



Familial Bondage and Disintegration: A Psychoanalytical Study of Sally Rooney's *Intermezzo*

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Abstract

This research aims to explore familial disintegration in the bondage of a family system, in Sally Rooney's *Intermezzo* (2024) by employing Bowen's theory of Family Systems. Bowen's theory seems to be rooted in the depth of clinical psychology but now its tendencies are making its ways in literature as well. In our primary text, *Intermezzo*, most characters exhibit disintegration with their attitudes and behaviors. The study is descriptive in nature. Text is taken as primary source, whereas secondary resources such as research articles, thesis and reviews are utilized through close reading method. Bowen's theory on Family system is used to analyze the situations and conditions of characters described in text and to prove the stated stance, how they cope up with the situations by managing stress and anxiety. Textual analysis is utilized as methodology. The purpose of my study is to analyze the factors presented by Bowen with eight interlocking concepts of Family system, to dig deep the familial bondage, which brings to the surface the disintegration in Rooney's major characters in *Intermezzo*. The significance of this study lies in finding out the root cause of disintegration and characters' way of managing stress and anxiety.

Key words: Family, familial bondage, Familial disintegration, Psychoanalysis, Sally Rooney, *Intermezzo*, Sibling position

Introduction and Background

This study aims to focus on the familial bondage and disintegration depicted in the novel *Intermezzo* (2024) written by Sally Rooney as seemed from the perspective of Psychoanalysis. Familial disintegration in literary criticism finds relationship between an individual and his family. It focuses on the institution of family and the respective behaviors of family members which they adopt to cope with, in stress and anxiety. These behaviors create an effect on the environment as well. Family is defined as "*the smallest cornerstone of societies consisting of mother, father and children*" (Arslan, 2023, P. 1). In response to the individual dilemmas, the familial relations were given utmost importance and propagated through literary criticism to bring awareness regarding the importance of behavior in familial life. The impact of attitudes and behaviors cannot be ignored in the lives of human beings because both complement and influence each other.



The problems regarding familial bondage are due to the over-functioning or under-functioning of spouses and in return this milieu also disturbs the lives of other family members and create psychological problems. So the relationship between an individual and the family is inevitable.

The researchers have based the study on the idea that the members in a family, their behaviors and their position in the family create an aura and all contribute to influence and shape the lives of the human beings especially in the case of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is regarded as a striking and distinctive revolution; which has been founded by Sigmund Freud. Its roots can be traced in the late 19th century that became the cause of imprinting its marks in the psychological and therapeutic fields. Once this process is started, it gathered momentum with a breakneck speed and paved its way through multiple renovations. Since its evolution until now the sky is the limit for the expansion and exploration in this field. After taking birth from the hands of Freud, psychoanalytic theory has gone through many variations in the past one hundred and fifteen years. His focus revolved around the psyche of an individual. Freud's utmost concern remain hitched on the enquiry about the working of unconscious mind; which are traversed and portrayed through the behavior of an individual. Though psychoanalysis has been rendered as a lengthy process which gives impetus on the unconscious mind, yet it consists upon the combination of a lot of ideas and experiments. This unique invention became a new foundation to explore the workings in the realms of unconscious mind. It also provided a new way to treat mental illness.

Psychoanalysis was brought to light at the nick of time when people were suffering with psychological disorders. The only available treatment was in physical and moral domains but with certain limitations. The approach was novel in nature and introduced by a medical man Sigmund Freud. It had opened new horizons for thinking minds and provided food for thought to cure mental illness. Freud's early experiences with such patients who were suffering from psychological disorders and struggling with mental illness laid foundation for many new ideas in the domain of psychoanalysis. He made use of this therapy for neuroses and in time its expansion spread in various "*practices in the history of civilizations including warfare, mythology, religion and other arts.*" (Hossain, 2017)

Psychoanalytic studies remain continued to flourish throughout the 20th century. Later on, many theorists took part in expanding this theory with different approaches. If we see it in historical perspective we come to know that psychoanalytic studies had been used as a tool in medical profession. The aim was to probe deeper into the working of unconscious mind where inexpressible thoughts and emotions were laid dormant. After making its marks in the psychological field: it spread its wings to the other areas of study and finally settled itself in the literary studies as one of the unique approaches.

