

Tribhuvan University

Critique of Middle Class Ethos: A New Historic Reading of J. K. Rowling's

*The Casual Vacancy*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirment for the Degree of Master of Arts in English

By

Rajendra Prasad Kandel

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science  
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Rajendra Prasad Kandel has completed his thesis entitled “Critique of Middle Class Ethos: A New Historic Reading of J. K. Rowling’s *The Casual Vacancy*” under my supervision. He carried out his thesis from 2073/05/23 B.S. to 2073/09/02. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted to viva voce.

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Shankar Subedi

Supervisor

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Tribhuvan University  
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science  
Kirtipur, Kathmandu

Approval Letter

This thesis is submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Rajendra Prasad Kandel entitled “Critique of Middle Class Ethos: A New Historic Reading of J. K. Rowling’s *The Casual Vacancy*” has been approved by undersigned members of the thesis Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Internal Examiner

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

External Examiner

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Head

Central Department of English

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Critique of Middle Class Ethos: A New Historic Reading of J. K. Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy***

**Abstract**

The proposed research work argues J. K. Rowling's the first adult novel *The Casual Vacancy* is the historicization of the class ethos of 21<sup>st</sup> century British middle class; it is the exposure of hypocrisy, self-centeredness and egoism of the modern middle class Britons, and emphatic but creative resistance for anti-marginalization of British lower class. Social hierarchism, thereby, superiority complex of middle class Britons is one of the causes that hinder the unity of all British people for the collective efforts to root out any socio-economic hazards and go ahead horizontally not vertically with cordial reciprocity. Giving voice to officially unrecognized English lower class, it urges the privileged ones to be emphatic towards compulsions, difficulties, and wounds of unprivileged lower class and to give them the helping hands responsibly to rise them up. Accepting the multiplicity and plurality of analyzing any historical event, it presents one of the dominant natures of British lower class and middle class relationship.

**Keywords:** Historicity, textuality, truth, narrativization, anthromphism, metonymy, mataphor, mytonymy, discourse.

J. K. Rowling's the first adult novel *The Casual Vacancy* is the historicization of the discourse of the middle class superiority remained in the present Britain. This novel has artistically rendered the socio-political context of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. Middle class Britons' superiority consciousness and its effects in the lower class are the cardinal contents of this novel. Social hierarchism ingrained in the middle class

British societies has granted the justification to their irresponsible and apathetic treatment towards the plights and miseries of lower class people. Rowling's this narrative has foregrounded the phenomenally snobby, pretentious, self centric and egoistic nature of the middle class Britons and sheer marginalization of have nots. In effect, Rowling's this text historicizes 21<sup>st</sup> century modern Britain.

Internationally, Britain is recognized as a highly democratic, economically affluent and culturally civilized country but through this narration Rowling questions this claim of official history; the objective and universal nature of it. Through this narrative Rowling depicts that there is even heart- squeezing poverty and sheer marginalization of the have nots within present Britain. She deftly exposes the hypocrisy of the so-called well-cultured and civilized middle class British society. Her text gives the historical voice to those socio-political scenarios of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain which have not recognized by power-friendly official history.

Pagford is the fictional village in the West of England where Rowling sets her narrative. Pagford is outwardly pretty bourgeois haven where middle class people live and the Fields is its local estate where economically deprived people reside. Almost all members of the idyllic English town want to get rid of its own local council estate the Fields just because it has ruined by seething economic destitution and its multi-faceted effects. The middle class Pagfordians want to be detached from the Fields to keep the standard of the middle class values unspoiled and not to lose its already prevailed relative economic stability and for secured future of Pagford. Pagfordians consider themselves more civilized, more intelligent, more trustworthy, more ethical, more sophisticated and so on than the residents of the Fields. For them, the residents of the Fields are shiftless, lazy, irresponsible, uncivilized and economically poor. That's why Pagford doesn't want to accompany with the Fields. Pagford's sole concern

is to keep its so-called glorious civilization and sophistication unharmed rather than the upliftment of the Fields. Such apathetic attitude of middle class Pagford towards the plights of its own local council estate the Fields is because of middle class superiority embedded in the Pagfordians. The deployment of this discourse has played the significant role to sustain their power over the existing politico-socio-economic structure and to veil their self-centric, egoistic and snobbish nature.

This narration of *The Casual Vacancy* (2012) gives the meaning to the contemporary history of modern Britain. Through the close and detailed examination of this novel, we can hear the plurality of historical voices of the 21<sup>st</sup> century's Britain. The Researcher claims that this novel historicizes the voiceless and marginalized poor people's excruciating destitution that is artistically covered by the official history of so called advanced present Britain. Through the realistic plot and setting, she unveils that shadowy part of British society which can't be described and comprehended only by the reason. As an alternative version of history, Rowling's this text, residing within broader cultural networks, presents one of the interpretations of present Britain. How the discourse of middle class superiority has granted the exemption to the middle class Britons to be indifferent and unsympathetic towards the poverty-stricken underclass people is clearly depicted through this narration. This text cites those aspects of the class-based British society which the official history has denied to recognize. Not the fact but the opinion on which reality is formed. Instead of seizing events tangibly and thoroughly, like novel, history also grabs reality incompletely. There is also textuality in history and historicity in text or fiction, so there is no final and absolute history but multiple histories. Rowling's this text is also one of the multiple histories of the present Britain because text is naturally the product of author's subjectivity that is formed by the context in which the author gets along with.

Numerous critics have examined *The Casual Vacancy* as the dark portrayal of reality because this novel deals with a range of social issues, politics, and poverty. Rape, racism, marital discord, self-mutilation, domestic violence, prostitution, child abuse, generational conflict, adultery, etc. are some of the social issues of this novel. Class tension and political squabbling are more resonant issues among them. Columnist Jan Moire in the Daily Mail calls *The Casual Vacancy* is "a relentless socialist manifesto masquerading as literature." Some views it as a "parable of national politics" denoting the contemporary politics of Britain. For Time magazine, reviewing *The Casual Vacancy* Lev Grossman writes, "It (the novel) is a big, ambitious, brilliant, profane, funny, deeply upsetting and magnificently eloquent novel of contemporary England, rich with literary intelligence and entirely bereft of bullshit". He sees this narration as the resistance of the unfair present Britain on the issue of tackling poverty justifiably.

