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Role of Circumstance in Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*

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Abstract

This study analyzes how the circumstance has played significant role in shaping the action of the characters in Rebecca West's novel, The Return of the Soldier. On the one hand, the study reveals how characters are being controlled by circumstance and on the other hand, it questions the traditional notion of authorial intention by showing that, it is not the author who shapes the action and role of the characters rather it is the circumstance, by which characters are guided. Everything in the novel is revealed by Jenny's narration. Illness, fragmentation, chaos, failure are some of the core issues, around which the story moves. These issues are not created by the intention of author or characters but formed by circumstance. Whole story is in the form of chain and cause and effect relationship where A leads towards B, B leads towards C and it goes till to the end. B would not happen in the absence of A. Before action A is responsible for after action B. That is why the preceding action itself shapes another coming action. Neither the narrator nor the author could stop something from happening. In this way, this thesis attempts to dismantle the conventional notion of the role of author in shaping the action of story by introducing the role of circumstance as a controlling mechanism both for characters and actions.

Key Words: Destiny, Fate, Circumstance

Based on Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*, this thesis inspects the events and actions, which characters perform, and argues that they are not the intentional acts but circumstantial and situational one that finally leads towards the happy ending of the novel. The whole plot is in the form of chain, where after action is based on before action. If A is not there, obviously B would not be there. Therefore, the role that characters play, is not the product of their conscious and rational mind but shaped by circumstance, by which they are simply guided.

In the novel, male characters are shown unsuccessful to accomplish the assigned masculine traits and are unable to confirm the male values and practices. On the contrary, females are active, bold, courageous, independent and timid. Females are able to play what patriarchy calls masculine role where males fail. Margate is able to cure Chris, which cannot be done by a renounced doctor. But, here the point is that Jenny and Margate play masculine role and Chris adopts feminine role not because by his/her intention. They are simply the mere follower of their predetermined destiny; circumstance. In the novel, subversion of gender role arises not because of the strong resistance of female characters but because of the failure of male characters. And this failure is none other than circumstantial.

Margate and Chris are the major figures of the novel. Margate comes to Baldry Court with the information of Chris' mental illness. Despite the hatred of Kitty and Jenny, she insists on the truth-value of the information of Chris' mental illness. After the homecoming of Chris, she frequently revisits Baldry Court in order to take care of Chris. Even though it is opposite to the rules, regulation, norms and values of patriarchal society, she pays regular visit. She even says once to Jenny, a narrator and sister to Chris, "I suppose I ought to say that he isn't right in his head, and that I 'm married, so we 'd better not meet (86)." In such situation too, she does not care too much about society but simply walks on her path as a responsible beloved and a wife. She takes rational and bold decision and makes Chris

confront the bitter reality that he is married to Kitty and his son died five years ago, in his age of two, by showing the jersey and tennis ball of Oliver. By doing this, Margate reminds him the events that happened in the past fifteen years of his life and cures him back to health.

In the development of story, when Chris is brought back to the home, he displays what patriarchy calls feminine attributes. He lives in virtual reality. He knows very well that he is now in his age of thirty five and married to Kitty. Instead of accepting the fact, he always dreams of Margate and demands the life which passed away fifteen years ago. He is always obsessed and nostalgic with the memory of his former beloved and does not see the value of life without her. As a soldier and a head of the family, he has many responsibilities on his shoulder. Instead of fulfilling them, he becomes emotional, submissive and dependents on his sister and ex-beloved. The unexpected demise of his father, his lower economic status, his visiting to Monkey Island and falling in love with a beautiful lady; Margate and getting angry with her later by seeing her with Bert Batchard, failure on running own business are some circumstantial incidents that make him join an army and fight in the front row. If he had not faced his father's demise or if he had not seen Margate with Batchard, if he had not suffered from financial crisis while running business, perhaps he would not have had to go on war and everything would have gone fine. But these circumstantial incidents happen as if they are already planned, which finally make him mentally ill and make him forget his valuable fifteen years of his life.

Furthermore, when Mr. Allington, father of Margate, dies, she falls into deep financial crisis. She waits for Chris but he does not even write to her. For survival, she first works in an Irish family for two years and later moves on to Watson family, where she meets William Gray. She leaves Monkey Island with him but after few years, again revisits there. Her revisiting and meeting with Mr. Taylor there make her to know that she has twelve letters from Chris. She does not read them until she gets telegram in her second revisit of Monkey

Island. By getting the bad news of Chris' mental illness, Kitty charges Margate a fraud and misbehaves her. Despite her misbehavior, Margate visits Baldry Court frequently and gets success on curing Chris. Here, Chris' not sending letters to her when she is in Monkey Island, his sending twelve letters when she leaves Island, her revisiting of that Island and meeting with Mr. Taylor and again getting telegram which is sent to the address of Monkey Island are another coincidences. She goes Baldry Court with the news of Chris' mental illness. She finds Baldry Court easily with the help of her maid. Her maid is the sister to Baldry Court's second housemaid. It makes her easy to find Baldry Court. Working of her maid's sister in Baldry Court is another coincidence that establishes the easy way for Margate to meet Jenny and Kitty. In the same aspect, if Chris would have written to her in her awaited time, she would not have had to marry to William. He does not do so in time because he is also the mere victim of circumstance.

In this sense, the used characters are just playing their role, which is fully circumstantial. Though Margate does everything for her past love and ex-boyfriend, but gets faced with many incidents that unwillingly lead her towards Chris. Her not opening twelve letters means her not willing to know about Chris or to be close with him. But receiving the telegram could not let her stay without reading them. Her knowing about Chris' mental illness is the seed of the plot of novel that grows up with the leaves of circumstance and chance. The same case happens in Jenny, Kitty, Chris, Dr. Anderson, Oliver and so on.

The Return of the Soldier is one of the famous novels of Rebecca West. Since the beginning of publication, it has been able to attract the attention of various critics and scholars. Many of them have made different views and opinion regarding this novel. One of the most renowned critics, James Harper Strom in his thesis "Modernism Aesthetics of 'Home' in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*, argues:

On its surface, it is the sort of timely narrative of shell shock and the family that proliferated during and after the war. However, West's novel would be more accurately described as an exploration of the spaces of women and an indictment of the forms and attitudes traditionally associated with such space in the fiction. (23)

James Strom in these lines notices that, *The Return of the Soldier* at the same time raises the issues related to women by showing the effect of war. It shows how families were affected during the war time. With this, it empowers women and also gives the new role, position and identity to them as well as creates new space for women and challenges traditional patriarchal forms and attitudes of society.

