which the newly married couple sleeps. Adina and Paul use a flashlight for the fear that the big light can be seen from outside. The room is full of mosquitoes and they have to use chamber pots to obey the call of nature. They have to bathe inside the room using a washing bowl. They develop a negative state of mind and are not able to keep their calm. Their sadness combined with anxiety is driving them towards psychosis. Liviu says that he feels like a louse hiding in the edge of a bed. When Liviu and her wife go away, Adina and Paul move into the pantry when anyone calls out near the gate. They do not turn on the television or the radio and are always on alert for any sound that can cause fear. This is a daily routine and Adina keeps count of the times she makes tea to separate one day from the nest.

Liviu is a teacher in a village, which lies in a part of country that is cut by the river Danube. He often talks about these villages to Adina and Paul whenever he visits the city and stays with them. He tells about 'the wakeful sleep of the young and the leaden sleep of the old.....and how their years mistake their own snoring for the voice of the policeman and the mayor, who tell them even in their dreams what must be planted in every garden, every flower bed' (85). This shows the subjugation that the people are subjected to in a totalitarian regime. Liviu tells them that people in the villages hear shots every now and then. This means that someone who is trying to cross the river to the other country has been shot. Liviu says, "I keep drinking until I forget the shots" (86). In the wire factory, a worker, Crizu, meets with an accident. His hand gets stuck in the press and is cut. He ties off his sleeve with a filthy rag but later lays on the floor unconscious. He is taken to the dressing room. There, the director pours brandy inside the unconscious man's mouth. Sometime later, Grigore, the supervisor announces that Crizu has met with an accident because he is drunk at work. When the doctor comes, he also pronounces that Crizu has met with an accident because of his own fault as he is drunk at the work place. Such is the justice of the country that it does not want to take the liability of even a single worker. The state wants automated robots without any kinds of rights, to work for increasing production in the country. Paul also plays guitar and runs a band with Sorin, Abi and the lead singer. He performs a song with his band mates. This song 'Face without face, Forehead of sand, Voice without voice, nothing is left/Except for time' (103) does not go well with the authorities because it is liked by many people and it speaks against the Ceausescu regime in a

very subtle way. The concert is interrupted and the audience is told to leave the hall. Anna and Adina are also present in the hall. Anna is attracted towards Paul but is jealous of Adina because Adina has been living with Paul for three years. There is a hospital near the stadium where the concert is taking place. Paul tells Adina that four sick people have jumped from the windows and have ended their lives. The trauma of living under a totalitarian regime is so much for them that they even do not want to get well.

Adina's friend Abi is being interrogated by Pavel. This infuriates Adina who blames Clara that she has ditched her. She accuses Clara of sleeping with an enemy. But Clara helps her escape to the southern part of the country, where Adina lives a secret life with her former friend Paul. In this novel, the characters live their lives under the ever-watchful eyes of the state. Not the state alone, even common people help the state spy on the people whom they consider dissidents. People are bribed and threatened to spy on their friends and relatives. Bettina Brandt and Valentina Glazar in the book *Herta Muller: Politics and Aesthetics* write, "Muller's poignant discourse of discontent, as well as her personal history as a political writer, allows for a sophisticated perspective on Communist life in Romania, and it reaches a wider audience than most historical texts ever could" (10). Muller's perspective on communism in Romania is honest to the core and is bereft of any prejudice whatsoever. It's because she herself had been a victim of the National Socialist communism prevalent in Romania before 1989. This very fact endears her to many a reader. In schools, there is less focus on studies. Students are frequently taken to tomato fields to work. The condition of children in those fields is anything but healthy. The driver of the bus in which children are taken to work in fields also possesses a depressed psyche. He says, "My wife and I, the only time we talk is at night, when we can't sleep" (49). In the field, an agronomist dictates children how to pick tomatoes and reminds them of filling 15 crates a day, which is the quota. Adina sees that her pupils are hungry. She tells them to eat the tomatoes they are harvesting. This does not go well with the authorities, who reprimand Adina for this action.

Adina's apartment is visited by two men from the secret police. The younger of the two knows the location of things in the apartment. It means that Adina's apartment is often visited by men of the secret police. There is a fox-shaped rug in the single room apartment. The younger man unpacks a razor blade and cuts the right hind leg of the fox-rug. He wipes the cut hair and slides the cut-off leg back against the belly of the rug. He makes it sure that the cut is not visible.

This is the scheme of the secret police to inflict mental trauma on Adina as she is associated with a band that performs songs aimed against the dictatorial regime. One day Adina takes Clara to her apartment and shows her all the pieces of the fox-rug that have been cut—all the legs as well as the tail. Adina is afraid that she can be poisoned anytime as all the eatables lay in the kitchen. This fox-rug has been bought for her by her mother. She was ten years old then and both of them had walked a long distance to the hunter's house, where they got the fox-fur rug. The trauma of the situation is too much for Clara's nerves. She feels sick, gagged and throws up in the bathroom. Abi, a member of the band is interrogated and this incident makes Paul as well as Adina very worried. This makes them silent. Muller writes, "Paul and Abi are silent, resting their heads in their hands, the shattered minds inside their skulls" (180). All of them were sitting inside a café sipping coffee in the harsh winter. She further writes, "It is a winter in the city, a winter grown old and slow...a winter in which young people hate one another like poison whenever they detect the slightest hint of happiness...a winter walking along the river, where laughter freezes instead of the water...where every question dies away in the throat while silent tongues keep beating against clenched teeth" (181).

In the stadium, the Romanians defeat the Danes. The crowd goes wild with happiness. An elderly man sings the old anthem which has been forbidden by the state. He lifts his chin high and sings loudly in order to drown his fear. He says, "My God, what we could be in the world, and here we don't even have bread to eat" (187). He throws up his hands and shouts to God to forgive them for being Romanians. A police dog pounces on his neck and his body is carried away by five policemen. But, in the days to come the forbidden song spreads and is being sung by a large number of people. The servant's daughter who works with Adina tells her that the dictator commands great fear in the whole country. She says, "He has a house in every city, and every city shrinks between his temples as his helicopter touches down. Wherever he spends the night, a bus with boarded up windows passes slowly through the streets. The bus is full of wire cages. It stops in front of every building to collect all the roosters and dogs and haul them away. Nothing is allowed to awaken the dictator except for light...any crowing or barking throws him off" (198).

The characters in *The Fox was Ever the Hunter* experience day-to-day irritability. Sometimes, they ignore other important tasks and focus on themselves only. Adina, Clara, the seamstress, the tinsmith, Sorin and Abi have developed fractured psyches. It is the result of the

brutalities of the inhuman Romanian totalitarian regime. The characters suffer repression, neurosis and psychosis while they battle with their day-today lives.

In *The Land of Green Plums* the characters Lola, Edgar, Kurt, Georg and the narrator experience strange state of affairs in totalitarian Romania. This makes them lash out at each other. They can't stand each other because they are all that they have. Their laughter has become hard and they use it to drill it into their pain. The narrator says, "Hate was allowed to trample and destroy. To mow the love that sprang up in our closeness like long grass. Apologies took back the insult in no more time than you can hold your breath" (75). The fractured psyches of the characters make them incapable of having normal emotions and relationships.

A lunatic of the city dies. The guard who is at duty is very sad and speechless at this demise. He thinks of his village, his father and his grandfather who have probably died. He doesn't thrash anyone that day. Trauma is present even in the people who make others toe the official line. Such guards are mostly village folk who have moved to the city in order to escape the demeaning poverty in the village and have become the part of a soviet imposed totalitarian government. Edgar lives on the fifth floor, Kurt on the third and Georg on the fourth. Each room has five boys. Their roommates are aware of the rebellious thoughts of these three men and are wary of them. They threaten to beat them up and one of them in each room reports each of them to the authorities. The roommates turn against Edgar, Kurt and Georg because their rooms have been searched by the members of the secret police and who have advised the roommates to distance themselves from the three of them. Their homes are also searched and their families are harassed. They struggle to maintain their sanity and develop neurotic thinking about their future. They feel worried and anxious on one pretext or the other. Edgar's father comes to city and takes a roundabout way to the dormitory to meet him. He gives him some hazelnuts and a letter from Edgar's mother. He gives every detail of the search that is done at their house. He tells Edgar that the members of the search party were not able to read letters from Edgar's uncles because the letters were in German. They took the letters with them. They turned everything in the house topsy-turvy. Now, it is almost impossible for Edgar's mother to find out as to what belonged to which of her customers. Edgar's uncles were SS men who had killed a lot of people and had parted ways after the end of the war. The patriarchal society of Romania also comes under the spell of the totalitarian regime. Valentina Glazar uncovers the influence of the totalitarian regime in "Conflicting Identities in Herta Muller's *The Land of Green Plums*":

By reflecting on the Banat-Swabian village, Muller also depicts an extreme patriarchal society deeply influenced by National Socialism. The childhood of Muller's first-person narrative begins with an alcoholic, abusive father and former Nazi, and a submissive mother obsessed with cleaning in a community governed by the imperative of the German Frog. As was the case with most ethnic German marriages after World War Two, the narrator's parents married out of necessity. The marriage is represented as having been based not on mutual feelings of affection, but rather on the narrow choice of men or women returning from the Siberian labour camps. (525).

The totalitarian regime has twisted the societal structure. People have become incapable of having normal relationships, which are based on mutual trust and love. Rather survival, necessity and subsistence become the deciding factors in marriage and familial matters. One more death happens in the city. A man who is always drunk and who talks out loud to himself has died in a telephone booth. Adina stands there long and talks to the dead man in her head. Then, she leaves the place. She is of a sensitive mental makeup and is not able to bear such inhuman incidents. Neurotic tendencies start appearing in her. Edgar and Georg are dismissed from their posts. Kurt also has taken so much leaves that he is practically out of the job. Georg comes to live with Edgar's parents. His behavior is not normal and he behaves like a ghost. It has become impossible to talk to him. Edgar's parents are annoyed at this. Muller depicts his loneliness and depression in the following words:

Georg would wake up early, get dressed, and sit down by the window. When he heard the clatter of dishes and cutlery, he'd move his chair over to the table. After breakfast, he'd take it back to the window. He gazed out. There was always the same bare acacia trunk, the ditch, the bridge, muck and grass and nothing else. He was waiting to hear from the passport office. When Edgar went to the village shop or out for a walk, Georg never went along...Everyday Georg found it harder to explain to his parents that the Georg he knew was different, that he'd become obsessed because his skull was so crammed full of worries. (214-15)

The totalitarian administration is taking toll on the psyche of its people, making them listless and neurotic in the long run. Earlier Georg had complained to Edgar that he was feeling lonely and as a result was not behaving in a normal way. But it was just an excuse by Georg. Actually, his psyche has developed strange gloominess and grief and he wants to leave the country at any cost.

The narrator sees that before leaving, the other girls have sewn a pig's ear in the middle of her bed. This is their style of saying farewell. This shows the fear among other girls and their disappointment in the narrator. The other girls feel as if she is putting them in trouble. After leaving the dormitory, she reaches her home in the village after four hours of journey. Now, she becomes a translator. Her grandfather still plays chess but imagines the queens, as his favourite queens were lost in the search. Her singing grandmother is not able to recognize her. The narrator remembers that last year she had put makeup every morning. She says to herself, "The less I wanted to live, the more I wanted to makeup" (82). The narrator has developed unwarranted guilt over things that are not her fault. This drives her towards suicidal tendencies. The narrator is also turned out of her job of translating the descriptions and workings of the machines. She takes to private tuitions for subsistence. She gives German lessons to students. But she is forced to leave this job also as the people where she gives her lessons are approached by the authorities. She is in a very disturbed state of mind. The loss of her job and the resulting feeling of being a failure leave her shattered. The same thing happens with her friends. She writes,

When we lost our jobs, we realized that we were worse off without that reliable distress than when we were under its constraint. While we were failures in the eyes of the people around us whether we had to work or not, we now became failures in our own eyes as well. Although we went through the whole list of justifications and found them all valid, we still felt we were failures. We were broken, sick of the rumours about the dictator's imminent death, weary of people killed trying to flee. We were moving closer to obsession with flight, without even noticing it. (218)

The dejected and miserable state of mind of these characters is manifest in these lines. They are in a young age but have been brought to a state where they feel themselves to be utter failures.