Some critics have examined *The Casual Vacancy* as the narrative of the irresponsible treatment of the rich towards the poor. Connor Strechi explores *The Casual Vacancy* as "one gigantic metaphor for the gulf fixed between people's pretense and mucky, concealed truth hidden on the inside...clean and pretty on the outside, dirty and rotten on inside." Strechi's this comment denotes the middle class Pagfordians' snobbery and artificiality. Middle class Pagfordians claim themselves that they are civilized, responsible, generous and helpful but in reality they are blighted by rampant snobbery, sexual frustration, ill disguised racism, egoism, self centricism and gossipy stupidity. Similarly, Christina Pivovar argues that Rowling's this novel is didactic. Pivovar states "Rowling's books operate on the traditional idea that literature should delight and instruct and the themes of social responsibility and empathy loom large here. Inability to recognize other people's humanity seems to be

the key failing in Pagford". But dark, depressing and dismal portrayal of Pagford, explicit and rampant vulgarity and depravity, ubiquitous use of dirty language, the meanness and pettiness of characters are some causes that this novel is not for children. Sometimes open exposure of the basics of the reality can be counterproductive to the small children's mind.

Some other Critics have viewed this novel as a mirror of class conflict covertly ingrained in modern Britain. Lauren Hubers, backing up this argument, opines "set in the small English town Pagford and centered on local council election, it [the novel] is deep complex exploration of human painted against a backdrop of class struggle, adolescent mood swings, and societal expectation." Middle class Pagfordians are divided into two factions in the Pagford Parish Council during election campaign held to nominate a new councilor to fulfill *The Casual Vacancy* caused by death of former councilor Barry Fairbrother. One faction is strongly devoted to shut down the addiction clinic and shunt the responsibility for the Fields onto the adjacent larger working class town of Yarvil. Another faction advocates that Pagford should be responsible to uplift its poverty stricken local council estate the Fields and towards the betterment of the residents of the Fields, and the Fields should be remain within Pagford. But this second faction is advocating for the Fields just for its political space in Pagford Parish Council. Those middle class characters competing for political office has the little compassion for the Fields they are striving to articulate. They are more concentrated on their own personal vested interest rather than the future of the underclass the Fields. Reviewing *The Casual Vacancy*, BBC art editor Will Gompertz states:

Individualism as its[novel's] central creed and justification, the bourgeoisie and its apologist have lost sight of the central importance

of society and of social co-operation and interaction to the well being of human - both as individuals and a groups. Once this individualism was liberating philosophy when counter-posed to medievalism and the rigid social structure of that age but now it has become the curse of our era, increasingly alienating us from one another and fragmenting our society.

Individualistic and self-centric nature of middle class Britain is the barrier for the collective headway of the society. Poverty anywhere constitutes a danger to prosperity everywhere. Nobody can be strong by putting other people down; rather we become strong by lifting them up.

Has Rowling become fair while depicting middle class Pagford and underclass the Fields whereas she herself belongs to middle class Britain? As an answer to this question, Moir Jan argues, ". . . J. K. Rowling herself [is] the kind of blinkered, left leaning demagogue quick to lambast what she perceives to be risible middle class values, while failing to see that her own lush thickets of dearly held emotions and prejudices are riddled with the same narrow-mindedness, she is so quick to detect others". He discerns the historicity and Rowling's own subjectivity as well in her narrative *The Casual Vacancy* though extent may differ. His own perspective, desire, and experience also might have stirred in his criticism to her writing.

Different from these all perspectives, the researcher discerns *The Casual Vacancy* as the historicization of the discourse of middle class superiority prevailed in present Britain. Rowling's the first adult novel reveals that present Britain is garlanded by the class problem, socio-economic and linguistic hierarchy. In *The Casual Vacancy* Rowling has highlighted self-centric, pretentious and egoistic middle class and voiceless, marginalized and poverty-stricken underclass through the setting of

Pagford and the Fields respectively. Britain's socio-cultural and political historicity surrounding the first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century has been reflected through this novel.

*The Casual Vacancy* is a realistic work of art that historicizes 'the interplay of the discourses, the web of social meanings operating in the contemporary Britain in which this text has written. The researcher argues Rowling this narrative is the representation of the modern Britain where discourse of middle class superiority has cultural predominance; class hierarchy matters for the marginalization of the economically deprived ones. Rowling's this narrative is the product of Britain's present "context and networks of its institutions, beliefs, and cultural power relation".

This novel shows various aspects of the contemporary British society: the disparity and discrimination between rich and poor, shameful greed for the position of the political power, stakeholder's apathy towards social welfare, snobbish and self-centric middle class, poignant lifestyle of the voiceless deprived people, superiority consciousness of the middle class people, and their search of secured life by excluding the poor ones etc. Through the close and detailed examination of *The Casual Vacancy* we can find the plurality of the historical voices of the contemporary Britain.

Applying the method of the New Historic analysis, this paper aims at analyzing the historicity of the discourse of middle class superiority of present Britain in Rowling's this narrative. New Historicism potentially aims studying literature in relation to its historical context. For New Historicist, literature is as historical as history and history is as fictional as fiction. It accepts the multiplicity of meaning and impossibility of objective analysis because either he is literary figure or historian, his personal feeling, perspective, desire, experience, ignorance, misconception, prejudice or his subjectivity is mingled in his writing. Our perspective is determined by the context and text is composed and understood accordingly. Our subjectivity is shaped by and

shapes the culture in which we are born. So, any text is the product and producer of the culture in which the author belongs. Through the literary criticism a critic finds not absolute fact but web of social meanings of the culture of given place and time to which the text belongs. In this regard, one of the well recognized New Historicist Greenblatt states:

Literary criticism has a familiar set of terms for the relationship between a work of art and the historical events to which it refers; we speak of allusion, symbolization, allegation, representation, and above all mimesis. Each of these terms has a rich history and virtually indispensable and yet they all seem curiously inadequate...And their inadequacy extends to aspects not only of contemporary culture but of the culture of past. We need to develop terms to describe the ways in which material here official documents, private papers, newspaper clippings, and so forth is transformed from one discursive sphere to another and become a aesthetic property. (11)

As per Greenblatt, even if insufficiently, every work of art is the reflection of the historical events. With the help of the tools of the literary criticism one can grab the historicity remained in it. For him so-called factual texts like official documents, news articles, diaries etc., are also aesthetic assets, they are not absolutely objective rather all texts are subjective.

For Geertz, through the thick description or close and detailed examination of the texts, a critic disentangles 'the structure of significance' and fixes their social ground and import. Culture is constituted by the distinctive set of signifying systems. Literary text is the representation, imitation, or symbolization of the culture because it is also a cultural product. Geertz further states, "Doing ethnography [the description

of races] therefore like trying to read a manuscript – foreign, faded full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sounds but in transient examples of shaped behavior” (10).

