

Tribhuvan University

Trajectory of an Anti-Hero in Partick Suskind's *Perfume*

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By

Rupa Thapa

Symbol No. 283578

T.U. Regd. No.: 6-2-50-2297-2006

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu, Nepal

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Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Rupa Thapa has completed her thesis entitled "Trajectory of an Anti-Hero in Patrick Suskind's *Perfume*" under my supervision. She carried out this research from March 2017 to April, 2018. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

.....

Dr. Dhruva Karki

Supervisor

Date:

Tribhuvan University
Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Trajectory of an Anti-Hero in Patrick Suskind’s *Perfume*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Rupa Thapa has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

_____	_____
	Internal Examiner

_____	_____
	External Examiner

_____	_____
	Head
_____	Central Department of English

_____	Date: _____

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Abstract

This research work examines the representation of an anti-hero in Patrick Suskind's *Perfume* (1985). In the setting of the Eighteenth century French society, Suskind's eccentric male protagonist, with his superhuman quality of smelling human scent invents perfume out of the dead bodies of young girls. In the contemporary French society, Grenouille constantly kills innocent beautiful girls just for his passion of making perfume. The project claims that the novelist creates a hero who does not go with the values and principles of the modern world. This project points out to the utilitarian perspective of the contemporary society and exhibits its harsh impacts on the lives of all common people, who are forced to work for their survival. Suskind presents the sorrowful condition of people under such system of the society in which they are always dominated, exploited, tormented, and neglected by the handful of powerful people. Throughout the novel, Suskind justifies his protagonist as the product of such a society and tries to establish him as an anti-hero in the novel. This project focuses on the bourgeois thrust and its impacts on the character of Grenouille in particular and common people in the world in general. In *Perfume*, Suskind portrays the protagonist as an anti-hero who does not embody heroism in a conventional sense of the term as he kills young girls for his passion, not only because he is guided by the materialistic French society but because he is totally deprived of natural parental affection. Through the portrayal of Grenouille as an anti-hero, Suskind tries to challenge the dialectic of Enlightenment for its exclusion of sensibility and show the link between the late 18th century French Politics and the late 20th century global violence. To support the claim, the researcher draws some theoretical concepts from the thinkers such as A.C. Ward, J.A. Cuddon, Sigmund Freud and others.

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I. Representation of Grenouille as an Anti - Hero

This study examines Patrick Suskind's portrayal Jean Baptiste Grenouille as an anti-hero in *Perfume* in the context of the contemporary materialistic French society. Suskind's protagonist with an incredible sense of odor makes perfume in pursuit of his interest to become a multi-billionaire in France. This study explores how Suskind's lead character consistently feels alienated in the world that induces him to make perfume. His sense of odor serves the elite the sophisticated cosmetic, but he lives miserably. In his obsession, Grenouille suffers severe emotional disorder – alienation in the materialist world, and thus, turning into an anti-hero. Methodologically, the researcher examines the representation of the anti-hero in the materialistic Western world in Suskind's *Perfume* in the theoretical frame of A.C. Ward, J.A. Cuddon, Albert Camus and Sigmund Freud.

The study exposes the deceptive nature of the world that keeps the protagonist in its trap. Jean Baptiste Grenouille is born in France in the eighteenth century. His mother deserts him alone in her failure to raise him properly without means enough to sustain the family. She has already thrown four babies before throwing the protagonist. The protagonist Jean Baptiste Grenouille is born without his own smell but with a supernatural ability of smelling the scent of others. He kills innocent virgin girls in pursuit of making the perfect perfume.

In the eighteenth century France, the common people used to live very oppressed and confined life in reeking areas. Baldini knows Grenouille's ability, so he trains him to become a famous perfumer. The rational power of Grenouille makes Baldini very rich but he has to live a life in relative poverty. In a capitalist culture, he is encouraged to make an ideal, magical perfume that fulfills his desire of gaining more and more money. The deceptive nature of the society makes him alienated from

himself and that society itself. To fulfill his desire, he kills 25 girls but at last when he discovers the reality of capitalism; in it being reduced to a mere product, he pours the perfume over himself and gets killed by the mob.

The significance of this project is to show the exploitative nature of the society, which alienates all individuals in the world. In the novel, the protagonist Grenouille is the victim of the agents of capitalism like Baldini. The emotions, feelings, and sentiments of the protagonist are dominated by materialistic thoughts. The tragic situation comes in the life of characters because of the evils and the vices of the selfish world.

The negative impact of the massive exploitation of the individual for the selfishness of the handful of the agents of capitalism will be brought under study. The research aims to analyze how Suskind critiques the selfish nature of the world. The research also aims at critiquing the characters' inability to understand the selfishness of the world.

In literature, an anti-hero is a central or supportive character that has some of the personality flaws as well as ultimate fortune that is traditionally assigned to the villains or antagonists but nonetheless also has enough heroic qualities or intentions to gain the sympathy of readers or viewers. They do have the heroic qualities or capability of performing the heroic deeds, but they do not execute them and rather perform against the expectation of the reader or the viewer. Anti-heroes can be awkward, obnoxious, passive, painful or obtuse, but they are always in some fundamental ways are flawed or failed heroes. In this sense, the term 'tragic hero' is sometimes used. Comic books also feature anti-heroes, as 'dark heroes', who are characters fighting for the side of good but either with some tragic flaw (such as a tormented past) or by some questionable means to reach their goals. A good working

definition of anti-hero is a paradoxical character who within the context of a story is a hero but in any other context would be easily seen as a villain or simply as unlikable.

The higher nature links the hero to the creative energies that seeks to overcome negative states and reach the higher state of being. It inspires her/him to seize the days to be creative and virtuous, courageous and just. It is a source of great power, and it motivates the hero to make sacrifices and do great things. The lower nature links the anti-hero to the physical, animal side of his nature. It is earthbound self that pursues earthly things hidden in the matrix of its seductive energies are the libido and the id – the source of our most basic instincts, appetites and drives, the ones that control hunger, sex and aggression. They compete with the higher nature for influence over the hero and the anti-hero, and they are the principal resisters of all positive change. The hallmark of heroes is personal sacrifice. They personify the positive unselfish side of the ego, and their journey reveals the upside of the passage. The main objective of anti-heroes, on the other side of the coin, is the antisocial act. They personify the negative selfish side of the ego, the side that has given the word 'ego' a bad name and their journey reveals the dark or down side of the cycle.

The classical hero is represented in the works of the Greek and Roman literature. A hero is the main character of drama or fiction on whom all the events of drama or fiction center. The hero is a man of great strength and courage favored by the gods and in part descended from them, often regarded as a demigod and worshipped after his death. A hero is a person, mostly a man admired for courage, nobility or exploits especially in war. He is a man also admired for qualities or achievements, regarded as an ideal model, having distinguished bravery or noble qualities.

A person normally becomes courageous by performing an extraordinary and praiseworthy deed. A hero normally fulfils the definitions of what is considered good and noble in the originating culture. However, in literature, particularly in tragedy, the hero may also have serious flaws, which lead to a downfall, and such persons are often referred to as tragic heroes. Sometimes a person might achieve enough status to become courageous in people's minds. This is usually complemented by a rapid growth of myths around the person in question, often attributing to him or her powers beyond those of ordinary people.

Some social commentators prescribe the need for heroes in times of social upheaval or national self-doubt, seeing a requirement for various role models, especially for the young. Such myth making may have worked better in the past: current trends may confuse heroes and their hero-worship with the cult of mere celebrity.

In the classical sense of the word, the hero should possess certain qualities. Any central character of any type of story and drama cannot be an ideal hero. The classical scholars regard the tragic hero of Greek literature like 'Oedipus' as an ideal hero who is incorporated with certain qualities. So the central character of comedy or comic hero cannot be an ideal hero, because what resembles with human situation and fate is tragedy not comedy as people give attention to the quality of the inevitable that we associate with tragedy and the tragic effect in the readers' mind gives a sort of relief.

The qualities requisite are that the function of tragic hero is to produce the 'Katharsis' of pity and fear, pity being felt for a person who, if not wholly innocent, meets with suffering beyond his desert; fear being awakened when the sufferer is a man of like nature with ourselves. Tragic character or hero must be exhibited through

the medium of a plot which has the capacity of giving full satisfaction of these emotions. Certain types, therefore, of character and certain forms of catastrophe are at once excluded, as failing either in whole or in part to produce the tragic effect.