Freud distributed mind in three regions on the basis of his discoveries presented in "The interpretation of dream." (1900). He considered mind a hub of good and bad experiences. (Das, Ritamain, p 13-18). According to Freud, it is natural for human being to satiate their basic needs for "*food, shelter and warmth.*" (Hossain, 42). He examined the character of Oedipus and happenings in his life as a complex to reunite with his mother. He proposed three structures of personality referred as "*Id, Ego and Super ego.*" (Freud, 303) But the hypotheses given by Freud were regarded "neither verifiable nor falsifiable."



(Hossain, 43).

Monte (1977) talks about psychoanalytic theory as a work which ensures the existence of those internal conditions that provide motivation to an individual to expose his unconscious through actions. (Beneath the masks, 8). Lacan, a French psychologist discussed it in the second half of the century. He did not deny the significance of pre oedipal stage in child's life. He viewed this stage as a mirror stage where child begins to draw basic distinction between self and others. Later on, another pupil of Freudian psychology named Carl Jung (1875-1961) took psychoanalysis to another dimension according to his own understanding of the theory and suitability to the environment. Jung pondered over the basic behaviors mentioned in myths and lives of legends. After that Alfred Adler (1870-1937) saw man as a social being. In his view human beings are always motivated by social needs. This attribute makes us conscious about ourselves and gives the ability to improve ourselves and the world around ourselves. (McConnell, 250). Therefore Hossain compliments about psychoanalysis in these words:

"We can begin to perceive that there is a mutual fascination between the field of 'psychoanalysis and literature.'" (Hossain, 43) Melanie Klein Focused on the object relation theory. On the other hand, Erik Erikson gave the idea of psychosocial development. In spite of innovations and multidimensional value, Freud's ideas are considered inevitable and inseparable in the psychoanalytic practices. These ideas are still instrumental in treating and benefitting those people who are suffering from psychological traumas.

The early 20th century marks the beginning of psychology with modern approach. Through this modernistic step the psychoanalysis of the literary text came into existence. Literary criticism has made use of psychoanalytic theory in order to interpret literary texts. In the similar fashion, literature has made use of psychoanalysis with an express purpose of creativity. Psychological criticism is considered a way to deal with a literary work *"as an expression in fictional form, of the state of mind and the structure of personality of individual author."* (Hossain, 41). Psychoanalytic theory is being utilized in two ways. Initially it is used as a way to treat people who are victimized to mental disorder. Another way is its theoretical framework which provide a lens to probe deeper into character's mind mentioned in the literary text. As psychoanalysis is an act of renarrating the life of a person. It gives undue importance to the unconscious thoughts and motives. It gives emphasis on the motives which help to explain literature in terms of writing actions of characters within the text. Psychoanalysis gives impetus on the subjective approach and tries to give an exhaustive detail about the relation of meaning and identity which are known as psychic and cultural forces. Psychoanalysis possesses great significance in order to gain an understanding from literature to culture. Thomas Hardy points out in his text 'A history of Psychology'. According to him, Freud had paved way for the emerging innovators of psychology to give a boost to their psychological ideas up to the marks of science (Freud, 284) yet, in spite of taking pains in an attempt to prove scientific nature of psychology, his theory remains subjective in nature (Morgan, 2007) and assumed outward behavior an outcome of 'unconscious mind' (Morgan, 1). A letter written by Freud, to his friend Wilhelm Fleiss is an ample proof of his viewpoint about himself. He considered himself neither a man of science nor an experimenter and observer. Allison mentions his saying:

"I am by temperament nothing but conquistador –an adventurer, if you want it translated with all curiosity daring



and with tenacity of characteristic of a man of this sort. (Freud, 283)

Though the Psychoanalytic approaches in literature are meagre in accordance to clinical psychology but carry huge importance. Both the literary theories are taken into the same thread of consideration in literary criticism in which psychoanalytic text is analyzed on the basis of Familial disintegration. Psychoanalytic studies have paved ways to understand behavioral issues which are central to manage stress and anxiety in a family system.

The behaviors and the physical environment have their effect on the lives of all family members and they are affected by them in every aspect of their lives. Parent-child relationship has great importance in the lives of human. It includes all the things which are associated with family and they depict harmony with each other. In literary texts familial disintegration and the psychoanalytical framework is not new thing to cover all the situation but to recognize it separately as a new theory in literature. It is regarded a tremendous effort made by the family systems theorists.

