

I. Introduction

The novel *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* by Micheal Dorris, a American noveliest has been reviewed by a number of critics for drawing various conclusions employing different procedure and heterogeneous theoretical assumptions. Inspired either by technical or cultural presuppositions, these critics hardly seem to concur at any point except what New Critics would have termed external. Judging the novel from all the available commentaries and criticisms, it would by no means be unfair to say that the novel still has not acquired the required textual approach, which alone is appropriate to analyze the relational self of three female characters.

The story of the novel revolves around the lives of three female Native Americans. The novel interweaves these women's narratives in a cyclical pattern in which all three women--grandmother, daughter and granddaughter--discuss their numerous perceptions of the same events in their lives. Each woman tries to find a personal identity to define oneself not only in terms of self but also in relation to the other women.

In the novel, all the female characters are active and independent without the males support. Aunt Ida, the grandmother, faces the challenges in a very unconventional way. Aunt Ida's daughter Christine misperceives her mother's motives as hatred and disgust, but it is to Aunt Ida whom Christine turns when she realizes that her daughter Rayona is not receiving the proper parenting that Christine feels Rayona should have. Christine returns to Aunt Ida's home, as does Rayona eventually.

The novel is about struggle of females to make the home themselves; they hardly ever need males' support. Each woman in the novel is caught up in defining what home means to her. For Aunt Ida, daily existence comprises re-enacting her past,

but her re-enactment is an act of imagination. At one point in the novel, she narrates, “I have to tell this story every day, add to it, revise, and invent the parts I forget or never knew” (279).

Christine recognizes that her life is headed in a downward spiral in part because she is no longer able to imagine a better life for herself. Therefore, she takes her teenage daughter, Rayona, to Aunt Ida’s so that she could raise her. Rayona, however, is also engaged in a personal battle of imagination, but her imagination is destructive in that she wants to be anyone but herself. In her mind, if she was someone else, she did not have to face the teasing that she gets because of her, the father being Black, mixed black-Indian heritage. Nor would she then experiences the displacement that characterizes both her and Christine’s life. Through these three women’s narrations, we come to know that all the three create a fictional world of female that mirrors real-life situations of women.

All of the three females spend single life and take care of their children without the help of male. Aunt Ida is a single mother by choice, opting to raise Christine and her son, Lee, alone. Christine, too is a single mother, she and her husband, Elgin, Rayona’s father comes on and off to them only to have a sexual relationship. Moreover, Rayona, as the youngest member of this female trio, faces the daunting challenge of finding her place in this chaotic and unconventional world. The women in this novel live oddly isolated and self-sufficient lives raising their children and keeping their stories intact without the aid of the alienated males, whose life-intersecting lives are caught up in pathos rather than tragedy. Clara comes in her sister Annie’s house to take care of her illness. She also becomes a good friend to Ida. They have good relationship with each other, but the presence of Lecon in their life has misconstrued it. As a result, Annie and Ida begin to hate Clara and take her as an

enemy. Ida loves Christine as her own daughter, even though Christine is the daughter of Lecon and her aunt. When Willard comes on Ida's life and she gives birth to a male child Lee, the love between Ida and Christine is demolished. Lee needs more love from Ida; so Christine feels lonely. When Elgin comes on Christine's life, she forgets mother Ida. From Elgin and Christine a female child Rayona is born. Elgin has relationship with other woman, so he leaves Christine and Rayona alone. Christine alone grows her daughter up.

There is a tendency among the literary critics to relate the Dorris's novel with feminist insight and interpret accordingly. While some of those pieces of criticism are logically backed and thus fair, some of them seem to have superimposed from without and reveal more about prejudices of the critics than the genuine want of the text. Being the story of the three female narrators, however, the application of the feminine perspective in the reading of this novel can reasonably be justified. Besides, there are other textual and extra-textual evidences which provide the adequate or ample logical basis for applying Nancy Chodorow's theory of relational self as a tool for analyzing this novel.

The first reason is that in the novel, the interrelationship between three American Indian women--the grandmother Ida, the mother Christine, and granddaughter Rayona-- fails as the relationship between and among the female characters is misconstrued and misunderstood due to the presence of male characters. So, it is justifiable to apply the same yardstick for female relationship.

The second reason is related to the mutual relationship between females and destructive relationship between male and female characters in the novel. All the females support each other time and again. For example, Ida dedicates her whole life only for her non-biological daughter Christine; Christine also spends her life in the

care of her daughter Rayona. But males are always making the relationship with female only for their self-interest. Being a husband and father, for instance, Elgin never bothers to care his family. Similarly, as a son, Lee never supports her mother and sister. And, as a father and husband, Lecon always gives trouble instead of love and support to his family. Therefore, it seems very logical that in this novel the tool of Chodorow's 'theory of relational self' is not just appropriate but indispensable as well.

Finally, the facts the female relationship fails time and again due to the presence of male in their lives that all the time one female is the supporter of another female, that females have good relationship with each other but they begin to have misunderstanding with each other when one male enters into their lives, that none of the male gives true love to the females, that the only factor that attracts them towards the females is the gratification of their libido with the female's body and that they never understand and respect the females' love and emotion but their presence always creates problems in females' lives also corroborate why the theory of female relational self is applicable and essential to read this novel.

II. Feminism: A Theoretical Overview

Feminism generally is a theoretical discourse advocating women's rights based on the belief in the equality of the sexes. It is a doctrine redefining women's activities and goals from a woman-centered point of view and refusing to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to a sex object, a second sex and a submissive other. It conjures up various images and ideas regarding the women's issues. In spite of diversity, feminism is often represented as a single entity and somehow concerned with gendered equality and freedom.

This movement was literary from the very outset in the sense that it realizes the significance of images of the women promulgated by literature, and sees it as vital to combat them and questions their authority and coherence. The major feminists such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett, Nancy Chodorow, Elaine Showalter, Gilbert and Gubar, Betty Friedan and Julia Kristeva appeared in the literary field with the objectives of elevating status of women in all fields of human enterprise and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women.

Since the late sixties of twentieth century, there has been an explosion of feminist writing without parallel in previous critical innovations in a movement that, displayed the urgency and excitement of a religious awakening. Current feminist criticism in America, Britain, France and other countries is not a unitary and homogeneous theory or procedure. On the contrary, it is a heterogeneous movement that borrows critical insight from a great variety of theoretical vantage points and procedures such as marxism, psychoanalysis and post structuralism.

The term Feminist believed to have first come into currency in England during the 1880s advocating that females, like males, be given equal social, cultural, economic, legal and political rights. The development of feminist thought has not only

been uneven, but has also always involved deep theoretical disagreements. These parties reflect the various needs and perception of women in different societies and situations.