In the first place, the spectacle of man eminently good undergoing the change from prosperous to adverse fortune awakens neither 'pity' nor 'fear'. It shocks us and repels us. Next, and utterly devoid of tragic quality, is the representation of the bad man who experiences the contrary change from distress to prosperity. It means the character in drama or fiction should possess the good quality and only the good character can represent the reality and they can produce a dramatic but a kind of realistic effect or only the tragedy of good character can move the heart of the reader and the spectacle. A play in which the wicked prosper, and the virtuous miscarry, may doubtless be good, because it is a just representation of the event of human life. The characters who are vicious or represent the despicable qualities doomed to be punished of death and if that happens, it does not astonish or shock the reader and the spectacle of pity and fear are here wanting. Even the sense of justice is unsatisfied. The impression left by such a spectacle is indeed, the exact opposite of 'pity' as it is that which the Greek denoted by the righteous anger or moral indignation excited by undeserved good fortune.

Aristotle, in this context, talks about pity and fear. For him pity is not a noble and impartial emotion. Without fear, there is no pity. Pity and fear are closely linked; and this becomes still clear from the definition in the translations of *Aristotle's Poetics* by Humphrey House, in which he argues, "A sort of pain at an evident evil of a destructive or painful kind in the case of somebody who does not deserve it, the evil being one which we might expect to happen to ourselves or to some of our friends, and this at a time when it is said to be near at hand" (107). Pity again is related to fear

a little further, where he argues that pity turns into fear when the object is so nearly selected to us that the suffering seems to be our own, and we pity others in circumstances in which we should fear for ourselves. In Aristotle's treatment pity is not an altruistic and disinterested emotion. There can be no pity in his view, where there is no fear. Both pity and fear are derived from the self-regarding instinct, and pity springs from the fear that a similar suffering might happen to us. This is the basis of the very possibility of sympathy of the feeling of somebody else. When the good ones prosper, we rejoice with them. When the good suffer or expect to suffer, we share their pains and fears, and that is pity.

If we do not have a tendency to fear ourselves we cannot share the fear for others. Rash and presumptuous people therefore tend to be incapable of pity. And at other extreme if we ourselves are already in terrible suffering and have nothing worse to suffer or fear, we also for this reason tend to be incapable of pity, because we are absorbed in our own fear and cannot share any more with other. Humphrey House in his translation of *Aristotle's Poetics* claims:

Ideally according to justice the two scale of goodness and badness and of pleasure and pain should be in harmony, so that the good have pleasure and the bad pain. Tragedy illustrates a dislocation of this harmony; for it is of the essence of the situation which calls forth pity, that the misfortune and suffering are underserved. Tragic pity is felt only for the good; it is therefore not a patronizing or sentimental feeling by which we look down on the sufferer; we continue to look at him. (102)

Aristotle's pity and fear are sympathy for the good part of mankind in the bad part of their experiences. This is the emotional side of justice. We see that no theory of

catharsis makes sense, which speaks of purging away a 'painful element' in pity and fear. Aristotle does not say that pity and fear have a 'painful element'; both of them are species of 'pain' or 'disturbance', therefore to get rid of the 'pain' would be to get rid of the emotion altogether. The theory of catharsis which claims that by tragedy pity and fear are to be purged of their "self-regarding" element; as if catharsis was some kind of process by which pity and fear were converted from being self-regarding emotions into being altruistic emotions. In Aristotle's view the perfectly blameless character is deemed unfit to be a tragic hero on the ground that wholly unmerited suffering causes repulsion, not fear or pity. We feel pity for one who is in the highest sense, an innocent sufferer. In this regard, T.R. Henn in his book *Harvest of Tragedy* argues:

In tragic drama or story the perfect character to the place of protagonist is rarely chosen, Blameless goodness has seldom the quality needed to make it dramatically interesting. It wants the motive which lead to decisive act of will, which impels others to action and produces a collision of force . . . It has generally a touch of egoism, by which it exercises a controlling influence over circumstances or over the wills of minor characters that are grouped around it. (310)

In classical Greek literature, what we find inevitable is the tragic death of the hero, it is assumed that death is the natural termination of the tragic fact or experience of all experiences death has the highest emotion potential. The death is the most satisfactory terminal point from the point of view of the tragic pattern. The dramatist will emphasize the affirmation of new values, the revolution of the wheel. Such new values are often certified, as it were by recalling the heroic qualities of the dead, in whom evil has been expiated. This celebration is now largely a social convention. It is

clear that the emotions attached to death in works of art or literature are highly complex.

Anthropology tells us that the death of a king or hero has a perpetual ritual significance conscious or unconscious, with two aspects or values. He dies because there is concentrated upon him, as symbol, the necessities of Birth and Resurrection cycle of the year. He dies often, in his prime because virtues (courage, strength and so forth) must not be impaired by old age; perhaps because of the belief that the souls of these who die in battle are purer than those who die of disease.

From the point of view of the spectators, there is strong emotional movement in the direction of a complete moral exoneration. The price has been paid, whatever crimes or follies the hero, or any tragic player has committed. The dead is removed beyond judgment or at least distance until the new order has had time to root itself, and the hero's deeds have become part of the historical cycle. The death is perceived as an atonement calling down, and diffusing, something that might be called grace. And at the same time the tradition brings the hero into line with the historical past of all ages, imposing on him a kind of timelessness.

Catastrophe has a very important role in the life of the tragic hero. Examining the plot of *Oedipus Rex*, we may be tempted to regard its catastrophe as not only inevitable but also inescapable. Aristotle, however, did not see the inevitable change in the fortune of the result of chance, or coincidence, or fact, or even of some profound flaw in the character of the hero. Rather he saw the change of fortune as being caused by some 'error of judgment', a "great error", on the part of the hero. As stated in the *Elements of Literature*:

In defining the elements of tragedy, Aristotle clearly regarded the hero or heroine, and not some condition beyond human control, as

responsible for initiating the chain of events leading to the change of fortune. Even a profound flaw in character, after all, is beyond human control. (788)

Accordingly, Aristotle describes the tragic hero as an "intermediate kind of personage" in moral character, neither "preeminently virtuous nor just," nor afflicted "by vice and depravity" – as someone morally "like ourselves," in whom we can engage our emotional concern. Thus, when we regard tragedies such as *Oedipus Rex* or *Othello*, we should not regard their protagonists as victims of circumstances, but rather should seek to identify the sense in which they are agents of their undoing.

While we seek to understand the nature of their error, we should not forget that the most tragic heroes are genuinely admirable characters – persons, as Aristotle tells us, who deservedly enjoy great reputation and prosperity. And their reputation is the function not simply of their social rank but also of their commitment to noble purposes. Oedipus is not merely a king but also a man committed to discovering the truth and ridding his city of the plague. *Othello* is not only a military leader but also a man committed to moral purity in all actions as well as in all his personal relations. *Romeo and Juliet* are not simply the children of aristocratic families but also persons committed to a love that transcends the pettiness of family squabbles and political factions. Our response to them should, thus, combine judgment with sympathy and admiration. Once we make the effort to discover their error, we shall find that we undergo and experience a parallel to that of the protagonists themselves. We find that we are compelled by the process of events – by the turn of the plot – to recognize how they have undone themselves. The protagonist's act of recognition is defined by Aristotle as the discovery, because it entails a change from ignorance to knowledge. And the discovery as Aristotle recognized, is caused inevitably by a reversal, an

incident or sequence of incidents that go contrary to the Protagonist's expectation. Reversal and discovery are crucial elements of the tragic experience, because they crystallize its meaning for the protagonist – and for us. When events go contrary to their expectations, when the irony of their situation becomes evident, they and we have no choice but to recognize exactly how the noblest intentions can bring about the direct consequences. Thus in its discovery, as into entire plot, tragedy affirms both the dignity and the frailty of man.

Fate plays a vital role in the life of the hero in Greek literature. Greeks were great believers in fatalism. In *Sophie's World*, Jostein Gaarder argues, "Fatalism is the belief that whatever happens is predestined" (52). We find this belief all over the world. We find that the belief in Ancient Greek that people could learn their fate from some form of Oracle. The fate leads the action of the hero in *Oedipus Rex*. Oedipus did not want to kill his father and marry his mother but the force beyond the human capacity forced him to commit that sinless crime as he was escaping not to meet that fate. He was ignorant of the fact and his ego to reveal the fact further doomed him to the tragedy. Lee A. Jacobus argues, "*Oedipus Rex* is known as tragedy of destiny. Its tragic effect is said to lie in the contrast between the supreme will of the gods and the vain attempts of mankind to escape the evil that threatens" (100). In most of the classical Greek literature, hero, who is an individual, has to struggle against the divine.