The narrator also says, “Each of us imagined how we might desert our friends by committing suicide” (219). Suicidal tendencies have started erupting in them. Their neurotic state of mind is worsening all the more. Lola keeps on looking for men in the tram. The men work in a detergent factory or a slaughter house and are dead tired when they board the train. They nod off in as soon as they occupy their seat. When a man looks at Lola, she looks back at him with inviting eyes. After that, the man is not able to close his eyes. At the next stop Lola moves out of the tram and the man follows her. Lola lures such men to the scruffy park and then has sex with them without any need of any kind of talk. “The men’s eyes glow and burn over Lola because they have been extinguished throughout the day” (16). At such a point Lola, thinks of her childhood. She was the sixth child born into a poor family. She is behaving in such a manner because the neurotic tendencies that have developed in her don’t allow her lead a normal life. At seven in the morning, buses full of prisoners, drive into the city from a prison that is outside the city. At seven at night, the buses drive back to the prison. Some people like the dwarf lady at the Trajan Square, the old woman with a sled and the philosopher at the station have gone insane. All these are neurotic people whose psyches have been victimized by the totalitarian state.

Both of them, the narrator and Edgar go to Frankfurt twice to see the place where Georg died. The second time they manage to get some snaps of the place too. They want to show these snaps to Kurt. But Kurt is also dead by now. He was found hung in his apartment with a rope. This is also told to be a case of suicide by the authorities. At the end of the novel, Both Edgar and the narrator are sitting together comparing the telegrams that announced the death of Georg and Kurt. They are looking at pictures that they have secretly captured. Edgar says, “When we don’t speak, we become unbearable, and when we do, we make fools of ourselves” (242). This is indicative of the excessive level of sadness that has developed in them. They experience neurotic tendencies like guilt, agonizing embarrassment and negativity. Both of them are attempting to hold on to their sanity.

The characters in *The Land of Green Plums* indulge in petulance and feelings of blame without any fault of theirs. In the case of Lola, the feeling of her childhood helplessness gets attached unconsciously to the loss that she experiences at present. This leads to a splitting in her mind and she thinks that she is not loveable at all. She becomes psychotic and hysterical. Her ego becomes a critical agent. Her superego has turned into a very harsh superego. Edgar, Georg, Kurt and the narrator have left the impoverished provinces and have come to the city in search of

better prospects. But, city life in the totalitarian regime is worse than the village life. They soon come in confrontation with the authorities. They have only two options before them, either bow before the oppressors or resist and perish.

In *The Appointment* the narrator, Paul and Lilli experience repressed anger, depression and hateful feelings. The life of the narrator has become aimless and she has started developing signs of neurosis. She has already developed senselessness but the feeling of living a life without any aim is beyond her suffering capacity. She has developed a defence mechanism. She tries to lose all her anxiety and aimlessness in the newest dresses. She writes, "In the factory I tried on the most gorgeous dresses and strutted like a peacock, crossing the packing hall all the way to the door and back. I continued trying on clothes in the hope of becoming so beautiful I would begin to exist" (39). The mental condition of the narrator becomes such that in every aspect of her daily life, the words spoken by Albu or Nelu occur in her mind and associate themselves with anything that she is doing. Both of them, the narrator and her husband Paul indulge in a defence mechanism when they dance to exhaustion in order to ease their mental pressure. The narrator could never forget her first husband though she disliked her. Moreover, her current circumstances lead to a loss of appetite as well as loss of happiness. She says, "And in my cerebellum, where we supposedly keep our sense of balance, would be a fly resting on a table, instead of an evening meal chewed and swallowed with no appetite. Surfaces and contours would be divided into friends and foes, easy to tell apart. And in between there'd still be some space for happiness" (96-97). Her neurosis is deepening day by day. Her anxiety has started disturbing her sleep patterns and diet. She struggles to find happiness. Her psyche has become so fragile that even a minor incident is capable of ruining her day. Peter Filkins analyzes *The Appointment* in his article "Betrayal as a Way of Life" published in The New York Times as follows:

In the world of "The Appointment," no bond is unbreakable, no loyalty is lasting, and no future is certain. Instead, life amounts to a sequence of arbitrary episodes, each undermining the other. Because of this, the narrator's private effort to impose order on a wide array of losses amounts to a political stance in itself. Admitting that "senselessness was easier for me to handle than aimlessness," she can only try to arrange the shards of her experience into some semblance of order while traveling on the tram.

The narrator in the novel suffers from emotional instability and mood swings. She feels panicked as she is not sure of loyalty from anyone in the suppressive regime she is living in. The cruel regime is expert at creating circumstances, where even close friends and relatives spy on one another. She finds it very difficult to keep a stable relationship. She suffers from neurosis and finds any relationship difficult to manage. She feels anxious, listless and aimless. Her unjustified sadness even makes it difficult for her to get with others at work. Nevertheless, amidst her obsessive thinking and unjustified guilt, she tries to make sense of her shattered life.

Utter desperation and neuroticism have become the second nature of every sensitive person in the country. No wonder, many people want to flee the country for good. The narrator depicts their fear and madness as follows:

I was wondering about the games that life plays, and on my way back from the shoemaker I went through all the possible ways of getting fed up with the world. The first and the best: don't get summoned and don't go mad, like most people. The second possibility: don't get summoned, but do lose your mind...The third: do get summoned and do go mad, like the two women in the mental home. Or else the fourth: get summoned but don't go mad, like Paul and myself. (120)

The psyche of the narrator becomes fractured and she constantly wavers between life and death, between happiness and sorrow, between sanity and forgetfulness. It's because she has the guts to get summoned again and again and not to bow to the might of the dictatorial regime. She says, "On the third day as I was heading for Albu, I found myself walking to the park. I lay with my face in the grass, dead, I would have welcomed it, and at the same time I liked living so damned much. I wanted to have a good cry and instead wound up laughing myself silly. Good thing the earth sounds so dull and hollow, I laughed until I was tired" (127). Such behaviour cannot be expected from normal people. This neurotic state of mind become the fate of those people who refuse to resign to their circumstances in an atmosphere of subjugation and suppression.

The characters in *The Appointment* experience suppressed and painful thoughts. They choose those relations where they might be demeaned. The narrator, Lilli and Paul suffer from intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts and are in search of a new identity. This leads to

neurotic and psychotic tendencies in them. They seek pleasure elsewhere in order to get away from problems that they face in their dysfunctional lives. Herta Muller's intense portrayal of sensitive characters, who want to keep their self-respect intact in a suffocating system, is realistic as well as poignant.

In *The Hunger Angel* the characters Leopold, Trudi Pelican, Beatrice Zakel Irma Pfeifer and Karli Halem experience cessation of interest in the outside world. They suffer from loss of capacity to love and even indulge in delusional expectation of punishment. The protagonist Leopold Auberg packs things for a journey. It is not a journey for pleasure. Rather, he is being shipped off to some place in Russia in the dead of winter. This journey is in fact a psychic journey of the protagonist. His entire psyche lays bare before us as he embarks on this journey. The time is January 1945 and the Second World War is still on. Everyone is keen on giving something to him that could be of some use. His father, grandfather, uncle Edwin, neighbor Herr Carp and aunt Fini give him their things. The toilet kit and the burgundy silk scarf only belongs to him. Auberg is 17 years of age and is secretly a little bit happy also that his name has figured in the Russian's list. He wants to go away from his small town where he is not able to lead a private life. The protagonist already has some elements of neurosis in him. This neurosis grows all the more as Leo faces the inhuman hardships of the forced labour camp. His deep desires are being repressed by his ego. Therefore, he wants to flee the place. He says in the novel, "I wanted to get out of our thimble of a town, where every stone had eyes...I simply wanted to go to a place that didn't know who I was" (2). The Romanian Germans are held guilty for the crimes committed by Hitler. They are deported to reparation camps in Russia with an effort to rebuild Russia. The inmates of these camps also include respectable people like lawyers and doctors. The inmates are subjected to unspeakable physical and psychological horrors. There are given bare minimum food so that they are able to survive for excruciating labour. As a result, the inmates develop various mental ailments like neurosis and psychosis. Many inmates lose touch with reality as their traumatic condition is beyond their bearing capacity. Their mental contact gets removed from consciousness and they experience hallucinations and nightmares. The violence, brutality and terror in the labour camps is portrayed by Muller in powerful language, which is expressive and poignant as well.

This novel portrays the inner landscape of humans in a very vivid manner. This is exemplified by the following incident when an inmate is almost beaten to death because he steals

bread. People who suffer atrocities and wrongdoings develop a kind of defence mechanism in them. In addition to the inmates, who steal bread, Leo has his memories, which also act like an enemy to him. Pavlo Shopin avers in “Unpacking the Suitcases: Autofiction and Metaphor in Herta Muller’s *Atemschaukel* (The Hunger Angel)”, “Precision and accuracy become oppressive features of language in the novel because they come from the cast-iron logic of the camp, and thus words and memories turn into the protagonist Leo’s enemies when they keep haunting him” (201). Leo is able to fight with his memories. This defence mechanism also unites people and they all stand united against any kind of wrong doing that springs from amongst themselves. Leo is able to fight. One day Leo hits Karli Halmen and nearly strikes him dead. This happens because Karli stole the whole bread that Albert Gion had saved by being steadfast for full five days. Karli is beaten by other inmates and Leo also can’t control his anger. Leo is over powered by hatred, cruelty and revenge:

My bloodlust had swallowed my reason. And I wasn’t the only one, we were a mob. We dragged Karli in his bloody, piss-soaked underwear out into the night, next to the barrack. It was February. We stood him against the barrack wall, he staggered and fell over. Without any discussion, the drummer and I undid our pants, then Albert Gion and all the others. And because we were all getting ready for bed anyway, one after the other we pissed on Karli Halmen’s face. Paul Gast the lawyer joined in as well...We used the snow to wipe the blood off our hands. Everyone went back to the barrack in silence and crawled into bed. (103)

Karli spends two days in the sick barrack. After that he is back with them and does not hold his punishment against them because he knows that he has earned it. Others also do not hold the theft against Karli. Normal human relationships have been twisted and convoluted in an atmosphere where survival is the only primary aim of life. Leo’s father is an art teacher. Such is the guilty conscience of Leo, that whenever his father utters the word water colour, he feels as if his father has kicked him. It’s because the place Neptune Baths is always inside his head. He says, “I was my own thief, the words came out of nowhere and caught me’ (4). It is his defence mechanism that he always becomes cautious whenever such words are uttered by any member of his family. His family takes pride on its Aryan Heritage as they belong to the Transylvanian

Saxons. They also believe in the black square of Hitler's mustache and this makes Leo cringe at his forbidden relationship and that too with a Romanian.

The characters in *The Hunger Angel* experience depression and masochistic tendencies. They feel emptiness, grief and lose interest in those activities that bring meaning and enjoyment. They think themselves to be worthless and indulge in self-reproach and hence can be called psychotic. Leo, the protagonist, undergoes harrowing experiences at the reparation camp. This experience changes his life forever. Listlessness and unjustified sadness become his second nature. Even at the end of his life, he is unable to form stable relationships. He remains in the grip of neurosis even in his old age.

Chapter V

Deconstructing Totalitarianism and its Reflections

The concept of totalitarianism was developed in the 1920s by German political theorist Carl Schmitt and Italian fascists like Benito Mussolini who glorified this concept as the supreme form of nationalism. The reality is, however, contrary to what they claimed. Totalitarianism is a form of government that does not permit any kind of political opposition and advocates complete control over the lives of its inhabitants. The state designs its own goals and every individual is supposed to be subservient to them. After World War I, political chaos ensued and this led to the emergence of totalitarian regimes in countries like Germany, Soviet Union and Italy. Movements that advocated totalitarianism took advantage of the proliferation of sophisticated weapons and the modern forms of communication. They used these to achieve total control over their citizens and to further their extreme political agenda. Totalitarianism is considered to be the complete and monstrous form of authoritarianism. Authoritarian governments are content with having complete political supremacy and are not keen on changing the psyche of their citizens. Totalitarian regimes on the other hand aim to control the whole social life of their inhabitants ranging from control over education to domination over private life and morals.