Recently, feminist criticism has not had a theoretical basis though it has been a dominant force in the literary studies for a considerable length of time. Feminist thinkers regard feminism as somehow different from the mainstream as innovative, inventive and rebellious. Beasley points out that " the point of view of feminist writers is that the western thought is 'malestream' and thus its authority needs to be questioned" (3). It is a doctrine which suggests that women are systematically disadvantaged in modern society and advocating equal opportunities for men and women. It shares the common theoretical assumption as shared by all branches of the movement that there has been a historical tradition of male exploitation of women.

E. Porter defines feminism as " A perspective that seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex" (27). In the same way R. Delmer says:

It is certainly possible to construct a baseline definition of feminism.

Many should agree that at the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change in the social, economic and political order. (27-28)

More recently, feminism has been defined not simply as a particular framework set of ideas or social analysis or form of critical questioning around a focus on women and power, but also as representing a specific way of experience. Thus it is clear that all feminists call for change in the social, economic or cultural order, to reduce and

eventually overcome this discrimination against women. The bottom-line of all this subordination is the lack of freedom. Of course, several theorists, writers and scholars have underlined this issue from varied perspectives. Marriage has become one of the bondages that restrict women from realizing her independent self. It has been defined by men as a legal authority over women. Feminist addresses this issue to instill a sense of human existence which is devoid of sexual biasness.

Feminism is related to feminist social movement that seeks to provide equal rights, equal status and freedom to use their own careers and life patterns. Concern for women's rights dates from the Enlightenment, when the liberal, egalitarians, and reformist ideals of that period began to be extended from that bourgeoisie, peasants, and urban labourers to women as well. Feminism is concerned with marginalization of all women: that is, with their being regated to a secondary position. By analyzing Feminist Dictionary by Cheris Kramaras and Nancy Chodorow summerizes:

Basis of sex equality in all human relation; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, women should abolish all privileges and sex burdens, and would strive to set up the recognition of humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom. (50)

Feminism represents one of the most important social, economic and aesthetic revolutions of modern times. Feminists examine the experience of women for feminist's perspective. It represents one of the most important social, economic and aesthetic revolutions of mordern times. Feminists examine the experince of women from all races and classes and cultures, including, African American, Asian, American, American Indian, Lesbian handicapped and the third world subject. The growing feminist movement sought to change society's prevailing stereotype thinking

about women that they are relatively weak, passive, and dependent on men. They are also considered to be less rational and more emotional than men. Feminism seeks to achieve greater freedom for women to work and to remain economically and psychologically independent with men if they choose. Feminists criticize society's prevailing emphasis on women as objects of sexual desire and sought to broaden both women's self-awareness and their opportunities to the point of equality with men.

In its early phase, feminism has emphasized on the relational self, the self of a woman priority as mother. Nancy Chodorow, in her book *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) sees gender differences as compromise formations of the Oedipal complex. She begins with Freud's assertion that the individual is born bisexual and that the child's mother is its first sexual object. Chodorow, drawing on the work of Karen Horney and Melanie Klein, notes:

The child forms its ego in reaction to the dominating figure of the mother. The male child forms this sense of independent agency easily, identifying with the agency and freedom of the father and emulating his possessive interest in the mother/wife. This task is not as simple for the female child. The mother identifies with her more strongly, and the daughter attempts to make the father her new love object, but is stymied in her ego formation by . . . the intense bond with the mother. Where male children typically experience love as a dyadic relationship, daughters are caught in a libidinal triangle where the ego is pulled between loves for the father, the love of the mother, and concern and worry over the relationship of the father to the mother. (51)

For Chodorow, the contrast between the dyadic and triadic first love experiences explains the social construction of gender roles, the universal degradation of women

in culture, cross-cultural patterns in male behavior, and marital strain in the West after Second Wave feminism. In marriage, the woman takes less of an interest in sex and more in the children. Her ambivalence towards sex eventually drives the male away. She devotes her energies to the children once she does reach sexual maturity.

Despite the adaptation of various critical modes in feminist critical theory, most of the writers and critics share some assumptions and concepts about patriarchal domination and sexual difference. Firstly, the western civilization is male centered, that is, perversely dominated by patriarchal norms and values. All domains such as familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic are organized and conducted in such a way as to submit women to men. Women are brought up and socialized in such a way that patriarchal ideology is being instilled and internalized within them so that they become co-operative in their own subordination. From the ancient philosophy to the present it defines females by negative reference to the male-as an 'other' or kind of 'non-man'. Secondly, sex is to determine by anatomy, whereas gender is constructed by culture, the omnipresent patriarchal biasness of our civilization. Simone de Beauvoir in 'The Second Sex' says, "One is not born but rather becomes a woman" (7). So, the masculine is identified as active, dominating, rational and creative whereas the female is identified as passive, timid, emotional and conventional. Lastly, feminists claim that patriarchal ideology encroaches into literature too. The most highly regarded literacy works such as Oedipus, Ulysses, Hamlet and Huckleberry Finn focuses on the male protagonist depicting masculine traits, feelings and interests whereas the female characters are created to submit to masculine traits, feelings, interests and desires are presented from a male perspectives. In such works autonomous female models are created and only male readers are implicitly addressed. So, female readers have to identify themselves by

taking up the position of the male subject and assuming male values and ways of feelings. In addition, the canon of literary criticism, the criteria and the standard for analyzing and appraising literary works are immune to total masculine assumption, interest and reason.

Nancy Chodorow's Theory of 'Relational Self' and Motherhood

Nancy Chodorow, a [feminist sociologist](#) and [psychoanalyst](#), is well known for her theory of 'relational self' in female relationship. According to her, female affiliative or relational self emerges from a structure of parenting in which mothers treat their sons and daughters differently. Daughters, who are treated as projections of the mother, never fully separate from her and, thus, come to define themselves as connected or continuous with others. Boys, who are treated as more separate by their mothers, come to identify themselves as differentiated from others and possess more rigid ego boundaries than their sisters. Thus, the basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world; the basic masculine sense of self is separate.

Chodorow's most influential book is thought to be *Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender*. In this book, she challenges the traditional view that females are biologically predisposed towards nurturing infants. She argues that mothering fulfills a woman's psychological need for reciprocal intimacy. Chodorow also describes the difference in the mother's relationships with their sons as opposed to their daughters. She states that mothers are close with their infant sons, but they view their male children as different and do not share with them the same sense of oneness that they experience with their daughters. She claims that mature males that are unaccustomed to a psychologically intimate relationship are; therefore, content to leave mothering to women.

Chodorow thinks that object-relations theory is a gender identity formation and is largely a result of the dynamics of family relationships. She has different views on the oedipal stage of childhood. She argues that "a girl's pre-Oedipal bond with her mother can continue after she develops a fascination with her father" (53). Chodorow also believes that in the pre-Oedipal stage, the infant experiences a primary identification with the mother and forms a primary love for the mother that makes no differentiation between the child's needs and the ability of the mother to fulfill them. Gradually, the child establishes a sense of self through an expanded awareness of its own physical self. The child begins to differentiate from the mother as it becomes less dependent upon her. She emphasizes the impact of same-gender mothering on the psychosocial development of girls as well as boys.