West's novel is a dynamic writing in both thematic and structural level. It has multiple sides and interpretation that is evoked by many more critics. Karl Rollinson, in the *Literary Legacy of Rebecca West*, argues:

The Return of the Soldier is inspired by a medical journal article that describes the case of an old factory employee who fell down a staircase on his head and revived thinking he was twenty-year-old. Due to the loss of memory, he rejected his wife and sought out a woman he was in love with when he was twenty. (69)

With this extract, Rollinson states that, West's novel is the recycled form of a medical journal article, in which the same case happened to an old aged man. Here, he tries to relate the case of medical and literature. He focuses that, West has applied the medical case of shell-shock and amnesia in the field of literature.

Along with this, this novel is about the stage of confusion and the conflict in between willingness and unwillingness of the characters. Anna Horner, one of the reviewers and critics, on her review, entitled "Diary of an Eccentric", writes:

The Return of the Soldier hardly mentions the war, other than Jenny's nightmares about Chris in No-Man's Land and her worries that he will be sent back to the front if

he regains his memory. It is such a short novel, and much of it is devoted to Jenny's observations of the landscape, Chris and Margaret's rekindled relationship, and efforts to help Chris remember the life he has with Kitty and Jenny. (1)

Here, Horner's main concern is to show the mental dilemma of Jenny, which is uncared by the readers. She assumes that, on the one hand, Jenny has deep desire to cure Chris but at the same time, she fears on losing Chris again because of war. Jenny has a thought that, Chris is uncured and mentally ill means he is safe and secure from war. He does not have to go to the front on war. That is why in a little bit sense; it highlights the reflection of implicit unwillingness of Jenny to cure Chris, as marked by Horner.

In one sense, this novel is a good example on covering the traumatic situation and experience of soldiers but at the same time it lacks to show how war causes trauma to soldiers. Evoking the same fact, Wyatt Bonikowski, one of the renowned critics, in "*The Return of the Soldier Brings Death Home*", asserts, "In West's novel the soldier brings home a revelation about the war and effects of war in the domestic scene, but the experience of war in general and Baldry's experience of his Trauma is absent from the novel. Chris' trauma has no origin and content" (514). Here, Bonikowski argues that Chris brings the negative effect of war in domestic spheres. Because of it, the family members are in trouble and it creates disorder as well. West backgrounds what makes Chris traumatized, which also hides the traumatic experience of the warrior. His focus is to say that, the novel backgrounds the horrific condition of war and soldiers' suffering because of war.

By analyzing the above mentioned various reviews, it becomes well known that, *The Return of the Soldier* has been able to include several perspective within a single novel. These reviews give focus on issue like gender, trauma, war and so on. In difference to this, this research paper has made an attempt to approach the circumstantial incidents and events, which are no more noticed by any critics. Focusing on how circumstance plays significant

role in shaping the plot of the novel, it attempts to prove the whole novel as a circumstantial one. Here, most of the active role is played by female characters and male are presented as a passive being, which is in opposition to patriarchal assumption, norms and values. In one point, it seems that, women are rational, active and courageous. But, the role, characters play here is neither the role assigned by society nor the sudden product of their mind. It is the role simply created by circumstance and chance. Margate plays what patriarchy calls masculine role, not because of the awareness of her identity, rights and freedom but because of her emotional attachment with Chris. Likewise, circumstance leads Chris towards war, traumatizes him and finally makes cured in the lap of Margate. Similarly, same cases happen to all characters, in which, they are not moving according to their will but by the direction of circumstance.

In the analysis of dictionary given meaning, circumstance is a kind of condition, which is connected with events and actions. With the help of this definition, it can be claimed that, what is ordinarily regarded as coincidence is simply circumstance. Many critics, scholars and religious leaders take destiny, fate, chance, coincidence, circumstance as a synonymous term. The overall assumption is, the action which is predestined is destiny, predetermined is fate and when this action happens in the life of people that becomes circumstance. When something happens, one action leads towards another action. Before action and after action has mutual connectivity, which is beyond the control of human. With the aim of achieving the issue of role of circumstance, this study especially focuses on the theory of destiny, fate, chance and circumstance as well. The ideas are taken from different critics and holy books; *Mahabharata*, *Gita* and *Bible*. Here, the notion of circumstance is the well-combined form of fate, chance, destiny and coincidence. Oxford dictionary defines circumstance as "A fact or condition connected with or relevant to an event or action/ an event or fact that causes or helps to cause something to happen"(n.p). James Krik Wall, in

"Atheist U", writes: "We are not here by an overarching unfortunate or damaging event. We are here by chance. Chances are not negative or positive, but simply reality" (n.p). With these lines, he means to say that, everything in the world happens not because of accident but because of chance. Chances are not negative and positive in themselves, but it is human beings, who define it. If willing thing happens, it is regarded as coincident and when something bad happens, which is opposite to will and expectation, than it is regarded as accident. In quite similar way, Morton M. Michael, an American critic, in the *Journal People's Library*, writes:

It is a belief in these, and thousands other deceits I could mention, which teach man that he is not the master of his own mind but ordained victim or the chance sport of circumstances...Men is not the creatures of circumstance. Circumstances are the creatures of men...I imagine that you mistake the effect for the cause; for surely temper is not the origin. But the result of those circumstances of which we are all the creatures...but men struggle for their fate. (160)

Through this extract, what Michel emphasizes is, it is not the human that creates circumstance, but it is the circumstance that creates human. All the actions of human beings are formed and shaped by circumstance. Just as an actor acts on the stage as directed by director and delivers dialogue as written by writer, same happens in human life. Though it seems that, human is guided by own mind, thought and plan, but in truth, it is the circumstance and destiny that decides the role of being. They are not the master of their mind but simply the victim of chance and circumstance.

With supporting Michael's view, Sumit Jain, in his article "Is Destiny Chance or Choice?", defines destiny as:

Destiny is something to which a person or thing is destined i.e. the course of events in our life is predetermined to reach a preordained destination. Destiny implies that there

is some Power which decrees or determines the course of events beforehand... destiny is ultimately what you arrive at in your life... in destiny, fate is the principle or determining cause by which things in general are believed to come to as they are or events to happen as they do... Life is but a stage on which we play our role. (1)

Jain's view is similar to Michel. Jain's main focuses is to show the relation in between destiny, fate and action. He believes that, human acts are already predetermined, which we call fate or destiny. Fate shapes our actions and we are just the actors. We act the role on the stage which is predetermined, same as the characters do on the stage. He also foreshadows mind, rationality, thought, courage in shaping the human behavior and action. Temper, anger, happiness all are predetermined. He assumes, when somebody shows anger towards other, it is not because of his/her irrationality or something else, but because s/he is predestined or assigned to do so. Something happens because it has to happen. The same thought is expressed by A. Spirkin, in an article "Destiny, Freedom and Responsibility", where he writes:

Fatalism is based on the assumption that everything in the world and in people's lives is predetermined by natural or supernatural forces, that there is a rational being which sets the goal for everything that happens in nature, and that this being is called god.