Through literary criticism, New Historical literary critic do have thorough and detailed examination of the text highlighting the marginalized. "Literary text, through its representation of human experience at a given time and place is an interpretation of history" (Tyson, 295). We can interpret those interpretations to hear plurality of historical voices. Stating the core area of New Historicism, Habib writes, "The New Historicism argues that analysis of literary texts could not be restricted to these texts themselves or their author's psychology and background, rather the larger contexts and cultural conventions in which text are produced needed to be considered"(766).

Literary text is neither a self sufficient, autonomous, timeless art object having no connection with history nor it embodies author's intention or illustrates spirit of the age that produced it. Rather literary texts are cultural artifacts that can tell us something about the interplay of discourses, the web of social meanings opening in the time and place in which the text was written. Literary text maps the discourses circulating at the time it was written and is itself one of those discourses. That is “literary text shapes and is shaped by the discourses circulating in the culture in which it has produced” (Tyson, 291). J. K. Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy* is also the embodiment of the specially two contrasting discourses prevalent in modern Britain: the discourse of middle class superiority and anti-marginalization of the underclass. At the same time her narrative can be seen as the representation of the evils of the social hierarchism, politics of marginalization, and though apparently unconscious the justification of the exclusion of economically unprivileged by middle class.

In M.H. Abram's words " Foucault views discourse of an era, instead of reflecting pro-existing entities and orders, brings into being the concept of oppositions and hierarchies of which it speaks; "that these elements are products and propagation of " power" or social forces. . . "(191). For Foucault, power gives knowledge/representation, and that knowledge becomes truth during its operation. When power changes 'knowledge' changes and also changes the 'truth'. So 'truth' is constructed, political, and discursive; there is no absolute, final truth, objective, and universal truth. In Foucault's views "Power is relation, power is not a thing, it is a relationship between two individuals, a relationship which is such that one can direct the behavior of another or determine the behavior of another" Power/Knowledge 410).

Discourses wield power for those in charge but they also stimulate opposition to that power. That's why there is mutually constitutive relationship between individual identity and society. So, even the autocratic regime doesn't have absolute autonomy to oppress the people and human beings. People are not only victim of power because they can find various strategies to resist autonomy in their personal and public life. According to the Foucault's theory of discourse and power, "people are told that discourse is a production of power and power is hidden in the practice of discourse. Power and discourse are inseparable and the power is realized through discourse. Discourse is not only the tool to exert power, but also the key to hold it" (38). For Foucault, individual is the subject of the discourse, discourse gives the 'subject position' to individuals. He becomes the bearer of the knowledge or embodies the knowledge within that given 'subject position'. But with the help of the 'technologies of the self' i.e. self fashioning, self stylization, and individual can exercise certain agency or freedom within discourse.

Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy* (2012) was published when whole world was struggling to revive from the economic recession of 2008. Early in the 21<sup>st</sup> century the capitalist countries faced the great recession. In this period of the crisis highly advanced and socio-economically developed Western countries' decisive ballot stood against the financial and other assistance for developing and underdeveloped nation. Even in the national and local politics economically well-off people were striving to sustain their already prevailed sophisticated status disregarding the voiceless poor ones. This was as they claimed, for protecting their so called glorious civilization and affluent economic position. Different contemporary works have rendered this historical scenario and middle class consciousness of the-then British society. Taking this point in case, the researcher explores the various dimension of the discourse of middle class superiority in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain and its contribution to gain and sustain their power through the close examination of Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy* within the framework of New Historicism.

Rowling admits her first adult novel has exposed the excruciating impoverishment existing in the current Britain. She says, "being poor as it is [as in the novel] is possible to be in modern Britain without being homeless". She further states Britain holds phenomenally snobby middle class society which is "pretentious" and "funny". Her text is the fictional portrayal of the same self-centric and egoistic middle class British society. Middle class majored British society's superiority complex becomes the incentive to make them detached not only from lower class society within the country but also from the European Union. But Rowling intangibly insists on the collective efforts because it is an infallible weapon that tackles down all kinds of hurdles and difficulties whether it is minor or major; and assures the national, regional and global stability and overall advancement. In Rowling's narrative Barry

Fairbrother is an example that proves if socio-economically privileged individual or society gives its hands to make unprivileged one rise and get out of the kiln of the disparity, discrimination and destitution, even that person or society can achieve capable, responsible and dignified life. The fictional town Pagford symbolizes the modern Britain. During the period Rowling was writing this novel, Britain was in the debate of whether Britain should be within European Union or not. That's why the referendum was going to held for the final decision of Britain's staying in European Union. Large portion of its population wanted to be free from European Union to keep Britain's economic sophistication and traditional civilization unharmed as Pagford desires to expatriate the Fields to restore Pagford to an idyllic, middle class poverty free existence in the narrative of *The Casual Vacancy*. Even those politicians who are lobbying for Britain's 'remain' in EU were not adequately sincere and devoted to it because their vested interest was to get power rather than Britain's 'remain' in EU. Paul Mason argues "In Brexit[Britain+Exit] referendum , we have seen what happens when working class culture gets hijacked and when the party that is supposed to be defending working people just can't find the language or the offer to separate a fake revolt from real one".

This text can have the contribution in shaping class ethos in British culture whereas the text in itself has been shaped by pros and cons of the discourse of middle class superiority rooted in British culture. Pagford and Pagfordians are the representative of the Britain and British middle class respectively. Middle class people of Pagford consider themselves superior to people of the Fields as middle class British people assume themselves more civilized, self reliant and sophisticated than the rest of the rest of the world. Outwardly Britain claims that she is in favour of fair, just, meaningful and productive European Union but in reality, instead of contributing

EU's better health along with the creative and constructive resistance against its unfair actions, Britain withdrew its membership from EU by the decisive ballot of the middle class Britons. Rowling narrative is the prediction of this result as well as an aesthetic revelation of middle class Britons' ego i.e. they are more intelligent, more responsible, more well-off and more civilized than lower class people. Fields is another symbolic representation of the British lower class society and relatively poor countries in EU. Economically deprived, socio-politically marginalized and culturally isolated lower class Fielders are engulfed in the vicious circle of poverty. But class ethos of the middle class people doesn't let them see lower class more than shiftless, lazy, irresponsible and poor. For them inhabitants of the Fields are deceitful, laxy, inactive, negligent, and economically deprived. For Aubrey Fawley, one of the Pagfordians, residents of the Fields are "people who have literally not worked a day in their lives". Instead of finding out the root cause of the destitution of the Fields and tackling them accordingly for good, Pagfordians want to get rid of own local housing estate the Fields by carefully redrawing the border of the Pagford Council so that this ruined estate may exclude from Pagford for good. Pagfordians seem reluctant to carry out any responsibility for the upliftment of the Fields. To get rid from the responsibility of carrying further economic burden for the Fields and to keep the standard of the middle class values unspoiled Pagford wants to leave the Fields to Yarvil. For instance, Howard Mollison who considers himself the First Citizen of the Pagford views "Pagford shone with a kind of moral radiance. For him the town was an ideal, a way of being a micro-civilization that stood firmly against rational decline"(415). The Pagford Parish is search of novelty and originality for its own sake irrespective of poverty stricken the Fields. This research work therefore explores how the discourse of middle class superiority is shaped by and has shaped the culture of

modern Britain and isolation of have nots on the basis of Rowling's narrative *The Casual Vacancy*.