French philosopher and political scientist, Raymond Claude Ferdinand Aron was critical of totalitarian ideas, especially those of Marxists. He wrote against those thinkers who extolled Marxism and denigrated democracy. He considered any regime a totalitarian system, which perpetrated atrocities and oppression upon its subjects in the name of exalted goals. He was critical of left-wing movements and the totalitarian tendencies of Marxist dispensation, which took freedom of inquiry and freedom of controversy away from each and every individual. He talked of the disordered intellectualism and morality that is associated with totalitarian systems. He called totalitarian thinking as superficial thinking because it attacked every other system as inefficient but never looked upon its own pitfalls. In his book *The Opium of the Intellectuals* (1955), Raymond Aron observes, "In any given regime, it is essential to achieve a reasonable compromise between conflicting demands which, carried to extremes, would be totally incompatible" (21). The conflicting demands are a feature of almost all the political systems.

But, in totalitarianism, this conflict is taken to an extreme. The totalitarian ideals tend to be totally incompatible to reality and practicality.

Robert Conquest, a British-American historian and poet in his book *The Great Terror: Stalin's Purges of the 1930* lashed at the totalitarian policies of Stalin. He stated that the purges were not a narrow affair but a widespread phenomenon in the Soviet Union between 1934 and 1939. According to his estimates the purges undertaken by the totalitarian regime of Joseph Stalin resulted in the death of 13-15 million people. Death and suffering of such monstrous proportions was falsified by maintaining millions of fake dossiers and records. He also talks of insurrections and rebellions that took place against the totalitarian regime in the Soviet Union. He gives account of about 13,754 revolts in 1930 that involved about 2.5 million farmers. It is alleged that Stalin in order to take revenge from the Ukrainian people organized a famine in 1932-33, which claimed 6 million lives. Stalin adopted his inhuman policy of collectivization with a view that farm yields under such a system would increase. But the contrary happened and the peasants lost interest in collective farms as there was no compensation from the state and tax requisitions were doubled. In addition to criticizing the ill effects of totalitarianism, critics like Karl Bracher have termed this system as highly inflexible and therefore not suitable for the revolutionary ideas that it espouses.

Hannah Arendt, the celebrated American philosopher and political theorist, describes the modus operandi of totalitarian movements in her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism*:

Totalitarian movements are mass organizations of atomized, isolated individuals. Compared with all other parties and movements, their most conspicuous external characteristic is their demand for total, unrestricted, unconditional, and unalterable loyalty of the individual member. This demand is made by the leaders of totalitarian movements even before they seize power. It usually precedes the total organization of the country under their actual rule and it follows from the claim of their ideologies that their organization will encompass, in due course, the entire human race. (323)

Blind faith in the ideology of the totalitarian leaders is a pre-requisite for the success of any totalitarian regime. The totalitarian leaders call this blind faith as loyalty and allegiance to the supreme leader. Nation and national wealth are held supreme and the individual is just a small

cog in the grand machine. The totalitarian leaders also make grandiose claims of making the whole world subservient to their ideology. Hannah is of the view that loneliness and seclusion of people serve to be the forerunners of totalitarianism. Masses, who are unfit for developing a form of self-government, give rulers a pretext to devise ways that entail sudden shifts of policy. The totalitarian rulers then justify themselves because they prove that the common people are unfit to rule themselves through self-government. Hannah's book is the standard text on the subject of totalitarianism. It consists of three parts that deal with anti-Semitism, imperialism and totalitarianism respectively. The third part deals in detail with the type of governments in the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. Hannah considers both these forms of governments as absolute evils. Her book is exceedingly complex because she has interwoven the concept of totalitarianism with the forms of government under Hitler and Stalin. She was of the view that totalitarianism changes the ideology and belief into deductive rules of action. It subjugates human freedom completely and leads to debased forms of politics. In totalitarianism people are merely seen as material and the concept of the unique self is totally falsified. She did not say that anti-Semitism caused Totalitarianism, rather she said that elements like anti-Semitism, expansionism and decline of nation state crystallized in movements that led to regimes like that of Hitler and Stalin.

She rejected totalitarianism but was well aware of the problems that are linked to human diversity. Race, ethnicity and religious beliefs are the source of human diversity. The problem of the world today is to create a common world where people, who are historically and culturally distinct, can live and thrive together. Hannah gave her readers the insight that human nature is not changeable. So, problems like totalitarianism are bound to surface in one form or the other. Nonetheless she encouraged the readers also as she believed that great things are possible that we haven't even thought of. She was of the view that totalitarianism should not be subsumed under traditional moral and political categories. It has no precedent and its elements are present in this world in one form or the other. If it tries to re-emerge in its monstrous form it can and must be resisted. This is the only way for the reconciliation of this world. One should not feel hopeless but should live in the present as this is the temporal dimension of action. Bruce F. Pauley in his book *Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini: Totalitarianism in the Twentieth Century* depicts the ideology of totalitarian leaders:

In many ways, totalitarianism was a secularized religion complete with charismatic leaders, sacred books (with old and new testaments), prophets, martyrs, saints, disciples, heretics, hymns, ceremonies, processions, and concepts of heaven and hell. True believers claimed to be in possession of the one revealed truth that could not be disputed on the basis of rational arguments. There were chosen people who belonged to the “right” class or race and nonbelievers and non-favored groups who had to be eradicated from the righteous community by instruments of inquisition. The young were to be thoroughly indoctrinated in the new “religion” so that it would be perpetuated indefinitely. It is no wonder, therefore, that many traditional religious leaders soon realized that they were competing with the totalitarian leaders and parties for the very soul of the people. (2-3).

In totalitarianism, the difference between life and death and action and inaction becomes devoid of any meaning and the self-consciousness of the individual hangs in a state of limbo. They appeal to the past and promise that they would restore the nation and culture to the previous pristine glory. In reality, they lead the masses towards racism and xenophobia through their emotional speeches. They want people to follow a new ‘religion’ passionately, which will end all the evils of humanity. They instill the feeling in the people that history is somehow leaving them behind and that they should work collectively for some utilitarian greater good. For this, the ends justify the means and the only rule of the law is about the process of following and creating laws to achieve the ultimate good.

In *The Passport* Windisch, his wife Katharina, daughter Amalie, Dietmar and Rudi suffer from trauma, fear, suffering, violence and guilt while living in a totalitarian state. They deal with repression in the community, family and the state. Windisch remembers how he has been befooled by the mayor for a long time. The mayor asks for bribe all the more but does nothing about Windisch’s passport:

The previous summer, Windisch had been on his way home with two sacks of flour. Windisch had knocked at a window. The mayor shone his torch through the curtain. “Why do you still knock?” said the mayor. “Put the flour in the yard. The gate is open.” His voice was asleep. That night, there was a thunderstorm. A flash of lightning struck the grass in front of the window. The mayor switched off his torch. His voice woke up

and spoke more loudly. “Another five deliveries, Windisch,” said the mayor, “then the money at New Year. And at Easter you’ll have your passport.” “Twelve deliveries since then, and ten thousand lei, and Easter is long past,” thinks Windisch. It’s a long time since he knocked on the window. (12-13)

The miserable way in which the local government works has started taking toll on the psyche of the citizens in general and the minorities in particular. People have to bribe their way out in every matter and rampant corruption has scarred the lives of the inhabitants. People indulge in superstitions and become mentally unwell. Amalie’s love Dietmar gets killed accidentally during military practice. The priest blames it on the owl. According to him the owl flew away from the village to the area where Dietmar was practicing with his fellow soldiers. He saw the owl, laid his rifle in the grass and stood up. A bullet struck him and he died on the spot. Katharina takes it for an accident whereas Windisch is sure that the owl killed Dietmar. Dietmar’s funeral takes place in the village. The militiaman and other soldiers pay last tributes to him. At the funeral, the funeral prayer leader tells Windisch that the priest has called Amalie to her place the Sunday afternoon. The priest has to look for her baptismal certificate in the register. The utter helplessness of the minorities is evident in this incident. A pious gathering like funeral ceremony also has corruption and stigma lurking behind it in the totalitarian country.

The characters, especially women withdraw themselves from the society. They experience fear which is no less than madness for them. This also leads to their withdrawal from the village economy. They don’t earn anything and thus become a burden on their families. They are also aware of this predicament and this state of affairs leads to their mental derangement. Though, Amalie, her mother Katharina and the village post woman don’t get mentally deranged, they surely become the victims of a repressive system of government. The totalitarian regimes want to get hold of the psychology of people. This method is more effective than physical suppression of people as it changes the thinking process of the masses. Once the thoughts are changed any opposition to the regime becomes a rarity that can be controlled easily. The language used in the novel is highly symbolic because the write is aware of the fact that human beings communicate with each other through a set of symbols. Symbols have more impact on us than mere matter-of-fact words. Carl Jung in his book *Man and His Symbols* says, “we constantly use symbolic terms to represent concepts that we cannot define or fully comprehend”

(21). The symbols used in the novel have negative connotations. Owl is used to symbolize death whereas usually it is the symbol of intelligence. The character skinner who feeds the owls with lizards and toads and later kills them, hollows them and stuffs them is representative of the State's behaviour with the masses. "He fed the owls with lizards and toads. When they were fully grown, he killed them. He hollowed them out. He put them in slaked lime. He dried them and stuffed them" (33). Similarly, the colours black and white are the symbols of polarization in the society. There is no grey colour. The rich are as they are-rich and the poor are always poor. The name Windisch is also symbolic. It means wind-like. Wind is the symbol of the life force. Windisch has many facets and appearances just like the wind. His task in the novel is to use his potential to the fullest so that he is able to use the life force in him to achieve his aim.

People have become hard hearted and their sensibilities have degraded. They find joy when somebody else falls in danger because the feeling of mutual trust and respect has altogether diminished from the society. People are solely judged on the basis of their economic status. The writer also points out that political instability is a major factor that demeans and frustrates people. When people know that their fate is not going to improve, they resign to their circumstances by and by. Their fighting spirit gets fatigued and the revolutionary thoughts die a slow death. They don't want to fight. They just want to flee the place. The joiner of the village has also applied for the passport. His wife has been exploited by the priest of the village. Muller writes, "Sometimes the joiner's wife is summoned to the priest because of the baptismal certificate, sometimes to the militiaman because of the passport" (49). The night watchman tells Windisch, "With some families the militiaman loses and mislays the applications and the revenue stamps seven times. He looks for them on the mattress in the post office store room with the women who want to emigrate" (49).

Once the King's train had to pass through the village station. This was before the war. The station was decorated. People gathered on the station wearing bright Sunday Clothes. The children wore white knee socks and held big bouquets of flowers. The village band stood there in their dark red uniforms. The train steamed into the station and the band started playing a march. The children threw flowers in the air. But the King did not show up. Herta Muller describes the callousness of the ruling class:

People were wearing their Sunday Clothes. The children wore white knee socks. They held heavy bouquets of flowers in front of their faces. When the train steamed into the station, the band played a march. People clapped. The children threw their flowers in the air. The train moved slowly. A young man stretched his long arm out of the window. He spread his fingers and called: "Silence. His Majesty the King is sleeping." When the train had left the station, a herd of white goats came from the meadows and ate the bouquets of flowers...A little girl who was to have recited a poem for the King when the march had finished...sat in the waiting room and cried, until the goats had eaten all the bunches of flowers. (57)

The indifference and cruelty of the ruling class is evident in this anecdote. No wonder that the people want to escape this callousness and oppression and dream of a different life in a different country. The dirty reality of the totalitarian state has been depicted by Herta Muller in a language, which reminds us of a sad song.

At the school, the little boys and girls are made to sing the Romanian national anthem daily. They stand in a semi-circle in front of the teacher's desk and press the palms of their hands against their thighs. They raise their chins and sing loudly. They look like little soldiers and sing all the seven verses of the anthem. Amalie hangs the Romanian map on the wall and says, "This is our Fatherland. These are the towns of our Fatherland...Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu is the father of our country...Comrade Elena Ceausescu is the mother of our country...all the children love Comrade Nicolae and Comrade Elena, because they are their parents" (60). In this way, little children are being brainwashed right from the beginning. Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife are being termed as the parents. In reality, they don't care even a jot for their citizens. Anna Porter in "The Lonely Passion of Herta Muller" says, "The Passport, its setting a small village in the mountains, is haunted by a simple man's determination to escape the hopelessness of his birthplace. His desire to move to the West traps him and those close to him in horrific acts of self-degradation to please the authorities who have the power to grant his wish" (490).