Existential philosophers like Nietzsche and Camus do not agree in fatalism. They reject the ideas that our fate is determined and we cannot avoid or change it. Nietzsche rejects any interpretation that considered fate as a manifestation of benevolent divine providence. For him, fate is faceless and any individual is not victimized by it. It is blind coincidence from which we wrest meaning with our own

actions. He does not believe the idea that we cannot go beyond fate's will and we have to surrender before it like the protagonist of *Oedipus Rex* and *Macbeth*.

Nietzsche regards fate as a contingency, an empty coincidence and a necessity. He argues that the individual has a kind of goal and course of the world that is not intentionally oriented toward fate. Safranski adopts and naturalizes the ideas of Nietzsche regarding fate that it is a stable element, and freedom is the singular open and mobile element in this determined world. He called 'free will' as the highest power of fate, which is realized in its antithesis, namely in the medium of freedom of will.

For Nietzsche, fate is not a compelling power, but an experience of free will. Through freedom we can experience fate. Free consciousness experiences this world as resistance, as struggles to establish its own latitude within it, and in doing so presents itself as a "free will". His views on the mystery of freedom are parallel to the idea of fate. For him, if the relationship between freedom and fate is constituted such that it depends on the individual to connect the two spheres in his own life, every individual becomes an arena of the world as a whole. Each individual is a case in point of the link between fate and freedom.

Camus also considers individual freedom. He thinks that an individual can make his own fate. He debates that the individual must not bow to God or authority and should neither negate nor objectify him. He worried about the false spirituality, religion, and authority. In *Myth of Sisyphus*, Albert Camus examines awareness of Sisyphus' actions:

The awareness of Sisyphus during the process- his insight into the fact that Sisyphus knows what he is doing- that gives Camus courage. Like Sisyphus, Camus tells us, human make their own fate, their own

choices, and to that extent are in control of their own destinies. By defying the gods, Sisyphus made his choice and his fate. (67)

Oedipus was alone to fight against the catastrophe prevailed there in Thebes, plague had ravaged almost all the city. Other characters like Teiresias and Kreon were not along with Oedipus' action but they were forced to keep themselves silent, because he was pre-destined for the result. In the struggle between individual force and divine force, individual force seems very weak and the divine force remains always victorious. The struggle between these two forces are evident in Sophocle's next play *Antigone*. Antigone was legally obliged to accept the state law that is not to bury her state claimed traitor brother Polyneices, but she was more obliged to accept the divine law, on once it depends on the proper cremation of her brother Polyneices. This becomes the cause of the tragedy of Antigone. Lea A. Jacobus in his *The Bradford Introduction to Drama* argues, "The main conflict in *Antigone* centers on a distinction between law and justice, the conflict between a human law and a higher law" (70). Antigone emerges as a heroine who presses forward in the full conviction that she is right. She must honor her dead brother at all costs. Even if she must break the law of the states, she must answer to what she regards as a higher law.

A modern hero is different from the traditional hero. The contemporary scholars have defined a modern hero in different light. A common man can be defined as a hero even in the modern sense that is beyond the definition from the past. A modern man working in a farm, or an industry or any urban area is a hero today. The goal of the hero is to liberate an entity like a family, a country or a galaxy from the tyranny and corruption that caused a state of misfortune and to create a new unified whole. On the other hand, the goal of the anti-hero is to take possession of an entity and redirect it toward goals that fulfill its own desires and needs which is to

accumulate, control and enjoy everything it needs to satisfy its insatiable cravings for sense objects, security, wealth and territory.

Since, the publication, the novel has invited numerous criticisms and analysis. Critics have come up with their understanding of the novel. Naturally some praise it open heartedly and some severely attack it as propaganda. Some critics rank this novel as a detective novel, novel of serial killings, and then some term it as a realistic novel. Among some of the prominent critics, Dieter Stolz is one; he reads the novel focusing on its techniques. Stolz discusses *Perfume* within the context of new counter-cultural European narrative technique and its popularity. He also claims that this is a “tragicomic masterpiece” (8). He further argues:

It is . . . superficial down to its deepest refinements style, an example of the most subtle popular elite art. Insatiable. . . incorrigible Germanists, on the other hand, are enthused by the prospect of such ‘exciting’ working titles as ‘*Das Parfum* as detective story’, ‘*Das Parfum* as a Bildungsroman’, ‘*Das Parfum* as a picaresque novel’ or even ‘postmodern narrative discourse as a deconstruction of traditional structural models with regard to current religious, philosophical, psychological and macro-societal questions. (4)

Stolz claims that this novel has many qualities, and so it becomes an elite art. Stolz interprets this novel as a detective novel, as a bildungsroman, as a picaresque novel, postmodern narrative discourse and as a deconstruction of traditional structure. Stolz also shows that this novel gives the aesthetic pleasure by being full of wit, imagery and irony. By presenting a serial murderer in the novel, he compares Grenouille with Hitler: “Hitler and Stalin, who very quickly showed themselves to be the greatest criminals of their century” (4).

Similarly, Michael Gorra, in his review, argues that the novel blends historical reconstruction, gothic fantasy, and political allegory. Gorra argues that Suskind succeeds to show the historical fact and situation very carefully. Gorra compares the then society and places with modern ones: “In the period, of which we speak, there reigned in the cities a stench barely conceivable to us modern men and women” (137). In the novel, Jean Baptist Grenouille is presented as a thrilling character from the beginning to the end. Until we reach the ending of the novel, Suskind does not give any hints how the novel is going to end and simply, without completing it, we cannot know the theme or the whole story. Gorra claims that to make the genre fiction Suskind works hard. Gorra further argues:

But Suskind dares to wait until the end of the novel to reveal the sources of that moral tension. He waits until Grenouille has made his last great perfume to suggest that the novel is a myth about the inner life of a demagogue, and the way in which people respond to him, and later try-out of shame-to forget that they have. It’s a mark of Suskind’s achievement that one never feels he has simply imposed this theme on the end of the novel. (137-38)

Here, Gorra claims that Suskind has carefully handled the story and developed the plot in the novel. The immorality of this character is sympathetically shown from beginning to end.

Damon O. Rarick, in his review, “Serial Killers, Literary Critics, and Süsskind's *Das Parfum*”, views the novel as a modern imagination of blending murder in the art. Patrick claims that by the representation of serial killings this novel is a crime fiction where modern sublime and aesthetic come after the subject matter. Suskind gives the sense of troubling in particular and murderous art in general. Patrick presents the

debates on the real serial murder happened in 1970s and early 1980s in Europe that is presented in the novel. Patrick observes:

The phenomenon of serial killing, which had become a widely publicized and much debated issue in Germany during the late 1970s and early 1980s, had also drawn attention to the role and influence of the media in promoting and escalating violence. German media outlets . . . who together claimed to have killed hundreds of people in the United States. (213)

Rarick studies many critics of this novel and their point of views. Some critics praise and some question the novel. Rarick studies American, European, German, and Continental critics and their views on *Perfume*.

After the examination all these reviews and criticisms, the researcher notices that the novel can be interpreted from different perspectives. Different critics have analyzed the novel with their own viewpoints. Departing from them, this research studies *Perfume* from a perspective of anti-heroism. Drawing upon the concepts of the thinkers A.C. Ward, J.A. Cuddon, Sigmund Freud and others, this project focuses on the indifferent nature of the society towards individual suffering.

This study questions the selfish nature of the world through the presentation of powerful rebellious character Jean Baptiste Grenouille. This tragic novel dismantles the selfish nature of the world which physically and emotionally dominates Grenouille from birth to death. Grenouille himself lacks a personal odor signifying an absence of individual identity. He hopes to make the ideal perfume to save his identity. When he reaches this achievement, Grenouille realizes that the aura of identity created by his magic perfume is an illusion. What he gets in life is not success but alienation and frustration. His death is not only his tragic end but showcases him as an anti-hero in the novel.

The project claims that one needs freedom, company and happiness in life. The society as a house of individuals should secure such things in an individual. The major concern of this project is to show how the society makes the individual alienated and frustrated in life. By depicting the condition of the protagonist in the novel, Suskind in *Perfume* implies that if the individuals are alienated and frustrated in their life; it would invite a serious disaster in the society. As the focus of the research is anti-heroism in the protagonist of the novel, it mainly falls back upon the thinkers A.C. Ward, J.A. Cuddon, Sigmund Freud among others whose theory on anti-heroism will be the base for this study.