Discourse of middle class superiority circulating in so many of the texts that are shaped and have shaped by British culture in the centuries of time. *The Casual Vacancy*'s embodiment of the contradiction and the complexities of the discourse of middle class superiority reveals the 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. From very beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, western advanced countries including Britain are contending with diverse socio-political and economic problems. Iraq war, economic recession of 2008, outbreak of different fatal diseases such as swine flu, bird flu, Ebola, etc, ferociously spreading terrorism, unlimited supply of migrants, exceeding number of asylum seekers are some of them. Along with all these external problems, Britain has its own external difficulties such as socio-economic disparity, extreme poverty of underclass, marginalization of voiceless, economically deprived community, depreciation on the traditional humanitarian values, sense of insecurity etc. Because of all these causes middle class British society also feels insecure and as a result becomes more self-centric in the name of protecting its so-called prosperous values and socio-politico-economic status. The discourse of the middle class superiority endorses those status and values covertly but artistically letting English people the rationale of advocating for Brexit and the ideology that middle class Britain is civilized, and have glorious values inherited by ancestors; it is the matter of national and cultural identity and so it should be protected at any cost.

In this way, Rowling's depiction of the contemporary Britain through this novel can be seen as "history not in terms of discreet episodes, forming a homogenous whole but as fractured subjective and above all textual [and thus it is] contingent, unstable and partial" (Green,112). *The Casual Vacancy* is a manipulation of discourse

of middle class superiority through and by culture's power struggle. Rowling favors the marginal particularly poor people over the central power holder middle class Pagfordians. Rowling shows her sympathy towards the marginalized poverty stricken community the Fields by portraying it as it is. Any work of art raises voice against any socio-economic and political evils and perversions basically in two ways: first, it depicts as the content is, second, it declares how the content is unfair, it present the content critically and gives the solution. Rowling doesn't give any wayout of the problematic content rather minutely observes the basic structure of the class conflict, marginalization, and dire poverty that creates sincerity and sympathy in readers towards the victims. For instance, depicting the dismal and disappointing reality of the life of the ruined estate the Fields she writes:

The Fields were not improved by sunshine, which merely showed up the dirt and the damage, the cracks in the concrete walls, the boarded windows and the litter.

The square in the Pagford looked freshly painted whenever the sun shone. Twice an year, the primary school children through the middle of the town, crocodile fashion, on their way to church for Christmas and Easter services. Nobody has ever wanted to hold Krystal's hand.

Fats had told them all that she had fleas. (437)

Krystal Weedon is one of the representative characters of the Fields. The member of the ruined estate (Krystal, Terri, Robbie) are shown loud, promiscuous, overtly sexual, squalid and not very bright. Though Terri Weedon is not homeless but is penniless. She embraces prostitution as compulsion when her self esteem and desire to get rid from the quicksand of sheer destitution is wrenched mercilessly but repeatedly. She becomes overtly sexual, junkie, whimsical, squalid and thoroughly

irresponsible towards the upbringing of her son Robbie and daughter Krystal due to the never healing but excruciating wound of poverty and society's hatred towards her. Krystal Weedon struggles her best to hold her disintegrating family. But unfortunately, she is raped in her own home by her mother's drug dealer Obbo. Distraught mentality of teenage girl Krystal can't get any solace in her house. Krystal, a fiercely loyal sister to her three year old brother Robbie, ultimately commits suicide when she couldn't protect her brother from being prey of starvation. Their junkie, heroin addicted mother can't give them familial protection, love and proper guidance. One the one hand, underclass people are searing in such plight of scarcity, on the other hand, instead of contributing for the betterment of own local housing estate, Pagford is adopting all ways to be detached from the Fields forever. Pagfordians want to be detached from the Fields no matter how pathetic it will be for the Fields.

If we contemplate this narrative, *The Casual Vacancy* seems contradictory with the British Authority's proclamation as Britain is highly advanced and civilized nation, it is in post-scarcity stage. Rowling's narrative challenges the official history of the Britain. As a realistic novel, Rowling's this narrative historicizes the pathetic condition of the economically deprived people in the so-called advanced contemporary Britain. Poor people are compelled to be prey of strongly ingrained socio-economic disparity and discrimination though Britain claims there is full respect of human rights within present Britain. Rape of Krystal Weedon, her mother's compulsion of adopting prostitution for survival, death of Robbie and suicide of Krystal herself caused by starvation and lack of shelter and familial love and protection, and middle class Pagfordians hatred towards Krystal's family and her neighbors are some representative evidences ridiculing Britain's so called robust position on respecting human rights, and its post scarcity phased advancement.

Internationally, Britain is considered that it is in post scarcity condition that is none is starving, fundamental needs – clothing, shelter, healthy food, quality education, health service and security- have been provided to its citizens. But through this novel Rowling portrays the absolute poverty and discriminatory socio-political tendency remained beneath the veneer of so called highly cultured and economically affluent present Britain. The sheer destitution of the Fields can be seen as a representative thing that there is still absolute poverty in Britain. The Fields has been demolishing with:

. . . welts, sores, gashes, burns, tarnblack, bruises, scabies and nits; babies lying on the carpet covered in dog shit; kid crawling on broken bevvies; and once a child who had been locked in a cupboard for five days by his psychotic stepfather. That one had made the national news.

(81)

Such culmination of poverty has covertly ridiculed Britain's so-called advancement and boldly rejected the official history's objectiveness.

