

## I. Role of Mass Media in Circulating Patriarchal Ideology

The novel *The Pilot's Wife*, explores the functioning of capitalist patriarchal ideology and its different forms of oppressions that women face in the post-industrial society. While doing so, this research also studies the nature and functioning of the pervasive change in mass media and technology. However, the hidden politics of dominating and marginalizing the women has remained same. Such as the ideal of a male dominating society is being reinforced in the mass media, there are certainly male figures and male values being dominated even in media. This shows how the mass media is feeding with a certain type of message that shapes traditionally held belief that men are center and self while women are other.

For the perpetuation of patriarchy, the media emphasizes the production of such images that are loaded with the gendered values and meanings. So, the research on one hand analyses the changes and continuities taking place in the structure, functioning, and politics of patriarchy under the influence of mass media.

In the novel, the dominant role of capitalist ideology circulated through the mass media can be found in the incident when Kathryn Lyon's husband Jack dies in the plane crash in which she is bombarded by press rather than helping her to find her lost husband and becomes the prey to the existing mass media. To quote Shreve:

She felt herself to be inside a private weather system, one in which she was continuously tossed and buffeted by bits of news and information, sometimes chilled by thoughts of what lay immediately ahead, thawed by the kindness of others, frequently drenched by memories that seemed to have no regard for circumstance or place, and then subjected

to the nearly intolerable heat of reporters, photographers and curious onlookers. (145)

The quote explicates the reality and hidden politics of mass media which is more oriented towards the commodification of emotion and pain rather than helping her. Jack Lyon's fatal crash sends Kathryn into shock and emotional numbness. She wishes she could manage the trauma but the result is quite opposite. The interference of media in her personal life makes her pain more intolerable which she regards the weather system with "no logic", "no pattern", "no progression", "no form" (145). And the tragedy becomes the subject of the media feeding frenzy along with disturbing rumors about Jack.

Mass media as a source of information in present context is a controversial issue. Because it informs as well as misinforms the common people in the society since capitalism and culture industries have grown beyond what the Marx and the Frankfurt School theorist envisioned to a unified cultural and economic global hegemony that robs the individual. Mass media in modern society is "a clear product of the period in the late 1960s when the study of popular and mass culture was still in academic limbo" according to Daniel Bell's claim (3). It consists of the various means by which information reaches large numbers of people, such as television, radio, movies, newspapers, and the internet. It has been always been dominant medium throughout the decades in the western civilization to change an individual perception of reality where everything is controlled and governed by the rich capitalists.

The ideology of capitalism is so powerful that it is reified with the assistance of mass media. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in their essay- from *Dialectic*

*of Enlightenment*, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as a Mass Deception,”

advocate the hegemony of the capitalist in such a way that:

The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which, with its plots and staging, it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged; the promise, which is actually all the spectacle consists of, is illusory: all it actually confirms is that the real point will never be reached, that the diner must be satisfied with the menu. In front of the appetite stimulated by all those brilliant names and images there is finally set no more than a commendation of the depressing everyday world it sought to escape.

(241)

Every promise is mere illusory. Capitalist mass media deceive and hegemonize the common people through their iron system alluring them for their benefits. So art, culture, sentiment, human life, emotion, and other cultural artifact are comodified and made the vehicle of capitalist ideology. So also in the novel, Shreve cleverly delineates the post-industrial condition of the so-called advanced countries and digs out the hidden politics of the time, whereby for their benefits the capitalists spread different rumors about the pilot and the plane crash draining public’s interest which in fact is a false story created by the capitalist ideology.

Jack, the pilot, whom Kathryn took her better- halves and thought “her marriage a good one” is not a same person to her after the accident (151). The man from Pilot’s Union assures his assistance to her after the incident could be an agent to the capitalists giving every minute information about her reaction. So that the story in the news can serve the people’s interest for the benefit of the capitalist because media

is the source of information at the same time is a means of entertainment in the postindustrial society. Shreve in the novel so realistically depicts the complexity of this period intertwining the patriarchy with capitalist ideology where Robert who supposes to accompany and console her until her recovery from the tragedy is the main agent to communicate with other link. Robert despite there to help Kathryn communicates with some unknown people to her. To make the idea clear Shreve narrates that:

The telephone rang a serrated edge in the silence of the kitchen. Robert Hart answered it immediately.

‘No comment’, he said

‘No comment’.

She watched him lay the receiver back on its cradle and massage his forehead with his fingers. He had thick fingers and large hands, hands that seemed too big for his body. (8)

The tactics of capitalist is well arranged that none of the individual with simple mind can understand the policy. Robert’s duty imposed by the union is to look after the deceased family of the pilots basically. Yet he is not aloof from the ideology of capitalist and is forced to serve under them too. His frequent communication with them is also under his performance that he cannot at all deny.