Everything in the world is predestined and no one is responsible for what happens. (1) Spirkin also believes that, supernatural force; god is responsible for what happens in people's life. The role that Jain is talking, is shaped by god for Spirkin. Therefore, what characters do or perform is based on what god assigned to them. He does not see any role of mind, rationality, emotion, knowledge in shaping the action of the people. But for him, it is something controlled by what we call fate, destiny, chance or circumstance.

In this sense, by analyzing the different thought of the above mentioned critics and scholars, the clear connectivity in between fate, destiny, chance and circumstance can be

established. What we call "coincident" happens because of these forces. Nobody is free from own destiny and s/he cannot avoid what s/he has destined or predetermined. The same happens in the case of the characters of *The Return of the Soldier*. What happens in Chris' life; death of father and son, losing Margate, mental illness, all are predestined and predetermined in his destiny. Because of it, circumstance simply leads him from one action to another. The same cases happen in others characters also, where they become the victim of their destiny and circumstance.

By applying the theory of fate and destiny along with circumstance, this study pays deep concentration upon the role of circumstance in Rebecca West's *The Return of the Soldier*. In order to make research convenient and expose the role of circumstance, this research has been divided into three main sections. The first section presents an introduction that gives the overall outline of the research work. It begins with the introductory paragraph, general introduction of the text, literature reviews, point of departure, hypothesis, and introduction of the tool and organization of the entire work. Similarly, the second section contains the textual analysis with the application of methodology. It depicts the sufficient evidences on how circumstance plays role in shaping the whole novel. The third chapter concludes the whole project in short and aims to establish the novel as a circumstantial one.

This chapter of the study examines the novel *The Return of the Soldier* from the perspective of destiny and fate in order to prove the novel as circumstantial ones. The study mainly focuses on the dialogues and the activities of the major characters like Margate, Chris and Jenny by relating the theoretical concepts of different critics.

It is already mentioned that, this study centralizes in the role of Margate, Chris, Kitty and Jenny. As the plot of the novel develops, Chris Baldry, a soldier, goes to the war, faces the death of father and son, fights in front row, becomes the victim of shell shock and forgets the last fifteen years of his past life. In such stage, he sends a letter not to his wife Kitty, but

to Margate, a woman with whom he was in love in his youth, in the address of Money Island, which she has left many years ago. When he is brought back to home, he longs for Margate. Though he is familiar with the fact that Kitty is his wife and he is now of thirty fives of years, but he still longs for Margate. He fails to comfort the reality and fulfill his responsibility towards family and society. He is in such a stage what patriarchy calls feminine. On the contrary, Margate, as a married woman, who has simple family status and loving and caring laborious husband, plays what patriarchy calls masculine role. She goes to the Baldry Court with the news of Chris' mental illness, pays regular visit to him, love and care him as a nurse and finally becomes able to cure him, which cannot be done by a renounced doctor. She becomes able to maintain the balance among her family, Baldry's family and society as well.

It is already discussed that, many critics, scholars and religious leaders take destiny, fate, coincidence, circumstance as a synonymous term. The overall assumption is, the action which is predestined is destiny, predetermined is fate and when this action happens in the life of people that becomes circumstance. When something happens, one action leads towards another action. Before action and after action has mutual connectivity, which is beyond the control of human. Therefore, what happens in the life of Chris; getting birth in a lower status family, falling in love with Margate in Monkey Island, leaving her in anger, not writing to her soon, facing the death of his father and son, incapability of running own business, going to an army, being mentally ill, forgetting the valuable last fifteen years of his life and finally getting recovered with the help of Margate is the predestined fate of Chris, in which he has to go on. Similarly, in the life of Margate too, her losing of parents, suffering from economic crisis, waiting for Chris and moving to an Irish family and then Watson's family to work, meeting there Mr. William and marring to him, leaving Island for building economic status, returning Monkey Island and getting twelve letters of Chris, not reading them until getting the telegram, going to Baldry court with the message of Chris' amnesia, being misbehaved by

Kitty, revisiting Chris and finally being able to cure him are the events and actions that are already determined to her and circumstance simply leads her from one action to another.

Life is a beautiful combination of these several factors, which not only determine the action of human beings, but also shape their behavior. Anger, agony, pain, anxiety, happiness are not in the control of human beings because they are not in control of mind and heart, but are simply shaped by what is called fate, destiny and circumstance, as indicated by previous critics. The same idea is applied in the case of all characters in *The Return of the Soldier*.

The novel begins with the waiting of Jenny and Kitty to Chris. Before getting the bad news of Chris' amnesia, Jenny, a narrator, narrates the childhood of Chris. She reflects his hardship, loss, struggle and dream of his early phase of life. Her narration goes on:

He had exchanged his expectation of becoming a Red Indian for the equally wistful aspiration of becoming completely reconciled to life. It was his hopeless hope that some time he would have an experience that would act on his life like alchemy, turning to gold all the dark metals of events, and from that revelation he would go on his way rich with an inextinguishable joy. There had been, of course, no chance of his ever getting it. ...at his father's death he had been obliged to take over a business...

(14)

To be a Red Indian and a successful business man is a dream of a soldier, before going to an army. He lives with his golden dream that one day he becomes successful on his mission. So he moves his first step by running a business. But because of the unexpected death of his father, he could not properly maintain his business. The death of his father and the entrance of Kitty in his life, add extra responsibility. Such types of business could not fulfill their necessities. Therefore, Kitty demands something more. As Jenny narrates: "...then Kitty had come along and picked up his conception of normal expenditure, and carelessly stretched it as a woman stretches a new glove on her hand" (14), it becomes clear on the attitude of Kitty.

She always demands something more from Chris, which is insufficient from his lower income of business. Chris is still engaged in business until his son's demise. He still has the hope that, with this little business, one day he can achieve his dream. But the unexpected death of his two-year-old son forces him to join on army.

On the one hand, he has the pain of losing his father and son and on the other hand, he has the responsibility of his incomplete family on his shoulder. This bitter realization compels him to choose a new way of life and he joins in army. By addressing Chris' such situation, Jenny narrates: "Then there had been the difficult task of learning to live after the death of his little son. It had lain on us, the responsibility, which gave us dignity, to compensate him for his lack of free adventure by arranging him a gracious life" (15). The death of his son distracts his mind deeply. He could neither concentrate on business nor does he have enough funds to be established. He begins to search for new way which could be the honorable and has dignity. These events that happen one by one in Chris' life are purely circumstantial. In order to support this argument, it is worth to add Leonard P. Campos' view in circumstance. In "Beyond Script Destiny: Chance and Circumstance in the Life Course", by referring the view of Eric Berne, he engraves: "Early childhood, and the life course is what actually happens. The life course is determined by genes, by parental background, and by external circumstances" (278). As said by Campos, the future of Chris is already determined by his parental background. He has such a lower status means he has to do something great to achieve his dream. He is so much ambitious in life that, he wants to earn lots of money and gold. For this, he needs to do something big and risky.