Bowen composes in *The Family system Theory* (1978) about the relation between family and the behavior they exhibit. As “Parents remain important source of guidance and support. (J. Martin et al, 2011)” (p. xxv). Therefore to know about the causes of behavioral issues in the literary texts has become a central and separate literary concern which supports various concepts of familial bondage an disintegration on the basis of psychoanalysis.

The main concern of Bowen’s ideas is to diffuse restlessness. According to him anxiety permeates through too much closeness or great distance. Therefore both these factors are considered as key generators to stress and anxiety. Besides this the external pressure is central in transmitting it to generations. Bowen tells about the responses which are based upon the reactions of the family. According to Bowen, if a family continues to react instead of paying heed to their own responses, it becomes the cause of chronic anxiety, which is trickled down to the next generation. His aim was to raise awareness to reduce anxiety by addressing it. He has given impetus on changing self instead of making futile efforts to change others.

Betty Carter has praised Bowen’s work in these words:

“Bowen’s theory has been instrumental in helping us understand the complexities of family relationships and the ways in which they shape individual behavior”. (P. 15)

The study aims to be conducted to analyze the text psychoanalytically in the perspectives of familial issues. The selection of the text is favourable to apply this combined approach because the modern writers remained the victims of disintegration. Qualitative mode has been selected for the study to trace the issues from the selected novel.

Analaysis

Sally Rooney, through her family-centered novel and Murray Bowen, through his philosophy in the field of psychology, have both added to a healthier understanding of the mechanism of the Irish family systems in this modern era. Differentiation of self seems to be the pioneering notion in the family system theory. Bowen describes an individual as a distinctive and a unique entity in the system of relationships. (Extra ordinary relationships, 18) Morgan, a keen observer of Schiff’s ideas quotes self as “which cannot be traded or lost when



with others” (23) .The crux of this concept lies in the capability of an individual to work independently according to self -directed choices while remaining emotionally connected to the intensity of a significant relationship system because “*much of human existence is dictated by the strong togetherness* (Gilbert, 14)

People are conferred with the ability to manipulate different situations in order to attain the level of maturity and uniqueness. They muddle through the impediments “depending on their level of differentiation.”(Morgan.8) we witness the characters of Ivan and Margaret as displayed by Rooney in her text .They follow their pursuit of happiness and involve themselves in a relationship. In the circle of their emotional fusion they take intense responsibility for their actions and relish the flavor of “*the miracle of existing together*” (P.133) Margaret acknowledges and relishes the beauty of life by taking responsibility of her own actions. She becomes cognizant of the “*miraculous beauty of life itself lived only once and then gone forever, the bloom of a perfect and impermanent flower, never to be retrieved*”. (P.134) Both of them happen to be head over heels in their emotional fusion. Though they do not bother about other people’ reactions towards their stance, yet there is existence of stress. As “*stress is a condition of strain that affects one’s emotions, thought processes, and physical condition*” (Werther and Davis, 1996)

We see in the text that Margaret feels stressed. She happens to be older than Ivan. She harbours deep feelings for him with an over powering feeling of stress. She shows concern about the reaction of Ivan’s family regarding the acceptance of their relationship. She expresses her apprehensions about the possible reaction of Ivan’s mother: which would be certain after knowing the reality. In her view his mother won’t allow his son to have relationship with a girl with certain age gap. At this, Ivan blurts out in a straight forward way, “*I don’t care .It’s not her business .It’s my life.*”(P.289). and the stress is gone. The English language dictionary (1987) of Collins takes stress as a feeling which is filled with tension and anxiety. The real technique is to manage stress is to understand oneself better by setting one’s priorities. So, is the case with Ivan he sets his priorities to live with Margaret and deals with all the thoughts and concerns by managing stress. They both like each other’s company. Both of them happen to be “*at different stages*” (P. 70) in their lives ,Ivan being a young adult of twenty two years old and Margaret a divorcee with an age of thirty-six, yet the element of acceptance is there with mental compatibility and peace of mind. Ivan vanishes Margaret’s apprehension about age by answering this “*from my perspective- I don’t personally care about that, at all*”.(P.70)

Family is the backbone of society. The strength of a family lies in its bondage. It is in fact “*one of the primary agents of socialization*”.(Dolan, 751). The patterns of behaviors exhibited by the parents effect the whole infrastructure of family. “*Most adults copy the behavior of parents into two ways: consciously one hand, subconsciously on the other hand.*” (Bushara MOE, Khan WA, 2020). In the text written by Sally Rooney we witness the disintegrated family which is broken apart through “*marital separation*”. (Opatha, 104) “*Disintegrated families are families in which widows and children live together formed by the death, separation or divorce of husband or wife....*” (Arslan, 46) . Ivan and Peter used to live with their father after separation of their parents. Their mother moves to the house of her boyfriend where she lives happily with her stepsons.