People of the Fields are increasingly engulfed in the quicksand of poverty. Their houses are the mirrors reflecting their ruined economic state. Describing Krystal's house Rowling further writes "It [kitchen] was almost as dirty as the bathroom. Other than the fridge, cooker, and washing machine, there were no gadgets; the counters carried only dirty plates, another overflowing ashtray, carrier bags, mouldy breads... Rubbish had overflowed the bin, on top of which sat the pizza bot, precariously balanced" (71). The houses smell of stale food, of sweat of unshifted filth. "There are no books, no pictures, no photographs, no television except a pair of filthy old armchair and broken set of shelves" (67). The life expectancy of the inhabitants of the Fields is 40-50 years. "Nobody close to Krystal had ever died of old

age”(199). Promiscuous and drug-addled inhabitants of the Fields are content of the explicit and rampant vulgarity and depravity. Children feel insecure not only from others but also from their immoral drug addled parents:

Sometimes Terri thought that those weeks in hospital had been the happiest of her life, even with the pain. It had been so safe and people had been kind to her and looked after her. She thought...not to back to her father, not to back bedroom door flying open in the night, and her father with his hand on his fly approaching the bed where she begged him not to . . . (265)

Rowang's this narrative discloses the indigence and its fatal consequences: gender and sexual violence of women and childrne, moral decadence, unfulfillment of the basic needs, dire living standard, short life expectancy, gross violation of human rights etc, that are prevalent even in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. This is one of the marginalized history of present Britain.

Through the genuine examination of the narrative of this novel we can get the internal reality (marginalized histories) of the contemporary Britain when it was written (2012). M. H. Abrams states, “[literary text] situated within the totality of the institutions, social practices, and discourses that constitute the culture of a particular time and place and with which the literary text interacts as both a product and producer of cultural energies and codes” (192). So Rowling’s *The Casual Vacancy* is also the product of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain, it has also contribution to build the ‘cultural energies and codes’ of the Britain. Two contrasting discourses of the present Britain – the discourse of middle class superiority and discourse of anti – marginalization of unprivileged groups or individuals are resonantly reflected in *The Casual Vacancy*. But the dominant discourse of the period was the discourse of

middle class superiority which leads modern Britain to leave European Union.

Rowling's *The Casual Vacancy* is the product of Britain's present "context and networks of its institutions, beliefs, and cultural power relation". Rowling through this novel gives blaring voice to the marginalized and officially unrecognized history of the present Britain.

This novel portrays the ideology of middle class superiority ingrained in the well-off British people; it evinces "how ideology operates in the formation of the personal and group identity, how culture's perception of itself influences its political, legal, and social policies and customs, and how power circulates in a given culture (Tyson, 288). People of Pagford, a fictional village resembling the middle class Britain of 21<sup>st</sup> century, are tangibly or intangibly guided by discourse of middle class superiority because this ideology maintains them in power. As per this discourse, people at the top of the social scale are naturally superior to those below them. They are well-cultured, well-educated, economically well-off, well-accessed, more responsible and generous than their underclass. They have the more engaging flair, ingenuity, and competence to handle any governing bodies of the society. Obviously, *The Casual Vacancy* reflects this discourse of middle class superiority, thrived in social hierarchism, circulating in the so many of the texts (political, legal, social policies, and customs) that both shaped and were shaped by British culture during first decade of 21<sup>st</sup> century. As a ratification of this discourse, the political office of the Pagford Parish Council is in the suffocating grips of middle class Pagfordians. There is no one in this political body who is from the Fields articulating this economically ruined estate. Along with the death of former councilor Barry Fairbrother, there is nobody in the council having genuine sympathy towards the Fields.

Long rooted political squabbling in Pagford Parish Council between two factions on whether Pagford should 'remain' or 'leave' the Fields is the fictionalization of the Britain's years-long political dispute on whether Britain should 'remain' or 'leave' the EU. There were the historical accounts of the disputes in Britain since the very year 1973 when the United Kingdom joined the EEC or "common market"- most notably a faceoff between one faction that was in favor of Britain's membership in EEC and another that was against the Britain's participation in EEC. The labour party on the general election of October 1974 in the agenda of recontracting Britain's terms of membership of the EEC and conducting referendum of 1975, 67.2 % Britons voted for UK's staying in EEC, thus, Britain remained member of the EEC. But the opposition voice advocating Britain's withdrawal from EU kept on becoming stronger and more stronger in the passing course of time in the initiation of firstly Labor Party, then the Referendum Party, and The UK Referendum Party. Finally former Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron became compelled to held referendum that gave decisive vote for Britain's withdrawal from EU in 23 June 2016. Britain came in the verge of leaving EU because middle class Britons felt that the mass immigration from the EU to Britain, heavy pour of Britain's budget (at least for middle class Britons) in EU had challenged their relative socio-economic stability and security. Even those parties and campaigners who were in favor of Britain's 'remain' in EU, couldn't effectively circulate the message that EU is the great message of the advanced human civilization calling for the entire world to unite within a single umbrella that is solely devoted for the overall betterment of human beings leaving all forms of divisive and regressive borderlines of humanity. Self centric middle class Britons couldn't realize that we are living in interconnected world, without collective efforts no potential headway is possible.

*The Casual Vacancy* can be seen as the narrativization of these historical events of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. In this narrative there is the decades long disputes in Pagford Parish Council on whether the Pagford, idyllic, middle class small town should be detached from the Fields- a rundown sink estate. Along with the unexpected and sudden demise of the former councilor Barry Fairbrother, “a man of boundless generosity”, the faction lobbying for the Fields’ staying in the Pagford loses its virtual majority in Pagford Parish Council. The opposition led by Howard Mollison attains majority along with the victory of Miles Mollison as a councilor in the election. This faction wants to reassign the Fields to the district council of the nearby city Yarvil, offloading the responsibility for its economically ruined underclass inhabitants and closing the Bellchapel Addiction Clinic served for the addicts from the Fields and Yarvil. There is none who honestly articulates Barry Fairbrother’s strong and persistent voice that the socio-economic condition of the Fields can be improved if the proper opportunities and collective efforts are provided to it. He himself was born and grew up in the Fields but by attending in the Pagford’s good school allowed him better life. From the successful life story of Barry Rowling shows that even the lower class people have immense potentiality of gaining competent, sophisticated, and dignified life if there is collective contribution to lift them up. Barry prefers the Fields as indivisible part of Pagford but his opponents, self centric middle class Pagfordians, think that this poor estate has spoiled Pagford’s pristine socio-cultural values and has foisted excessive economic burden and insecurity upon Pagford. For them, “The Fields are full of glue sniffers and smackheads” (311). Pagfordians think they are superior to Fielders. By naturalizing the Fields with such negative stereotypes, discourse of middle class superiority has given the Pagfordians the justification to be apathetic and irresponsibly detached from the Fields instead of contributing for the

Fielders' relief from the kiln of poverty. As the Britain is willing to be detached from the EU, so the Pagford has hurried to be liberated from the Fields no matter how irresponsible it is.