Chodorow believes that psychoanalysis cannot make universal claims that concern psychological development. They must take into account the cultural and historical conditions of the present time. She characterizes Freud's work as only sometimes describing how women develop their self in a patriarchal society. Instead of his work arising out of clinical observation, Chodorow illustrates Freud's work as making unsupported statements about how women and men ought to be.

Chodorow is often taken as a leading theorist in feminist thought, especially in the field of psychoanalysis and feminist psychology. Her essays are included in many books concerning gender roles and construction as well as psychoanalysis. Her evaluations of the ways in which the psychological dynamics of the gender system is systematically generated and subject to historical change and development are acknowledged as significant contributions to feminist theory.

The theory of relational self, attempts to rescue the psychology of women from traditional distortions by inverting the values ascribed to stereotypically male and

female traits. But its solution—hoisting the banner of care and relationality above individual achievement and autonomy—creates another danger for women. Chodorow comments:

The expectation that women should be caring and empathetic expresses a deeper cultural belief that men's needs take precedence over women's. The female relational ideal is grounded in, and serves to perpetuate, a context of male privilege. The new paradigm acknowledges this system of male prerogative in adult relationships but fails to understand its deep influence on women's character development. (43)

By celebrating relationality as if its development were free of the effects of female subservience, the new psychology unwittingly advocates an oppressive ideal for women.

Thus, a girl develops a self-in-relation both through her mother's ease in responding to infant female attunement, and through her expecting empathy and caretaking from her daughter. This sense of self that emerges in the daughter is characterized by an ongoing capacity to consider one's actions in light of other people's needs, feelings, and perceptions. She comes to feel that maintaining the relationships with the main people in her life is still the most important thing. And her self-esteem is based in feeling that she is a part of relationships and is taking care of relationships through which she can express empathy, care and clarity in connection with others.

Nancy Chodorow argues that the connected or relational self develops out of early childhood experiences. Males must develop their gender identity in households where women mothers and fathers are largely absent. Boys, therefore, establish their

gender identity by becoming not female in the presence of their mothers. Girls, by contrast, identify with their mothers who are more present in their daily lives, and with whom they remain in relation. They never separate from their mothers in the decisive ways that boys do.

Chodorow has also argues that "a girl's resolution of her Oedipal complex never really removes the traces of a long primary identification with the mother. But the proof that the girl, thus, wants a child is a bit short for my taste. Her identification with the mother must be further differentiated to become various aspects of womanhood" (52).

Chodorow herself notes a distinction between gender identity and adult object choice. For instance, if the girl does not become identical to her image of her mother, what features of that image does she adopt, and why? For her, to become a nurturer rather than an equal partner in parenting, or just a biological mother, she must have a very specific image in mind. And that image may have little relation to either her infant desires or her mother's performance.

Although it seems clear that new, unprecedented pressures have recently called into question the meaning of mother. The Oxford English Dictionary(OED), under the editorship of Henry Bradley defines that the first sense of mother grounds the concept in what until recently could hardly be seen as anything but its natural meaning, denoting a gendered, bodily, and relational identity: a female parent, a women who has given to a child. The second sense expands the referential field to things more or less personified: with reference either to a metaphorical giving birth to the protecting care exercised by a mother, or to the affectionate reverence due to a mother.

Both in the OED's definition and in many recent feminist struggles to interrogate and revise nineteenth century notion of motherhood, is the relational aspect of the concept mother. Implicitly, in the OED and all subsequent definitions, mother in the primary sense of the world is someone, may be a woman or may be not, who gives birth to a child or seeks protection and control of a child or is affectionately revered and looked up by a child. The force of those prepositions is felt in feminist arguments as well.

Motherhood has recently entered into literary studies from psycho-analysis is through the notion of the play space or potential space, taken primarily from object relations theory. Following key lines of French feminist thought, Claire Kahane has argued that "this space is analogous to the discursive space, the woman writer might occupy and that since poetic discourse is dominated by the semiotic, it is the ideal vehicle for a maternal voice that questions fixed structures of gender in postmodernist discourse" (13).

For increasingly greater number of women worries about either fetal rights or women rights are a luxury; the urgent issues are how a mother can survive and take care of her living children most basic needs. Poverty puts pressure on the middle-class norms of maternalchild relation and unthinkable numbers of children and their increasingly isolated, unsupported mothers are visibly at risk in ways that are heart breaking and resistant to solution. Apologists for family values often ignore the actualistics to maternal work, and hence they too may stand between the (biological) mother and any means of meeting the needs an actual child. As the editors of a special issues Kahane further comments:

Signs on "mothering and patriarchy" have observed, sentimentalized tropes of idealized mothering endlessly loving, serenely healing,

emotionally rewarding have no counterpart in a political and social reality where the labor of caring is devalued, unsupported, and unseen, and where mother are more likely to be endlessly burdened, anxious and blamed. (19)

Motherhood as a discrete and exemplary feminine event, is elevated, providing of course it occurs within the prescribed cultural scenario. Novels by and about lesbians, African Americans, and native Americans show with particular clarity that mother without child has historically been the brutal norm rather the tragic exception. As previously under presented voices struggle to speak, and as we look more carefully for places in which they have already spoken, it should come as no surprise that we recently hear sad stories about rupture and loss.

It might alternatively be argued that second-wave feminism itself is chiefly responsible, in one way or another for the rise of stories about mothers who give up or lose their children. Most obviously, in its critique of motherhood as a site of femal oppression, feminism, like birth control, seems to threaten to take women away from the children they bear, or ought to bear. More subtly, perhaps these stories might be read as the work of the feminist-as-daughter, unable to forgive or own patriarchal mother either for abandoning the daughter or for failling to later go and bearly able to imagine herself as feminist mother or to represent anything but the anguish of motherhood that threaten from all sides. It has been suggested that feminists may debise distancing strategies to avoid confronting their ambivalence about mothering.

The law, in assuming that a mother bears, takes care of, and is revered by a child, at once presupposes and oversimplifies the meaning of the relational aspect of motherhood. Most of the female hoped consciously or unconsciously at some point in their lives to follow this law, but for various reasons they are unable to so or choose

not to do so. In the discussion of the feministic notion of motherhood, Elaine Tuttle Hansen notes that:

A mother is known to the law only by her willingness to sacrifice everything, even her relation to the child; in them, the mother without child can only be either a criminal who breaks the law or a victim of circumstances or evil forces. Emerging in the last three decades in conjunction with both the material crises of contemporary maternal practice and the feminist critique of motherhood, the fictional death, threatened death, or absence of a child thereby serves as the instigation to different ways of hearing, knowing, and being mothers. (27)

Here, we come to know the definition of legal motherhood and relationship between child and mother where a mother is defined, without child, either criminal or victim and makes a child as the server of various elements to the mother.