Therefore, what he does in his life is all because of circumstance. Here, actions are happened in the form of chain, which have cause and effect relationship. Before action is fully responsible for the after action; B happens because of A. The death of Chris' father makes him to marry Kitty. The rising demands of Kitty and the death of his son lead him towards

war and finally he becomes the victim of shell-shock. Likewise, the demise of parents pushes Margate to Irish family to Waston family and to Ladysmith road, where she further faces the death of her two years old son.

In addressing the same issue, Campos adds:

The same can be said of birth circumstances over which we do not have a choice, for example, to belong to a certain culture, gender, sexual orientation, or racial or ethnic identity. Nor do we have a choice in any given culture to be born into differences of social class, economic status, and family educational level. (278)

In analyzing Chris' situation from the point of view of Campos, it was the circumstance of Chris to get birth in such a lower status family. He passes his childhood in full of suffering, and lack; exchanging it with golden dreams. He starts business to achieve his dream. But, unfortunately, then comes to face the death of his father and son. If he would born in an upper class family or if he would have enough money to run own business or if he would not have to lose father and son, perhaps he would not have to go on war. That means he would not have to be the victim of amnesia. But, neither is it his rationality or braveness that leads him towards war, nor his irrationality or cowardice nature that makes the victim of amnesia. It is simply the circumstance that does everything. In other words, his actions were predestined and fate makes him to play his assigned role.

In reflecting the similar case, Sumit Jain, in his article, published in *Publish Your Article*, entitled "Is Destiny Chance or Choice?", proclaims: "Fate is the principle or determining cause by which things in general are believed to come to as they are or events to happen as they do... Life is but a stage on which we play our role"(1). Here, Jain's focus is to show the relation in between fate and circumstance. He asserts that, the actions and events that happenin life or are going to happen are already determined and nobody can stop them. Those events happen in the form of chain. One action leads to another, which is called coincidence

or circumstance. Just like an actor performs his/her role in the stage, same people do in the daily life. An actor speaks the words as given by writer and changes gesture as directed by a director. Therefore, Jain compares the life with the stage of drama where characters simply play their role. It might be god or some supernatural force for Jain that determines the human fate. Hence, it becomes clear that, people are simply the follower of destiny that is why, what they do is circumstantial.

The similar case happens in sending the letters to Margate, her receiving those letters, getting telegram and her going to Baldry's residence with the bad news of Chris' amnesia. When Chris becomes the victim of amnesia, he forgets the previous fifteen years of his life and goes back to the days, in which, he was in love with an inn keeper's daughter; Margate, in Monkey Island. It is interesting that, Margate has left Monkey Island fifteen years ago in order to build her economic condition, but still she gets telegram, sent to the same address of Monkey Island. In addressing this case, Margate says to Jenny and Kitty: "And it was sent to my old home, Monkey Island, at Bray. Father kept the inn there. It 's fifteen years since we left it"(30). It has been already fifteen years since they have not visited Monkey Island. In one sense, Margate and her husband are settled in Ladysmith road and there is no need to go Monkey Island again. But as the action goes on, fortunately, she and her husband revisits there on the last September and tell to the folks about it. Margate further adds: "I never should have got this telegram if me and my husband hadn't been down there last September and told the folks who keep it now who I was"(30). She gets the twelve letters of Chris, from the hand of Mr. Taylor in her revisiting of Monkey Island. If this situation is analyzed from the perspective of fatalism, Margate is predestined to get the letters and to know about the shell-shocked condition of Chris. That is why, fate [circumstance] leads Margate in Monkey Island after her leaving of fifteen years. Hence, their revisiting to Monkey Island and telling to folks is simply circumstantial. If they would not go there, neither they get the letters and

telegram nor get the news of Chris' mental illness. She goes there because she is destined to know the suffered condition of Chris.

In the same aspect, Terry Pratchett, in *Interesting Times*, marks: "Whatever happens, they say afterwards, it must have been fate" (n.p). Here, what Pratchett clarifies is, every events in the life of a person happens, simply because of fate. He tries to relate fate and circumstance in a sense that, what is predetermined is fate and when this action happens, it becomes circumstance. Here, Margate and her husband's going to Monkey Island after fifteen years of leaving, their visiting to Mr. Taylor and getting twelve letters and telegram of Chris by Taylor also have a significant role in the novel. When Margate says to Jenny: ""For a long time I did not read them; I thought it was against my duty as a wife. But when I got that telegram saying he was wounded, I went up-stairs and read those letters" (110),she also revels the fact that how circumstance makes her to go there and read those letters. After getting the letters in her hand, Margate does not collect enough courage to read them. So, she even does not tell about it to her husband. But when she gets the telegram with the message of Chris' illness, she reads them all and comes to know how much Chris loves to her. She bursts into tears after realizing his love and immediately runs towards Baldry court to convey the bad news. If she would not have gone Monkey Island or read the letters, neither she would have the realization of Chris' love towards her nor would she become ready to cure Chris. That is why, her revisiting to there, getting and reading telegram also has significant value. At first, she does not read twelve letters regarding her marital status. But in opening the telegram, her consciousness does not work. Therefore, if it is analyzed from the perspective of fatalism, she is destined to firstly know the mental illness of Chris. So, Chris, who forgets his own house and wife, writes to Margate in an address of Monkey Island and fortunately she goes there after her leaving of fifteen years. Hence, it is simply the circumstance that makes Chris to write and at the same time makes Margate to receive and read it.

In the further analysis of the novel, here comes the agonized phase in the life of Margate. After the death of her father, she suffers not only financially but also physically and mentally. When Chris leaves her in anger, she spends some more days in his waiting. But, he neither writes to her nor makes any response. In addressing this case, Margate says to Jenny: "I wanted Chris so badly; but he never came, he never wrote"(105). She already loses two important things of her life; parents and lover. The income of an inn gets stopped with the demise of her father. She neither has any saved property nor any nearest and dearest to get helped in such painful condition. Showing Margate's pitiable condition, Jennynarrates:

Her father had left her nothing save an income... First she fell into the hands of a noble Irish family in reduced circumstances... After two years... she had come upon a large and needy family called Watson who lived at Chiswick, and almost immediately Mr. William Grey, who was Mrs. Watson's brother. (106)

The above mentioned extract is very pathetic in tone. In order to survive, Margate works in an Irish family for two years. After that, she moves to Watson family and begins to work there. There she meets Mr. William Gray; brother of Mrs. Watson and later she gets married with him. As Pratchett and Jain's indication, it is the destiny of Margate that pushes her one phase to another and one place to another. The death of her father and penniless condition make her to work in Watson family and to meet William. If she would not have to lose her father, neither would she have to go on work in Watson family, nor does she get William as a husband. Therefore, it is circumstance that makes her to face these events in her life.