II. Representation of an Existential Anti - Hero in *Perfume*

This study focuses on the study of Jean Baptiste Grenouille, the protagonist in Patrick Suskind's *Perfume*. Grenouille suffers a lot in the selfish capitalist world. The research focuses that anti-heroism is reflected in Grenouille as he undergoes alienation, frustration and an existential crisis reflected by his opposition to social interdicts while pursuing for his autonomous self. His subjectivity, identity and status are vanished due to the evils of capitalist ideology. Grenouille is isolated character in the novel who struggles a lot for his existence because of his existential anti-heroic qualities. He is very much curious to know himself. He searches for grace, freedom and autonomous self. But politics, city life, human relations do not give him full support. When he does not get good response from these aspects, then he becomes isolated character. He loses his sense of himself. He suffers from the feelings of strangeness, alienation, frustration and existential crisis because his position is marginal in this world. He sees the outside world as hostile, so, he cannot adjust himself to the society. He transgresses social taboos and becomes social misfit. This research aims at finding out the elements and circumstances which makes him anti-hero in the light of existentialism.

The old values concerning human existence ceased to operate. In the evaluation of new vision, regarding man and his existence, no one is the whole, rather one passes over a number of cross- fertilizing influences. Thrown into an incoherent, disordered and chaotic universe in which individual destinies were obstructed and torn apart by the Second World War, people, especially the philosophers and literates, could not believe in old concepts like unity, rationality, morality, value, and even in Christianity. The modern selfish culture makes Jean Baptiste Grenouille a victim. Within this culture, he gets exploited and isolated, and becomes an outsider from birth

to death. In the situation and time period when he was born, the novel underscores the existence of the culture where material wealth is valued much more than any other moral or spiritual values. In this world, family bonds, co-operation, mercy, marriage and love are not prioritized. Money appears as a major governing system but the system turns lop-sided where no human voice is heard. It moves on its own way just to accumulate properties by any means.

This project deals with the society and how it affects the human beings and their behaviors. The story of the novel shows that there are many characters who are directly involved in the process of earning money. The entire atmosphere, the material setting, at the time the protagonist is born, is submerged by the capitalist infrastructure. Jeanne Bussie, the wet nurse of Jean Baptiste Grenouille who first looks after him is one of the players of the capitalist culture. His lack of odor and greedy nature for milk makes Bussie frightened. So, she complains about him and sends him to Madame Gillard. “I don’t want any money, period,” said the wet nurse. “I want this bastard out of my house” (10). Madame Gillard cares Grenouille until he is eight. She runs an orphanage for money. The basic need for baby is not provided there. She cares him till government pays money for Grenouille. When authority stops paying money she sells him to Grimal.

Existentialism

After the two great world wars, ‘Existentialism’ came into prominence, particularly in Germany and France as a philosophical moment or tendency. These world wars gave rise to widespread feelings of despair and separation from the established order. These feelings led to the idea that people have to create their own values in the world in which traditional values no longer reign. Existentialism insists that choices have to be made arbitrarily by individuals, who thus create themselves,

because there are no objective standards to determine choice. Existentialism draws attention to the risk, the void of human reality and admits that the human being is thrown into the world in which pain, frustration, sickness, contempt, alienation, malaise and death dominate.

It was during the Second World War, when Europe found itself in a crisis and faced death and destruction, existentialist movement began to flourish. Existentialism as a contemporary philosophical trend reached its zenith in the year following the war, the time when Europe was in a despairing mood, perhaps not without the hope of social reconstruction but pessimistic and morbid enough to accept the existentialist outlook of lack of design and intention in the universe and the nausea of human existence and its frustration. The dark portrait of such sickness could be found even in the optimistic and confident nineteenth century, within the works of authors as diverse as Karl Marx, Soren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche. Thus, the central idea of the Existential theory is the idea of man being responsible for his own actions, and as a school of thought devotes to the interpretation of human existence. The term “existence” comes from the Latin root Ex“out” + Sistere “to stand” (Cuddon 316). Thus existence means to stand out in the universe. It takes human being as an isolated existent into an alien universe. The feeling of despair and separation gave idea that people have to create their own values. Therefore, one has to make choices and create self, only existing up to the extent that one makes choices.

Existentialism is less of an-‘ism’ than an attitude that expresses itself in a variety of ways. Because of the diversity of positions associated with it, no single strict definition is possible, however, it suggests one major theme – it lays stress on concrete individual existence, freedom and choice. As Ryan explains:

Hence there is no single existentialist philosophy, and no single definition of the word can be given. However, it may be said that with the existentialists the problem of man is central and that they stress man's concrete existence, his contingent nature, his personal freedom and his consequent responsibility for what he does and makes him to be. (639)

Existentialism, then, concerns what authentic route people may take in the world where values and certainties are smashed into fragments how people can cope with negative aspects of human existence like depression, frustration, pain, anxiety, alienation caused by modern society.

In the novel, Grenouille has his own existential choice. He is not using his reason; the culture industry is manipulating his reason as its instrument. The society in which he lives gives more priority to human identity than humanity, morality and religion. As a result, he begins to create his identity although by doing inhuman activity. The culture of the society in which he is living, makes common people as prisoners in the prison of the society. Grenouille is exploited and dominated by the selfishness of the society with the manipulation of his own reason due to the creation of discourses in the society. He wants to create a magical scent by using his smelling power but as he heads in this path, he is enslaved by the society. "He closed his eyes and concentrated on the odors that came floating to him from the building across the way" (175). It highlights that the society always exploits the people for profit motif. The reason is supposed to emancipate the common people but it becomes an instrument for capitalists to earn capital. In this context, Sartre claims that we are free to create our own interpretation of ourselves in relation to the world, to create a project of possibilities, of authentic actions as the expression of freedom. According

to Sartre (*Existentialism and Human Emotions*), the individual has the potentiality to become more than what he or she is, “Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself” (15). Each individual has to make his own universe with a meaning of his own, Sartre claims, “there is no reality, except in action” (32). Sartre divides living as authentic and inauthentic. He chooses authentic living stressing that one must choose and make a commitment to make better. Sartre makes a clear distinction between being-in-itself (en-soi) and being-for-itself (pour-soi). En-soi applies to things; this means a thing is basically what it is. In case of human being, existence precedes essence. Therefore man is pour-soi: “The best way to conceive of the fundamental project of human reality is to say that man is the being whose project is to be God” (63). According to him we first exist, appear on the scene, make a choice and create our identity. What Grenouille does is the same here in the novel. By creating perfume, he wants to be a hero and god, but he really becomes an anti-hero.

In his world, Grenouille suffers a lot. Madame Gillard handovers him to Grimal, a tanner, who treats him in a degraded way, like an animal in the tanner house. “Grenouille knew that this man was capable of thrashing him to death for the least infraction” (32). Then, he works for Baldini, a perfumer, where Grenouille uplifts Baldini’s business. Grenouille’s heightened smell makes Baldini famous and richest person of Paris. Though Grenouille takes Baldini in that powerful position, Baldini never treats Grenouille as an ideal and genius man. Suskind highlights this as:

During that period and with Grenouille’s help, Baldini realized his high-flying dreams. He built his factory in the Faubourg Saint-Antoine, succeeded in his scheme for exclusive perfumes at court, received a royal patent. His fine fragrances were sold as far off as St. Petersburg,

as Palermo, as Copenhagen . . . Having reconciled himself to living out his old age in bitterest poverty near Messina, Baldini was now at age seventy indisputably Europe's greatest perfumer and one of the richest citizens of Paris. (111)

The society uses common people and the handfuls of exploiters become the power holders. Grenouille's magical smelling power takes Baldini in the strong position but Baldini enjoys exploiting him. In the society full of materialist infrastructure, people like Baldini give more priority and valorizes the goods, money and labor but they are never careful about the plights and suffering of the people because of whom they came to their present situation. They neglect human sufferings, love, feelings and ideas.

In the novel, Grenouille suffers a lot from birth to the phase of his life working in Baldini's factory. Baldini releases Grenouille after he becomes rich and famous. Grenouille alienates himself from society and mankind living in a lonely mountain. In his seven years of long self-exiled life, Grenouille is always haunted by his lack of identity and higher class. His aim goes higher and higher similar to the bourgeois people. He returns to Paris where he kills 25 virgin girls one by one to make magical perfume. His killing of the innocent girls is the outcome of the society where he grows up. The society does not care for the common people, their voice or their sufferings, but makes the people like Grenouille blindly follow the ideology.