This thing leaves an imprint on the psyche of her own children and they do the



same. Instead of living with mother after the death of their father: they prefer to live with their mates rather than family. Margaret and Ivan follow the epicurean motto of eat, drink and be merry and live in the present moment. As Margaret, at the interval of Ivan in her life follows the path of her happiness irrespective of thinking what other people might think. She takes it as an opportunity to alleviate her anxieties and to relish “*the pleasure of flattered vanity*”, being offered by Ivan. “*The pleasure of praise and compliments*” (P.73) Margaret herself tells her new partner that her mother used to consider Margaret a self-righteous persona: as she herself claims in these words,

“*I was self-righteous ... I don't know if I am explaining myself very well. I suppose I got attached to being in the right all the time.*” (P.292) though at times the thought of people's reaction strikes her mindset but she does not bother. Margaret like Ivan seems to be a highly differentiated individual who does not waste time in prudence rather makes decisions, and ready to face and accept ‘conflict, criticism and rejection’ with an open heart. (Morgan, 9).

A person in fused relationship reacts immediately according to the demands of another person, irrespective of choices and talk over relationship matters. We see Sylvia's act of soothing Peter with intelligent talks and Margaret has the same influence on Ivan. They invest their energies to ensure emotional comfort for them. Both of the brothers feel relaxed, and the signs of stressful events vanish. It proves that he more tendency to fuse the less chances to adopt stress. Sylvia and Margaret are non-aggressive and prove themselves bearer of more patience through their easy going behavior.

It provides them a way to differentiate themselves individually among their families. Polat (2014) considers the concept of differentiation of self as one of the most crucial in the theory of family system. It seems like Id by Freud but it is the result of familial disintegration .Both came from broken families Ivan from parental side and Margaret's own separation from husband .So it seems to be an emotional fusion which works to diffuse and manage stress and anxiety and feel secure. Ivan becomes “*a way of being*” for Margaret “*her pride, her dignity, her life*”. (140)

Bowen also throws light upon the way of dealing with togetherness and separation. In his view an individual can adopt any one of the stance to be ill at ease either by fusion or by detachment. Besides this it may happen that an individual finds himself between the devil and the deep sea and finding no other way, emotionally burst out by reacting at the situation. Because emotions are spontaneous physical reactions; which turn into feelings “*when they become conscious*” (The eight concepts, 12) G. Pirooz Sholevar states that differentiation and maturity are accomplished when a person can “define himself” within the context of the family relationship. The failure of this process occurs in the cases of “*undifferentiation*” and “*cut-off phenomenon*” (“Family Theory” 12.)

Feelings are not an unconscious way of behaving, rather they are referred as ‘position one takes in relationship in ‘nuclear and extended family ‘to govern response of individual in a particular situation. Emotional fusion and emotional detachment both come side by side. A topsy-turvy change can be seen in the form of cutting one's self from the tension within a relationship. Ivan's behavior of having an emotional cut off from his brother Peter and with mother Christine is an apt illustration in this regard. Both brothers shared a happy bond of friendship with each other in childhood. Peter left no stone unturned to help Ivan in growing age.



In the meanwhile a tragedy befalls on Sylvia in the form of a tragic accident. This incident creates anxiety which surrounds the whole environment. Everybody in the family seems to be in a bereaved condition. As Gilbert says, *“Anxiety that effects one, affects all.”* (The Eight concepts,12). So is the case with Peter. It shatters and breaks him to the core of his heart but no one comes there as a solacing factor. Even Ivan neglects him. This incident causes a breach between the two brothers. Peter develops a sense of indifference towards family. He starts making fun of Ivan and distances himself from the rest of family including his father, while talking to Ivan he says,

“I have spent my life trying to protect you both ...who was looking for me, Ivan? When things get difficult, you’re gone. You’re out of the room... maybe with dad I did, but I learned my lesson. He did not want me to be his son, he wanted me to be his protector.”(P. 271)