Circumstance does not leave any choice and option to people. Will, desire, determination, becomes powerless in front of it. Binary things like; good and evil, love and hate are not the product of human mind and heart, but even they are unknown about how it gets produced. People cannot know what is going to happen within a few second and what might be the result. Circumstance is something mysterious. It has both action and

consequence but it cannot be pre-assumed. In support to the mentioned argument, it is worth to add the view of H. Rider Haggard. In his story, *She*, Haggard inscribes: "Man doeth this and doeth that from the good or evil of his heart; but he knows not to what end his sense doth prompt him; for when he strikes he is blind to where the blow shall fall, nor can he count the airy threads that weave the web of circumstance" (125). In the close analysis of Haggard's perception, human beings are the mere victim of circumstance. The same characteristic is depicted in the novel *The Return of the Soldier*.

When Jenny goes to Baldry's court, bringing the bad news of Chris' amnesia, Kitty misbehaves her in anger. She charges Margate by saying "You come to tell this story because you think that you will get some money"(27). Margate, an ex-lover of Chris, who still loves him with her deep heart, gets blamed by Kitty for conveying the message of Chris' amnesia. Kitty, an aristocratic woman, thinks that, Margate makes a fake story in the hope of getting some money. Not only this, she threatens her of calling the police, where she says: "You should think yourself very lucky that I don't hand you over to the police"(27). But it is the greatness of Margate that, after this humiliation too, she frequently revisits Baldry Court and gives enough time to Chris. In the analysis of most of the parts of the novel, Kitty does not have control over her anger. Not only in the case of Margate, but in the case of Chris, Jenny and Dr. Anderson too, she shows her anger. She blames Chris for pretending as if he has forgotten his past in order to be closed with Margate. She is also dissatisfied with doctor for not being able to cure Chris. But, she has a virtue that, she later regrets on her misbehavior and anger and feels shame on her deed. She really becomes insane in her anger and says anything. Here, the fact is something different. She does not have control over her own anger, simply because she does not have such ability. It is the circumstance that shapes the activities as well as behavior of human beings. Anger, temper, happiness, sadness all are controlled by circumstance. Morton M. Michael, addressing the same issue in the Journal *People's Library*,

writes: "Men are not the creatures of circumstance. Circumstances are the creatures of men...I imagine that you mistake the effect for the cause; for surely temper is not the origin. But the result of those circumstances of which we are all the creatures" (160).Michael emphasis on the fact that, even the personal habits; anger, temper are not in the control of human, but are in the control of circumstance. Just like circumstances are the creature of men/women, in the same way, their habits are also shaped by circumstance. That is why, for Michael, when somebody does errors; circumstance is responsible for it, not human beings.

Being based on the same issue, while analyzing the case of Chris, same fact can be found. After seeing Margate with Bert on the island, Chris leaves Margate in anger and does not write her soon. Narrating her past to Jenny, Margate says: "And he went on talking, and then it struck me he wasn't trusting me as he would trust a girl of his own class, and I told him so, and he went on being cruel. Oh, don't make me remember the things we said to each other!"(111). Conflict arises from Chris' mistrusting to Margate. He even does not ask to her, who Bert is, but leaves her in anger, goes on army, and does not write to her soon. It makes Margate to leaves Monkey Island, by getting tired of waiting for him. Only then he writes to her when she has gone to Irish family to work. In one sense, these all events happen because of the anger of Chris. If he would not have left Margate in anger neither Chris would have to lose her nor would she have to marry William. His anger does not allow his mind to take a right decision. But, if Michael opinion is taken here, it is not the fault of Chris' leaving Margate in anger, because it is circumstance that has shaped his behavior and thought too, and Chris has no control over it. Therefore, he is made to be angry and left her by circumstance, for Michael.

In making the analysis more vivid and clear, here comes another factor, which is regarded as one of the most important driving forces of human beings;Destiny. Like fate and circumstance, destiny is also beyond the control of human. It is a system of belief that, what

is going to happen in one's life is already determined before getting birth. Therefore some religious leaders, critics and philosophers see the connectivity on before [past] life and present life. What is predestined is, neither can be avoided nor can be escaped. In the same aspect, Thomas Hardy, in *Fate and Destiny*, articulates: "Man is working to one end and Destiny to other. Destiny decides what will happen. Man can't change and divert will of Destiny" (5). He views that, whatever happens is, because of destiny. Human is not responsible for his/her action, but it is decided by destiny. Only those things happen in the life of human, what is destined in the fate. It is beyond the control of human to change or divert the predestined actions.

The Return of the Soldier is rich in the case of predetermined events; destiny. To get birth in a lower family, to fall in love with an inn keeper's daughter, to face the death of father and son and to join in an army, to get suffered from amnesia and again to get cured by Margate are some of the predestined events in the life of Chris, which he could not change or avoid. He simply follows the path, directed by destiny and circumstance. In support to this, Hardy further claims:

Fate means all those powers and factors which are beyond the power of man to control. All those conditions and circumstances over which man has no control and which play an important role in his life constitute Fate. They include man's heredity, parentage, his place of birth, the socio-economic position of his parents and his chance, meetings with many persons. (Destiny/Fate, 2)

Here, Hardy sees fate as the purely guiding principle of human beings. For him, fate determines even the birth, socio-economic position of family and to whom s/he is going to meet in her/his life. What is predetermined in fate cannot be changed. Fate is something which is already determined according to the "Karma" of past life. Margate's getting birth in a lower status family, losing parents in her early age, falling love with Chris and spending

some years in waiting for him, working as a house maid, meeting to William and marrying to him, losing two years old son, not getting financially established while doing struggle too, revisiting to Monkey Island, getting a telegram of Chris, knowing his mental illness, going to Baldry court with this bad news, meeting both Jenny and Kitty there, being humiliated by Kitty, again frequently revisiting Baldry court and caring and curing Chris are some of the events of her life, which are the parts of fatalism. These events are shaped before her birth and she is simply following the path, shown by her fate and destiny.

Though sometimes, she wishes to change her actions, but she could not do so. Though she does not wish to open Chris' letters, she does not wish to pay frequent visit to Chris and tell him about the death of his two years old son; Oliver, but she could not stop herself by doing so. Here comes the role of her fate. She does only that, what she has carried in her fate; what she is predestined to do. Therefore, in spite of her unwillingness, she could not avoid such events, which are in her fate.