Although the story in the novel is entirely fictional about a pilot’s wife and her trauma after her husband’s death in a plane crash, in it portrays the realistic glimpses of the contemporary western society. The so called developed and advanced countries America, Britain as such are also not left untouched by the system of patriarchy along with capitalism and so are under the periphery of patriarchal system. The declaration

of women's rights and right to equality is an unfulfilled saga that the women face even in developed western countries. The change from industrial to post-industrial society remarks little change in the society which is based upon technologies but not for women. Patriarchy remains in an improved way in such society. And Shreve advocates this in her novel as:

The office was over bright and colorless- white, metallic, plastic, gray. It was a room she seldom entered, an unappealing space with no curtains on the windows and metal file cabinets lining the walls. A masculine room. She supposed it had its own order- an order known only to Jack. (71)

From the above lines Shreve shows the marginality of Kathryn in the context of Jack's room. Marriage is a union of two bodies into one but in practical the pole between Jack and Kathryn remains wide gap in this regard. For Kathryn, Jack's room is a strange room and is completely masculine having not known the order of it, except he himself knows it. Her involvement in domestic chores and her teaching job compels her to be busy and leave Jack independent and separate with any suspicion. However Jack being guided by ideology of patriarchy betrayed her resulting in secret bigamous life.

Patriarchy is a society organized and run by men. It also refers to a system of government by males, and to the dominance of men in social or cultural systems. So it is said to be man's world. Men make the rules and dominate in all forms outside the home and within. Commenting on the operation of patriarchy, Sheila Ruth writes:

Patriarchy is a probably the oldest forms of exploitation of one part of population by another. It probably has also served as the model for all

other forms of relegation, by them on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, of class, such a system is established those in the high caste positions in this case males develop a vested interest in the maintenance of the basic structures and their own advantaged status . . . the short run interest of males as males , and perhaps more importantly, as traders of political, economic and cultural institutions are best served by and cultural institutions are best served by maintaining and reinforcing their traditional gender roles. (115)

So, Marxist feminism finds similarities between male and female in the family and bourgeoisie and proletariat in society where women are being exploited in the society on the basis of patriarchal norms and values which are construction of economic power position. And thus all oppressed people are included in what Marxist called the proletariat distinguished from the capitalist class by the ways in which they lack power and by their common claim to self determination that perpetuates false consciousness among the entire subordinate class.

The bond between patriarchy and mass media gets more power from capitalist society dominated by males. Kathryn, the main character, becomes the victims in this society. Her tragic life began after her husband's death in the crash. She tries to prove the rumor of her husband's death hijacking 103 passenger's life to death, she found out another secret story of him which she never dares to hear about. And then she wonders "how do you know that you know a person?"(162). Henceforth the central role of media helps to develop the plot in this novel with the underlying agent of patriarchy and capitalism that shape and control Kathryn's life.

In the beginning of the novel, Kathryn dreamt of a dream which she regards and calls it a “good dream” (1). She regarded her marriage a contented and considered a “good marriage” (151). But it all shattered after her husband’s fatal death. Kathryn’s journey from innocence to consciousness and struggle through her grief is a bizarre mystery that drives her from ignorance to consciousness and she is forced to confront disturbing rumors about the man she loved and the life that took for granted. The novel is about love, tragedy, and betrayal of Jack to his wife and daughter which is discovered only after his death which becomes the subject to media feeding frenzy. She comes to encounter with Jack’s life resulting the hidden bigamous life of Jack. Her perception of reality thus has shifted towards pathetic life shaped by patriarchy and capitalism with the role of mass media then and there.

At the time when Kathryn should be rebuilding her life with her daughter and grandmother, she is forced to find the answer to the question she does not want to know! After the crashed Kathryn is shocked and is sends to emotional numbness where she is tossed and buffeted by bits of news and information. And there she ponders whether Jack is husband to her or his secret wife, Muire Boland and how this is possible for Jack to maintain secret.

The force made by the initial investigator and media compelled Kathryn to evaluate her relationship with her husband. Then she embark on a transcontinental journey to find the truth about her husband, her marriage and her life, where she managed to reveal her husband’s secrets and his double life that produce the disaster and makes Kathryn sink into the ocean of grief.

Since the publication of this novel, it has received series of criticism. Several of critics have analyzed the novel from numerous perspectives as critic, Archangel,

views this novel as, “a story of love, contentment and awfully dreadful inexcusable deceit” (1). But Brooks views this novel from different viewpoints. He views this novel from the lens of psychological suffering and dilemma and says:

How much can you ever truly know another human being? Does being married for over a decade prove you know something or anything? Does having a child with someone guarantee you a bond with them that will help you understand them? It’s harder to be sure of anything of course, if the person you think you know is away traveling with work quite often, if you’ve never met any of their relatives, and they have a separate bank account that you don’t have access to. These are the things that our main character, Kathryn faced with. (1)

It is clear through this criticism that the novel is about Kathryn’s psychological sufferings and dilemma. Her suffering is ceaseless that extends up to all other family members and relatives. The closest one comes to be the relatives of distance or no one seems to be her own to her. Her husband after the revelation of his double life is nobody for her as he betrayed her by keeping a secret wife in another country.