The tussle starts with Ivan’s coming up with an age where he can argue with Peter. Ivan opens up his heart by telling Margaret, *“we are blood related”*.(P.184) and their family was lot more better due to positive energy brought by Sylvia but due to the accident of Sylvia they *“drifted apart from that point”*(p.184) As we go through the text we come across the quarrel between the two brothers. Ivan fights with Peter. The reason happens to be peter’s outspoken words for their late father. *“Family conflict can deteriorate into physical violence between the adult. (Gilbert,19)*. His arguments create anxiety and perturbs Ivan psychologically; he attacks on Peter in his full might. Resultantly this quarrel ends with the blood oozing from Ivan’s lip and Peter’s fleeing from the scenario.

There also occurs a heated argument between the two brothers on the topic of Margaret as well before. Peter puts a deaf ear to Ivan’s talk about Margaret. Though Peter himself enquires about seeing someone where Ivan gives a cold respond at first by saying, *“Yeah... But that’s not to put label on it.”* (P.116) Instead of developing an understanding he becomes judgmental and mocks at him. He considers this act a stance taken by Margaret to entangle his gullible brother. Peter rubs his eyes in shock and blurts out in an exasperated sigh:

“Don’t take this the wrong way, Ivan. But the woman is nearly forty. She’s been married already. You’re twenty-two, you’re hardly out of college, and you don’t even have a job. I’m not trying to be disparaging, but do you think a normal woman of her age would want to hang around with someone in your situation?” (P.124)

Already estranged relationship breathes its last. His harsh comments pinch Ivan’s heart. Resultantly, Ivan cuts him off from Peter, blocks his number and determines himself not to confront Peter ever. If in any case such situation occurs, either he will not acknowledge his existence or would treat him as a man in the street. Here Ivan happens to be an emblematic of low self-esteem who at the turn of events manages stress and anxiety by evading it or by shirking from the collision of confronting his brother. Opatha considers stress an inevitable part of life, every individual seems to be a victim of stress. Inability of an individual to cope with the situation will result in this way: *“the balance will become tipped to one side and we may feel stress or anxiety”* (Psychological therapies, 3)

Later on, when Margaret informs Ivan about the article which has been



published in the eulogy of Peter, *“something to do with gender equality”* (P.183), he does not show any kind of interest. He betrays indifference towards Peter which can be best described through his action:

“Ivan gives a barest twitch of nod. He has taken out his phone from his pocket and is looking down blankly at the screen” By shrugging his shoulder he tells Margaret: “You know, he told me once before that there is no point trying to talk to me because I can’t speak any normal language anyway”. (P.182)

Peter maintains his *“basic-self”* (Gilbert, 40) and remains connected with mother, Sylvia and Ivan occasionally. Though he connects himself with people according to his social need: with mother just on the basis of necessity, with Sylvia due to affection and with Ivan on Sylvia’s recommendations yet he remains connected. Peter proves himself a highly differentiated person who tries his best to bring a balance, by realizing his own tendencies and faults. Bowen considers it a healthy combination to achieve the balance but also acknowledges the troubles and hurdles. DeNisi and Griffin (2008) specify attributes of different individuals towards stress. They take the people who are highly competitive individuals as highly differentiated people because they are more focused ‘on their work and have few interests outside of work. Peter happens to be one of those individuals who leaves no stone unturned to become an elite. He wants to stand with those who bear good name and money. He happens to be an ambassador of human rights. Roberto considers principles, objectives and adaptability as high water-marks and peculiar characteristic of highly –differentiated people. Peter happens to be a good example of highly differentiated person He has objectives to become a good orator in job .He follows the principles of uplifting human rights and is a kind of darling in court due to his stance of uplifting the voice for humanity. He receives accolades for oratory even at the death of his father. His speech is an apt illustration in this regard. He is not easily swayed by others. He is sharp enough to utilize anyone according to his need. Finding no solution to satiate his carnal desires, he fixes himself with Naomi, helps her in releasing from jail, gives her shelter and benefits himself as well by saying, *“I want you to be happy”* (P.167)