The above discussed Hardy's idea is similar to the idea of a holy book *Mahabharata*. *Mahabharata* says that, the life of a person is determined by the deeds that s/he did in before life. It is so because "we are born with our own destiny and that is linked to our destiny due karma in the past life" (1). *Mahabharata* shows the connectivity in between past and present life. Karma of past life determines the present life; family status, economic status, life style, behavior and attitude and many other things. In supporting the same argument, Jayadvaita Swami also states: "Gita says that our karma—what we deserve for our past acts—proceeds not only from what we have done in the present life but from past lives as well. My present birth, then, is an outcome of what I have thought and what I have done in the past" (About Reincarnation, n.p). In the analysis of this, the point becomes clear that, our destiny depends on our "Karma" of past life. What we are today is because of what we did in our past life. With this assumption, it can be said that, Chris faces many losses, tragedies and suffering in

his life because of the "Karma" of his past life. Perhaps, he might have done many wrong deeds in his past life and he gets destined to lose father in early life, to lose Margate, to lose two years old son, to get mentally ill and so on. Here, it is worth to add that, what he is doing in his life is what destiny assigned, and his destiny is what he did in his past life; his "Karma". Therefore, his destiny leads him from one stage to another, one event to another and one suffering to another because of the outcome of his past Karma. Similarly, in case of Margate too, the death of her parents and two years of son, losing Chris, being under economic crisis might be the result of her "Karma" of past life. As swami states, what Chris and Margate have today is because of what they were and what they did in past life. All the actions of mind and body are based on past's "Karma". Not only this, what they do and speak is based on what "Karma" is done in past life.

Today's world is the world of difference. Some people are too rich and some are too poor. Some are enjoying good health even at the old age and some are being suffered by bad health even in young age, and this is all, because of the Karma of past life, for Jayadvaita Swami. Therefore, what Chris gets and loses in his life, What Margate gets and loses in her life, is simply because of his/her Karma. His losing of father and son forces him to go on war, by which, he gets chance to earn enough property. Financially, he becomes strong but he even forgets his own identity later. A big question, "Who am I?" raises in front of him. He is totally unknown about his own life; does not know own wife, own property, does not know about the death of father and son and lives the life of fifteen years back. In this sense, only those events come to happen in his life, which were already predestined in his destiny, which were determined by his past life's "Karma".

Fate is also one of the most important believed guiding principles of human beings. In the above mentioned discussion and analysis, fate and destiny is regarded as a synonyms term. What is predestined is fate and what happens in human life is controlled by fate. In this

regard, the events, that are the outcome of fate and destiny is circumstance. That is why; circumstance is the arrangement of the events, actions and incidents, which is predetermined in one's life. So, human actions and behaviors are shaped by circumstance and circumstance is shaped by fate and destiny. Therefore, they are mutually related.

What is going to happen in one's life cannot be changed. Neither Chris could save his father nor save his two years old son. Neither he could get Margate as a wife in his life nor does he save himself from being victim of amnesia. Likewise, in case of Margate too, neither she could save parents and her two years of son nor stops herself from reading telegram and meeting to Chris. Though novel does not talk much about their death, but *BhagwatGita* takes life and death as a result of Karma. Carmen Hara, in her article, "5 Ways Karma From Your Past Lives Affects You Today", marks: "Karma is the memory of our souls, which means it's often long-standing, even stemming from prior lives. Indeed, the course of our current life is mostly predetermined by earlier lifetimes: what we didn't finish then we come back to finish now"(1). What Hara assumes in these lines is, birth and death; the factors that affect human being, is determined by "Karma". She clearly writes that, if some deed remains incomplete in our past life; we take birth in order to fulfill that task. When this task gets completed, then soul leaves the body. She further explains, Karma is the memory of soul that is why each and every thing of the past life is recorded there, which later decides the fate and destiny of human beings. These predetermined events happen in the form of chain, which is regarded as circumstance. In this regard too, the untimely death of Chris' father and son, and Margate's parents and son is simply because of their destiny and fate. They were already predetermined to die in that age according to their Karma.

In supporting to this argument, *Padma Puran* also says that, "The fate of five things in one's life is already decided at the time of one's conception in the womb. The aggregate wealth one will acquire, one's occupation, education, lifespan, and when, where and how one will

die..."(n.p). Perhaps, their sons have some task remained incomplete in past life, so they get birth in the lap of Kitty and Margate. By fulfilling their task, they leave the body. It also might be possible that, Kitty and Margate have something remained to pay to their sons in past life. Therefore, with the law of Karma, in order to receive that debt, they get birth in their lap and leave them when it is paid. Their death was already fixed before they get birth. Hence, their death is purely a circumstantial one; they die because they were destined to die. Not only this, the wealth; Chris becomes successful to earn and Margate becomes less successful to maintain her economic condition, is all because of their own Karma of past life.

By analyzing the above mentioned scenario, it becomes clear that human is simply the obedient follower [victim?] of destiny and fate. S/he has to walk on the same path, directed by destiny. It is said that, even a leaf could not move without the wish of god. In this sense too, it becomes clear that, everything in this world, is controlled by supernatural force; god. God rules upon the lives of people. *Bible* also has a same point of agreement with *Gita*. In Genesis 2:7, it is written that, "God, the giver of life, has the right to end any life if and when He chooses". He is the one who gives and takes. He is the one who determines the fate, destiny and he is the one who creates the circumstances. He is the one who creates and destroys the world.

In this regard, the role of fate becomes much stronger in the novel. What is predestined and being guided by circumstance, is fate of the characters. The role of fate seems much stronger in case of Chris and Margate. Chris is the victim of his poor fate and it can also be applied in the case of Margate. She loses mother and father simultaneously, waits for several years for Chris, goes to work in an Irish family, shifts to Watson's family, marries to Mr. William, William loses his job after their marriage and then they migrate to Ladysmith road from Monkey Island in order to make money. But even after shifting the place, they are unable to build a standard life. Probably, it might be the result of her [their] past Karma.