In *The Passport*, Herta Muller has portrayed a village, which is on the verge of breaking up. Most of the German residents want to emigrate because they cannot bear the corruption, suffering and trauma while living in a totalitarian regime. For the characters Amalie, Windisch, Katharina, Rudi and Skinner, life has become an elegy and they are unable to bear the pain of it.

Rudi is an engineer but finds no joy in what he does. He develops mental ailments and has to remain in a recuperation house. Skinner has a lot of love for the place where he was born but the unforgiving reality of totalitarianism forces him to emigrate.

In *Travelling on One Leg* Irene, Franz and Stefan suffer from identity loss and feel as exiles. The protagonist Irene has to live in a refugee hostel because there is no room in the admission facility. The people who have emigrated from the country have silence and distance in their eyes. They have been traumatized by the experience and this experience has got on their nerves. Muller writes, “The distance was in the eyes too. And also, later, when the refugees weren’t walking in the street anymore. When they went to the post office, or talked too loudly on the phone from a rough neighbourhood. And wrote signs of life on cards to another country” (21). The refugees are still under Trauma and are leading a neurotic life in a country that is ethnically theirs but is not their motherland. They are in a broken state of mind and are living just because they are afraid of dying. It can also be said that Irene herself is in such a state of mind and this state of her projects onto everybody she comes in contact with. Irene has become very sensitive and even a hint of the other country awakens trauma in her. The German official who is handling her immigration file remarks, “You are so sensitive, so sensitive. As if our country has to make up for everything your country did wrong” (42). Irene said as if to herself, “I only know life stories that were wrong” (43). Irene knows that wrong has been done to her and she also knows that the profound isolation that she experiences is a result of this wrong only. The persons who have immigrated to Germany are given money by the German government for their daily needs. But it is not enough. Often such people take to stealing. Once a lady steals a pair of shoes from the store. Irene in her sensitiveness and insecurity thinks that she might be framed for theft because she is wearing the same shoes as were on the shelf. Muller writes, “Irene walked towards the door. She walked slowly, so as not to be noticed. She didn’t want to leave. She wanted to disappear as the woman had disappeared” (45). Her insecurity makes her fear everything in the city. Muller depicts her emotional instability in befitting words:

As she was writing the postcard, sentences came to Irene’s mind that she didn’t carry in her head. She didn’t have them on the tip of her tongue when it was between her and the streets. Whenever she tried to relate to Franz and to herself, everything outside Irene suddenly had properties...But her own inner insecurity was uncovered, washed up in

Irene's head. You couldn't damn that up. The city and her skull were an alternation of movement and immobility... Sometimes the city attacked Irene's thoughts. Sometimes Irene's thoughts attacked the city" (52).

Irene feels insecurity everywhere because she is insecure from the inside. The new country, the new relationship, nothing gives her a feeling of security and fulfillment. The fear, that is the creation of the totalitarian state, is always present deep within her mind. Franz's friend Thomas is also unhappy at the core of his heart. This reflects the turbulent times of that period when young people are also mired in sadness and dejection. Thomas tells Irene, "The bad thing is that my unhappiness is too big for me. I always have to take it to other people" (59). Irene thinks about herself and Franz and the unusual relationship they are in. She is always fearful and Franz is always unpredictable. Their relationship is strange because totalitarian regimes make people incapable of normal human relationships. Brigid Haines says in "The Unforgettable Forgotten: The Traces of Trauma in Herta Muller's *Reisende Auf Einem Bein* (Travelling on One Leg)", "Irene behaves in a voyeuristic and compulsive way, returning on each of her remaining nights to the place where she can observe a flasher, and rushing into a one-night-stand with a West German tourist, Franz. She pursues Franz after her arrival in Berlin, though it is clear to her that he is not really interested in her, and indulges in promiscuous behaviour in a search for tenderness" (274). The totalitarian regime has made her incapable of normal human relationships. Life in the repressive regime has turned her into a twisted personality, incapable of the warmth and sustainability of human relations.

In the building where Thomas lives, some construction work is going on. Several people work there including a boy with the peaked cap whom Thomas knows. Such boys are found in every city. This boy is one of the many you lose track of while they are still alive. Thomas says about the boy, "They would let their skin shine for a couple of years. Their eyes would sparkle like wet stones. Their pupils were the hidden ends of drains, the semi-savage jewelry of rusty pipes...Their years withered fast around their thighs and hips. A touch of perfume with a cloud of urine whenever they stood" (62). One day Irene gets a letter from the other country. It is from Dana. The letters that Dana writes reach Irene after a long time and have always been opened. The totalitarian dispensation always makes it sure that letters contain only that stuff, which people are allowed to write. The letters which deviate from the totalitarian norms are confiscated

and destroyed. In the meantime, there is another letter from Dana. Dana writes that the drummer has hanged himself. Dana writes in the letter, “The readiness to die for a small thing was big. His face has become too hot recently and he had plunged head first into every moment” (142). Irene folds Dana’s letter to the size of half a postcard and puts it in her handbag. Irene feels as if a face is growing in the blossoms that are shed by creepers. Muller depicts the presumptuous luxury of the ruling class through Irene’s eyes:

Irene saw the place at the Landwehrkanal where she had met Thomas. Creepers scattered blossoms like flour. The water had the same reflection as then. A face was growing between decayed poles. Irene didn’t want to admit it: The wife of the dictator from the other country looked like Rosa Luxemburg. There was a curse on Rosa Luxemburg’s face. The dictator’s wife had carried this face into old age long ago. She was a dictatress. In the evening she walked through the mansion at the dictator’s side. She looked for a safe place to sleep in the many rooms. Servants carried beds through the doors past eavesdropping velvet. The night became presumptuous in the mansion...Poverty was asleep in the country. (143)

The stark contrast between the sprawling mansion and poverty of common people is depicted by Herta Muller. The dictator and his wife were called the father and mother. But they didn’t possess even an iota of the love and warmth that parents have for their children. The citizens for them were just a means to increase the national wealth. They didn’t care for the emotions, aspirations and dreams of the citizens.

The characters in *Travelling on One Leg* search for human relationships. The totalitarian Romanian government has led to skewed human relationships. People suffer oppression and this does not allow them lead normal lives. Irene, Franz and Thomas lead listless lives and keep on postponing the things. Franz is called a waverer by his guide because he has developed the habit of procrastinating things. Irene and Thomas also experience unaccounted for grief and moroseness.

In *The Fox was Ever the Hunter* the characters Adina, Clara, Paul and Liviu attempt to survive in the totalitarian reality that is worse than a nightmare. They suffer under the weight of the totalitarian regime and their soul seems to be wrung out by despair. In this novel, Muller has

used language that very aptly depicts the trauma, which any sensitive person living in a totalitarian regime, would experience. Doris Mironescu says, “The language takes part in the author’s personal history of trauma and therefore cannot be taken out of it; the traumatic memory is inevitably haunting and it participates to any further semantic structuring of present and past experience” (65). The condition of the protagonist Irene is described by images that have photographic precision and which coalesce into a kaleidoscope of terror. Then, the reader realizes, how difficult it is to keep mind and body intact in a repressive regime- a regime where the distinction between friend and foe and the difference between the victim and the perpetrator has blurred completely. Jean Zimmerman from NPR.org showers praise on *The Fox was ever The Hunter* in the following words, “In *The Fox Was Ever the Hunter*, characters don't live their lives, they perform them matter of factly, with the state as an ever-watchful, ever-predatory audience. Physical detail communicates psychological realities.” (“The Nightmarish Reality Of Ceausescu's Romania In 'The Fox'”). Adina’s friend Clara works in a wire factory but is not in a good financial condition like most of the workers. She has developed the habit of cursing everything that troubles her. She is sunbathing along with Adina on the roof of the apartment block. She is given an apple by Clara. The first bite by Adina reveals a worm inside it which she eats along with the flesh of the apple. Her hunger has taught her not to worry about such small things anymore. The psychological reality of Adina’s mind, who is living in a dictatorship is communicated through the physical detail. Adina tries to survive in the reality of Nicolae Ceausescu’s Romania, which is worse than a nightmare for her.

The children that Adina teaches have warts on their fingers that are usually covered with dust. Their fingers are like turkey necks and their eyes are tired. They kick and shove one another and often get injured. But their parents and teachers just give a shrug of the shoulders at this. This shows that the education system of the country is in shambles. Qualities like humanity, brotherhood and modesty are never taught at school. One of her students tells her that her mother mentioned hidden drawers, “in the tree trunks, in the grass, in the fence, in the walls” (56). Children are taught party songs at school that praise their leader, the party and the nation. All kinds of imaginative, creative and artistic songs are banned in school. The dictator’s large image is printed every day in newspapers. He is called the beloved son of the people. The fishermen in the town are a poor lot and they barely manage to eke out a living. They like many other people dream of fleeing the country through the river Danube. Muller portrays their predicament in the following words. One of the fishermen conveys his desperation to the other fishermen:

You know, every night I can hear the crickets outside. The whole bed shakes each time the nightshirt turns over. The crickets chirp, they pull one long note like a dark string, they eat up all my peace and quiet. I sense that they could be right underneath our room, so I hold my breath. I have the feeling they are carrying our entire apartment block on their backs through the grass, across the long flat plain, all the way to the Danube. When I fall asleep, I dream I’m stepping out of the apartment onto the street. But there isn’t any street and I’m standing there barefoot in my pajamas, next to the water, freezing. I have to escape; I have to flee across the Danube to Yugoslavia. And I don’t know how to swim. (33)

This depicts very aptly that the psyche of people in a totalitarian country is mired in hopelessness and fear. People suffer from depression and nightmares. They keep on thinking about fleeing the country because they can see they the totalitarian regime has nothing to offer them, except suppression and surveillance. One day Adina and Paul receive a wedding invitation from Liviu, Paul’s schoolmate. Liviu is going to marry a teacher from the village because she is a woman from the village who belonged. Liviu’s decision to marry a village woman rather than a city dweller shows his desire to cling to his roots. He wants to assert his identity in a country which is bent upon destroying everything in the name of extreme nationalism. He says, “The Romanian

farmers eat and drink too much because they have too little, and they talk too little because they know too much” (37). There is hunger all over the city. Bread is scarce and the hungry mouths are countless. Bread usually comes by a horse cart in a shop. But the people struggle with each other to get the bread. Muller writes, “Hunger sharpens elbows for shoving and teeth for screaming. The shop has fresh bread. The elbows inside the shop are countless, but the bread is counted” (42). Children have lost any sensitivity towards life and death as they have seen so much death all around. When, Adina stops a girl from putting a frog in her pocket as it would die, the girl laughs and replies, “That doesn’t matter, doesn’t matter at all” (51).

Almost all the officials are corrupt. The warehouse supervisor Grigore sexually exploits the women who work in the factory. The women have to condescend to his demands because they get warm jackets in return, which can protect them in the severe cold. The gate woman of the warehouse talks about the illegitimate children that were the result of sexual exploitation:

The women’s children all look like Grigore. Thank God the mothers don’t bring them to the factory. I’ve never seen the children all grouped together, only one here and one there. Short or tall, skinny or fat, black-haired or blond. Girls and boys. When they stand next to each other you can tell they’re siblings. They’re all different but every one of their faces has a palm-sized piece of Grigore. From the moment they’re born, the women’s children suffer from sleeplessness. These children start growing and for a few years it seems they will grow up and away from the factory. But sooner or later, they come to the gatehouse looking for their mothers. It’s rarely anything urgent. Most of the time there’s no reason. (79)

The children suffer from sleeplessness right from their birth. This is attributed to machine oil by the doctors as the women who work in the wire factory are exposed to it continually. When the children grow, they too work in the factory. They do not wish to do so but don’t have any other job avenues. Muller writes, “From the tip of their noses to the tips of their toes they never find another way because there is no other way for them to find. Nothing but this gutter of poverty, hopelessness and tedium, from mother to child and on to that child’s children....at first they are angry and loud, then eventually they become soft and quiet, pattering from one day to the next” (81). This is the life that the totalitarian regime promises to its young citizens. Totalitarian

leaders talk about the combined wealth of the people and equal distribution of wealth. In reality, power and wealth get concentrated only in a few hands. Liviu lives in a village in the south of the country. This part of the country is cut off by the Danube and all the villages are lined along the road. Liviu tells them, “The villagers keep lots of dogs but not account of robbers...it’s so they won’t hear the gunshots. And they keep geese instead of roosters because geese gaggle throughout the night” (205). One day the dictator flees. Paul opens all the curtains and the room where they had been hiding seems to be shaking with light. The policeman in the village is stripped down to his underwear and is given a sound beating. Liviu and Paul drink brandy, dance and sing the forbidden song “Awake, Romanian, wake from the deadly slumber” (223). The forbidden song spreads in the whole country. People celebrate when the shackles of totalitarianism finally get broken.