Ivan on the other hand also maintains a sense of self but at distance. Although every individual possesses a unique sense of self along with togetherness as *“a drive to be unique is present in all of us”* (Morgan, 8) It is only the distinction of Bowen theory which introduces the concept of differentiation and gives prior importance to the individual. Ivan neither stay in contact with mother nor brother but to some extent with Sylvia. He is emotionally attached with Sylvia due to the bond they used to share in father’s time when everything was good. Sylvia was ray of hope and fundamental figure in their emotional attachment. When Ivan was young, Peter’s attention and cuddling behavior made him learn a lot. At Christmas Sylvia and Peter used to bring Ivan on excursions to make the event enjoyable. Ivan’s memories catches best manifestations in these words:

“Peter and Sylvia would bring Ivan up to Dublin for a day to go shopping, and at the lunch time they would sit in the tea rooms on Grafton Street together, under the stained-glass windows, and Ivan would drink a hot chocolate with cream.” (P.254)

Bowen Theory does not regard feelings an unconscious way of behaving, rather he refers them as ‘position one takes in relationship in ‘nuclear and extended



family 'to govern response of individual in a particular situation. So, the feelings of Naomi for Peter are not an unconscious way of behaving rather a proof of her being poorly differentiated. She possesses nothing .She has no father but a drunk mother: who has nothing to live upon except to offer her body in order to make money.

“ It is undue responsibility of the parents to nurture their children which would enable them to ‘ make wise and productive decisions for them.”(Radhika, 3)

She is the one whom no one has bothered in life ever. As for as the concern of her kith and kins she has no father but a drunken mother. She stays at Peter's house due to the compulsion of not having any residence, Peter meditates on the fact in these words:

“Father not in the picture, and the mother is a head case, drinker, in and out of rehab. Only forty four. He's heard them on the phone together: Naomi the grown up, her mother the child”.(P.107)

So it happens to be result of low self-esteem of Naomi which compels her to be fused with Peter. She does so as a side business in order to earn her livelihood, besides posting her pictures on websites. In fact it 'is indicative of low level of differentiation.' Of hers. (Morgan, 9). Morgan gives perspective of Georgetown family Centre who considers the low-esteemed people more at risk to stress and their recovery in process is more slow than people of high esteem, because people having low differentiation are more dependent on others opinions. Similarly her background and mother's ill behavior towards life provides her a reason to cut off from the shackles of familial bondage. In Bowen's view the ratio of differentiation in every individual is almost equal as it is innate and it can be changed with an effort to change in a structured way.

Some people choose the way of distancing themselves from other family members. They use this strategy as a coping mechanism to deal with stress and painful happenings in the family. When a person exhibit such stance; there may occur a possibility of isolation and disconnection along with stress. *“Stress is a condition of strain that affects one's emotions, thought processes, and physical condition.* (Werther and Davis, 1996)

A person may cut off with his family if he experiences significant trauma or abuse. It provides safety and protection for a while, but can also lead to the lack of support or healing. This term mentions the various processes that are amalgamation of 'separation, isolation, withdrawal, running away or denying the importance of parental family'(The eight concepts ,57).As we go through the text we come to know that Peter distances himself from father to the extent that he forgets the reality that his father loves him. Sylvia tries to convince him after the death of his father that his father used to love him a lot. He negates this idea and retorts her about his father. He gives vent to his feelings by telling that both he and his father know each other least on the verge of allergy. Hardly they talk to each other in fact they *“were allergic to each other”.* (P.10)

Bowen throws light upon the two ways of distancing from others: *“either through internal mechanism or physical distance”.* (Extraordinary relationships, 60). Peter act of distancing covers both domain emotional and physical as well. In the similar fashion. Ivan distances himself from Peter at the need of hour: when he needed it the most on emotional and physical level. Ivan himself admits the fact by remembering that he was not there when Peter was in need of



condolence and a shoulder to cry on. Ivan used to avoid him and having an eye contact with him. He felt uncomfortable in his presence due to the anxiety which was prevailing at every nook and corner of the house just because of Peter's bemoaning. It was not a deliberate action rather it happens to be personal trait, not everybody is good enough in dealing with untoward condition. Due to this Ivan *"started avoiding his company ,excusing himself early from dinner, slipping out of the room when Peter entered"*(p.254).It seems Ivan *"never told his parents about what happened at that time"*(P.255) Ivan did not take it incumbent to inform the family about the depressive condition of Peter, he was going through. Ivan feels regretful about neglecting Peter and putting a deaf ear to his conversation. It was just a way to avoid anxiety that would penetrate in family system in case of informing everyone. Though it was obvious and felt by everyone but the root cause was unknown. *John Paul a philosopher has considered it existential anxiety which is part and parcel of human life.*