When Margate is about to make clear to Chris about his son's death, she stops herself once. She thinks that, Chris is happy by not knowing the reality. That is why, she does not wish to ruin his happiness. Here, Margate says:

...and I know nothing in the world matters so much as happiness. If anybody's happy, you ought to let them be. So I came again. Let him be. If you knew how happy he was just pottering rounds the garden. Men do love a garden. He could just go on. It can go on so easily. (176)

The main focus of the extract is to show how much Chris is happy in believing that, he is just of twenty years and he has Margate to love and care. When Margate sees Chris happily moving around the garden, she thinks that, she is going to ruin his pleasure by telling him the death of his son; Oliver. So, she wishes to stop herself and Jenny by doing so. Being agreed with Margate's view, Jenny too, once decides not to tell the reality to Chris. On the one hand, she fears that, if he gets cured, he again goes to war, and on the other hand, she thinks that, if he comes to know the reality about his son's death, he cannot control himself. Jenny's narration makes it clear, where she says: "But, oh, I can't do it! Go out and put an end to the poor love's happiness. After the time he 's had, the war and all. And then he 'll have to go back there! I can't! I can't!"(177). Jenny too, comes in a point of confusion on what to do and what not to do. She sees both the pros and cons of curing him. Neither she wishes to leave him on that suffered condition nor wants him to go on war again. But finally, it seems that, she makes a decision not to make him known about his bitter reality. Jenny further adds in her narration: "Everything was going to be right. Chris was to live in the interminable enjoyment of his youth and love. There was to be finality about his happiness which usually belongs only to loss and calamity; he was to be as happy as a ring cast into the sea is lost" (177). She feels really good; thinking on that, Chris is going to live enjoyable life of his youth and love because, he thinks that, he is still twenty and in love relation with Margate. But

later, she changes her mind being fear with the thought of Chris' old ages. She begins to think that, when his smiling face becomes slack with ages, there will be nobody to cure him and he cannot stay in pleasure anymore in believing that he has Margate to care. Coming to the reality, Jenny narrates:

We had been utterly negligent of his future... For if we left him in his magic circle there would come a time when his delusion turned to a senile idiocy; his smiling mouth was slack with age; when one's eyes no longer followed him caressingly as he went down to look for the first primroses in the wood, but flitted here and there defensively to see that nobody was noticing the doddering old man. (180)

With this narration, Jenny comes out from her dilemma and changes her mind to cure Chris. Jenny begins to fear by thinking the Chris' future. She thinks, it will be okay for his young age. But in his old age, what happens when he still thinks that he is fifteen years junior than his real age? This question haunts in her mind. This thought makes her to come out from the stage of confusion. Later on, she finally decides to end his momentous joy in order to save his soul.

With this aim, both determine to tell him the truth where Margate says to Jenny: "Give me the jersey and the ball... The truth 's the truth," she said, "and he must know it." (181). Then after, Margate takes the jersey and the ball of Oliver and goes towards Chris to make him clear about his life; that he has lived in full of misunderstanding. Here, if the attempt is made to analyze the actions of both Margate and Jenny, they are totally in the stage of confusion. What is right and what is wrong is hard to decide. But at last, Jenny takes rational decision. As above mentioned, they are in the stage of confusion not because of their lower decision making ability, but because they both are guided by circumstance. Circumstance is ruling over their actions and shifts their mind from one stage to another. Hence, what they do here all

is, what circumstance makes them to do. In spite of her fear of war, Jenny decides to cure Chris. When Chris comes to know the reality and accepts it in the lap of Margate, Jenny says:

When we had lifted the yoke of our embraces from his shoulders he would go back to that flooded trench in Flanders, under that sky more full of flying death than clouds, to that No-Man's-Land where bullets fall like rain on the rotting faces of the dead.(185)

Jenny has deep abomination towards war. The terror and horror side of war is depicted in her narration. This feeling gets developed when war ruins the happiness of her family by making Chris mentally ill. By taking the help of above mentioned views, Jenny's this hate is also the product of circumstance. As Sumit Jain believes, Thomas Hardy does the same. For Jain, fate shapes the human attitude and behavior, which has no control. Anger, hate, love, fear, happiness, sadness, all is the product of circumstance. Because of this fear of war, she comes to the stage of confusion, which makes her hard to decide whether to cure Chris or not. Similarly, for Hardy, when something expected or unexpected happens, it is simply because of destiny. People never know why such thing happens because it is impossible to understand the nature and intention of destiny. Something simply happens because it has to happen. Though, at once, both Jenny and Margate come to a point, to not to tell Chris about his reality; death of his son, but later on, they both get ready to accept the reality, which is purely circumstantial.

Margate seems quite fatalistic in a sense that, she blames her own fate for taking her to Baldry Court twice. As Jenny narrates: "She was pleading not only with me, but with fate. "You wouldn't let them take him away to the asylum. You would n't stop me coming" (176), her disappointment with her own fate for bringing her there, is clearly reflected. She blames fate by addressing "You", for not stopping her from coming to Baldry Court. Margate's further anger and dissatisfaction with herself and fate, goes with her saying to

Jenny, where Jenny narrates: "Mind you, I was n't sure if I ought to come the second time, seeing we both were married and that. I prayed and read the Bible, but I couldn't get any help" (175). It is clear that, Margate is well conscious about her marital status and does not wish to go Baldry Court again. For this, she reads Bible and prays to God also. But praying to god and knowing the reality too, could not stop herself from revisiting Chris. Later on, when both Margate and Jenny change their mind, Margate tells Chris about his reality. Nothing worse happens as feared by Jenny. Chris comes to easily accept the reality. Here the point is, it is circumstantial that Margate and Jenny pass in the stage of confusion and, finally, come to take a bold decision. Likewise, it is also circumstantial that Chris comes to easily accept the reality. Neither Chris nor Jenny or Margate has the ability to change their action. Despite of her wishes, Margate revisits Chris and tells him the reality. Similarly, despite of her wishes, Jenny allows Margate to go towards Chris. These several actions happen in the novel because characters are not in a position to change their destiny and circumstance. They are simply the creature and mere puppet in the hand of destiny. In order to support this argument, it is worth to add Hardy's view on destiny, where he expresses:

Man is a helpless creature, a mere puppet at the hands of Destiny or Fate. Man would does not enjoy Free Will. The keen eyes of fate are always looking intently on his activities with a view to intervening as and when it so likes. Man is not free to choose the type of life he wants to live. Obstacles and hindrances swarm on his path of life, and they thwart all his hopes and aspirations. (Fate and Destiny, 1-2)

With these lines, Hardy is asserting that, human beings have nothing in own hands. In case of Chris, Margate, Jenny or Kitty, all become the victim of own poor fate. But at the same time, it cannot be denied that, what they get in their life; love, respect, welfare, fame, wealth is also the result of their own fate. Chris is being frequently watched with the keen eyes of fate. With his childhood, Chris grows up exchanging his golden dreams with poverty and loss. With the

hope of getting wealth, he starts his own business but gets failed to properly maintain it because of lack of fund. Many obstacles frequently come in his path. He faces the untimely demise of his father. After marrying Kitty too, he could not make her satisfied with his low income. Kitty's rising demands make him to join in an army. Everything is going well until he faces another death; death of two years old son, Oliver. His death makes Chris badly wounded and sweeps his all dream and hope.