Superiority consciousness of the middle class Britons is the root cause of the conflict between EU and United Kingdom as of clash between the Pagford and the Fields in Rowling's narrative. Middle class Pagfordians strong attachment to their class ethos represents present middle class Britons' infatuation with the discourse of middle class superiority. They consider themselves superior to not only British lower class but also rest of the people around the world. They do have the strong allegiance with Voltaire's famous saying that middle class British people "are like their own beer; froth on top, dregs on bottom, the middle excellent". They consider themselves as Lord Brougham states "[British middle class is] the wealth and the intelligence of the country; the glory of the British name" thereby Britain is regarded as a mother of the so-called most advanced civilization of the world. They take hard work, self reliance honesty, generosity, thrift and self help as their virtues. So, for them, they are superior to lower class people. Miles Mollison, who is openly in favor of exclusion of the Fields from Pagford argues with Kay:

Pagford is full of working class people, Kay; the difference is most of them work. Do you know what proportion of the Fields lives off benefits? Responsibility you say, what happened to personal responsibility. We've had them through the local school for years, kids who have not got single worker in the family, the concept of earning is completely foreign to them; generation of non-workers and we're expected to subsidize them. (224)

For Miles, unlike Fielders, Pagfordians are diligent, hard-working, self-reliant, contentious, and bounteous, that's why they are socio-economically prosperous and advanced than lower class. Pagford doesn't want to take any responsibility of underclass people of the Fields who have long term unemployment and reliance on welfare for existence, thus, are compelled to be seared in the excruciating poverty. Pagfordians, who are employed, can afford their daily basic needs easily, have their own comfortable house, couldn't realize that poverty anywhere constitutes the danger to prosperity everywhere. Collective efforts, to curb poverty, is the solution not the discard of poverty stricken people.

In modern British societies, genteel, polite, grammatically well formed and embellished language is used in public contexts. Such language is considered standard and legitimate. Received Pronunciation and other dialects and their speakers are seen negatively in relation to the standard language. Language is also one of the markers of the class status. Middle class people speak well-pronounced, genteel, polite, grammatically well-formed and diplomatic language whereas lower class people use vulgar, obscene, broken, and straightforward language. Lack of linguistic competency and courtesy of the people from the Fields (such as Krystal, her mother Terri) is the marker of their class and low cultured status:

'The fuck do you know?' demanded Terri. 'They're closing it and now they I've gotta to fuckin' Pagford to that bitch that killed Nana Cath. Well, I fuckin' ain't. I ain gotta do fuckin' anythin,' said Terri furiously. 'Cheeky little bitch ', she added for good measure. 'If you start fuckin usin' [heroine] again', Said Krystal, scarlet in the face 'they'll take Robbie away'. (407)

Terri and Krystal's lower class culture made them vulgar. Uttering the word 'fucking' is their linguistic habits, they have no gumption of using polite language. Class and education affect the construction of social subjects and forms of 'self'.

Through the fictionalization of events like middle class Britons' superiority consciousness, their deceptive politics for being detached from the lower class and political struggle regarding Britain's involvement in EU, Rowling creatively grants the voice to British lower class who are unheard and unrecognized by the official history of the modern Britain. Actually, reality is not a fact but an opinion, how the events are interpreted by the author keeps greater importance than the event itself. Rowling's narrative is also one of the interpretations of these events. There are usually multiple causes behind any historical event. So there is no complete and totalizing interpretation either it is fiction or history. Like other fictions, accepting the plurality of historical voices and multiplicity of truths, Rowling's text also tries to articulate minority British lower class along with majority British middle class people. For instance, she not only gives voice to the lower class concern of being engulfed within the vicious circle of merciless destitution which deceitfully blocks the outlet of getting rid from it, but also highlights the British middle class concern of subsidizing continuously to lower class community that is not genuinely striving to lift it up. Rowling's narrative is the projection of the complex relationship of British middle class and lower class, in Linda Harrick's words, it is "a dig at English class system."

According to Foucault, power 'individualizes' agents and 'certain bodies, certain gestures, 'certain discourses, certain desires come to be identified' through the exercise of power (98) . For him power is also productive not only regressive; it doesn't [always] repress. "In particular it invites people to speak to assess and articulate themselves" (131). We can see how Barry Fairbrother, even if he was born

and grown up in the Fields, becomes one of the Pagford's most prominent and cordially respected citizens and achieves the power to articulate his resistance against middle class Pagfordians' egoistic, self-centric, and narcissistic behavior. Staying in the 'subject position' granted by discourse of middle class superiority, through the 'technologies of the self' or self fashioning, self stylization, self mastery, he had celebrated his freedom of conscience or his agency in regard with responsible treatment towards the Fields. Barry Fairbrother masters the cultural codes of the middle class which gives him power but ironically disclassifies him.

In present Britain, members of middle class are often politically and socially engaged, they fight for political office and have decisive participation on local committees and governing boards. Such activities endow themselves with 'highbrow' cultural capital, high economic capital as well as high social capital and make them more powerful than members of underclass. Even in Rowling's narrative, all members of the Pagford Parish Council are middle class Pagfordians. They are economically self-reliant, and self-satisfied because they are employed in well recognized jobs like solicitor (Miles Mollison), General Physician (Parminder Jawanda), deputy headmaster (Collin Wall), teacher (Tessa Wall), delicatessen manager (Howard Mollison), nurse (Ruth Price), social worker (Kay Bawden), civil servant (Shirley Mollison). These jobs are considered the typical occupations of middle class of present Britain. Politically and economically strong middle class exercises power in its favor by creating the 'knowledge' that middle class is superior to lower class. Sara Mill points out that according to Foucault, "where there are imbalances of power relations between groups of people or between institutions/state, there will be a production of knowledge" (69). This ideology of middle class superiority leads the

Pagfordians up to the complete detachment of the Pagford from the Fieds in the name of protecting their glorious values and keeping socio-economic stability unspoiled.