To wrap up, feminism is related to the feminist social movement which seeks equal rights for women providing equal status with men and freedom to decide their own careers and life patterns. Feminists also challenge the idea that women exist only to please men and propose that women receive the same opportunities as men in education, work and politics. Feminism also raised the idea that liberation for women is liberation for men too. Feminism seems to overturn laws and practices that enforced the inferior status of women by discrimination in such matters as contract and property rights, employment and pay issues and management of earning and in matters related to sex and motherhood. Feminism is the process to establish females' own canonicity of literary writing and criticism by excluding males, believing that males are the mean to obstruct the female-female relationship and raising the female issues such as household, pregnancy, gestation, delivery, mother daughter relation, woman-woman relation, concept of independent motherhood and so forth.

While taking motherhood as granted emancipatory element of femalehood, some contradictory arguments have been prescribed in literary criticism. Some take motherhood as

an independent entity but others define it as a mean to exploit female sexually as every female concerns with the sense of motherhood within herself. Though, motherhood is oftenly catagorized as biological and non-biological, a female celebrates both kind of motherhood without the restriction of external factors.

The vary process of motherhood develops a sense of relational self within female. Relational self, here, can be defined in terms of relationship that any woman establishes with other women equating with gender similarities. As Nancy Chodorow's definition of relational self where she argues that the connected or relational self develops out of early childhood experiences. The theory of 'female relational self' of Nancy chodorow is perfectly proved in this novel. Males must develop their gender identity in households where women mother and fathers are largely absent. Boys therefore establish their gender identity by becoming not female in the presence of their mothers. Girls, by contrast, identify with their mothers who are more present in their daily lives, and with whom they remain in relation. They never separate from their mothers in the decisive ways that boys do.

III. Male's Obstruction in Feminine Relational Self in *A Yellow Raft in Blue*

Water

Feminism refers to political, cultural, and economic movements seeking greater, equal, or, among a minority, superior rights and participation in society for women and girls. These rights and means of participation include legal protection and

inclusion in politics, business, and scholarship, and recognition and building of women's cultures and power.

The relationship between and among females is seen in such a form that females form and share an intimate relationship independent, and in the absence, of males. The shifting examination and evaluation of the relationship between female and male characters and the emotional upheavals is primary focus of the researcher to show their relationship that has been brought about in the lives of the females. This research has attempted to examine the portentous intrusion of males in the lives of females where male spoils their affinity and, thus, obstructs the feminine relational self.

Relationship among Females

The relationship between and among female characters is cordial in the absence of males, which can be observed particularly in the relationship between, Christine and Rayona, Ida and Christine, Ida and Rayona and among these three. They are able to form and sustain their relationship based on mutual co-operation and affection.

In the novel, the female relationship is based on mutual trust and co-operation. Their rapport is guided by mutual emotional support and their affinity is based on understanding. All these evidences come to the fore while analyzing the characteristics of the main three female protagonists in the novel. They are Rayona, the granddaughter; Christine, the mother; and Ida, the grandmother. The relationship between these three women is very close and based on understanding.

The relationship between Christine and Rayona is based on mutual trust, support and latter need for her identity. The novelist explores their emotional affiliation with respect to one another in chapter one and in chapter thirteen. In both of

the places, they seem to be reaffirming and strengthening their emotional ties either through the games they play or physical support they provide to each other.

Moreover, the fact that the little girl is able to get her identity solely from her mother also highlights the significance of the relationship she has with her mother.

Rayona is dependent solely upon her mother for her identity. Her account is a story of a young woman trying to find her place in the world, trying to discover a personal identity that embraces the history of her family. Rayona is a biracial girl who bears an ambivalent, mixed identity; her mother Christine is an Indian and father Elgin a Black. Even though she is more similar in the physical appearance to her father than to the mother, she almost always prefers to identify herself from her mother's side. Her inclination to associate herself in matriarchal lineage as opposed to patriarchal heritage is also one of the major reasons why she emphasizes the relationship with females only.

Although the events narrated by Rayona in her narrative section of the novel take place within a brief span of time, perhaps only six months, one would learn a lot about this fifteen-year-old girl and her emotional association to her mother there. Rayona like a psychologically immature girl, is seen unsure of herself from the very outset of the novel. Her uncertainty is based in part in the apparent role reversed relationship that she has with her mother. Whatever the role they play with regards to each other, however, each of them is in a way or other lending a helping hand and providing emotional support to the others.

Rayona always tries her best to make her mother happy so that she could have a lasting relationship with her. This becomes conspicuously evident in the hospital scene in chapter one. While seeking to amuse the ailing woman with a card game, Rayona says:

"I quite when I'm ahead." She pushes the pile in the jumble toward me, find the button that adjusts her angle, and sinks to a reclining position. I take the cards, shift my weight, and shuffle, riffle and pat them even. Out of habit, I offer Mom. An illegal cut, which she ignores, then I pick up the deck and peel of clubs. "I never win this", I say, rising to leave. (4)

Playing cards is symbolic effort on Rayona's part to involve her female progenitor into enduring relationship with her. The way the daughter behaves towards her mother here shows that the daughter is ready to make any kind of sacrifice for consolidating the kinship. Though Rayona here seems more like a mother to Christine than Christine does to Rayona, she does so in order to win the affection of her mother and not for any other reason. This event also corroborates the fact that she is always worried about her mother's happiness.

Chapter thirteen sheds light to a large degree on the relationship between Christine and Rayona. Unlike in chapter one where the psychological being of the characters involvement is explored, in chapter thirteen the writer shifts the focus to the description of physical help that different female characters provide to each-other. Here, Rayona becomes the responsible parent who puts the milk back in the refrigerator before it spoils. Christine acknowledges that she takes Rayona for granted, but this acknowledgment does not change the fact. Rayona, the safety net once swaddled in a yellow blanket, acts more as an adult to Christine than Christine does to Rayona. Faced with a life alone without Elgin, Christine relies on Rayona for companionship. Likewise, Rayona, without a father who plays an active role in her life, depends solely on Christine. Christine's dependence on Rayona is best summed

up in her statement, “Rayona gave me something to be, made me like other women with children” (222).