Baldini weeps when Grenouille is ill because he is becoming prosperous and dreaming of many plans. He calls the doctor to treat the sick protagonist not because of love towards him but for his own beneficial purpose; there is nothing like humanity. Though Grenouille is in his last stage of life, Baldini gives him notepaper and pen to jot down something about perfume. It shows that the society does not have

a bit of humanity. To show this fact, the novelist argues, Baldini “spooned wine into his mouth” (108) when Grenouille is ill. Baldini heightens his status in Paris, but Grenouille remains in the same condition without progress. After coming back from his illness Grenouille works in Baldini’s laboratory acting near like a machine. When Baldini releases Grenouille, “Baldini had given him a little rucksack, a second shirt, two pairs of stockings, a large sausage, a horse blanket, and twenty-five francs”(112). Grenouille leads Baldini in the prosperous condition but he is bidden farewell due to Baldini’s indifference to him.

The novel *Perfume* critiques the motive of enlightenment, the limitation of reason in it and the spirit of industrial modernization through the character Grenouille. Enlightenment focuses on reason and rationality, where the novel shows the problem in people’s use of ‘reason’. The ideology of the society drags Grenouille to his self-destructive journey. The irrationality and destructive impulse of the modern society turns Grenouille into a slave. Grenouille’s aim ends when he kills Laure Richis. Grenouille is respectfully released from crowd by his magical perfume even though he is arrested and is on the verge of capital punishment by hanging. Then, he realizes his identity. Grenouille knows the reality that people only respect his product not him. As a result, he commits suicide. Here, Grenouille’s suicide clearly shows the hatred and critique of the society.

French Existentialist Albert Camus reflects the loss of certainties in the post-modern world. In his view, each individual has a design in their own life as a project. The choice and responsibility of that project falls entirely on them. Camus was concerned with the freedom and responsibility of the individual, the alienation of the individual from society, and the difficulty of facing life without the comfort of believing in God or in absolute moral standards. His notion of existentialism focuses

on the apparent absurdity and futility of life, the indifferent universe, and the necessity of engagement in a just cause.

Camus thought that human existence is absurd. The modern world is full of injustice: millions work in repetitive exploitative jobs. He thought that we should rebel against the absurdities by refusing to participate in them. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus, asserts that by refusal to surrender Sisyphus the representative of a modern man can create meaning through a free act of affirmation in which he gives meaning to a situation, which until then had none. Camus claims:

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe hence forth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of the night-filled mountain, in itself forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy. (70)

To get liberation from the anxiety of the absurd world, one may go to the rules of God or he may submit himself to the hand of death. But either of these choices is ridiculous and bad for the absurd man. The living of the absurd man depends upon the maximum struggle against this absurdity. The same thing takes place in the context of the novel. The protagonist is discarded by the owner of the perfume factory after his interest is fulfilled. After the release from Baldini, he alienates himself from the society and lives an exiled life in an isolate mountain for seven years. In those periods he eats anything he finds and that which is unaccepted by "bourgeois standards" (126). After spending seven years, he wants to go back to the society in Paris. But again he falls in the trap of science and technology. Marquis de La Taillard-Espinasse,

a ridiculous nobleman who believes he has the intellect to tell the world how it should run. He espouses the pseudo-scientific theory of fluidum vitale, and with the help of Grenouille in his Wildman state, he attempts to prove his idea that the earth exudes a lethal gas as Suskind argues:

Taillade-Espinasse packed him back up and transported him home to the storage room of his manor. There, in the presence of several selected doctors from the medical faculty, he locked Grenouille in his vital ventilation machine, a box made of tightly jointed pine boards, which by means of a suction flue extending far above the house roof could be flooded with air extracted from the higher regions, and thus free of lethal gas. The air could then escape through a leather flap-valve placed in the floor. (148)

Marquis captures and enslaves Grenouille for his experiment and self-benefit.

Through the power of science and technology the society exploits common people for their progress. The common people cannot go against its authority. They have to follow the demands of the selfishness of the society. Though they cannot go against the society, they can live there by creating their identity by any means. Grenouille does the same in the novel.

The world is full of absurdity and meaninglessness, but Sisyphus teaches us to revolt against action that destroys our freedom and justification of continuing life. Camus compares the situation of human life to that of the mythical figure Sisyphus revealing that our life is a series of meaningless actions culminating in death, with no possibility of external justification. According to Camus, the human future is unique and dreadful. As he evaluates modern man and his situation in the following passage:

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and his life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity. (*The Myth of Sisyphus* 13)

Camus believes that human being is an isolated existent in an alien universe. The universe does not possess any inherent truth, value or meaning. “This universe”, states Camus, “henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile” (Ellmann 852). Camus reached to a conclusion to declare the condition of man absurd when he realized that the speculative system of past provided no reliable guidance for life.

In the absurd world of modernity, Grenouille can be compared to Sisyphus. The lack of his odor and love shows his loneliness. The society treats him as an outsider. His lack of humanness makes him hate the society. Inspired by lack of identity Grenouille wants to create identity from perfume, a gift that he gives to the same society which alienates him. For this he follows the destructive journey. After the experimental exploitation of Marquis, Grenouille wants to make ascent, which can give him humanness and identity. In this path he kills 25 virgin girls one by one. He does not care about others’ life, love, humanity, emotion and shows no sympathy to them because he has never got such things from the society and he does not know their meanings as well. He cruelly murders girls, “True, he did not love another human being, certainly not the girl who lived in the house beyond the wall” (197). Grenouille becomes successful in making a perfect perfume after the murder of Laure Richis. His head is dominant on his soul– his humanitarian values disappear in the

face of existential values.

Albert Camus lays emphasis upon choices. Sisyphus is given the choices. He does not surrender to God and makes a choice. He believes that choice leads us to absurdity but joy comes out of that absurdity. As Ellmann and Fieldelson remark, he sees man “arriving through admission of absurdity, at an affirmation of his own worth” (806). He focuses on struggle against absurdity for humanism and optimism. It is through our choices that we create meaning in our life. Since our involvement in the world creates essence, there is no predetermined essence to govern our existence. Thus, as conscious person, a man can shut being-in-itself. No God is needed to account for his being. So, Sartre connects existentialism with humanism, not in the sense of regarding man as the ultimate end, but in the sense of regarding man as the creator of all values.

Alienation of Grenouille

In Patrick Suskind’s novel *Perfume*, Jean Baptiste Grenouille lacks both human scent and paternal cares that naturally make him an outsider and isolated in the society. He feels fragmented because of domination, exploitation and suffering. He has to work full time as per the demand the selfish society. The agents of the society do not bother themselves to show any mercy, love, help and sympathy to laborers. From the birth of Jean Baptiste Grenouille, he is neglected and treated as an outsider by the society and later, he himself chooses to live a life of isolation due to the torment he is forced to face. This is his existential choice. Grenouille, in his infancy, is treated as an outsider because of his lacking odor. Jeanne Bussie, despite showing sympathy and love for Grenouille determines to disconnect herself from the baby and claims he is “possessed by the devil” (10). Madame Gillard and other orphan children treat him as an outsider. He is just like Sophocles’ Oedipus, who is wounded in his

legs and ordered to be thrown in the mountain to death by his own parents. If Oedipus gets chance to be the prince of Corinth and later the king of the land of his own parents, Grenouille is living over his own conditions. Oedipus too kills people in course of his life, but regarded as the hero, protagonist by killing the innocent girls, becomes an anti-hero.

Hero is a person especially a man admired for courage, nobility or exploits especially in war. A person normally becomes courageous by performing an extraordinary and praise worthy deed. A hero normally fulfills the definitions of what is considered good and noble in the originating culture. However in literature, particularly in tragedy, the hero may also have serious flaw which leads to a downfall. Such heroes are often referred to a tragic hero. Sometimes a person might achieve enough status to become courageous in people's minds. This is usually complemented by a rapid growth of myths around the person in question, often attributing him or her powers beyond those of ordinary people. The novelist argues, "Grenouille no longer wanted to go somewhere, but only to go away, away from human beings" (117). This shows his complete alienation and disgust to the society.