*The Pilot’s Wife* is an entirely fictional story about a woman whose husband goes to the flight with his plane frequently. But the grief in the novel feels real and heart touching to the readers. Unlike Brook, Scmrak too, observed the novel in different perspectives and commented as:

*The Pilot’s Wife* is an extended journey into the tumultuous life of a woman who learns- after his death- that her husband kept secrets from her. Serious secrets: secrets about things she had never in her wildest nightmares considered possible. Secrets that separated the two of them



in death as surely as their revelation would have separated the two in life. And would have journey also shows us the beginning of healing.

(3)

Since as a pilot, with a regular set route, Jack lives back and forth between the two different countries i.e., America and England. Yet for the wife he becomes to be a stranger by keeping a very serious secret that she have never in her wildest nightmares considered possible. The journey simply reveals the truth of Jack and his bigamous life. But Kathryn as a strong lady despite her grieves able to maintain the situation with great difficulty.

Shreve is particularly interested in male and female relationships. So, she repeatedly emphasizes on the hardships of relationship and marriage especially for women in almost all her novel. And in this novel too, Shreve shows the complex life who fails to understand her husband. To quote Chouhrette Shrif:

Anita Shreve's books are often categorized under the 'women's novel' due to her acquired art of describing women's distressful feelings and sensibilities. The pilot's wife appears to be a puzzle that Kathryn tries throughout the novel to unravel piece by piece. She thought she knew her husband but found out that she was living with a complete stranger she knew nothing about. (3)

In most of her novels, Shreve deals with female position and problems of female in the society. And in *The Pilot's Wife* Shreve portrays psychological struggles within the minds of her characters and explores the adversities and complexities of relationship between men and women even in western societies. This novel, no doubt,

is a burning example of it. Because assumption of Kathryn towards her husband is a mere illusory that became a strange to her, knowing nothing about him.

Reviewing the novel, Cathy finds the story of the pilot's wife very appealing that an innocent woman like Kathryn is never accustomed to such incident. And she states:

It's the story of (would you have ever guessed?) the wife of a pilot. Kathryn's husband has flown passenger planes on transatlantic routes for years, and she has grown accustomed to the infrequency and irregularity of his time at home with her and their fifteen-year-old daughter, Mattie. But even though she is used to Jack being away often, nothing could have prepared her for the news she receives in the middle of the night: the plane Jack was piloting has gone down. (4)

Stating the above lines, Cathy expresses the shock that happened in the normal life of Kathryn being a good and a sincere housewife never ever in her thought struck in her with such in the beginning of the novel. As a wife, mother, and also daughter she adapts her life accordingly by multi-functioning. And all her routine life is properly scheduled. Only Jack's irregularity and infrequency disorders her order sometimes. But she never thought of the tragedy that happened would happen in her life. And all though it's too private, grief really is difficult for humble person like Kathryn. So the impulse of psychology is very complicated to deal superficially.

Various angles of interpretation can be found in different critics in Anita Shreve's novel *The Pilot's Wife*. Few of them are aforementioned. So after observing all these critical responses from different scholars, it has become more relevant to make the research on the issue of neo-Marxist notion of ideology and feminism to dig

out the political context of the contemporary Western Civilization on the grounds of class and gender.

The area of neo-Marxism includes analytical Marxism, Hegelian Marxism, Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, ecological Marxism, Marxist feminism, post-Marxism, the various critical social theorist i.e, the original Frankfurt School, critical pedagogy and many others.

The objectification, exploitation and victimization of the women in the advance countries in the novel need to be unveiled at the same time to be done justice to the characters who have been oppressed. Therefore, the research is an attempt to uncover the underlying structure of exploitation of women under rich capitalist patriarchal social system. Exploitation of women in the novel so tactfully takes the form of objectification of domestic unpaid laborer and commodified as a whole in the capitalist society.

The research analyzes Anita Shreve's *The Pilot's Wife* with the study of the role of mass media and its adverse impacts on the lives of the ordinary, marginalized people in modern, postindustrial society. While doing so, the patriarchy of the society will be assessed and how women are kept under total darkness about realities of males eluding them due to the trans-national occupations. For the study and critique of the media, the neo Marxist critics will be employed. On the other hand for the re-assessment of patriarchy feminist thinkers especially Marxist will be drawn.