Rayona is always present to help her mother. She never questions Christine’s actions except to say that Christine is making mistakes and to ask how she is running her life. For example, following Christine’s abortive suicide attempt, Rayona is stunned that her mother would want to stop and rent videos before the two women leave Seattle for the Montana reservation on which Aunt Ida, Rayona’s grandmother and Christine’s mother, lives. Rayona feels very lonely without her mother’s company. This is proven in chapter one, where Rayona returns home alone, she shows her mother need this way:

I open the exit and take the flight up instead of down. I’m not ready to go home. Without mom the apartment is like a closet packed with our rented furniture. Without her there, I hear noises I never otherwise notice and smell the food neighbors are cooking. I listen to the broken TV, and eat standing at the table. I feel that I’m alone in the whole world. (7)

Those aforesaid evidences demonstrate that the relationship between Christine and Rayona is very co-operative and affectionate. Christine devotes whole of her life to Rayona's care and Rayona requites it by trying her best to make her mother happy. She always accompanies, and provides care for, her mother during the time of her sickness, despite the fact that she is in her teens-the time when an ordinary girl would indulge herself in different kinds of recreational activities. Christine loves Rayona more than she loves any other male, because the relationship between females is closer than the relationship between male and female.

Like the relationship between Christine and Rayona, the relationship between Christine and Ida is also founded on co-operation and honesty, which is substantiated by a number of evidences. The facts that Ida becomes mother without child bearing, that she accepts the child of father as her own daughter and that she gives more love to Christine than her own son Lee are some of the evidences that reflect the great devotion of Ida for Christine. These two women's relationship, although unconventional, is a life-giving force to each.

The only tie which binds these two women in an everlasting relationship is love, even though there was no such thing in the beginning. Having been raised on Montana reservation, from which she never moves, Ida is faced at the tender age of fifteen years with the grim decision to raise her aunt's child as her own. Although Ida is not the biological mother of Christine, she raises her up as a loving and caring mother to Christine, with all motherly feelings a woman can have for a child. In fact, she devotes the whole of her life in the care of her daughter.

The ignominy the mother has to face while bringing the child up also conversely consolidates her relationship to her foster-child. When the society questions her about her character because of child bearing without marriage, she assumes all the blames for the sake and love of Christine. The dialogue between Ida and her mother in chapter eighteen proves this evidence:

"You've lost your mind," she said.

"You can't tell me what to do with my own child."

Mama caught her breath, but I smiled.

"She's mine," I said softly.

"What do you mean? You can't..."

I reached out my hand. A paper filled it.

"You've no rights," I said.

"I carried her. I gave her birth."

"This paper says differently. This paper says what everyone on this reservation knows. That it was me, Ida, who came back here alone with a baby with the image of my father. That it was me, Ida, who's raised her every day. All knows it was me who bore her." (336)

This conversation shows the devotion of Ida for her daughter Christine. Although she has the emotional feelings for Christine that any mother might have for a daughter, Ida and Christine's relationship is tenuous at best. Sometimes, they seem more like rival than mother and daughter. For example, when Ida's son, Lee, is born, she and Christine battle over who is the better caregiver to Lee. But they need each other over their whole life.

The frail health of the daughter is also one of the binding factors that strengthens their relationship. Ida, like her grand-daughter Rayona, is worried about the fragile health of Christine. Ida is seen worrying about her health even when Christine, irate at the presence of Lee in between them, deserts her. This becomes conspicuous in chapter sixteen where Christine narrates the worries of Ida this way:

Ant Ida's eyes rested on me. She asked, "how are you?"

I let her look. She could see.

"You call me for... if you want to," she said.

"I will."

"You do it sure."

"I will."

"Is Dayton taking care of you?"

"Dayton's good to me. I couldn't ask for better."

She bit her lip, turned to go. She nodded again without looking back, repeated, "you call for me."

"I will." I stood in the doorway and Aunt Ida sat straight in her seat.

We didn't wave because we didn't have to. (275)

Christine neither knows nor feels that Ida is not her real mother. She also loves and cares for Ida in her old age. Although Ida is not her biological mother, she certainly is her emotional mother. Christine's mother is actually Clara, Ida's aunt and therefore Christine's great-aunt, whom she once meets in a Seattle hospital when Ida forces her to go. This unconventional genealogy symbolizes the reckless, devil-may-care life that Christine leads. Concerning Ida, Christine acknowledges that they will always have a contentious relationship. Such conflicts, however, can become something to rely on because these two women always judge each other's actions but learn to accept each other. In chapter fifteen, in the conversation with Rayona, Christine says, "Aunt Ida is more than I could take, more than I ever realized. I become selfish sometimes but she never commented me. She always worries about us more than for her son Lee." (271)

Ida takes pride in Christine's independent and fearless nature. No matter how hard Ida tries to steel herself from loving Christine, Christine makes emotional inroads into Ida's heart. Even though, Ida insists that Christine call her Aunt Ida as a means to keep an emotional distance between the two for fear that Clara might return to claim Christine, "every time she said it, the feelings for her I couldn't help, the feelings that came from being the one she came to when she was hurt and the one who heard her prayers, the feelings I fought against, got flaked away" (329). Ida is unable to resist an emotional attachment to Christine; she grows into motherhood.

Ida's battle against Clara for legal guardianship of Christine shows just how much Ida has become attached to Christine. With Father Hurlburt's help, she becomes Christine's mother not only emotionally but also legally. Although Christine never learns the truth about how Ida and Clara are really related to her, and although she seemingly rejects Ida as her mother, from this point we know the deep personal sacrifice that Ida makes for Christine. By not telling Christine about her past, Ida attempts to protect her and herself-ironically from each other, as though Christine's knowing the truth and Ida's having to defend her actions would be more painful than the combative relationship that the two women now share.

Squarely with other female relationship, the relationship between Ida and Rayona is also based on sympathy and support. After Christine, Ida is the only caregiver of Rayona. Ida raises Rayona in the young age and when Christine becomes ill, she hands Rayona over to Ida. Rayona loves Ida very much. She thinks that her grandmother is the best caretaker in the world. Concerning Rayona, she admits, "She was my miracle, and I knelt beside her" (224). Ironically, however, no matter how much Christine resents Ida as a mother, it is Ida to whom Christine turns to raise and protect Rayona.

Intimacy among the females is also highlighted by some literary devices present in the novel. Understanding the meaning of some key images is vital to the full appreciation of the story and female characters. Within each narrative segment, there is often a central and powerful symbol that serves to add meaning to the text and to underline some subtle points it is making. Images are the implicit expressions of ideas and they carry more intense and more artistic perception of the issue. Ida's braiding her hair symbolizes her creation of her own individualized story. The three strands of hair that she rhythmically interweaves are similar to the three narrative

sections, which together make a complete whole that is all three women's lives. Separately, each woman struggles, but united, they form a cohesiveness that gives strength, power, and validation to their stories. Ida, as the last narrative weaver in the novel, is the foundation on which both Rayona and Christine build their own life stories.

Thus, from those aforementioned instances, it can easily be surmised that all the female characters in this novel are always helpful and devoted to each other.

Motherhood

The novel structurally as well as thematically foregrounds both the difficulty and traditional importance of knowing who one's mother is and why she acts the way she does. It consists of three distinct but overlapping first person narratives, presented in chronological order moving from young to oldest speaker and hence in part from present to past by three generations of women: Rayona, a biracial teenager; Christine, her Native American mother; and Ida, Christine's mother. Both maternal concern and fear of loss are at the centre of each mother's tangled story.