A complete change takes place all over the country. In the wire factory, the director is made the foreman and the gateman is made the warehouse supervisor. The servant’s daughter becomes the director of the school and the director becomes the coach. The officer in whose house her mother worked is arrested and the officer’s wife goes into hiding. Ilie, the soldier runs away from his duty and boards the train that goes to Timisoara. Adina and Paul keep the pieces of the fox fur rug in a box and release it into the river. They place a candle inside a hole in the middle of the box. Paul cries and says, “Abi is up there, looking down on us” (236).

The characters in *The Fox was Ever the Hunter* experience lack of freedom of expression. They want to flee Romania because they fear violence, imprisonment and execution. The totalitarian state has become a system of regulatory institutions, which wants to influence and shape each and every aspect of the lives of its citizens, leaving no space for creativity, self-esteem and flowering of the personality.

In *The Land of Green Plums* the narrator, Edgar, Kurt and Georg experience political repression. The government wants to actively suppress their thoughts, beliefs and activities. The four students who study in a university are expelled from the university and are declared as political dissidents because they try to use their freedom of speech in a police-controlled regime. Kurt writes a poem that has such views as people are not supposed to have in a totalitarian government. He has to pay the price for it. The narrator describes his humiliation and disgrace at the hands of Captain Pjele:

Captain Pjele had the text of the poem on a piece of paper. He crumpled it up; Pjele the dog barked. Kurt was made to open his mouth, and the captain stuffed the piece of paper into it. Kurt had to eat the poem. It made him gag. Pjele the dog jumped at him twice, tore his trousers, and scratched his legs. The third time, Kurt reckoned, the dog Pjele would certainly have bitten him. But Captain Pjele said in a quiet, bored voice: That's enough, Pjele. Captain Pjele complained about his kidneys and said: You're lucky you've got me. Edgar had to stand in a corner of the room for an hour without moving. The dog Pjele sat in front of him and watched. His tongue hung out of his mouth. (79)

Kurt, Edgar and the narrator are brutally interrogated because they chose to have freedom of expression. They are vocal about human freedom and dignity. Pavlo Shopin in "Metaphorical Conceptualization of Injurious and Injured Language in Herta Muller" says, "The act of interrogation is experienced by the characters in Müller's novel as a physical act of injury to the human body. In the office of the secret agent Pjele, the protagonist of the novel *Herztier* is forced to undress and sing" (1073). Their steadfastness does not augur well with the totalitarian authorities, who want complete subjugation to the state ideal. The authorities want to injure each and every dissident in body and spirit. Any deviation from the state ideal is considered to be insurgency. The novel highlights the plight of dissidents, those people of courage who stand up against the regime. In addition, this novel also exposes the vulnerabilities, mental harassment and the excesses that women face in a totalitarian regime controlled by police force.

Without any sign of what is going to happen, one day the narrator finds Lola hanging by her belt in the closet. It is around 3 O'clock in the afternoon and it is Lola's fourth year of study. Then, three men show up and photograph Lola hanging in the closet. They do not ask the other girls a thing because it seems to the narrator that they already know why all this happened. The same day, Lola's picture is in the glass display case. Beneath her picture is written, 'This student has committed suicide. We abhor her crime and we despise her for it. She has brought disgrace upon the whole country' (23). Two days later, at four o'clock in the afternoon, Lola is posthumously expelled from the party and ex-matriculated from the university. An official from the lectern announces her expulsion from the party. All the people clap. They feel like crying but keep on clapping because of fear. Then there is a vote on Lola's expulsion. The gym instructor raises his hand first of all. Then, all the other hands go up. People keep their hands up in the air

till the gym instructor does not lay down his hand on the lectern. Most of the people are exhausted by then. Then he says, "There's no need to count, of course we're all in favour (28). Two days later, Lola's diary disappears from the narrator's locked suitcase. The narrator is not able to bear all this. She goes to roam outside. There she sees Lola's men coming out of the factories after an early shift. Nearly all of them are peasants who have been fetched from the villages by the administration to work in the factories in the city. The men do not belong to the city. The narrator depicts the predicament of the peasants who have become misfits in the cities:

I watched Lola's men as they came off the early shift in the factories. They were peasants, fetched here from their villages. They, too, had said to themselves, no more sheep, no more melons. Like fools, they had gone chasing after the soot of the city, following the thick pipes that crept across the fields to the edge of every village. The men knew that their iron, their wood, and their detergent didn't count. That's why their hands remained crude, that's why they manufactured lumps and clods instead of craft and industry. All that was supposed to be great and sharp-edged became tin sheep in their hands. All that was supposed to be little and round, became in their hands a wooden melon. (29)

The totalitarian Romania is producing misfits. People who are exceptional at their work in the villages are forced to work in the factories. This brings non-fulfillment, boredom and listlessness in their lives. Such people whose talent is being destroyed in the name of increased national wealth can only be a burden on the nation. After that the proletariat of tin sheep and wooden melons head to the nearest bar. But, here no one is a guest but all are 'refugees from a meaningless afternoon' (30). They eat like beasts, stagger and yell and smash empty bottles on one another's heads. This shows their tortuous state of mind and the constant yelling and fighting is a defence mechanism that they employ to overcome the emptiness of their minds. The next day, if they remained sober, 'they would go into the park alone to get a grip on themselves' (31). They also fear that in their inebriated state they might have said something political and it might have reached the authorities because the waiters report everything.

Edgar, Kurt and Georg have kept other books hidden because the books contain revolutionary thoughts. The narrator takes some of the books with her to a graveyard and reads

them. She is surprised to see the depth of ideas in these books. Those books are against the totalitarian ideology. The narrator has learnt how to wander to fill the emptiness in her life. She wanders at different places in the city, in the street and in the graveyard. The narrator and Edgar come from a village whereas Kurt and Georg came from small towns. Georg says, “Everyone’s a villager here...No cities can grow in a dictatorship, because everything stands small when it’s being watched” (44). The mothers of Edgar, Kurt and Georg are all seamstresses and all of them are sick on the inside. The narrator says, “Edgar’s mother in her gallbladder, Kurt’s mother in her stomach and Georg’s mother in her spleen” (45). The narrator’s mother is also ill. ‘She was sick on the outside, in the small of her back. (45). The fathers of all the four had been in the SS and have come back from the war. Their mothers write similar letters to them, which are full of talk about their illnesses. The mothers use their illnesses as a kind of knot with which they want to tie their children to themselves. Sascha Talmor says in “The Cruel Sons of Cain: Herta Muller’s *The Land of Green Plums*” avers, “There is no privacy, no friendship, no trust, no affection, no love. All the country and all the people are under a curse, they are all infected with an incurable disease from which there is only one way out: death or escape across the frontier. But even when the very few succeed in escaping, the dictator's henchmen reach out and destroy them in their new hiding-place” (90). Edgar, Kurt, Georg and their families have to bear this curse because their inner spirit has not bowed down to the totalitarian might. They keep on showing their disagreement, displeasure and dissent against the authorities in their own small ways.

The books that the four of them read are smuggled into this totalitarian country. The narrator says, “The books were in our mother tongue, but the silence of the villages, which forbids thought, wasn’t in them (47). Edgar and Georg give vent to their feelings through poetry, which they hide in the summer house. Georg lowers his head and in a low voice sings the following song, “Yellow canary bird, yellow as yolk, with feathers so soft, and eye so far away” (60). This song is very popular in the country but has been banned by the regime as some of the singers have escaped from the country. This is a smothering of the culture and folk literature by the dictatorial government. Edgar, Kurt and Georg also recite a poem too often. They recite it in the scruffy park, in the tram, in the movie theater and on the way to barber shop. The poem is considered to be an incitement to flee the country. The poem is a folk song but is not considered to be fit to be sung in the new administration. Captain Pjele, the mouthpiece of the administration

says that previously there was the rule of the bourgeoisie and the landowning class but now the country is supreme. Now, people sing different songs. Kurt takes photographs of the buses that take prisoners every morning to construction sites and back. They even compose songs that are full of hatred for the dictator and his soldiers. It is their own way of harming the perpetrators of evil. The secret police itself spreads rumors about the dictator's illness so that people can find courage to flee the place. Then, almost each and every one trying to escape is gunned down by the bullets.

The guards are everywhere. They are present in the streets, outside the entrance of big buildings, outside shops, in the scruffy park, in front of the dormitories and at the station. These are the young men from the villages who have yellowish teeth and wear too tight or too loose suits. They have left the villages in order to escape poverty and strict patriarchal atmosphere of their households. They are fond of the green plums and take roundabout routes to pick green plums from the branches of trees that droop with fruit. They fill their pockets with the green plums that last a long time. These young men harass common people and grab at ladies on one pretext or the other or simply as per their whims. They and their dictator are called plumsuckers. Plumsucker is a term of abuse that is reserved for sycophants, opportunists and killers. All the four of them are afraid and cannot hide their fear. The narrator says, "We laughed a lot, to hide it from each other. But fear always finds an out. If you control your face, it slips into your voice. If you manage to keep a grip on your face and your voice, as if they were dead wood, it will slip out through our fingers. It will pass through your skin and lie there. You can see it lying around on objects close by" (75). Edgar has found a job of a teacher in a grimy industrial city. He says, "Everyone in the city made tin sheep and called it metallurgy" (84). The students in his school are between the age of six and ten. They are trained to sing party songs and have to eat mulberries to keep their voice in shape. They are taught multiplication tables, good handwriting and soccer. The children suffer from diarrhea from the inside and scrapes and lice from the outside. The children want to be officers and policemen but are carried off into the factories by the chimneys. Edgar says, "Only a few, the toughest among them, still cling to life by the skin of their teeth" (87).

Georg is sent off to an industrial town as a teacher. This town is in the middle of a forest. Wood processing industry is located in it. The workers here are mostly peasants who have no interest in the work that they do. The narrator says about the town, "...where everyone made

wooden melons. The wooden melons were called wood-processing industry” (87). The workers steal scraps of wood and use them to make parquet floors at home. They steal so much that the paraquet covers their walls too, right up to the ceiling. The totalitarian state has smothered the personality of the individuals because they are made to do work which is against their liking and temperament. The next time Kurt comes he is having a bandage on his hand. A worker has dropped an iron bar on his hand purposefully and his thumb has got split as a result. He says, “I drank blood like others in the slaughterhouse. Now, I’m an accomplice too” (127). Kurt is always followed by a man in a hat whenever he is in the city. Kurt is also slowly and unwillingly becoming a part of the cruel administration. Edgar, Kurt and George are fed up of this totalitarian government and are trying to oppose it in their own little ways. They meet the narrator and ask her about Lola’s death. They fear that somebody has killed Lola and it is not a suicide. The narrator tells them everything she knows about Lola, personally as well as what she has read from her diary. The three of them live in the boys’ dormitory. Edgar notes in his diary what the narrator says about Lola. He is confident that his diary will not disappear because they have a ‘safe place in town, a summerhouse in an overgrown garden’ (35). The summerhouse is owned by a custom official. He had hidden a lot of foreign currency at Edgar’s parents’ house. He had retired and was planning to smuggle the money out of the country. The key of the summer house has been given by his son to Edgar. The rampant corruption in the regime is evident here.