In accomplishing the present research, I have used some related theories to support the main theory of neo Marxism basically concept of ideology and Frankfurt School of criticism. Neo-Marxism includes analytical Marxism, Hegelian Marxism, Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony, Marxist feminism, post-Marxism, the various

critical social theorists i.e., the original Frankfurt School, critical pedagogy and many others. The first chapter is the introduction which introduces the whole research. The second chapter will be about analysis of the text with the discussion of theoretical tool in which the major tool is neo-Marxism in aided to feminism for analyzing the ideology embedded to mass media and patriarchy and their criticism in the novel. Finally, the last chapter is the conclusion to the research on the basis of second chapter.

## II. Critique of Mass Media and Patriarchal Ideology in Shreve's Novel *The Pilot's Wife*

This research focuses on the study of the impact of the mass media to the lives of the people in post-industrial society and the ideology it imparts in their life in Anita Shreve's novel *The Pilot's Wife*. Along with the study of the illusion cultivated by the mass media that aggravates the trauma of Jack's death in the Lyon family, this study also explores the patriarchal ideology that comes to the prominence in the quest for the reason behind the plane crash. Mass media like radio and television are responsible to invade the life of the ordinary people with various lies and ideological positions through their reporting of the serious accidents like plane crash in the novel.

Kathryn, the central character of the novel and the wife of Jack, the pilot who is dead in the crash is haunted by the various television channels like CNN, WBZ and WNBC and traumatized by the images the television report about the crash as the reports are conflicting and continually changing. Mass media create confusion and traumatize her and her fifteen years old daughter Mattie. The network formed by the press, the radio and the television is often termed as the media culture that is responsible for the mass production so as to generate the consumers for the commodities manufactured by the capitalists and there is no doubt that they care about the accumulation of the capital rather than providing the truthful details about the things. To this move, in his book *Media Culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and the postmodern*, Douglas Kellner observes:

Media culture is industrial culture, organized on the model of mass production and is produced for a mass audience according to types (genres), following conventional formulas, codes, and rules. It is thus a

form of commercial culture and its products are commodities that attempt to attract private profit produced by giant corporations interested in the accumulation of capital. (1)

In the developed, industrial countries like America in which Shreve's novel has been set, media culture is the only agent to shape the public opinion. It can manipulate a very little piece of information in the favor of the capitalist without considering its impact upon the individuals like Kathryn and her daughters.

In the novel, the mass media have become the battle ground for the conflicting ideologies. Jack Lyon, an American pilot working with the British airways called Vision dies in the plane crash that seems to be an explosion. The investigation going unravels the truth of the crash and the responsible factors behind the explosion. Media like radio and television start to report the rumors and the eventually found pieces of information and create confusion about the nature of crash and the intelligence of pilot, Jack. The pilot union wants the crash not to be regarded as the pilot's error but the airlines company does not want it to be proved as the mechanical failure rather the pilot's error would be better for it. These conflicting positions are in battle to prove their own side better. But in-between the battle among the power centers in the media the pilot's family suffers. In such a suffocating environment, the trap of ideologies, Kathryn tries to unravel the truth but gradually feels that she had been cheated not only by the media rather her deceased husband Jack Lyon had also cheated her living a double life. She had been dominated by a male in the name of love and there are many things that appear mysterious to her. Thus, along with the ideology of the media, the patriarchal ideology also works in the novel.

In the post-industrial societies, media have grown up to form a complex system of production and reproduction which is termed as media culture. Media

culture is saturated with capitalist ideology as it is in the control of the powerful ones. Media culture shapes the public opinion and helps form the certain belief about the things in such a way that it exerts the control over the consumers of its production and reproduction. In his book *Media Culture: Cultural studies, identity and politics between the modern and the postmodern*, Douglas Kellner explores the function of media to create a culture which he terms as media culture that is constituted by images sounds and spectacles:

A media culture has emerged in which images, sounds, and spectacles help produce the fabric of everyday life, dominating leisure time, shaping political views and social behavior, and providing the materials out of which people forge their very identities. Radio, television, film, and the other products of the culture industries provide the models of what it means to be male or female, successful or a failure, powerful or powerless. (1)

Media culture is responsible shaping the political behavior and the social behavior. It constructs the social identity labeling its consumers and providing the models for them. It is not always the case that the identities constructed by the media culture are positive identities rather they also construct the negative identities and prey upon the social reputation of the people.

Since the media reports the rumor that the crash of the plane might be the result of the explosion, the suicidal move of the pilot Jack, the public forms negative image of the pilot and this gives the Lyons negative identity that haunts his wife Kathryn and the daughter Mattie very hard. As Kathryn calls Matigan Rice, an old woman in Forest Park Nursing Home, presumably Jack's mother, whom she doesn't know because Jack never talked of her; Kathryn is branded with the negative identity,

the identity of the wife of the pilot who committed suicide. Mass media is responsible for spreading the rumor about Jack's death and thus affecting the identity of Kathryn and traumatizing her. Kathryn calls the old Matigan so as to notify her of the funeral of Jack. The conversation over the telephone follows:

'No, I'm not a relative,' Kathryn said. 'There's going to be a memorial service for her son, and I wanted her to be informed.'