Motherhood, the novel implies, can be comprehended only as a highly complicated narrative, told from sometimes conflicting, sometimes overlapping perspectives, full of selective recall and secrets. They are perceived as necessary and strategic in situations where women are at once highly vulnerable to loss and all too aware of both the value and risks of holding on to a child. Conversely, narrative is driven by the need to know, and repeatedly, the daughter's misunderstanding of who her mother is, what she feels, why she does what she does, is to some extent corrected. Collectively, the stories not only revised what individual daughters think they know about their mothers, but also rewrite several dominant myths about motherhood. The novel debunks the notion that mothers are the only influence that

determines the identity of children. Important as the bond between mother and daughter is in each woman's life, these stories also speak repeatedly to the limits of the mother's power and the impact of other psychological, social and political forces. Relations with peers and siblings, for instance, are especially critical to the development of a gendered identity, as we learn from the role of her brother Lee in Christine's story. In Rayona's case, the absence father of another race is a fact to be reckoned with.

Similarly, these maternal revelations call into question the association of motherhood with women's lack of volition. Until recent technology brought us to the so-called age of choice, women were assumed to have little control over their procreative lives. Both Ida and Christine, however, stress the fact that they chose to become mothers, and in a world where they otherwise have little control, motherhood is a clear source and proof of identity and agency. The power to choose is also demonstrated by decisions not to mother: Christine refuses to have a second child because she fears that Ray would feel "out in the cold", as she did when her brother Lee was born (232). Ida remains an isolated, somewhat resentful woman, and Christine will soon die, perhaps without even knowing about her biological mother.

Thus, the theory of motherhood is very apt to the analysis of the novel *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water*. In the novel, the relationship between mother and daughter is greater than other relations such as the one between father and daughter, husband and wife and mother and son. While attempting the relationship between Ida and Christine, Ida becomes a mother without giving birth to Christine. But she loves Christine more than her own mother who gives birth to her. Ida never tells Christine the reality because she fears herself as a mother. She does not want to separate with her daughter. Ida is the example of a great mother because she spends her whole life

in the devotion of her daughter, Christine and granddaughter, Rayona. Likewise, Christine also becomes a loving mother to her daughter, Rayona and an equally loving daughter to her mother Ida. She devotes her whole life only for her daughter's happiness.

Relationship Between Male and Female

While analyzing the relationship, different types of relationships between male and female characters come to the fore-- the relationships, for example, between husbands and wives, fathers and daughters and mothers and sons. In all these instances where female and male have either an emotional or hereditary ties, the relationship of females to their male counterparts is often mattered by different self-serving motives of the latter, making it uneven, inequitable, discriminatory and unhealthy. Concerned only with the fulfillment of their self-interest, male characters in the novel seem completely engrossed to have their works done and their desires satisfied through females, even when such a self-centered approach may debilitate the psychology and wreak havoc on the existential being of the female characters.

Surprisingly, none of the relations between males and females appears to have been founded on co-operation and mutual support. On the contrary, these relationships hardly ever seem to impart a sense of justice to the female roles. Male as a father, husband or son never supports the female. All the males come in female life only to gratify their self-interest.

The novel exposes the relationship between male and female characters to be uneven and inequitable. In the novel, to quote Simone de Beauvoir, 'the two sexes have never shared the world in equality' (Woman as Other, 215). Clearer it becomes when we analyze the relationship between Elgin and Christine.

Despite the fact that Elgin is husband of Christine, he never supports and loves her. In fact, he never regards Christine as his wife. He comes to Christine only to have his sexual desires satisfied. This becomes conspicuously evident in the hospital scene in chapter one, where Christine falls seriously sick but Elgin neglects her thinking that she is faking. Similarly, in chapter fourteen, Christine's pathetic narration unveils the apathetic reaction of her husband to her ailment:

When Elgin arrived in the hospital, shining with the rain, I thought the doctor must have talked to him, that he knew my story and couldn't face me. All my fight drained out, changed to pity. I wanted to tell Elgin it would be all right. I wanted to go back into that world where it was just he and me, where I will get well if only to see him smile. "Rayona," he said. "What's happening?" "I'm surprised you recognized me." (239)

When Christine understands the real thoughts of Elgin about her health, she tries to console herself by giving vent to her anger. She further expresses her bitter feelings for Elgin in this way:

I felt stupid in my thoughts. I might as well not have been in the room for all he cared. I decided to remind him who was sick, whom he had come to see, whose car he has driven to get there. He knew what I meant, that all he wanted was the fucking car, and he rubbed his thumbs against the knuckles of his clenched fingers. The energy of anger shot through me, I tried to be reasonable. I said I was sick, sick, but he wouldn't stay here. I couldn't say more because of Rayona, and the frustration maddened me.

"Just get the hell out of here," I told him. "Go back to your fat girl."

(240)

Although Christine suffers very much and she needs her husband's company, Elgin comes there only to take key of Christine's car. At first, when her husband comes to see her, she becomes very happy. This happiness, however, was not to last long because the reality is different. He does not love her; he comes there only to return the car. From this event, it can be easily inferred that female needs love and care from male in response to their love. Opposed to such female expectations, no male in the novel ever takes the responsibility of their family from heart. They are always in search of material and physical pleasure.

When Christine and Elgin have close relationship, Christine becomes pregnant. Even after Elgin knows about her pregnancy, he ignores the baby and forces her to abort the baby. Conversation between Elgin and Christine shows the situation; "You are pregnant? He sopped his hand, propped up on his elbow. His face became alert and tense" (184). All these events accentuate the fact that Elgin makes relationship with Christine only for sexual satisfaction. He never gives company to Christine as a loving husband. The relationship between Christine and Elgin is not for each other but only for self benefit.

The relationship between Elgin and Rayona is father and daughter. Rayona for the first time sees her father at the age of fifteen. When she meets her father, he behaves towards her as an enemy. Rayona also does not like her father. When she knows the so-called relationship between father and mother, she hates her father. She understands that her father does not love her mother. Once Rayona says, "I try to figure out what mom is so upset about and dad never lives together for more than a week before the picking on each other and talking divorce. But they never go through with it. Being married never stops either one of them from doing what they want. It

doesn't interfere" (11). From this expression it can be made out that the relationship between Rayona and Elgin is not good.

The relationship between Ida and Lee is the relationship of mother and son. Lee is the biological son of Ida. Ida loves her son very much but Lee does not care her mother; he spends most of his time only with his friends. Lee wants to join military but Ida requests him not to join that job, he does not care mother voice and does what he wants. When he dies, Ida becomes alone and Christine is the only care taker of her old age. So, the relationship between Ida and Lee is not good.