Anti- Heroism in Grenouille

In literary works, an antihero is the major character who has some of the personality flaws and ultimate fortune traditionally given to the villain or antagonist. They do have the heroic qualities so are capable of performing the heroic deeds but do not execute them properly rather they perform against the expectation of the reader or viewer. Anti-heroes can be awkward, obnoxious, passive, pitiful or obtuse but they are always in some fundamental way flawed or failed heroes. Comic books also feature anti-heroes, also known as "dark heroes", those who are characters fighting for the side of good but either with some tragic flaw or by some questionable means to

reach their goals. A good character that is, within the context of a story, a hero but in another context would be easily seen as a villain or simply as unlikable. In the second half of nineteenth century novel heroes approximated more and more nearly too ordinary people and shed more and more of the qualities associated with traditional heroes in fiction. This tendency became common practice in early twentieth century novels. The novel writers introduced non-hero rather than anti-hero.

The concept of anti-heroism is clarified by A. C. Ward as he differentiates between traditional hero and an anti-hero. In the past, the novels or dramas used to represent the higher class of society this new tendency marks the difference between the traditional type of hero and a hero of new generation. A. C. Ward argues:

Anti-heroes reject standards of conduct or social behavior formerly held to be essential in civilized society. Some deliberately revolt against those standards and regard the modern world as a jungle in which tooth and claw prevail, others again, having been educated away from their early environment became stranded intellectually and emotionally, turn sour and affect to despise what they cannot grasp.

(39)

From this remark we know that anti-hero is a character who does not follow the code and conduct of the society. Rather he seems barbaric and uncivilized in his activity, and intellect, strength, and wit are the things of distance for him. Irrationality of his character makes not only him to suffer but also to suffer the others. J. A. Cuddon remarks:

Anti-hero is a non-hero or the antithesis of a hero of the old fashioned kind, who was capable of heroic deeds, who was dashing, strong, brave, and resourceful. It is a little doubtful whether such heroes have

ever existed in any quantity in fiction except in some romances . . . The antihero is a man who is given the vocation of failure . . . The anti-hero is a type who is incompetent, unlucky, tactless, clumsy, cack-handed, stupid, buffoonish—is of ancient lineage. (43)

Cuddon and Ward present similar view in terms of character, their action, society's view on them. Such heroes deviate from the classical hero who has power, strength, intellect, and also has a public support. He is a man of noble birth and has a higher responsibility. The protagonist does have the anti-heroic quality in him. The following lines clearly show the fact. The novelist argues:

The murderer possessed exquisite taste. And he had a system. It was not just that all the murders had been carried out in the same efficient manner, but the very choice of victims betrayed intentions almost economical in their planning. To be sure, Richis did not know what the murderer actually craved from his victims, since he could not have robbed them of the best that they offered—their beauty and the charm of youth... or could he? In any case, it seemed to him, as absurd as it sounded, that the murderer was not a destructive personality, but rather a careful collector. For if one imagined—and so Richis imagined—all the victims not as single individuals, but as parts of some higher principle and thought of each one's characteristics as merged in some idealistic fashion into a unifying whole, then the picture assembled out of such mosaic pieces would be the picture of absolute beauty, and the magic that radiated from it would no longer be of human, but of divine origin. (203)

Though he is the murderer, he is also the collector of something that is needed for human beings. Grenouille becomes a criminal not for his sake but for the sake of others. He even sacrifices his own life for the sake of others. In the same light M. H. Abrams claims the anti-hero denies the qualities of classical hero:

The chief person, in a modern novel or play whose character is widely discrepant from which we associate with the traditional protagonist or hero. Instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power or heroism, the anti-hero is pity, ignominious, passive, ineffectual, or dishonest. The anti-hero is especially conspicuous in dramatic tragedy, in which the protagonist had usually been of high state, dignity and courage. (11)

All anti-heroes are not the same as they differ in their character, nature and action. One type of anti-hero feels helpless, distrusts conventional values and is often unable to commit to any ideals, but they accept and often relish their status as outsiders. In the novel, the protagonist Grenouille is the character of anti-heroic personality as the novelist argues:

Grenouille stood there and smiled. Or rather, it seemed to the people who saw him that he was smiling, the most innocent, loving, enchanting, and at the same time most seductive smile in the world. But in fact it was not a smile, but an ugly, cynical smirk that lay upon his lips, reflecting both his total triumph and his total contempt. He, Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, born with no odor of his own on the most stinking spot in this world, amid garbage, dung, and putrefaction, raised without love, with no warmth of a human soul, surviving solely on impudence and the power of loathing, small, hunchbacked, lame, ugly, shunned, an abomination within and without-he had managed to

make the world admire him. To hell with admire! Love him! Desire him! Idolize him! He had performed a Promethean feat. He had persevered until, with infinite cunning, he had obtained for himself that divine spark, something laid gratis in the cradle of every other human being but withheld from him alone. (239)

Grenouille is the man different from other normal human beings. He lacks his personal odor which every normal human being does have with him. He murders 25 innocent girls for the invention of perfume. Though he is a murderer, he seems all innocent as if he has not committed any crime. When he succeeds, he does not have that much excitement in him as other human beings would have. He has distinct qualities than that of a hero.

In the novel *Perfume*, all the characters are more or less affected by the frenzy of the selfishness of the society. In the novel, there are many hierarchal situations, exploitations, dominations, instances of slavery and sufferings. The protagonist, Grenouille blindly follows the ideology of the society in the name of creating his 'identity' and becomes the victim of it in return. There are characters, like Baldini in the selfish society, who are concerned only about their own dreams not to the life of others. The novelist argues:

He thought of his dreams. And he thought of all these things with great satisfaction. Yes, it seemed to him as he looked back over it that he was a man to whom fortune had been especially kind, and that fate had led him down some tortuous paths, but that ultimately they had proved to be the right ones-how else would it have been possible for him to have found his way here, into this dark chamber, at the goal of his

desires? He was, now that he really considered it, a truly blessed individual! (36)

Grenouille has been brought to the torturous path by the ideology of the society in which he is living. He is less powerful than the rulers of the society like Baldini. He has frustration over his life. In this line of argument, Northrop Frye argues:

If inferior in power or intelligence to ourselves, so that we have the sense of looking down on a scene of bondage, frustration, or absurdity, the hero belongs to the *ironic* mode. This is still true when the reader feels that he is or might be in the same situation, as the situation is being judged by the norms of a greater freedom. (52)

Grenouille is the man of irony. Although he creates the sweet-scented perfume, he follows destructive path. Although he murders the innocent girls, people have sympathy over him. So he is very ironic character. Although he has achieved the goal of his life, his frustration is reflected in the following lines:

Feelings of humility and gratitude welled up within him. "I thank you," he said softly, "I thank you, Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, for being what you are!" So touched was he by himself.

Then his eyelids closed-not for sleep, but so that he could surrender himself completely to the peace of this holy night. The peace filled his heart. But it seemed also as if it reigned all about him. He smelled the peaceful sleep of the maid in the adjoining room, the deep contentment of Antoine Richis's sleep on the other side of the corridor; he smelled the peaceful slumber of the innkeeper and his servants, of the dogs, of the animals in their stalls, of the whole village, and of the sea. The

wind had died away. Everything was still. Nothing disturbed the peace.

(219)

When his dream is fulfilled, Baldini gets satisfied. But immediately, he forgets the contribution of Grenouille, who brought this success to him and just claims the words of thanks to him. If Grenouille had done any heroic deed, he would have been remembered for his heroism but he has committed crime in the name of creation. So, he is an anti-hero, who just gets thanks from his so-called boss.

Joseph Campbell, in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, drawing insights from myths and history, traces the universality of the hero's journey:

The mythological hero, setting forth from his common day is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon-battle; offering, charm), or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). . . . At the return, the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world. (246)

Campbell's definition of the hero matches our protagonist. Grenouille is not a mythical character, but he voluntarily serves Baldini. He undergoes a journey though wrong path to gift mankind a perfume. So, he is an anti-hero.

Grenouille's mother's poor economic background compels her to work till the

day of her pregnancy. The social norms and her poor condition compel her to get rid of her child as soon as he is born. Grenouille is born in fish stall and his mother throws him in gutter that highlights the miserable life of common people in eighteenth century France. Grenouille sucks more milk than the common babies so that his foster mother wants to get rid of him because they have to care for numerous children. Madame Gaillard, a foster mother who runs orphan house to earn money, is second foster mother of Grenouille with capitalist motive. So, Gaillard provides low quality and very small and insufficient quantity of food to children. The selfish society does not bother on what is right and what is wrong but it only aims at the utilitarian values of human beings. Suskind in the novel argues:

Or like that tick in the tree, for which life has nothing better to offer than perpetual hibernation. The ugly little tick, which by rolling its blue-gray body up into a ball offers the least possible surface to the world...the tiniest bit of perspiration escape. The lonely tick, which, wrapped up in itself, huddles in its tree, blind, deaf, and dumb, and simply sniffs, sniffs all year long, for miles around, for the blood of some passing animal that it could never reach on its own power. (22-23)

In the selfish modern society Grenouille suffers a lot because of his poor origin. Madame Gaillard sells Grenouille to Grimal, a tanner after the center stops paying money to care him. Baldini buys Grenouille due economic motive after he proves his supernatural ability of smell. Grenouille is exploited by people throughout his life. Grimal's improvement in treatment to Grenouille after the discovery of his commercial value was also similar to Baldini, who exploited Grenouille's genius as a perfumer, and Marquis also used his isolation and his experience. As a result, he

develops a sense of lack of identity and loneliness in life and gets ready to be a murderer without any refusal.