'Her son died?'

'Yes.'

'What was his name?'

'Jack. Jack Lyons.'

'OK.'

'He was killed in a plane crash,' Kathryn added.

'Really? You mean that Vision crash?'

'Yes.'

'Oh, my God, wasn't that awful? What kind of a man would commit suicide and take all those innocent people with him?' (154-55)

This conversation between Kathryn and an old woman from the nursing home shows how the media is responsible to create the negative public image of Jack that haunts the identity of Kathryn too. As soon as there is the talk of crash, the old woman labels Jack of a person who committed not only the suicide but also killed the passengers on board. His identity of murderer has been constructed that tortures already traumatized Kathryn.

Douglas Kellner further explores how media culture is responsible to construct the identity of the people:



Media culture also provides the materials out of which many people construct their sense of class, of ethnicity and race, of nationality, of sexuality, of 'us' and 'them.' Media culture helps shape the prevalent view of the world and deepest values: it defines what is considered good or bad, positive or negative, moral or evil. Media stories and images provide the symbols, myths, and resources which help constitute a common culture for the majority of individuals in many parts of the world today. Media culture provides the materials to create identities whereby individuals insert themselves into contemporary techno-capitalist societies and which is producing a new form of global culture. (1)

The stories and images in the media reporting the crash in the novel *The Pilot's Wife* have fed the public with the resources to the public to assume the certain identities around them. They provide the materials, the feedbacks to the public whereby they recognize the people like Jack and his family. It is accordance with the stories and images broadcasted on the media, people form their opinions about the things around them, thus, they attest to the mass culture and its ideology to construct them as the consumers.

Jack's fifteen years old daughter, Mattie, is awestruck with the very imagination of her father being a murderer because it gives her the negative identity in the society that has worse implication to her life than the very death of her father. She is intent to know the truth about her father and does not want to be cheated. The rumor due to the materials circulated in the media is responsible to increase the intensity of her trauma that is seen in the conversation between her and her mother:

‘Mom, if it’s true, does that mean that Daddy murdered all those people? Would it be murder?’

‘Where did you hear the word?’ Kathryn asked quickly, as if Mattie were a child who had just uttered an obscenity she’d learned at school or from a friend. Yet the word *was* profane, Kathryn thought. It was appalling. More appalling for coming from the mouth of her fifteen-year-old daughter. (122)

This awful thought of the daughter even with the imagination of her father being a murderer and the suffering it inflicts is the result of the rumor spread in the media. Media has no care for the suffering of the individual rather it has to make profit selling the curious and interesting materials to entertain its consumers. Mattie has become the victim of the ideology of the mass media and thus, she is not willing to listen to any lies. The conversation continues:

‘I didn’t hear it anywhere, Mom. But I can think, can’t I?’ ‘Look, Mattie. Just hang on. I’ll be right there.’

‘No, Mom. Don’t come here. I don’t want you to come. I don’t want you to come here and try to tell me a lot of lies to make things better. Because I don’t want lies right now. It can’t be made better, and I don’t want to pretend. I just want to be left alone.’ (122)

Mattie avoids her mother too because she does not believe her own mother to tell her the truth. She would also tell her lies so as to bring solace on her. There is the confusion what is true or what is false and doubt is everywhere. She can’t trust even her mother. Mass media is responsible for the schizophrenic and chaotic state of the child’s mind. Mass media depends upon the system and reproduction of the materials

it gathers so as to shape the public to its customers. Both the system and reproduction are very important aspects to form a media culture according to Kellner:

Media culture consists of systems of radio and the reproduction of sound (albums, cassettes, CDs, and their instruments of dissemination such as radios, cassette recorders, and so on); of film and its modes of distribution (theatrical playing, video-cassette rental, TV showings); of print media ranging from newspapers to magazines; and to the system of television which stands at the center of media culture. Media culture is a culture of the image and often deploys sight and sound. The various media—radio, film, television, music, and print media such as magazines, newspapers, and comic books—privilege either sight or sound, or mix the two senses, playing as well on a broad range of emotions, feelings, and ideas. (1)

The whole system of mass media is thus exists in the reproduction of the materials it has at hand. The information is manipulated as per the capitalist ideology. Though they use the images and the sound as the medium to promote their version of entertaining stories, they are aware of the emotions and the feelings they evoke upon their consumers. It is due to this, Robert, the representative of the Pilot's Union, who has officially sent to help Kathryn to overcome the trauma of her husband's death and save her from the unnecessary hassles from the media, does not want Kathryn to watch the television at the time she is hard hit by the news of her husband's death:

All day, Robert had told her not to watch. The pictures would stay with her, he had warned, the images would not leave. It was better not to see, not to have them, for they would come back, in the daytime and in her dreams.