Edgar, Kurt and Georg are apprehensive that they will be arrested. So, they carry toothbrushes and hand towels in their jacket pockets. They also place two hairs on their suitcases each morning in order to make it certain whether their suitcases are being tampered with or not. Their suspicion is correct because every evening the hairs on the suitcases are gone. Their rooms as well as their houses are searched three times more. This time Edgar’s father does not come to meet him but writes to him that he is driving his mother to an early grave. The room of the narrator is also searched. The other girls hold her responsible for Lola’s death. Her house is also searched violently. This search troubles her grandfather a lot because the white chess queen he was very fond of has disappeared. Her mother writes to her, “Don’t do this to your grandfather again” (69). The narrator thinks of a man with whom she had a relationship. The man was somebody from Tereza’s office. Their relationship was completely physical and didn’t have a trace of love, especially because the man was not interested in love. However, he wanted to take the narrator to the other country via the Danube river when the days had turned very foggy. He

was killed while attempting to flee the country. However, in the official notice, his death was declared as natural death due to heart failure, while he was at home. Georg dies while in Germany. This was his seventh week of emigration. A telegram reaches Edgar's house and breaks the news of death to Edgar. The cause of death is told to be suicide. It is mentioned that Georg has committed suicide by jumping from his apartment window on the sixth floor. Edgar has started living in Cologne. While in Germany, both Edgar and the narrator receive letters that have crossed axes on them. They have the message, 'You have been sentenced to death, we'll get you soon' (235). The cruel totalitarian regime is troubling them even after they have moved away from Romania.

The narrator also makes up her mind to jump into the river and move away from that place. But every time she is not able to make up her mind and returns to the city. She goes to the river four times on separate days but is not able to muster courage to jump into the river. The regime wants to control each and everybody and does not care if the system gets highly corrupted because of it. Jean Boase-Beier in the article "Translation and the Representation of Thought: The Case of Herta Muller" says, "Speech is thus, in this novel, something used by those in power without consideration for its real meaning, in order to keep other people (children or adults) in line" (218). Every citizen is forced, directly or indirectly, to conform to the totalitarian ideals. The regime is powerful and hence is able to assert its speech over hapless individuals. Life under a state that smothers everything creative and lively in its citizens is driving the narrator insane. The factory, where she works, has a slogan hung from the gable, "Workers of the world, unite. And down on the ground walk shoes that can only leave the nation by fleeing." (131-132). Paul, a worker in the factory stops coming to work. Everybody gossips as to how he would have died-through corn, sky, water or a freight train. Many others before him also had stopped coming to the factory. The narrator writes, "A death as cheap as the hole in your pocket. You stick your hand in it, and your whole body has to go along. The more people died, the greater the obsession of those who remained" (132).

The narrator cannot bear the trauma of the interrogations she has to face. For no reason she tells Tereza how her interrogations took place. Every single item she possessed was removed and she was made completely naked. Each item of her clothing and the items in her handbag were entered under different headings on a single sheet. Then, she was made to sing the song in the naked state. She also tells Tereza how she explained that the song was a folk-song. The she

was allowed to wear her clothes. She also tells Tereza that Captain Pjele has taken the address book that had Tereza's address. Tereza asks the reason for all this. She replies that captain Pjele wants that she should fear him, the dictator and the state. Then, the narrator leaves the country and immigrates to Germany. But, here also the fear of the totalitarian state does not leave her. She receives death threats from Captain Pjele here also. The threats come by mail as well as by long-distance telephone call. One day she receives a call from Tereza who asks for some money because she wants to come to Germany to visit her. The narrator is very excited because she genuinely cares for Tereza. However, after Tereza arrives, she tells her that she has been sent to Germany by Pjele. She promises that she will tell a fabricated story to Pjele and would not tell the actual truth. But the narrator feels betrayed and humiliated at Tereza's action. The narrator searches Tereza's suitcase and finds a key in it, which is the duplicate of the key to the narrator's flat. She tells Tereza to leave by train that night only. The narrator is deeply saddened by this turn of events. She thinks a lot after her departure and wants badly to write to her. The totalitarian authorities have made people incapable of friendship and faith because they make people spy even their close friends. After six months, Tereza dies because of her illness. Beverly Eddy in "Testimony and Trauma in Herta Muller's *The Land of Green Plums*" depicts the trauma of the dictatorial regime in the life and death of Tereza:

Although Tereza's death from cancer is the only 'natural' death among the narrator's circle of friends, i.e., it is neither murder nor suicide, it, more than any of the others, is emblematic of the larger trauma of the Ceausescu dictatorship, for it is immediately preceded by Tereza's betrayal of the narrator to the Securitate. Because of this betrayal, Tereza is lost to the narrator even before she dies. This double loss of her friend – through betrayal, then cancer – is the personal, traumatic memory that sparks the narrative, for it opens up the issue of survival in a particularly compelling way. (65)

Tereza's death, though natural, hints at the trauma that has perpetrated in the Romanian society. The characters in *The Land of Green Plums* face political persecution and discrimination. The totalitarian dispensation prevents them from participating in the political life of the society. They become misfits who lead a morose and sullen life. Lola, the narrator, Edgar, Georg and Kurt feel disillusioned and fear losing completely their sanity and their standing among the fellow citizens.

In *The Appointment*, the narrator, Paul and Lilli are victims of the totalitarian ideology. The totalitarian regime constructs a fantasy, which eventually becomes a social reality through the use of excessive force. The regime wants that people act in a way as is believed to be right by the authorities. In the novel, Lilli gets frightened by the talk of the narrator and considers her an instigator because the narrator talks of drastic changes and revolutionary ideas. Lilli is a German. Her father was drafted and then blown to pieces by a mine, when her mother was merely two months pregnant. The narrator can see signs of hate lurking in her features. It is not that Lilli does not want to flee the country. She only does not want to use drastic measures like the narrator. She develops a relationship with a sixty-six-year-old officer and one day both of them try to flee across the Hungarian border. But they are caught. The officer is arrested and Lilli is shot dead. The totalitarian government never takes any chances. Such is the dread of the dictatorial government that apart from the narrator only two other persons can muster courage to attend Lilli's funeral. The third person at the funeral is Nelu who has come there on orders.

Corruption has made its way into the military ranks as well. A long time has passed since the last war and the officers get busy in the conquest of beautiful women. The soldiers too have become depraved in the corrupt regime:

Beauty was graded according to the face, the curve of the backside and the shapeliness of the calves seen together...The conquest of women has taken the place of maneuvers, the soldiers were told. Everything between the neck and the thighs has to be just right...Each conquest keeps your body's joints oiled and helps maintain your inner balance. And that improves the harmony of your marriage. The old officer had thoroughly educated Lilli about the best tactics for combating idleness in peacetime. He too had been on constant maneuvers, Lilli said, until his wife died. (53)

A lofty profession of a soldier is also demeaned. Narrator's second husband Paul also has to face humiliation at the hands of the dictatorial regime. His clothes, though not worth stealing, are often taken away by somebody. Then, Paul had to face humiliation as he comes out naked from the shower. He, then, borrows clothes and returns home on his bike Java. The narrator says, "I was afraid that Paul was working himself to a state of blindness" (84). Paul is bitter but somehow, he keeps his cool. He says, "Socialism sends its workers forth into the world

unclad...every week or so it's as if you were born anew. It keeps you young" (85). Paul had joined the party when he was just a tenth-grader from the mechanical engineering school. Despite that, he is hounded and humiliated by the party. Paul receives a letter from her mother, exhorting her to leave the narrator. Paul judges that the letter is dictated by someone. This letter does not have those terms of endearment that are present in every other letter written by her mother. Such is the extent to which the communist authority goes to pressurize those who dissent with their particular view-point.

The narrator is compelled to speak and confess false things at the appointment with Mr. Albu. She is forced to tell the names of those Italians to whom she sent the notes. Although, she knows none. She describes her torture at the hands of Major Albu:

Albu banged his fist on the table and stood in front of me. He shoved my face down against the blank paper, pulled me up from my chair by the ear, that burned like fire. Then he ran his hand into my hair above the temple, twisted my hair around his index finger, and yanked me, as if by a tassel, around the office, over to the window, and back to the chair. And when I was sitting down facing the paper, I wrote: Marcello. I was biting my lips, I couldn't think of any other name apart from Mastroianni and Mussolini, and those names he knew as well. (139-140)

The name Marcello that she writes is totally imaginary. She has never met an Italian in her life. Then she goes on to write the place where she met him and what is the level of her attachment to him. She writes all this to escape the torment, suffering and humiliation at the hands of her interrogator, Mr. Albu. She writes, "Death, with whom we flirt now and then just to keep it at bay, was advancing, checking for an available time and date-perhaps one was already circled in Albu's diary" (142). Paul's mother also had joined the party when she was young. She was intelligent but had a loose tongue. The narrator says, "Her brain was intelligent. But her tongue was much too loose for a language devoid of smell and taste, hearing and sight" (86-87). Anyone in the country who wanted happiness that varied with the definition of the regime was bound to be harassed, spied upon and killed eventually, especially if he did not mend his ways. She thinks, "But death comes knocking especially for those who think they can dance their fill of the world in order to be happy. Yes, that's the way we'd like it: we'd wear the crown and have our fill of

the world. But isn't it the other way around, that the world has its fill of us, and not we of it" (118).

Paul makes TV antennas for selling at the black market. He finishes one antler of the aerial in one week. But he never gets the chance of selling these because he is caught by the regime. Charges of black-marketing and infiltration of the State through foreign TV channels are stamped against him. It's not that such aerials are not being made in other parts of the city. The regime is specifically interested in Paul because he is associated with the narrator. The narrator says, "Paul wasn't summoned, but neither was he spared. When I moved in with him it was like breaking and entering into his daily rhythm. They would have tracked down anything carrying my scent, and nobody who was connected with me would be overlooked" (193). Memories of both of them are filled with moroseness and trauma. Dana Bizuleanu in his article "Images and Places of Memory in Herta Muller's Prose" says, "...traumatic events scourge the memory path and inscribe the act of narration or commemoration with disjunctions and tensions raised through clashes between collective and personal memories" (175). Before the accident, Paul found it very difficult to wait for the narrator to return home from being summoned. After, the accident, however, this difficulty of his eases quite a lot. Waiting becomes same for both of them. Their memories of trauma united. The narrator also patiently waits for Paul to come home from his drinking.

The regime starts troubling and tormenting them all the more. A gray truck hits Paul's Java as he is riding back home. He gets injured and his motorcycle gets damaged. This happens because the narrator has the audacity to visit Lilli's grave. Such is the impact of this incident on her psyche that she thinks to herself, "After Paul's accident, nothing could induce me to visit any grave on Earth" (129). The narrator also says, "People were so afraid of the regime that everyone blamed Paul for over speeding and no one admitted of seeing the gray truck that hit Paul. Then, Kurt and Edgar decide that they will put the notebook in a sack and hang it from the underside of the lid of the well. The summerhouse belongs to a person who attracts no suspicion from the authorities. The narrator writes, "The only ones who did not want to flee were the dictator and his guards...they will make graveyards with dogs and with bullets. But also, with the belt, the nut, the window and the rope" (48). The narrator is so uneasy with her life that she cannot sleep. She waits for the other girls to fall asleep and then ventures into the streets and walks faster and faster. Then, one day revolution happens in the city. People who fired have their photographs

posted on the heavy wooden doors of the opera by the revolutionaries. Pavel's photograph also hangs there. An old man with a fur cap says, "They all fired into the air, no doubt about it. But it was the air that happened to be in people's lungs" (229). Some days later the dictator and his wife are executed.

In *The Appointment* the government wants its citizens to be passive citizens. It wants that the citizens should not care about moral or political categories but should work like cogs in a machine. The narrator, Lilli and Paul witness a form of government in which freedom and solidarity are sacrificed in favour of material productivity.