Grenouille works for Baldini and makes his business prosperous which is in critical situation in the time he joins him. Grenouille's supernatural power of smelling makes Baldini the most prosperous citizen in Paris. Without the labor of Grenouille, Baldini could not have made decisions about the perfumes but he never gives credit to Grenouille. Domination and exploitative mentality of such selfish people in the society make common people work for them as if they are doing the voluntary service willingly without expecting any credit. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in their book say:

The class of the completely property less, who are compelled to sell their labor to the first class, the bourgeois, simply to obtain from them in return their means of subsistence. Since the parties to this trading in labor are not *equal*, but the bourgeois have the advantage, the property less must submit to the bad conditions laid down by the bourgeois.

This class, dependent on the bourgeois, is called the class of the *proletarians* or the *proletariat*. (38)

Capitalism is the social system which is now prevalent in almost all the countries of the world. Under this system the means for production are owned by a small minority of people; bourgeois. The majority of people must sell their ability for wage or salary. The term majority and minority here clearly depict the classes of the people, the working class and capitalist or proletariat and bourgeois. The class division is the essential feature of capitalism.

In the capitalist culture people feel tired both physically and mentally. People do not have any charm on their life, family, society and nation. They want freedom.

When Grenouille realizes this from Baldini's factory, he goes to exiled life in an isolated mountain where people are afraid to go. Grenouille is in search for peaceful solitude far away from human existence, so, he chooses a lonely mountain, Plomb du Canal. By alienating himself, he wants to meditate upon his idea of magical perfume. Grenouille has the experiences of domination, exploitation, pain and suffering in the capitalist culture all the time till then. In the material society, common people feel suffocated and are happier to distance themselves. Suskind's protagonist feels the same and argues:

He climbed back up to the peak a few more times during the first weeks to sniff out the horizon. For here, inside the crypt, was where he truly lived. Which is to say, for well over twenty hours a day in total darkness and in total silence and in total immobility, he sat on his horse blanket at the end of the stony corridor, his back resting on the rock slide, his shoulders wedged between the rocks, and enjoyed himself.

(127)

Grenouille feels like an outsider, and the experience of alienation haunts his entire life. Even the capitalists like Baldini who gain great wealth through his skill, now leave him to face self-imposed alienation. Grenouille stays in a mountain cave for seven years. This self-imposed exile allows Grenouille to live through his olfactory sense which drags the future event of his life. During this time his ambition to rule mankind through smell increases. Following the same path of bourgeois' exploitation and domination, Grenouille kills girls one by one to make magical perfume which can give him the bourgeois position. Richard T. Gray in his essay argues:

Knowledge and their sympathetic interest in the elements of thought and human conduct that Enlightenment culture sought to exclude from

the discourse of the "rational". *Das Perfume* extends the critical counter-historical examinations into the domain of historical fiction, constructing a fictional narrative that exposes the epistemic mechanisms of Enlightenment culture by transposing those mechanisms into the alienating realm of the olfactory. (490)

Richard T. Gray's argument is that Enlightenment has developed many things but its negative sides are more dangerous than this. Because of exploitation, domination and sufferings, people are alienated from themselves, society and workplaces. Same happens to Grenouille in his society and workplace. He feels as an outsider and isolated person when he is in Baldini's laboratory and in Arnouff's olfactory. Although Grenouille had finally achieved his aim to be loved by humanity, he ultimately did not feel loved or satisfied because he was not loved for his identity, but rather the perfume which he created. "And suddenly he knew that he had never found gratification in love, but always only in hatred -in hating and in being hated" (249).

An anti-hero is a person who starts the story with a few unlikable traits such as prejudices, self-centeredness, immaturity, cockiness or a single minded focus on things such as wealth, status or revenge. Thus the hero may actually begin the story as a not so likeable character. However, through the course of events, as we get to know the character, "they row and change and may actually become popular" (Abrams 11). So, anti-hero is a principle character of a modern literary or dramatic work that lacks the attributes of the traditional protagonist or hero. The anti-hero's lack of courage, honesty, or grace, his weakness and confusion, often reflect modern man's ambivalence toward traditional, moral and social virtues.

Similarly, Grenouille's destructive desire end when he kills Laure Richis. She is his 25th victim. In Grenouille's sense, Laure's body has so powerful smell that it

would complete his magical scent making it perfect. Grenouille is blinded by the ideology of the society and is travelling in the path of irrationality. He kills innocent girls for personal glory and gratification. On the day of his execution he spreads his magical perfume which makes the people praise him and they become so unconscious and spellbound with the fragrance that they let him go unharmed. The power of his anti-heroism is seen through the power of his perfume. But there are people like Baldini in the society who manipulate common people like Grenouille for their selfish purpose but never acknowledge them for their job. Suskind in the novel argues:

He smiled, pressed Grenouille's hand more tightly, and said, "It will all turn out all right. The magistrate has overturned the verdict. All the witnesses have recanted. You are free. You can do whatever you want. But I would like you to stay here with me. I have lost a daughter, but I want to gain you as my son . . . And when I look into your eyes, it's as if she were looking at me. You are her brother, and I want you to become my son, my friend, my pride and joy, my heir. Are your parents still alive?" (252)

Monsieur Richis is also a production of the society. In the race of creating identity and rationality, he also runs blindly. After he knows Grenouille's target is his daughter, he hides his daughter here and there. Eventually Grenouille kills Laure. In the day of his execution Grenouille is released due to the power of his magical perfume. This magical perfume attracts Monsieur. His individualistic ideology makes him forget his daughter's death. Now, he wants to possess the protagonist adopting him as his son. It marks the irony and proves Grenouille as the anti-hero in the novel.

The agents of the selfish society have the aim to enslave the world.

Grenouille's magical perfume, only the spread of single drop, proves, "There was

enough left to enslave the whole world” (259). The negative side of the society has made Grenouille emotionally changed. Grenouille knows his identity attaches with his perfume. People admire his perfume but not his unique performance. So, he pours all the perfume and the crazy mob of people divides his body into thirty pieces and eats his flesh due to the perfect fragrance of the perfume. Here, people eating his flesh underscore how much they are attracted towards his creation of the perfume. The industrial culture gives people false identity even then it makes the workers work for the very culture as the tyres of the motor. Here, Grenouille’s death or end shows the death of his identity. Bradley Butterfield in his review work in the same novel argues:

The fact that Suskind does not illustrate a positive solution to enlightenment but only its negative conclusions, that his book does not resolve the issue of enlightenment’s complicity with death, is what separates his own from that of Grenouille’s which turns enlightenment into death with the false promise of identity. (416)

The society promises the enrichment of human life but it is a false promise or ideology. People start scorning it and go against it after they bear the tragedy. In the name of money, social dignity and power, they treat common people as cattles. The utilitarian act takes the hierarchy to peak point. People start to criticize it when the unjust hierarchy becomes strong. People start to feel their dignity lost. Enlightenment does not only develop the infrastructure but also manipulates the consciousness of people. People start questioning the social norms and values, and revolt for the socialism.

Grenouille also sacrifices his life but for the sake of handful of people like Baldini. His killing of the innocent girls can never be called a noble job although he makes perfume out of their body. No question he gifts that perfume to the humanity, it

is the matter of luxury for them. So Grenouille is no more a hero but an anti-hero. To describe how he feels after discovering the perfume, the novelist argues:

He was even greater than Prometheus. He had created an aura more radiant and more effective than any human being had ever possessed before him. And he owed it to no one-not to a father, nor a mother, and least of all to a gracious God-but to himself alone. He was in very truth his own God, and a more splendid God than the God that stank of incense and was quartered in churches. A flesh-and-blood bishop was on his knees before him, whimpering with pleasure. The rich and the mighty, proud ladies and gentlemen, were fawning in adoration, while the common folk all around-among them the fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters of his victims-celebrated an orgy in his honor and in his name. A nod of his head and they would all renounce their God and worship him, Grenouille the Great. (240)

These lines clearly show how Grenouille is liked by people. Although he has committed crime, they are ready to forgive him.