It was unimaginable, he said to her.

Meaning, Don't imagine it.

But how could she not? How could she stop the flow of detail, the flow of words and photographs in her mind?

Throughout the day, the phone had rung continuously. Most often Robert had answered it or given it to one of the people from the airline.

(40)

The images of the media haunt the traumatized Kathryn. So, Robert suggests her not to watch the television. There is no truth in whatever is presented in the television rather it is full of imagination and the guess work. The media adds up the things in the basic information as per the need of its consumers. The images have the direct impact upon the mind of the consumers which is clearly understood and used to manipulate their feelings. It indicates the powerlessness of the individuals before the mass media.

There is the exercise of the hierarchy between the powerful and the powerless in the media culture as Kellner rightly observes:

Media culture spectacles demonstrate who has power and who is powerless, who is allowed to exercise force and violence, and who is not. They dramatize and legitimate the power of the forces that be and demonstrate to the powerless that if they fail to conform, they risk incarceration or death. For those immersed from cradle to grave in a media and consumer society, it is therefore important to learn how to understand, interpret, and criticize its meanings and messages. (2)

Lyon family is powerless in the hierarchy and the multi-million dollar media like CNN are the powerful one. Even if Kathryn and Mattie know that the reality is totally different than it is presented by the mass media, the mass media coerces them so as to

believe that the version of truth represented in the media is the true one. If they are unable to comply with the views in the mass media their existence itself falls at risk. They are totally helpless not to watch the television and not to listen to the rumor spread by the mass media.

It is due to such hegemonic stance of the mass media, Robert is very critical of them. He compares the press to the dog that is looking for affection but it enters one's house as soon as he gets the affection. So, he suggests Kathryn not to share anything to the press:

‘Never feed the press,’ Robert said quickly. ‘They’re like dogs looking for affection. They’re hungry to be let inside the house.’

Kathryn smiled, and it shocked her, that she could smile. Her face hurt, the dryness and the salt of the crying. (33)

This novel appears to be very humanistic that questions the relevance of mass media that traumatize the people who are already experiencing the trauma. If we examine the position of Robert critically, we see the ideology in his suggestion too. He is the representative of the Pilot's Union, so, he is worried about the information Kathryn might leak to the press proving Jack, the pilot as the guilty of the crash. The Union never wants the crash to be the pilot's fault. Thus, both to speak or not to speak are tainted with ideology.

It is due to the capitalist ideology that operates inside the mass media Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno in their seminal essay about the system of reproduction and mass media “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception” observe:

The culture industry endlessly cheats its consumers out of what it endlessly promises. The promissory note of pleasure issued by plot and

packaging is indefinitely prolonged: the promise, which actually comprises the entire show, disdainfully intimates that there is nothing more to come, that the diner must be satisfied with reading the menu. The desire inflamed by the glossy names and images is served up finally with a celebration of the daily round it sought to escape. (53)

Horkheimer and Adorno are very critical of the mass culture and thus, they term the mass media and their system as the culture industry. They charge the culture industry of the reproduction of the lies. They see the packaging of the ideology and capitalist motive in their reproduction so that their promise of truth becomes no more the truth rather the vehicle of ideology. They are seemingly faithful to the consumers but actually they manipulate their mind. It is due to this reason, Robert suggests Kathryn to avoid the press charging it to be like an opportunist dog.

The novel criticizes the lies promoted by the mass media and dismisses them to by the production of their ideological imagination and discussion upon the rumors and fiction. In the novel, the reporters and the photo journalists gather at the Tides Inn, discuss the rumors and make up the fiction out of them is clearly indicated:

Julia and Kathryn taking turns watching over her, and Robert, Rita had said, was in Jack's office. Doing what? Kathryn wondered.

All day, down the long gravel drive and behind the wooden gate, there had been people looking in and other people keeping them away. But now, Kathryn imagined, the reporters and cameramen and producers and makeup artists were probably all headed over to the Tides Inn to have a drink, tell stories, discuss the rumors, have dinner, and sleep. Wasn't this just the end of a normal workday for them? (33)

After the death of Jack, Robert is sent to help Kathryn bear the shock of her husband's death and save her from the assault of press by the Pilot's Union. Rita, one of the members of the Union, also visits Kathryn to express her sympathy towards her. As Rita says she has hired a room at the Tides Inn, Kathryn thinks of the Tides Inn and imagines how the journalists and the reporters might be making the unreal, imaginary ideological tales. In her view, the news reports are the constructed discourses made during drinking wine and chatting to each other. Thus, she is very critical of the way the news reports are made.