The relationship between Lecon and Ida is of Father and daughter. Lecon lives his life only for his own pleasure. When he makes the extra-marital relationship with Clara and gives birth to Christine, he uses her daughter Ida as a mother of his child. Ida becomes mother without giving birth to any child. She spends her whole life only for the sake of her fathers' image in the society. Lecon uses three females--Annie, Clara and Ida for his self benefit. He does not care his family happiness. Ida spends her whole life being the mother of her father's child. She digests all the negative behavior of the society without her fault, but only because of her father's extra marital relationship with her aunt Clara . So, from these events we come to know that the relationship between Lecon and Ida is not good.

Thus, the presence of male characters wreaks havoc on the interrelationship and the lives of females. All the time one female is the supporter of another female. Females have good relationship with each other but when one male enters into their lives, they begin to have misunderstanding with each other. None of the male gives true love to the female. The only factor that attracts them towards the females is the gratification of their libido with the female's body. They never understand and respect

the females' love and emotion. So, it can easily be proved that the presence of male always creates problems in females' lives.

Obstruction of Male in Female Relationship

The male characters in the novel consider themselves as the one, subject, superior, godlike, intellectual while females as the other, object, inferior, malleable and inert. Because of male's craving for superiority, they obstruct the female relationship time and again. In the novel, the interrelationship between and among three Indian women- the grandmother, Ida, the mother, Christine, and the daughter, Rayona- becomes dysfunctional as their relationship has been disfigured and dismantled by the presence of male characters such as Elgin, Lee, Lecon and Foxy.

The interrelationship between Christine and Rayona has been obstructed by the intrusion of Elgin in their lives. Elgin is the husband of Christine and father of Rayona. He comes in Christine's life only for sexual purpose. An event in hospital shows that the presence of Elgin brings obstruction in Christine and Rayona's relationship. Before the presence of Elgin, Rayona looks after her mother, never leaving her alone. But when Elgin comes in hospital, Christine orders her daughter to go away from there. The following conversation corroborates it:

"You go on now, Ray," Mom says. "Elgin and I have to talk." She has been busy rearranging herself and the bed. She is lying almost flat, with the sheet tucked under her chin. The pillow still supports her knees, though, so she has to lift her head to see father Elgin. "I'll see you tomorrow, baby," Mom says like an order. She is impatient for me to go so she can have Dad to herself, and that makes me curious. I don't know what she sees in him. She has other boyfriend who call when they promise, pay the check at restaurants, and want to live with us. (6)

In this way, the good relationship between mother and daughter is obstructed by the presence of father, Elgin. Rayona does not like her father's presence in their lives because when father come there, her mother neglects her and gives attention only to him. Elgin never gives love to his daughter; he comes there only to get enjoyed with his wife.

The game of solitaire, which Christine and Rayona play, symbolizes the lonely existence that both women live. Ironically, however, their isolation means that they must depend on each other for companionship. Christine cheats at the game, and Rayona allows her too, but what Rayona does not realize is that Christine wants Rayona to catch her at cheating.

Apparently, their roles are reversed, Christine acts like the rebellious, irrational daughter, and Rayona acts like the wise mother, chiding Christine that she is not taking care of herself the way she should have been. The tense family dynamics of Rayona's family are introduced when Elgin, Rayona's father and Christine's husband, shows up at the hospital. Before Elgin's appearance, it can be noted that Rayona caring her mother and Christine feels happy in her daughter's company. Christine's marriage to Elgin is not anything but idyllic. Christine tells Elgin to leave, but Elgin, thinking that Christine's stay in the hospital is only one more of many times she has been there, tells Christine that she is only playacting at being sick. Unfortunately, he does not realize that Christine is very sick, this time; she is not faking an illness. Christine's comment to Elgin, "Go back to your little black girl," emphasizes the nonconformist relationship between Christine and Elgin. Elgin is having an affair, and Christine knows it (17).

However, what we do not know yet is that Elgin's seeing someone else is part of the pattern that Christine and Elgin have established in their marriage. They rely on

the regularity of their on-again, off-again marriage, and both concede that this is the only way they can relate. Later in the chapter, Rayona acknowledges that her parents cannot be around each other for long periods of time without fighting. Elgin is a philanderer who disbelieves that his wife is sick and whose sexual desires are never sated. After the arrival of Elgin, Rayona leaves the hospital without caring her sick mother. Elgin's appearance in the hospital room creates tension in mother daughter relationship.

Another male character is Lee, the biological son of Ida. His presence also obstructs the two female relationship between Ida and Christine. When Lee comes in Ida's life, Christine goes away from her life. Whereas Rayona compensates for her feeling about being displaced from her cultural heritages by becoming silent and withdrawn from her mother, Christine, as a teenager, consciously and Lee have a very close, special sister-brother relationship, except that in Christine's opinion, Aunt Ida favors Lee more than she does Christine. In chapter nine Christine expresses her jealousy on Ida and Lee's relationship. She says:

But there was no way anybody, especially Aunt Ida, could stay mad at Lee for long. Even as a little kid, he was a boy people noticed, he was a winner. There were times I saw Aunt Ida wonder at him as though she couldn't believe he was hers. Sure I was jealous. Everything was Lee this and Lee that from when he was a baby. But I've got to say he didn't let his looks go to his head as much as some would. There were times he forgot all about himself (146).

Because of the presence of Lee in their life, Aunt Ida and Christine do not get along for sometimes. Ida gives her attention only to her son Lee and neglects her daughter Christine. In the absence of Lee, Ida always need Christine there, she thinks that

Christine is the only person who gives company to her old age, but after the presence of Lee in her life, she becomes far from her daughter.

Over the course of their teenage years, Lee and Dayton grow closer, and Christine becomes more jealous of their relationship. Perhaps as a way to rebel against both Lee and Aunt Ida, Christine starts drinking heavily and having frequent, indiscriminate sexual relationships with various men. When Aunt Ida confronts Christine about her loose behavior with a married man with two children, Christine rebels even more and moves in with her Aunt Pauline, Ida's sister.

After the graduation of Lee and Dayton from high school, both involve in the 'red power' political movement. Christine is embarrassed because of Lee's newfound crusade. She becomes afraid that the many servicemen whom she dates will reject her because of Lee's political stances for Indian rights and against the Vietnam War. When Christine confronts Aunt Ida about Lee, Aunt Ida supports Lee's behavior, which only causes Christine to be that much angrier at Aunt Ida. This evidence is shown in the abstract expressed by Christine in chapter ten which is as follows:

As it happened, I left the reservation before Lee, which was right in a way since I was older. I went to say good-bye to Aunt Ida and she gritted her teeth and kissed my cheek. She was glad to see me go, glad to have Lee's last days to herself. She didn't want to do anything to make me stay just to spite her, so for once she was the way she used to be with me, packing me a lunch for the bus, giving me advice about the city living even though she'd never been anywhere except Denver more than overnight herself. She got all her views of the world out of her television and so it's not surprising they didn't fall together in any

kind of sense. She told me not to mix with private eyes and gangster,
not to smoke drug, and to always pay my rent on time. (171)

Although Ida deeply loves Christine, She happily farewells Christine because of Lee's presence in her life. From the above evidence we come to know that Christine is going to leave Ida's house and wants to go away from her life. Before the presence of Lee, Ida never gives permission to Christine to go away from her. The place of Christine is overtaken by Lee and for her to go away from Ida's life.