He is called “great” because of his gift to them all. In the same line of argument, Canadian literary theorist and critic of the twentieth century Northrop Frye claims that a hero has a superior degree of leadership. His passions are far greater than we normal people. Frye argues:

If superior in degree to other men but not to his natural environment, the hero is a leader. He has authority, passions, and powers of expression far greater than ours, but what he does is subject both to social criticism and to the order of nature. This is the hero of the *high*

mimetic mode, of most epic and tragedy, and is primarily the kind of hero that Aristotle had in mind. (51-52)

The protagonist of the novel resembles the same features as argued by Frye. He has passion and strong determination to create perfume that a normal human being can never do. He is a hero of tragedy as he has tragic end of life.

Although he makes the fine perfume, he cannot enjoy it. At the last moment of his life, he is terrified. Suskind further argues:

He was terrified because he could not enjoy one second of it. In that moment as he stepped out of the carriage into the bright sunlight of the parade grounds, clad in the perfume that made people love him, the perfume on which he had worked for two years, the perfume that he had thirsted to possess his whole life long [...] What he had always longed for-that other people should love him-became at the moment of its achievement unbearable, because he did not love them himself, he hated them. And suddenly he knew that he had never found gratification in love, but always only in hatred -in hating and in being hated. But the hate he felt for people remained without an echo. The more he hated them at this moment, the more they worshiped him, for they perceived only his counterfeit aura, his fragrant disguise, his stolen perfume, and it was indeed a scent to be worshiped. (240)

Grenouille has never experienced love from others in his life. When he gifts the people with the perfume he has made, he immediately starts feeling love from them all. He was despised from his birth till death. He is a poor miserable character who never enjoys his life but makes others enjoy. In this line of argument, we can call him an anti-hero.

Anti-heroes are those who do something bad in their life. Villains become anti-heroes when the story centers around them, when we see the process they undergo to become villains. That is the only real difference. They are both motivated by some lower-self impulses. Whereas the hero represents that part of us that recognizes problems and accepts responsibility, the anti-hero is the will to power and insatiable greed, the materialistic, power hungry, tyrannical side of our natures.

The goal of the hero is to liberate an entity like a family, a country or a galaxy from the tyranny and corruption that caused a state of misfortune and to create a new unified whole. The goal of the anti-hero is to take possession of any entity and redirect it toward goals that fulfill his own desire and needs, which is to accumulate, control and enjoy everything it needs to satisfy its insatiable craving for sense object, security, wealth and territory. In modern terms, we are talking money, sex and power, psychologically; these are the appetites and desires of the lower self-taking possession of the conscious self.

The project aims to show the negative sides of the selfish modern world and proves that over exploitation over the common people like Grenouille leads mankind towards catastrophic consequences. This research questions the rationalistic philosophy and points to the need of humanitarian thinking for the happy life. Grenouille's life is void because of the domination of utilitarian value in the industrial era. His death suggests the valuelessness of common people in the modern society and by the means of his death he wants to uplift humanitarian value revolting against the inhuman human world.

III. Anti -Heroism as a Result of Social Rejection in Suskind's *Perfume*

The analysis of Patrick Suskind's *Perfume* leads us to conclude that the novelist has created a hero who does not go with the values and principles of the modern world. Suskind has observed the socio-economic system of eighteenth century France in his novel. This project has pointed to the utilitarian perspective of the contemporary society and exhibits its harsh impacts on the lives of common people, who are forced to work for their survival. Suskind presents the sorrowful condition of people under such a system where common people are always dominated, exploited, tormented, and neglected by the handful of rich people. Throughout the novel, Suskind justifies his protagonist as the product of such society and tries to establish him as an anti-hero in the novel.

Grenouille heads towards the self-destructive journey because of the selfish modern world's atmosphere. His birth, childhood days and life as a perfumer show that there is no charm in his life. Jeanne Bussie discards Grenouille and stops looking after him because he sucks more milk than two babies from her breast. Then he is transferred to Madame Gillard, another foster mother. The ideology of the society makes Gillard run from the orphanage because she wanted to die at her own home. She collects money by providing little food to children. "He could eat watery soup for days on end, he managed on the thinnest milk, digested the rottenest vegetables and spoiled meat" (21). She has no humanity towards the orphan children. In the selfish world, bourgeois do not look Grenouille as a man but compare him with a "spider" (18).

This research has underscored the evil and vices of modern industrial world and its effect in the human life while analyzing the novel. The novel centers on the existential choices of the protagonist. What Grenouille feels himself to be revolting

against is not simply the class-system but something even more frightful; namely the kind of intellectual inertia or sluggishness which afflicts people regardless of the class they belong to. Grenouille's revenge motif is irrational and causeless. His anger is developed by the prejudice of upper class people. He makes wicked choices that disturb his whole life. His dissatisfaction is vague and his protest against society is fruitless.

The protagonist of the novel, Grenouille, is a lower class common personality. In the industrial world, he is a desiring machine because he heads towards negative desire, the desire manipulated by the ideology of the society. The society produces and expands the domain of desire but all the desires are not attainable for common people. Grenouille is compelled to upgrade his social status and create his identity to fulfill his desire to be counted as a human being to follow the same path like the other people in the society. Grenouille is born in a fish stall from his poor mother and is thrown by his mother to die. Even his mother rejects him because she has no money and material to care him, already having thrown her four babies before him. After people save Grenouille, he is transferred from one foster mother to another. From Jeanne Bussie to Madame Gaillard, he suffers, gets exploited, alienated, an outsider, and dominated by the selfish ideology of the society. The agent of the industrial world, Baldini uses his supernatural ability of smell. By using his reason the selfish material world exploits Grenouille mercilessly.

The traditional hero struggles to get redemption from the social evil. He has to fight against the forces which are beyond of his capacity. He is the individual but his opponent may be the superpower or the divine forces. In such battle the hero is all the time defeated and the antagonistic forces remain victorious. The hero fights for the good purpose but his fight seems insignificant and he has to suffer severely. All the

readers and the spectacles respect him, they identify themselves with the suffering hero, because the tendency of the spectacle is to keep themselves at the side of righteousness. It creates the situation that the readers or spectacle feel a kind of emotion that is catharsis. Catharsis is the feeling of pity and fear. The readers feel pity to the hero, but at the same time they fear for themselves, because they think that they are fortunately not the people to suffer, the same situation which has troubled the hero might trouble them. So, there is a kind of distancing as well as assimilation we can find. The suffering, punishment or death of the hero brings a kind of emotion because death for the right purpose contains the highest emotional potential, so it brings a kind of seriousness to the readers. The suffering or death of the hero affirms certain new value. Instead of arousing such graveness in the reader's mind, Grenouille's activities create a serious shock in the mind of the readers. We find him alienated in the society which exploits him because of his lack of personal odor and some abnormal qualities in him. At the end of the novel, he dies causing everyone to forgive him for whatever crime he has committed.

Being alienated and neglected from the society, being sold like cattle for many times, being compared to insects, like spiders, involving himself into the act of murdering 25 innocent virgin girls for making a perfume, being punished for his deeds and dying at the end of the novel are the traits of our protagonist, Grenouille. These are not the qualities of the traditional hero. So, he is a hero of different type totally different from traditional hero, an anti-hero. This hero Grenouille is not linked to the higher nature or inspired by the great nature that he should overcome from the negative states boldly and reach to the higher states of being. As Grenouille is linked to the lower nature, in this sense he is an anti-hero.

There are certain qualities of the hero which are defined by many classical scholars and critics. Anyone who has a common birth couldn't be the hero, because the actions and characters of the man of noble birth can attract the attention of the reader. Our hero Grenouille is not a man of noble birth, he is from working-class origin. He is a common man. So, he is an anti-hero.

The hero must be doomed from the start, he has to fight against the villain. He does not get any chances to enjoy his life from the beginning of the story to the end. He must suffer for the right purpose so he becomes able to produce a feeling of pity and fear. Grenouille, the protagonist of Suskind's *Perfume* cannot create the emotion of pity and fear in the readers' mind. His activities do not make anyone sad, rather they create a kind of shock. So, Grenouille from every perspective stands opposite to what has been supposed a hero. So he is an anti-hero. Suskind has employed anti heroism to satirize the intellectual culture and the modern world of enlightenment.

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