The culture industry stands in its biggest weapon of abstraction of the facts and turning the facts the vehicle of ideology. The reporters make the fictions and stories that entertain their consumer out of the fact they get and by doing so they deceive the mass. In the essay "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception", Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno explore the abstraction the culture industry uses as its publicity device or the means of promotion:

Abstractions in particular are identified as publicity devices. Language which appeals to mere truth only arouses impatience to get down to the real business behind it. Words which are not a means seem meaningless, the others seem to be fiction, untruth. Value judgments are perceived either as advertisements or as mere chatter. The noncommittal vagueness of the resulting ideology does not make it more transparent, or weaker. Its very vagueness, the quasiscientific reluctance to be pinned down to anything which cannot be verified, functions as an instrument of control. Ideology becomes the emphatic and systematic proclamation of what is. Through its inherent tendency

to adopt the tone of the factual report, the culture industry makes itself the irrefutable prophet of the existing order. (58-59)

Abstraction is the publicity device through which mass media compete to gain popularity. They report the things in one way but their inner intention is to gain profit so, they can modify the techniques of reporting. They embellish the fact with curious mystery so that they are able to attract the attention of large number of consumers. They advertise but the inherent motive for the advertisement is full of ideology, the target to earn profit or the capital. They may outwardly claim that they are impartial and free from any selfish motive; they play the role to maintain the existing social hierarchy between the capitalists and the consumers. The culture industry manipulates the power of reasoning, turns the mass into the people using their rationality in the favor of capitalists and helps to maintain the status quo so that the audience remains consumer forever and the capitalists gain the profit from them forever.

This kind of abstraction is seen in the novel in many places as the television and the mass media reports the plane crash in different ways. They keep changing their view on the crash so that they could captivate their audience or the consumer. First they report that the reason behind the crash is the mechanical failure of the plane:

Already she had noticed that Robert Hart had a nervous habit of holding his pen between the knuckles of his fingers and flipping it back and forth like a baton.

‘I thought you should know,’ Robert said. ‘They’re saying mechanical failure.’

‘Who’s saying mechanical failure?’

‘London.’



‘They know?’

‘No. It’s just bullshit at this point. They’re guessing. They’ve found a piece of the fuselage and an engine.’ (33)

Robert Hart informs Kathryn that the London headquarters of the Vision Airways tells the media that the reason behind the crash is the mechanical failure. But soon after, the report is changed. The continual changing of the report seems to be an attempt to prove that the pilot is responsible for the crash. It is a good example of abstraction as the changing the reports on media keeps their audience captivated. The mechanical failure suggests that the blame of the crash goes to the Vision Airways, the very influential capitalist company, but the capitalists have the power of the mass media and so they think immediately to whom the blame is easy to shift. They exert their power to media and blame shifts to the relatively powerless person, the dead pilot Jack.

In contrast to the capitalist airways company, the pilot is individual and his family is unable to influence the media like the capitalists. Thus abstraction is seen as the rumor and the report of the crash changes:

He looked at her hard and took a deep breath.

‘They’re saying pilot error,’ he said.

She shut her eyes.

‘It’s just speculation,’ he said quickly. ‘They think they’ve found some flight data that doesn’t make sense. But, trust me, they couldn’t know for sure.’

‘Oh.’

‘Also,’ he said quietly, ‘they’ve found some bodies. (61)

This abstraction of the crash, shifting the blame to the dead pilot from the capitalist airways company traumatize the family of the dead pilot, his wife Kathryn and daughter Mattie more than the news of the death of Jack itself. Mattie cannot digest it and Kathryn senses lies in it.

There is the ideology in the play in such abstraction as the media use a documentary motion picture to show the crash in visual form. The visual images are very quick to enter into the mind of the consumers, the audience and thus, involved in the manipulation of the rationality of the public and deceiving not only the family of the deceased rather deceiving the mass, the public as a whole. Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno locate ideology in such use of pictures or photograph as they claim:

Ideology is split between the photographing of brute existence and the blatant lie about its meaning, a lie which is not articulated directly but drummed in by suggestion. The mere cynical reiteration of the real is enough to demonstrate its divinity. Such photological proof may not be stringent, but it is overwhelming. (59)

Thus, using the photological proofs, the media involves in the abstraction of the crash. There is the ideology in its split form- the photography and the lie to which it is committed on the behalf of the capitalists. The pilot family is thus, completely loses its identity due to the ideology professed by the mass media. The domination of the mass media and their manipulation of the public reasoning in the post-industrial society has the harsh implication on the life of the common people, the ordinary people like Lyons who cannot attest to the reports reported on the mass media.