Another instance of Peter's distancing himself from mother. He seems to be indignant towards his mother and the residence of her boyfriend. She had parted ways with her ex-husband, the father of Ivan and Peter, long ago in their childhood. So the gap which had been created in their infancy cannot be retrieved. *"... a family change during children's first five years should alter their developmental path by a greater degree than a change experienced later..."* (Reyan et al p,12) Though she tries to remain in touch with her children but they do not bother her any more. When she invites for Christmas dinner and ready to skip the trip if he is coming to see her, he blatantly rejects the offer in a straight forward manner by saying, *"You don't need to stay on my account"*.(P. 170).Peter also distances himself from Naomi . The guilt conscious of being involved in another girl for the fulfilment of carnal desire, without emotional attachment never lets him have a peace of mind. Radhika mentions this fact by saying; *" in the personal and professional lives of the individuals , they are overwhelmed by various types of problems and challenges."*(p, 8) So, finding himself between the devil and the deep sea, he comes to the conclusion that he has to choose only one to manage his stress and anxiety. He seems to be at the brink of break up he thinks:

"Trembling with a rush of feeling inside himself as if to get sick, he goes on: But I can't do this anymore. We have to stop. You and me."(P.238)

Sylvia creates emotional discrepancies with Peter after accident as she becomes helpless to meet the needs of Peter. She does so deliberately on account of being selfish if she continues to make and allow Peter to be a nincompoop and remain in pursuit of chasing her. Peter wants to be with Sylvia for the rest of his life with an express purpose of, *"Holding hard, harder, clutching, and not letting go."*(P.235)Even when Peter comes back to her after burning all the boats behind him- after breaking up with Naomi, they both have a quarrel when she deliberately makes an indictment to Peter by saying,

"I don't see what more can I do for you. I've tried to be your friend, and for some reason you've been determined to humiliate me and hurt me .I don't know why. May be deep down you really wish I was dead, and you're trying to punish me because I'm not."(P.263)"

Ivan has also due share in distancing himself from all family members. He considers himself a symbolic of neglected child. He has braces on his teeth so, he



feels complex for not having any attraction due to braces.

There is no such event which betrays his emotional attachment with mother. He does not discuss with any one nor with Margaret about the reason of his detachment with mother except this that she is career oriented. The only concern of her happens to be career. All the time she is critique of Ivan and passes comments upon his sense of dressing.

Conclusion

The research has offered flawless application and exploration. At first, Rooney's work *Intermezzo* has provided standard medium for employing theory of Murray Bowen. The wide-ranging presentation of Bowen's eight conceptions has confirmed that they are closely interrelated. The study has revealed that the characters in *Intermezzo* take resort in distancing themselves from the family either emotionally or physically. The term has been titled as cut off which explains an individual's attempt to relieve anxiety by emotionally or physically distancing from the system. The individuals adopt various processes such as parting ways, neglecting and running away from parental family' to deal with stress and painful happenings in the family. This kind of demeanor hints at the possibility of isolation and disconnection. It ensures not only safety and protection but can also lead to a lack of support and healing. The researchers explore Peter's act of distancing himself from the family; mother, father and brother; which results in apathy. Ivan distances himself from Peter when the later was having a dire need of it. Ivan's stance seems on two levels; emotional as well as physical. He does so to minimize uncomfortable feeling, which arouse due to gloomy scenario prevailing all around the house just because of Peter. The study further reveals Sylvia's way of creating emotional discrepancies with peter because of her inability to meet his needs. The study reveals that one of the major characters in the novel Ivan cuts him off from the family due to the negligence he has experienced in childhood. The peak point emerges in the form of having no contact at all neither physical nor emotional with Peter. So, does the Margaret with mother in order to alleviate anxiety.