In *The Hunger Angel* the characters Leo, Bea Zeakel, Irma, Karli Halmen and Anton lose the capacity to start something new. They lose the capacity and urge to do something unexpected because they always have to toe the totalitarian line in the prison camps. This urge to do something new, different and unexpected is very natural to human beings. But unfortunately, the characters have lost this capacity and have developed listlessness and moroseness in their lives. It's true that the proximity of reality in the prison camps cannot be verified fully by the readers, but the language that is used by Herta Muller in this novel creates a valid reality. It's the power of her language that recreates reality for us in vivid and penetrating images. The Derstandard website admired *The Hunger Angel* in the article "The completely different discourse of being alone":

Herta Muller has not only remained true to her subjects, but also to her stranger view and pain expressed in precise, razor-sharp language. Uncompromising and persistent, conscious of the inability to arrive, she continues on her way. In her latest novel, *The Hunger Angel*, published this year, she also flashes back to the time after the second great war, when thousands of Romanian Germans were deported to Russian labour camps...it has become a great book, in the tradition of a Ruth Kluger or an Imre Kertesz.

Herta Muller has used precise and poignant language to describe the excruciating bodily experiences of the characters in *The Hunger Angel*. Her metaphoric conceptualization of language is par excellence. The trauma, terror, suffering and anguish experienced by the inmates of the labour camps is forcefully depicted. The ideology of the totalitarian Romania, which held the Romanian Germans guilty is exposed to the fullest. It was the false propaganda by Romanian

authorities, which made the Romanians feel superior to the minorities. With this book Herta Muller joins the legacy of Ruth Kluger and Imre Kertesz. Ruth Kluger held an extremely scathing view of anti-Semitism and saw the war and the holocaust from the feministic angle. Imre Kertesz work is semi-autobiographical and deals with the friable experience of individuals vis-à-vis government might. He wrote about dictatorship and the havoc it wreathes on personal freedom. Herta, with her forceful works, has joined the league of these holocaust writers.

On reaching the Russian soil, the persons of the German minority have to obey the call of nature together. The train stops near an empty field and the Russian guards yell *Ubornaya*. The inmates of the train do not understand the meaning of the word but they sense that it means a communal toilet stop. The guards with machine pistols yell again, "Pull down your pants" (13). All of them have to attend to their need huddled together, with snow and machine-pistol guards all around. Leo now knows the names of some people. Trudi Pelikan, Paul Gast-the lawyer and Heidrun-her wife, are in the multitude that are forced close together to obey the call of nature. All of them keep their faces towards the tracks while they attend to their daily needs. It is because they are afraid that the doors of the cattle car might shut anytime and the train might move forward without them. One of them cries out in the vast night, "So, here we are, the Shitting Saxons. Wasting away in more ways than one. Well, you're all happy to be alive-I'm right, aren't I?" (14). All these characters are the representative of the German minority in Romania. These respected people might never have imagined the nightmarish experiences that they were made to suffer. This novel portrays vividly the inner world of such repressed people. The man who speaks these words sobs and some people start crying at this appalling condition in the fouled snow. Once at the camp, more horrors are in store for them. Death has become very cheap at the camp. With so much death all around, people have become hard-hearted. They don't want to think of the dead because it reminds them of their own impending death. All the Germans in the labour camp are being punished for what Hitler has done. Leo, the protagonist describes the callousness that develops in him as well as the other inmates at the camp:

When the first three of us died of hunger, I knew exactly who they were and the order of their deaths. I thought about each of them for several days long. But three never stays three. And the higher the number gets, the more hardened it becomes. When you're nothing but skin and bones and in bad shape yourself, you do what you can do to keep the

dead at a distance. The mathematical traces show that by March of the fourth year 330 people had died. With numbers like that you can no longer afford separate feelings. We thought of the dead only briefly. (79)

The feelings of the inmates have hardened gradually. So much death at the camp has toughened them and now they think more about their individual selves. They don't want to be the next victim of hunger and drudgery. Being alive is their main focus. Leo says, "None of us were part of any war, but because we were Germans, the Russians considered us guilty of Hitler's crimes" (36). It's the prejudice and false propaganda of the regime that has led Romanians think that ethnic Germans are guilty of Hitler's crimes. Daily a bread cart comes to the labour camp. The large bread loaves are covered with linen cloth. These look like a pile of corpses to Leo. Every inmate's hair is cut and their face is shaved by the barber. The barber is not an accomplice of the administration but is allowed to live in his barber room whereas all the other inmates are stuck in barracks. Some men cry a lot when they see themselves in the mirror.

People start dying in the camp. When the first three die, Leo thinks about them for many days. But gradually death becomes common and his attention is also diverted towards his hunger. By the March of the fourth year of the labour camp, 330 people die. Now, all the inmates think of the dead, only briefly. The condition of the inmates is pathetic. They are given the bare minimum so that they can just survive. They even have to steal and beg for survival. Such deplorable condition is the fate of all the inmates of the camp, many of whom are persons of respectable social standing. The inmates pick wild grasses and leaves for eating. They have to get salt by bartering from the market. Only when the wild plants like Orach are boiled in salt, can they be eaten to satisfy the hunger. The inmates face chronic hunger that comes in many varieties. Sometimes they feel sick with hunger. Sometimes, a new kind of hunger arises in them which pounces on the already existing never-ending hunger. Leo says, "When you can no longer bear the hunger, your whole head is racked with pain, as though the pelt from a freshly skinned hare were being stretched out to dry inside" (18). The basic act of breathing becomes labour when a person is famished. The camp that Leo is sent to has five work battalions or ORBs. Each battalion consists of between five hundred to eight hundred employees. Leo is assigned to battalion number 1009 and his work number is 756. Every evening they stand for roll call with their swollen eyes, large noses and hollow cheeks. All the people are infested with lice that move

all over their bodies while they stand in attention for a long period of time for counting. Their Russian camp commandant, Tovarishch Shishtvanyonov, keeps screaming all the time. Leo says, “Perhaps we had to stand so long to stop the time in motion. Our bones became heavy as iron, When the flesh of your body disappears, your bones become a burden, and the ground pulls you downward” (20). The starving inmates of the labour camp have lost a lot of flesh and have developed extreme weakness. They are being given only a little food by the authorities so that they somehow manage to live.

The characters in this novel are incapable of revolution because the totalitarian might has proved too much for them. They have lost courage and have resigned to the circumstances that they find themselves in. Alina Crihana in “The Exile Memoirs – between the Identity Discourse and the Critique of the Totalitarian Ideologies: Herta Müller’s Case” says, “Herta Muller analyses the mechanism of internalizing an ideology which, by the practice of terror, determines the schizoid division of the totalitarian subjects who become chasers and chased” (46). The horrors of totalitarianism have smothered human spirit and creativity of Leo, Beatrice, Irma, Kobelian, Trudi Pelikan and Karli Halman beyond recognition. In *The Hunger Angel*, Herta Muller has portrayed these fears and shocks in the lives of her characters making use of her surrealistic imagination to an effect that is brilliant and poignant at the same time.

CONCLUSION

Herta Muller has portrayed characters who are leading dysfunctional lives in a totalitarian regime. The characters mostly belong to the German minority who are subject to discrimination, cruelty, violence, surveillance, fear, terror, oppression, political repression, imprisonment and execution by the totalitarian Romanian regime. The characters face trauma, suffering, guilt, loss of identity, exile, suicidal tendencies and death while living under the brutal regime of Nicolae Ceausescu. As a result, the characters suffer from various psychological problems like neurosis, psychosis, mourning, hysteria, listlessness, loss of capacity to love, depression, masochistic tendencies daydreaming and delusions. Herta Muller has successfully portrayed the psychodynamics happening in the mind of characters. The varied attempts that the characters make for searching a new identity have been vividly described. The psychological variables undercutting the lives of the characters as well as their conflicts, struggles and defence mechanisms have been brilliantly depicted. Her characters face psychological regression while living in such excruciating circumstances as they try to emancipate their souls from the yoke of the Socialist Republic of Romania.

Herta Muller's language shows how human mind works. She depicts how humans fix their identities through radical acts of ego-assertion through her characters. The text of the novels also provides a profound insight into the working of the mind of the author herself as she and her near and dear ones were subjected to unspeakable horrors while living in Romania. It has also been found out that her characters suffer from faults and weaknesses and hence are sometimes misunderstood as being psychologically disturbed. Characters like Windisch, Katharina, Rudy, Irene, Adina, Clara and Leopold Auberg lack enthusiasm and interest in life. They suffer from neurosis, lead their lives in a passive manner and don't want to commit themselves into serious relationships. Characters like Amalie, Stefan, Paul, Lola and Edgar show obsessive behaviour, anxiety, loss of touch with reality and depression. They experience neurosis, psychosis, mourning, and melancholia. They go through their grief and this feature of the human condition has been depicted by the author in minute detail. The language that Muller uses is metaphorically conceptualized and the bodily experiences of different characters have a major role to play in such a conceptualization of language.

This study has also found out that Herta Muller has used silence as a major weapon to depict the horrors and brutalities of totalitarianism. She has used silence to personify phenomena. This has led to the enhancement and realization of the communicative potential of the environment in which the characters find themselves in. This is exemplified by Muller's mother who spent 5 years in a reparation camp and remained silent or spoke only fragmented sentences when told to relate her experience. Silence has become the chief reference point for trauma, suffering, terror and guilt experienced by her characters. Characters like the narrator and Lola in *The Land of Green Plums* and Irene in *Travelling on One Leg* often regress into their childhood as a defensive manoeuvre and this affects their capacity to reattach with other people. Their ego forms a kind of identification with an unconscious lost object in their childhood. This happens because these characters have been dehumanized, marginalized and oppressed politically as well as culturally. The internal dynamic of characters is witnessed in the novels.

In *The Passport*, Herta Muller aptly and powerfully portrays the isolation and estrangement of the dispossessed. She depicts the political, emotional and psychological ramifications of living in a totalitarian regime. These ramifications have impinged upon the subconscious life of the characters in a very cruel way. The protagonist, Windisch, hopes to end his suffering by escaping to Germany with his family. He is fully aware that his grown-up daughter will have to sacrifice her chastity, honour and modesty for the realization of his aim. This thought has turned into a veritable poison for him which he has to drink every moment of his existence. Amalie is reluctant to attach her feelings to Rudy because she feels that if she does so she would betray her lost lover. She has made her lover a part of her psyche and experiences internal guilt and shame. Nevertheless, she goes on with her new life. This life preserving principle is very aptly witnessed in her case. Herta Muller has used her crafty language to delve deep into the subconscious of the characters. She has portrayed characters, which primarily belong to a village and have to suffer despair, agony and gloom at every point of their lives. They hope to end their suffering by finding a way out of the repressive system. The dictatorial dispensation has turned them neurotic and melancholic. *The Passport* is full of moving images, which depict in moving detail the understated agony of the characters. Herta Muller's narrative is permeated with dreams, superstitions of the village life and stunning imagery. Windich has developed inefaceable wounds in his psyche as he feels subjugated and traumatized in an oppressive regime.

Travelling on One Leg is heavily entrenched in Herta Muller's personal experiences. She has also depicted with honesty and frankness the experiences of those persons who have become victims of Totalitarianism. The overall atmosphere is that of gloom and the reader is not able to digest the heaviness of it. The female protagonist Irene is the pivot of the story. She has left the tyrannical, brutal and callous Romanian regime, where a life of freedom and dignity has always been a distant dream for her. The country that she has left has been plagued by the backward ideologies of communism. But, in the new country, she is not a welcome addition. She is not able to relate to the new land because she has been uprooted from everything that she was acquainted with. She feels isolated, lonely and displaced in the new land. Neurotic tendencies occupy her wherever she tries to move to escape from her ennui and isolation. In Franz, Muller has further depicted the death drive complex, which is channeled internally. It is channeled on his own self. He gets into the habit of excessive drinking to the point of damaging his health and research work. Franz is mentally crippled and he possesses individuality but it is not of an enriching nature. Irene tries to find some solace in Franz but fails to relate to him. She keeps on reflecting upon her miserable condition to the detriment of her relationship with Franz. Irene has become incapable of maintaining stable relationships as her psyche always remains fixed on the dreary and nightmarish life she had to lead in oppressive Romania. The language used by Muller is sharp and biting and extremely selective. She has portrayed the internal life of the characters, which has become a nightmarish dream for them. The characters confront a loss of touch with reality and undergo through chronic mental stress throughout the novel. They experience melancholia, hysteria and are in the grip of neurosis even when they celebrate some small happiness in their lives. The novel has been written in a surreal style, which blends reality and dreams to a great effect. The stream of consciousness of the characters is depicted through disruptions and disjointedness in the novel. Irene, Franz and Stefan suffer throughout the novel from the ennui and listlessness that has become part of their lives.