Similarly, discourse of middle class superiority is backed up by various discourses like discourse of education. Education has great value in middle class. People of this class invest their every effort and wealth to ensure their children obtain university degree. Underclass people are mostly deprived of it, formal education is limited to certain classes. Because of that any individual's level of education denotes his social class. Education affects the subject's social class, paves the way to other classes. It is broadly accepted that higher quality education increases the possibility of getting a better, more prestigious and lucrative job. Job status and income level are two issues related to the discourse of class. Barry Fairbrother succeeds to become a councilor of Pagford Parish Council, coach of the local rowing team, article writer for newspaper, and upgrades his lower class status to middle class because of the education he had gained by attending in the Pagford's good schools. Krystal Weedon also, despite her numerous hardships caused by the heart squeezing poverty, seems fiercely responsible towards her three years old brother Robbie because of the education and culture she learns in her school of Pagford. Pagford's St. Thomas Church of England Primary School had reluctantly admitted Krystal because when her school year started she was in staying with her grand-grandmother Nana Cath at Hope Street in Pagford. Later she came in the Fields with her mother but continued the same school. "No part of Pagford's unwanted burden caused more fury or bitterness than the fact that Fields children now fell inside the catchment area of St. Thomas Church of England Primary School"(57). Rare students of the Fields come in Pagford's good schools because they can't fulfill the strict criteria like "need to buy uniform, necessity of attaining bus passes and of getting up earlier to ensure that the

children arrived at school on time’(57). Pagfordians’ sincerity of providing good education and advanced cultivation can be evaluated by the Miles and Samantha Mollison ‘s decision of ‘removing both their daughters to St. Anne’s, the private girls’ school in Yarvil from their rightful school of Pagford’ just because of lower class Krystal’s presence in their class.

Discourse of middle class superiority doesn’t only wield power for the middle class people of the current Britain but also stimulate opposition to that power. The discourse of middle class superiority claims that middle class people are generous, ethical, self-reliant, responsible, well cultured and civilized than underclass. This discourse is permeated by the intention to dodge history, to transcend historical realities of time, place and human limitation. This discourse is the denial of historical reality that middle class people of modern Britain are also trapped by rampant snobbery, pretention, narcissism, sexual frustration, extra marital affair, pedophile, child abuse, poverty and so on. Rowling’s *The Casual Vacancy* presents this contradiction of current Britain as a mimesis. Howard Mollison and his family is happy in the death of Barry Fairbrother and in the exposure of the defamatory posts related to other councilors on the official website of Pagford Parish Council, though outwardly they pretends that they are extremely shocked. As an omniscient narrator, Rowling writes, in the unexpected demise of Barry Fairbrother:

Howard must be as brimful of ecstasy as she [Shirley] was; but to express these feelings out loud, when the news of the death was still fresh in the air would have been tantamount to dancing naked and shrieking obscenities, and Howard and Shirley were clothed always, in a visible layer of decorum that they never laid aside.(17)

Simon Price, another middle class Pagfordians, buys ‘stolen computer’ at night because it is cheaper than new one. But his own teenage son discloses this bitter reality on the official website of council by uploading post that reads, “...He saves money at home by furnishing it with stolen goods- recently a PC...” (241). Due to this exposed moral deflation, Simon not only withdraws his candidacy from the council election, but also is fired from his existing job. Abusive and domineering Simon Price bursts violently over the family members. “. . . he [Simon Price] thumped Paul [his little son] with his fists. Paul cowered and ducked; black liquid trickled from his left nostrils . . .” (283).

Another defamatory post on council website states “Mr. Collin Wall [ another middle class Pagfordians], a strict disciplinarian, is so frightened that a pupil might accuse him of inappropriate sexual behavior that he has often needed time off work to calm himself down again”(364). Collin Wall’s pedophile nature is exposed out by his own retributive, adoptive son ‘Fats’. Another councilor Parminder Jawanda’s extramarital affair with late Barry Fairbrother is unveiled by her own daughter Sukvinder. Samantha Mollison ‘hates waking up next’ to her husband Miles. She finds herself infatuated with and ‘kissing sixteen years old boy’(447) Andrew- a classmate of her daughter. Gavin doesn’t feel any hesitation to forward purpose of marriage with newly widowed and bereaved Marry Fairbrother in order that she is a mother of 4 children and is hysteric due to the shock of her husband’s death. Gavin considers gloriously pride when he says to Marry “Marry, I think I am in love with you’ (455). Instead of showing heartily sympathy in own friend’s (Barry Fairbrother) widow, Gavin shamelessly purpose her to get married with him. In the name of being authentic, Fats do whatever he prefers. He has strained relationship with his father; he keeps unprotective sex with Krystal Weedon; frequently bullies Sukvinder on

classroom, facebook, and twitter on account her weight and looks. And Andrew and Fats have drugs as well. They secretly hate their domineering and abusive fathers as Sukvinder do her mother. All these activities of middle class Pagfordians blur the boundary between middle class and underclass. These activities unveil the mask of hierarchy of current British society and its predation, hypocrisy, deceit and calculation.

In the political body Pagford Parish Council, all councilors are from Pagford though the Fields is also within the jurisdiction of Pagford Parish Council. All middle class Pagfordians consider the estate and the Bellchapel Addiction Clinic as the ‘drains and blots on Pagford’. One faction led by Howard Mollison openly advocates for exclusion of the Fields from Pagford and closing of Bellchapel clinic. For Howard Mollison the Pagford town is ‘an ideal, a way of being, a micro- civilization that stood firmly against the national decline’ (61). Along with the death of the Barry, ‘the one remaining ambition of Howard life was within touching distance: the return of the Fields to Yarvil seemed imminent and certain’ (62). Another faction of the Parminder Jawanda, Collin Wall and Simon Price is outwardly striving to represent the Fields but actually it has given silent consent to Howard’s line. Their rivalry with Howard is just to grab the power on council, they are only against Howard Mollison but not against the separation of the Fields from the middle class Pagford.

Simon Price, Collin Wall and Miles Mollison are three aspirants for *The Casual Vacancy* of Pagford Parish Council. No one of them has firm philosophy and sense of resolve; they are more concentrated on their personal affair than any sort of civic or social responsibility. Instead of thinking on how to materialize the Fields’ desire to remain within Pagford, Simon, self-announced representative of the Fields, “has gazed on a vacancy . . . [as] a place where cash [is] now trickling down onto a

empty chair with no lap waiting to catch it”(50). Like Simon Price, Collin Wall is “fighting for his reputation”(230) rather than for addressing the Fields’ issues.

Parminder Jawanda, “who pretends to be so keen on looking after the poor and needy of the area always has secret motives” (337). She has no serious concern on the issues of the Fields though she claims herself as the voice of the poor and needy the Fields. After raising voice for the Fields' staying and for the continuation of the Bellchapel Addiction Clinic, She asks herself, " Why am I doing this?" Uttering Parminder's self Rowling writes, "She derived more pleasure from the thought of Howard losing than from the thought of Fields children continuing to attend St. Thomas's, or from the Fields people being able to break their addiction at Bellchapel" (369). All these middle class people revolve around themselves, they are wrapped up into the narrow precise of 'me, me, me,' and do not seek the way-out which they could better lives of the others. Thus, self centric middle class can't represent the underclass in the sense rather it uses those underclass people in favor of strengthening own power.