The research has also drawn the family projection process causing from poor self-differentiation, displaying that disintegrated parents who suffer from bouts of depression and anxiety pass on such fretfulness to their children which fallouts in having another disintegrated generation. It implies that an anxiety-filled marriage can cause unnecessary focus on a child and ultimately contribute to the impairment of a child. So we witness Ivan as an impaired child; he takes resort in playing chess. Bowen's theory hails nuclear family projection process as a way through which the problems of parents are transferred to the children. The study makes it clear that the separation of parents brings psychological issues like depression, escape and obsession in Peter and Ivan. In order to escape from reality they take resort in illegal relationships instead of giving time to family they prefer to visit their girlfriends. Thus, the dissertation has then scrutinized; by what means the low self-differentiated characters in the novel affect each other in a negative way and betray familial disintegration by discussing the process through which parents project their emotions and anxieties onto their children and lead to the pattern of behaviors which become difficult to change. The dissertation has also illustrated that the interlocking concepts of Bowen's theory throws light upon the facts that in what ways the familial system is knotted; the disintegration in one member gives way to the uncertainty of this



system. Rooney's portrayal of Christine, and her concern about status quo is trickled down to Peter as he leaves no stone unturned to become an elite and study shows that this concern of hers put Ivan ill at ease. His indifference towards mother is a reflection of the projection of his father attitude as well. Hence, the study says that there are less chances of projection of anxiety onto the child if the parents are more distinguished.

The proposition of Multigenerational transmission process refers to the family projection process over several generations. It hinges upon the transference of vexation procedure at multigenerational level. Pattern of behaviors and coping mechanism are usually passed down from generation to generation and ultimately become sole cause of creating behavior which are inevitable to change. And the study of Sally Rooney's novel provides ample proofs of it in Kobuk's family, their habit of avoiding conflict. Christine's act of avoiding to give a straight answer about leaving her kids in childhood, her sense of righteousness, becomes natural psychology of Peter and Ivan. The unsolved mystery left a gap in their psychological brought up and children on coming up their age remain unable to resolve an issue by themselves on a healthy level. Christine's stance of leaving her family and living with boyfriend in his abode is transmitted to the next generation, and the two of her own sons remain hitched with prolonging their stay with their beloveds, instead of preferring to spend their time with families. The problems and clashes do not remain hitched to one family but are transmitted to the following generations as a part of their psychic behaviors.

The research has discussed concept of sibling position exhaustively, which considers the order and position in a family crucial for performing a task. Bowen seems to believe that the order in which children are born has a direct impact on their level of functioning. The theoretical framework also gives impetus on the significance of the position one owns in a family system. This point reflects the idea that the sequence in which children come to the world has a direct effect on the tasks they perform. Bowen, by dint of his observations he has considered children older more responsible in performing a task along with possession of leadership qualities. The study exhibits this fact in the characters of Peter and Ivan, mentioned in Rooney's work. By having a deep analysis Peter is seemed responsible, confident and ambitious fellow, has been eulogized as a brightest student and the best lawyer due to wittiness. Peter possesses all those traits of an elder child which have been proposed by Bowen in his Family System Theory. He happens to be a responsible child therefore he is honored to perform the task of giving eulogy to father at his late father's funeral. The mastery of his verbal force seems so alluring that everybody could not stop themselves except giving appreciation and accolades. The study of Bowen Family System Theory reveals that the two children could not enjoy the same luxuries in a family system because of their different number in landing into this world. So, the thorough analysis of Ivan in the novel, the youngest child, could not see the world as it has been for Peter. Ivan, being the youngest one is kind of creative and rebellious in nature. He is creative as plays chess tournament, wins the title of IM, reads theory about chess. Whenever he finds free time and he prefers to play chess online or read theory. We see clear instances of potential and firm determination, his own logics, turning hobby into his passion and remains a happy go lucky sort of person.

Lastly, the researchers describe the way through which society manages anxiety



as a whole, through the periods of progression and regression. The way through which emotional practice and anxiety management is done. The primal focus is on the fact that in what ways the process of emotional exuberance and strategies for managing anxiety can have an effect on the society as a whole. Theory of Bowen suggests that social problems can effect an individual's emotional functioning of family members and larger pattern of behaviors within families. Economic instability within a larger society creates stress and anxiety leading to change in family behavior patterns. The study brings us to the peak point where economic instability makes Koubeks to carry off, with their relationship. Which is brought to the surface by reading between the lines, Christine's decision to live a luxurious life, father's passivity. This situation imprints Psychological disturbance and creates a never ending wave of stress and anxiety among family members. Bowen's theory considers prevailing emotional systems in society, a true manifestation of set patterns of the behavior. The study gives us certain instances in which Naomi provides sufficient portrayal of economic instability which is brought to light through her unemployment. by posting her pictures, kittenish by nature, flirts with rich people including

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