The Fox was Ever the Hunter is a sensitive portrayal of the cruel and betraying life in the Romanian totalitarian regime. Through this novel Herta Muller has delineated a collage of riveting images, stirring stories and banned notions. She has depicted how Adina, Clara, Liviu and Paul witness and deal with their dysfunctional lives in silence. They speak in whispers and are vary of even close acquaintances in an atmosphere that reeks of oppression, coercion and dominance. Adina's apartment is broken into by the secret police. They want to put

psychological pressure on her by tampering with a fox fur that is very dear to her. This fox fur is a repository of memories for her because her mother brought it especially for her when she was young. Different parts of the fox fur rug are severed by the members of the secret police and Adina is afraid of the day when the final paw is cut off. Finally, Adina is not able to bear all this and she breaks down. Her mental state is depicted by the novelist in sharp images and pungent language. After this, Adina reacts negatively to neutral situations and panics even in non-threatening circumstances. She suffers from severe mood swings and feels as if her whole life has become a veritable hell for her. Neurosis and melancholia have become her fate and she is not able to come out of her fractured mental state until she immigrates to Germany. This character has been fashioned by Herta on her personal life, when she had to go through excruciating circumstance, while trying to maintain her sanity in Nicolae Ceausescu's dictatorial regime. The anger, frustration, neurosis, mourning and suffering of the characters is depicted in a language that is disjointed and thus depicts the fragmented thought process of the characters. *The Fox was Ever the Hunter* depicts a society that has been torn asunder by the oppressive might of the tyrannical Romanian Regime. Adina, Clara and others face severe identity crisis in their dysfunctional lives.

The Land of Green Plums is heavily based on Herta Muller's personal life and it has been written by the author after two of her friends died in the alleged Securitate organized suicides. Muller has portrayed the psychological makeup of Edgar, Lola, Kurt, Georg and Tereza in blurred and shifty prose. She has further depicted the death drive in Lola. She has shown that Lola has developed death wish as she deliberately chooses relationships where she is devalued and demeaned. It is a dynamic unconscious process in her and seems to go against evolution. But human mind is recalcitrant and refuses to be pigeonholed in one fashion. Similarly, the country that has been depicted in the novel has driven its inhabitants (and even horses) mad with fear. The characters suffer psychological and physical repression and feel themselves trapped. The spying and reporting that is encouraged and staged by the regime takes away mutual trust from the society. Excessive rules and the fear of being followed is stifling for the citizens, especially for the minorities. They have only two options, either to resist or to die. The narrator, Edgar, Georg and Kurt choose resistance against the regime's force and experience betrayal. Muller has used poetic, associative and robust language to portray the trauma, psychosis, suffering and loss of identity of the main characters in the novel. The whole story is character driven and is a bitter

criticism of the Romanian regime, which is bent upon changing the psyches of its citizens. Muller has depicted how harmless people and students are spied upon and interrogated brutally only with the aim to instill fear and submission in them. Their souls become tormented and despondency becomes their second nature. This kind of treatment by the authorities has a stunning and debilitating effect on them. As a result, the characters confront depression, mourning, loss of self-esteem, death wish and unjustified anxiety at every moment of their lives. Occasional sprinkling of happiness, camaraderie and solidarity is the only saving grace in the lives of Kurt, Tereza, Georg and Edgar.

The Appointment conveys the message that paranoia becomes the fate of people in a totalitarian regime. People who are victims of state-sponsored violence, cruelty, torture and fear develop fractured psyches and find themselves in a world where happiness has no meaning. The novel is narrated by a factory seamstress, who has been charged with prostitution by the regime. Muller depicts the surreal absurdity of the narrator's life through a stream of consciousness monologue. She has written this novel in powerful prose, which also becomes depressing many a time. Muller depicts the pallor of gloom that has spread in the whole Romanian society. This arouses anger and opposition in sensitive citizens, but they are no match to the might of the regime. The novel has a fragmented narrative line and this narrative line has been chosen by the novelist to depict the fragmented psyches of the characters. The unnamed female narrator in the novel is tormented by Major Albu-the officer of the secret police. This has developed trauma in her, which finally leads to neurosis and psychosis. She represents those countless citizens who were interrogated by the regime in inhuman and torturous manner. This also depicts the fear of the state, which is so concerned about its dissolution that it does not spare even harmless and powerless citizens. This has led to moroseness in the citizens. They have nothing to feel proud of and feel prisoners in their own country. They mourn their very existence. The regime has made them devoid of every kind of artistic expression as well as cultural life. This has created chaos in their lives and they feel traumatized. The characters have turned voiceless and feel psychologically tortured by their own government. The governments should see to it that the basics like right to freedom of speech and creative expression are not taken away from citizens in the name of nationalism.

In *The Hunger Angel*, Herta Muller explores the effect that extreme hunger has on the psyche and behaviour of humans. The lives of the inmates of the Russian labour camps have

been delineated by the novelist in precise detail. Various kinds of psychological problems like neurosis, psychosis, mourning, death wish and acute depression encountered by these inmates has formed the backbone of the novel. Leo, the protagonist, has never been loved by his parents and when he experiences acute mourning at the reparation camp, his present state resonates with his childhood. The moral agency of consciousness, which holds humans up to a higher standard, becomes a harsh superego in his case. This harsh superego devalues him and plays a negative role in his life. This leads him to suicidal thoughts. He even thinks of strangulating his new born brother who has become the centre of attraction for his parents. His detached superego is operating autonomously and he has lost touch with reality. Thus, he wants to hurt himself as well as his brother because he is not able to see the reality principle. Suffering and torment at the Russian gulags is responsible for his fractured state of mind. Similarly, other characters like Trudi Pelikan, Irma, Karli Halman, Albert Gion and Kobelian suffer from various mental ailments as they suffer for full five years at the Russian labour camps. They have lost their inclination to speak long sentences and only speak in small phrases when anyone enquires about their lives at the camp. They fear to think about their experience even when they are alone. They have developed despair and depression and are unable to lead normal lives even after they come back from the labour camps after five years. Their lives have become problematic, traumatized and listless. Ceausescu's bigotry, intolerance and prejudice towards the minorities has been exposed in the novel. The ferocity, violence and suppression by the ruling class has been revealed by the novelist in profound language. This has led to indelible scars on the psyches of the characters, who find escape their only hope.

The present thesis has analyzed Muller's characters from the psychoanalytical angle and has explored the psychological problems that are bound to surface in such circumstances. This study has added new dimensions to the research domain and has provided new understanding of the psyche of the characters portrayed in her novels. This study has exposed the pitfalls of totalitarianism and has also brought to light the horrendous effects of a totalitarian regime on the people of Romania in particular and on humanity in general. The study has underlined the importance of human free will and has generated consciousness that human personality cannot bloom under a totalitarian system. The study also entails an injunction that forbids humans from indulging in such brazen acts. It has focused on inclusiveness of different cultures, races and nations in this contracted yet complex world of the present time.

Psychoanalysis has turned out to be a powerful tool in the critical analysis of Herta Muller's novels. In fact, this technique has added some kind of legitimacy to the text. Here, psychoanalysis has served as a means to expand the creative potential of the texts. New possibilities for reading and studying Herta Muller's novels have been explored. In the present thesis, characters from different backgrounds have been studied and explored. It has been explored how such an inhuman form of government leads to fractured psyches in common people. People suffer from various mental illnesses like neurosis, psychosis, hysteria and melancholia. It's true that the majority of the characters who suffer from the oppressive dictatorial regime belong to the German minorities. They have been tortured, degraded and debased because they have been held responsible for the crimes that Hitler's Germany perpetrated. Nevertheless, it's also true that the characters like Windisch, Lola, Edgar, Irene, Paul, Ilie, Dietmar and Rudi belong to different backgrounds. Some of them belong to the rural background, others are related to city life and military life.

This study also depicts cultural prejudice and intolerance as seen in Muller's novels. This intolerance is the result of the Stalinesque communism that had overarching influence in Romania those days. People of Romania, misled by the flawed government propaganda, feel themselves superior to the minorities. They lose their tolerance towards the cultural and racial differences that are bound to occur in any multiculturalist society. These novels give voice to Romanians of German and Hungarian origin, who were branded as second-class citizens and were thought to be impure. The Ceausescu government often referred to racial purity and this exacerbated the rift between the pure and the impure. Nicolae and his consort Elena Ceausescu proclaimed themselves as the father and mother of the radiant Romania, but the impure were to have it worse. This has led to identity crisis and existential dilemmas in characters like Windisch, Joiner, Skinner, Kurt, Georg, Edgar and Lilli. These characters belong to the minorities and have been termed cohabitating nationalities by the oppressive government. The literature of the minorities is not considered worthy of national recognition and the poetry that characters like Edgar and Kurt write is considered an incitement against communism and the Socialist Republic of Romania. In such a scenario, peace, co-existence, harmony, brotherhood and camaraderie have disappeared from the society. Social diversity and mutual respect have taken a huge toll and the characters who belong to the minorities feel degraded, disregarded, marginalized and scarred. Such persons are called Swabians by the Romanian majority because they belong to the German-

speaking minority. They have been living in the province of Banat since their childhood but now have become outcasts in their own land. This is the reason that many characters in *The Passport*, *The Hunger Angel*, *The Fox was Ever the Hunter* and *The Land of Green Plums* want to flee the place that has been their hometown. Others have resigned themselves to their fate.

This is an age of democracy. Democracy is the preferred form of government in most of the nations. Barring countries, which are theocratic or socialist, democracy is seen a viable and progressive form of administration. In today's world there is little scope of totalitarian governments like the one depicted in the novels under study. However, totalitarian tendencies keep on raising their heads even in established democracies. The governments should see to it that such laws are framed that keep the multiculturalist, cosmopolitan and diverse nature of our societies intact. The flowering of the human spirit is only possible if the minorities are allowed to flourish and are not discriminated against on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion or culture. The minorities should be brought into the forefront of the policy making processes and should not be marginalized. Marginalized and disregarded people cannot become upright and virtuous citizens because they always have listlessness, rage and neurotic tendencies lurking in their psyches. They start living life just for the sake of living and begin to distrust everyone. They feel anxious about their status and future and become paranoid when the question of the future of their children arises. Such persons develop ruptured psyches and suffer from various psychological as well as physiological problems. They are unable to achieve the all-round development of their personalities. How can such citizens become an asset for any country? Fundamentalism and fanaticism tend to percolate in the ranks of marginalized people and they start feeling like aliens in their own motherland. Such a scheme of things is not good for any country in particular and humanity in general. In contrast, the minorities should also extend full cooperation to the country in which they happen to be a minority. They should respect the religious and moral principles of the majority and those of other minorities. They should feel themselves to be equal partners in the country's progress and should not allow any kind of fear to infiltrate their minds. Even in case of any injustice they should keep their calm and take recourse to the constitutional methods for grievance redressal. The thesis has social significance as it will contribute to the body of knowledge that denigrates totalitarianism and such tendencies.

Present Romania is a Parliamentary Republic with a semi-presidential regime and the government is accountable to the people. There was insufficient economic development in

communist Romania. Even in the present-day Romania a nouveau riche class has surfaced, which has not allowed the fruits of democracy to percolate down to the very poor. Heavy fines were imposed by the Romanian government in the lockdown period. It has raised many eyebrows on its democratic policies. Today's world has become a very small place. As a result, diversity -which remained scattered in the past- is even more visible today. In such a scenario tolerance, mutual understanding, mutual cooperation and respect for the individual should be the guiding principles in every country, irrespective of the system of government. It would be much better if a world federation is formed in the near future. This world federation should include all the nations as member states and should have a democratic framework. This would minimize the use and proliferation of weapons and would put an end to many economic and humanitarian problems. Countries, which subjugate citizens to further their totalitarian ideologies, will automatically be democratized. This will help ensure a freer, fuller and creative life for the citizens of this world. In today's world, narrow-mindedness and disregard for the human factor will take us back to the age of barbarity. A positive, progressive and an all-inclusive approach to life will make this world a wonderful place to live in. This study is a humble beginning. It will certainly help the students of criticism in particular and people in general as it will bring a new awareness in them.

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