Rowling's struggles during the period of immediately after her graduation from Exeter University to before her fantastic success through *Harry Potter Series* has the striking similarity, though it is not chronologically presented, with the narrative of Kay Bawden. A graduate of Exeter University Rowling had gone to Portugal in 1990 to serve as English teacher. There she fell in love with Portuguese journalist Jorge Arantes and got married with him. The couple blessed by a daughter named Jessica in 1993. After her marriage terminated in divorce, Rowling migrated to Edinburg, Scotland with her daughter live near her younger sister Di. While struggling to pop up Jessica and herself on Welfare she wrote a book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*. Along with the publication of this book Rowling's journey of majestic success started. Now she is the 13<sup>th</sup> wealthiest woman of the Britain – wealthier than even the

Queen of Britain because of her immensely praised Harry Potter Series. According to the Kay Bawden's narrative in *The Casual Vacancy*, Kay is single mother as Rowling was once. She migrate to the Pagford from London with her daughter and a job of social worker to be with her boyfriend Gavin as once Rowling had migrated to Portugal and served there as a English teacher and fell in love with Portuguese journalist Jorge Arantes. As Kay find Gavin has no virtual love with her she finally decides to return London so Rowling returns to her sister after the break up her first married life.

Rowling's this character Kay raises the issue of the Fields which have not publicly recognized in her several meetings with Pagford councilors. In Gramsci's language Kay has functioned as an organic intellectual by countering the existing self-centric ideology of middle class superiority. She openly criticizes narcissistic attitude of middle class Pagfordians and argues "[to] offload responsibility for them [Fielders] which seem to me [her] petty self-centered, and self- satisfied \_". With bold resistance, she blames an anti-Fielder Miles in front of him that "[Miles] wants to draw a line neatly between the home owning middle class and lower class \_"(224)in the context that nobody has overtly pinpointed the vested interest of anti –Fielders veneered by the discourse of middle class superiority. She lobbies for not to close Bellchapel Addiction Clinic served to the addicts from the Fields stating that when the Bellchapel Addiction Clinic is closed "some very vulnerable people [of the Fields] will be left without support"(310). In the Council meeting, instead of effectively presenting Kay's painstakingly prepared report showing the progressive effects of the clinic, Parminder vomits her hatred of Howard Mollison and makes the issue of the Fields more vulnerable. Thus, researcher argues that as an visionary and free scholarly intellectual Kay contest against, or become antithetical to established institutions and

official power of middle class Pagfordians she doesn't limit herself to the traditional beliefs and system though she herself is from middle class culture.

According to Gramsci, 'for achieving state of rule by consent', state/authority uses intellectuals as the functionaries to inject hegemony in the mass for their spontaneous collective consent. In the same line Althusser argues for gaining majority people's endorsement to the ruling authority state deploys 'ideology' in such a way that the 'subjects' with misunderstanding feel unified and completely satisfied with that ideology. Thus, for Althusser "ideology is the representation of the imaginary relationship of the individuals to their real condition of existence"(Leitch,1498). We can't understand the real condition of our existence because of ideology which interpellates us to be subject of the state authority. For Althusser ideology operates subtly through ideological state apparatuses such as religion, politics, political system, literature, family, education, judiciary, media, sports, unions, etc. with relative autonomy than the repressive state apparatus like police, military, prison system, government. Althusser's concept of ideology is similar with Gramsci's concept of hegemony in regard with flexibility of social dominance and its operation through the cultural institutions. Because of the ideology of middle class superiority over the underclass the Fields, they are unaware (at least for Althusser) of their real condition of existence including their duplicity, hypocrisy, snobbery, and self centricism. And underclass the Fields has also tacitly learned to be pliant and obedient to this ideology. Thus, in the society, the middle class is more privileged and has the better provision than the underclass due to discursive, ideological construction of their superior position.

In accordance with Althusser, Ideology doesn't let us to reach up to reality but for Nietzsche there is no universal truth. For him, "truth is mobile army of metaphor,

metonymy, and anthropomorphism" (874). What we call 'truth' is either overstatement, or understatement, or human centered bias but not truth. For Nietzsche truth is "nothing more than the expediency of certain race or species- their utility alone is their truth"(qtd. in. Barker, 47). So, every knowledge of truth is unavoidably subjective, our subjectivity comes as a lens in between us and the object we perceive. There is gap the between 'the thing in itself' and ' the thing in appearance'. Moreover, the language is the medium through which the 'truth' is expressed whereas the language in itself can't represent 'truth ' because of its slippery nature. That's why researcher argues neither history not literature represents the universal objective truth, there is as Greenblatt argues historicity in literature and textuality in history. There is infinite number of ways of interpretation of interpreting the world/event /object; it is the matter of power whose interpretation gets recognition as truth. Here, Rowling's narrative *The Casual Vacancy* is also one of the interpretations of the 21st century Britain (though it may be dominantly fictional); despite being subjective, it has also the reflection of the social meanings of the current Britain in which it has produced.

Thus, Researcher argues Rowling's this narrative embodies two contrasting discourses present in her own culture from where this narrative emerges: middle class superiority and anti marginalization of underclass or unprivileged group/individual. The novel's theme of the middle class superiority can be seen in its representation of idyllic, self reliant, educated and socio-politically engaged middle class English town. Along with the realistic depiction of the harrowing and hear squeezing poverty and vulnerable condition of underclass people , Rowling's narrative *The Casual Vacancy* unveils the private life of middle class characters and shows that beneath the veneer of civilization and superiority, middle class people are as defective as underclass. That's why the researcher claims Rowling's this narrative also embodies the discourse of anti

marginalization of underclass or unprivileged group/individuals. But the dominant discourse of her narrative is the discourse of middle class superiority as it is of current Britain.

Present Britain's middle class superiority consciousness is the original ideology which gave birth to *The Casual Vacancy*; this text has also helped to disseminate this ideology throughout the British culture. Rowling has dissolved the socio-political context of 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain in this novel. The researcher values this narrative as the end and source of current Britain's history or as a lens through which the discourse of middle class superiority of the culture from which it emerges has brought into focus. As an active agent of this ideology, questioning Britain's official history, *The Casual Vacancy* historicizes the 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain with the righteous social message- responsibility for needy and blaring resistance against the social injustice.

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