Perhaps Christine and Aunt Ida do not get along because they are so much alike because of Lee. No matter how much the two women battled for Lee's affection and still battle about who owns his memory, Christine cannot overcome her dependency on Aunt Ida. Faced with the emotional void of Lee's absence, Christine searches for the only person who can help her through her suffering is Aunt Ida. "My eyes reeled to every corner for help, "Christine narrates, "but finally the only thing I saw was Aunt Ida, and it was like looking into a mirror. We stared at each other over time, over Lee" (269).

Of all the female characters in the novel, perhaps with the exception of Evelyn, Ida is the most stable, strong, and self-determined. For example, she fights Clara for the right to raise Christine as her own, legal child even though she knows that she is giving up her life's independence. Even more, she intentionally rejects Willard Pretty Dog as a lover after she learns that she's pregnant with his child. Her decision is mitigated by Willard's thoughtless comments about her following his successful reconstructive facial surgery; "Ida may not be beautiful . . . She may not be very smart. But when no one else cared for me, she was there" (335). His comments are more painful than he realizes, for they also characterize other people's relationships-most notably Christine's-to Ida and not just Willard's.

Lecon is another male through whom the three females relationship is obstructed. Lecon is the husband of Annie and father of Ida. When Lecon impregnated Clara during Ida's mother illness, the close relationship between two sisters is destroyed and the relationship between Clara and Ida is also destroyed because of Lecon as well. Before the presence of Lecon in Clara's life, the relationship between Clara and Ida is very mutual. In chapter sixteen Ida expresses her views in this way:

Clara helped me with my homework, I had her to myself for an after supper. I took pride, as they had urged me to do, or, rather, Clara took it. She celebrated with me the receipt of a fine red A, exclaimed at every Excellent, cautioned Pauline to emulate my progress, praised my work to Mama and Papa. I told Clara my every thought. Her compressed smile, surrendered only when I overcome all defenses of her composure, was my goal and my reward. I mimicked her speech, altered my clothes to match the drape of those she wore, traded Pauline's confidence without regret, and was wary for any sign of Mama's improvement lest it signal Clara's departure. I need not have worried. Clara had not come to leave alone (306).

Lecon's behavior regarding his extra-marital affair with Clara emphasizes the negative treatment like brutality, ignoring behaviour that males receive throughout the novel. Lecon is much the same as Elgin, apparently forsaking his sick and dying wife for a brief tryst with his sister-in-law, Clara, who is as much to blame as Lecon for their misbegotten sexual indiscretions.

One female seems always the supporter of another female throughout the novel. Female relationship gets obstructed only from the presence of male. In this

novel, the same thing happens in all females' relationship. For example, the relationship between Rayona and Christine is very mutual but when Elgine comes between them, their warm relationship gets destructed. Also the good relationship between Cristine and Ida, and Clara and Ida is destructed respectively through Lee and Lecon.

To sum up, the feminist discourse discussed above helps us to form arguments and justify Dorris's attempts of female role and power in his novel *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* and to show how the females are bolder, more powerful and sensible than males in term of physicality, sexuality, spirituality and intelligence in social, cultural and political domains of life. And it also proved that the role of females is greater than that of males in the society because only the females are responsible to their families whereas males always want luxury and physical pleasure. According to the research of many feminist, it can be easily proved that females are more powerful and responsible than males. So, the role of females is always praiseworthy and respectable in the society.

IV. Conclusion

This research work has analysed the obstruction by males in female relationship in the light of Nancy Chodorow's theoretical proposition of female relational self in the text *A Yellow Raft in Blue Water* (1987) by Michael Dorris. As such, it does not present and examine the relationship between and among the males that they have with respect to each other, which the researcher found impertinent to the analytical tool. It only deals with the different types of female relationship between mother and daughter, particularly in between Ida and Christine and Christine and Rayona.

The dissertation first establishes the rationale behind the application of the feminist theory of Nancy Chodorow's female relational self to the analysis of the novel. Its necessity is proven, for one thing, by the fact that the whole novel moves around the struggling life story of three female characters--grandmother, mother and grand-daughter. For another, the female-female relationship is always based upon mutual co-operation and understanding in comparison with male female relationship. The fact that all the female devotes their lives in the support of each other and the fact that when male characters intrude into their lives, their cordial relationship gets obstructed in each case are some of the major reasons which necessitate the approach to be applied.

The whole research writing is dependent upon the three major premises--that the relationship between three females moves forward with mutual understanding in the overall plot; that the relationship between females is obstructed by and after the presence of male. When the females understand that they always need each other and the obstruction is created only from male presence, they again establish mutual relationship between them very strongly. As a natural outcome of these syllogistically

drawn premises, the claim that has been made is that females have always affable relationship but the presence of male shatters their relationship in favor of their self-interest.

The leading female characters Ida, Christine and Rayona have mutual relationship based on affection. Although Ida is not Christine's biological mother, she loves her no less than her own daughter. Christine also spends her whole life looking after her daughter Rayona. Rayona loves her mother and cares her all the time. The relationship between these three women is more often driven by the benevolent wish of providing support to each other than by the main aim of serving self-interest. But when Ida gives birth to Lee, Christine thinks that she loves him more than her. So, the relationship between those two is broken. In the similar way, the relationship between Rayona and Christine is ruptured by the presence of Elgin in their lives. And, Lecon's presence in Clara's life obstructs her relationship with her own sister Annie. Before the presence of male in their lives, the relationship between female is very co-operative but because of male's obstruction their relationship is misconstrued and misunderstood.

Ida becomes mother without child bearing. The motherhood of Ida never takes her far from her emotional daughter Christine. Christine also never asks her about her real mother because she never feels her absence. Christine breaks the relationship with her husband for her daughter because Rayona never likes the presence of Elgin between the mother and herself. She thinks that if father came in their life, the mother might stop loving her in order to catch the attention of her husband. Ida also iterates the commitment to Christine that she will care her and her daughter all over her life. In this way, these three female devote their whole life in each other's happiness and care.

Thus, the presence of the male characters creates havoc on the interrelationship and the lives of female that all the time one female is supporter of another, but their relationships is bedeviled for a period of time with misunderstanding due to the presence of male in their life. Here, relational self of females is seen mutual and co-operative only in the absence of male.

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