Though the main reason behind Chris' amnesia is not mentioned, but the shock of Oliver's death might be responsible for it. It is so because, when Chris forgets his important fifteen years of his life, denies accepting Kitty as a wife, desires to be with Margate, remembers everything except the death of Olover. Both Jenny and Kitty try their best to convince Chris about the reality that he has married to Kitty and he is now of thirty five years. Kitty shows her wedding jewels that he had given to him, but instead of accepting her, Chris simply replies to her: "I am glad I did that you look very beautiful in them" (51). He does not pay any attention to her. He ever tries to neglect Kitty and demands to be with Margate. Jenny too, tries her best to convince Chris that he is not of twenty years and he is married to Kitty. But again, he denies Kitty and asserts the same thing; to be with Margate. Instead of accepting the reality, Chris tells her another reality; his love with Margate in Monkey Island, which has been passed fifteen years ago. Chris further says to Jenny: "I know my conduct must seem to you perversely insulting...but if I do not see Margaret Allington I shall die"(58). It shows Margate's importance in his life, as Chris thinks. He does not see any life there without Margate. That is all Chris thinks and believes; he is of twenty years old and he has Margate to love and care. As argued by Jain and Hardy, Chris does not have any control in his thought. Different thoughts come in his mind and he does according to it.

In case of curing Chris, Allington, a renowned doctor, Kitty and Jenny, all get failed. After the arrival of Dr. Allington, he comes to know that Chris has amnesia. He wants

to know all incidents that had happened in Chris' life. By getting to know the Oliver's death at his age of two, he asks Jenny to tell Chris about his son's death. Kitty suggests the doctor to hypnotize Chris. But avoiding her suggestion, he handles this task of curing Chris to Margate, where Allington says: "It would have to be you that did it... Take him something the boy wore, some toy he played with."(167). Finally, Margate becomes successful to make Chris known about his reality by showing the ball and Jersey of Oliver. He comes to real life from virtual reality. Here, in her excitement, Kitty says to Jenny: "He 's cured! He 's cured!"(187). Kitty's saying to Jenny is the evidence for Chris' recovery. Here comes the point that, Chris, a shell-shock victim, who has forgotten everything of his previous fifteen years, but at last, gets recovered by knowing the death of his son.

He, who denies to accepts the reality in Kitty's and Jenny's saying, but later accepts in Margate's saying. It is quite amazing that, Chris, who forgets the jewels, which he had once given to Kitty, but remembers the jersey and ball of Oliver. Hence, it might be approached that, the death of his son might be the plausible reason for his amnesia; he comes to remember everything in a second, when he sees Oliver's jersey and ball. Therefore, it is also circumstantial that, Chris passes many days in suffering and finally gets cured by seeing his son's jersey and ball.

In the analysis of above mentioned quotation and ideas, Chris becomes the mere victim and puppet in the hands of fate and destiny. He does not celebrate any free will but is made compel to do beyond his wishes. His failure to run own business, demise of father and son, losing of Margate from his life, joining to an army, becoming the victim of amnesia, desiring to be with Margate, rejecting Kitty are some of his undesired actions, which neither could be controlled nor could be changed. It is his fate that makes Chris do these all. He follows his destiny because he is a helpless creature of fate. It might be predestined in his fate to remember Oliver's jersey and ball and get convinced by Margate. Until the ending of

the novel, only unexpected and undesired events happen in the life of characters. But at last, novel gets happy ending. What they have desired; to get back the memory of Chris, is achieved. Therefore, it is all the role of circumstance and destiny that leads towards both desired and undesired, expected and unexpected situation, in which, human beings have no control at all.

The novellights on the role of circumstance and destiny in human being, by presenting the major characters; Chris and Margate as a mere victim of it. What happens in Chris' life and by which situation he is ruled over, is simply controlled by circumstance or let say his destiny/ fate. His journey of despair begins with the death of his father. Slowly it goes on with his marriage to Kitty, their rising necessities, decreasing economic status and his failure to well-run business are some of the factors that make [compel] him to join an army. Though novel does not mention the reason behind his shell-shock, but war as well as the death of his son; Oliver, might be responsible for it. It is so because, only after seeing the jersey and ball of Oliver, he comes to accept the reality that he is now of thirty five and he is married to Kitty. Oliver's death might traumatize him, which later erases the previous fifteen years of his life, from his mind. Chris, first wishes to run own business but later being pushed to war. He does not wish to be a shell-shock victim, but he could not save himself from being victimized. He has no intention to be a passive and dependent man, but he is made to be an amnesia victim and later cured by Margate. It is none other than his fate and circumstance that shapes his each and every action in the form of chain. He could not control own action rather becomes themere victim of destiny and circumstance.

In the analysis of the role of Margate, she plays what patriarchy calls masculinity. Being a married woman also, she helps to reestablish the family of Kitty and Chris. As Chris', her journey of despair too, begins with the death of parents. Being tired in waiting of Chris, she begins to work in an Irish family for two years, goes to Watson family, meets William

there and marries to him, leaves Monkey Island, struggles enough to maintain the economic status but not gets successful, gets telegram and knows about his mental illness, goes to Bladry's Court and tells Jenny and Kitty about it, gets humiliated by Kitty, pays frequent visit there and finally becomes able to cure shell-shocked Chris. Like Chris, neither she is doing all because of her intention nor with any planning. Neither she wishes to read letters from Chris nor desires to revisit Chris and tell him the truth about Oliver's death. She is conscious about her marital status and she knows better it is not good to visit Chris frequently. But still, neither she could control herself by doing these all nor stop own action. She simply becomes the obedient disciple of circumstance and her own destiny. She does so, what she is destined to do.

Before wrapping it up, *The Return of the Soldier* can be regarded as one of the best circumstantial novels. Rebecca West has perfectly maintained the distance on herself and characters. The actions that happen in the life of characters, do not seem the imposition of the author rather, it seems that, characters are enjoying their freedom. Her characters are not controlled by herself, rather by their own destiny and fate. Their actions are shaped not by their rationality/ irrationality but by circumstance. The preceding action itself shapes the coming action.

In this regard, fictional characters too have the same specialty as living human beings have. They are not only the product of the imagination of an author, but they too have the rational, logical quality and bounded by time and space. They also practice their free will but at the same time, controlled by own destiny and circumstance, but not by an author. The presence of author becomes blurred when characters are established. It is not the author who directs the characters but characters move by themselves. What they want to do or not to do is of their own choice. They use own mind, heart and rationality and do what they feel better. They are the independent entity, which is not affected by authorial intention. But, in deep

analysis, though they are free in themselves but at the same they are bounded by themselves; own action, fate and circumstance. What they do has cause and effect, which leads towards another action and this process moves till to the end. The first action bounds the second action and second one depends on first action. The action, in which characters get involved, moves in the form of chain where B happens because of A and A becomes responsible for B. Therefore, there is only one major thing that bounds the characters and shapes their action; circumstance. Hence *The Return of the Soldier* might be the best example of circumstantial novel.

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