As we see the capitalist hegemony and status quo maintained by the mass media in the novel *The Pilot's Wife*, we gradually see that there is the operation of the

patriarchal ideology too to large extent. It is due to the unconvincing, incredible reports of the crash and Jack committing suicide, Kathryn is compelled to assess the past marital life between her and his husband Jack. Because everybody poses the questions regarding the marital life of Jack and his condition before he left home to his duty. Even the representative of Union, who helps her to regain her composure and understands most of her painful feelings starts posing questions about her dead husband:

‘Was Jack agitated or depressed?’

Robert paused.

‘You mean recently?’ she asked.

‘I know it’s an awful question,’ he said. ‘But you’re going to have to answer it sooner or later. If there was something, if there’s anything you know or you can remember, it would be better if you and I talked about it first.’ (62)

It is due to the continual questioning regarding Jack and his life in the family Kathryn is forced to look for the answer. She cross examines her memory of the past, the life spent with her husband.

Kathryn is amazed to find that she actually knows Jack very little because she was drenched in love with him, and due to the blindness in love and the family responsibility to raise a child, she has not actually accessed to many of the things in his life though they might have been accessed:

She considered the question. Odd, she thought, how intensely you knew a person, or thought you did, when you were in love — soaked, drenched in love — only to discover later that perhaps you didn’t know that person quite as well as you had imagined. Or weren’t quite as well

known as you had hoped to be. In the beginning, a lover drank in every word and gesture and then tried to hold on to that intensity for as long as possible. But inevitably, if two people were together long enough, that intensity had to wane. It was the way people worked, Kathryn thought, with a need to evolve from being sick with love to making a life with someone who was also changing, altering himself, so that the couple could one day raise a child. (62-63)

With this assertion that a lover might not know his/her lover due to the haze of the love, Kathryn was forced to ruminate the past life and any unusual behaviors on his part. Nothing seemed to go unusual for her. Kathryn's inability to understand the males is highlighted as she thinks about Robert who is actually helping her to cope with the trauma of her husband's death, 'What did she know about him except that he had been kind to her?' (215). Her daughter who is unable to digest the report of the media that her father had committed suicide also questions her mother's ability to know her father.

Though she silences her daughter saying it as a rumor, Kathryn is forced to doubt herself that she might not have known Jack properly:

'Oh, Mattie,' Kathryn said. 'It's just a rumor. The news media, they get an idea and they go with it before they've even checked it out. It's awful.

It's irresponsible. And it isn't true. It absolutely isn't true. I'm here with the airline safety board, and they would know, and they're denying the rumor very strongly.'

There was a silence.

'But, Mom,' Mattie said. 'What if it is true?'

‘It’s not true.’

‘How would you know?’ (121)

Being very critical to the media and the news they report, Kathryn gives solace to her daughter but she starts to feel unable to unravel the mystery of the past life of Jack. Jack used to tell her that he had no mother as she had died of cancer when he was nine. But the investigator traces that he has seventy four years old mother called Matigan Rice at Forest Park Nursing Home and thus, Jack had cheated his wife about his past life. Kathryn wonders that Jack had named his daughter after the name of his mother and he was very fond of his daughter, Mattie.

The obscurity and mystery of Jack’s past is the part of patriarchal ideology that shows how males possess the female body blinding them with love and keep their secrets of life as mystery, never sharing them. Though patriarchal ideology lets the males to regard women as the enigmatic objects of whom they cannot know much, this enigma has depicted in the males too in the novel *The Pilot’s Wife*. Shreve suggests her female readers that the patriarchy is responsible to keep the male their secrets to themselves and form a mask of obscurity around them which is liable to betray their wives.

Men regard women as the mysterious being which is criticized by Simone de Beauvoir in her book *The Second Sex* and this assumption is informed with patriarchal ideology. It is due to this patriarchal ideology that the females are mysterious beings, they are Other; male never shares his secrets to his wife. Beauvoir criticizes this ideology as:

Surely woman is . . . 'mysterious as is all the world' . . . . Each is *subject* only for himself; each can grasp in immanence only himself, alone: from this point of view the *other* is always a mystery. To men's

eyes the opacity of the self-knowing self . . . is denser in the *other* who is feminine; men are unable to penetrate her special experience through any working of sympathy: they are condemned to ignorance of the quality of woman's erotic pleasure, the discomfort of menstruation, and the pains of childbirth. (263)

It is due to the otherness, the women are regarded as mysterious to men. Men cannot penetrate into the experiences of the females and they are unable to feel the desires of the women. This patriarchal ideology in Jack is clearly experienced by Kathryn though it is too late that Jack has already died by the time she ponders its prevalence in him. Jack shares very little of his life to Kathryn both physically and mentally.

Jack is absent for his duty to London for many days and spends most of the time in his office at home in computer with Mattie. He is never with her to listen to her emotions and experiences. So there is mystery not only on the part of female but also on the part of males as Beauvoir suggests:

The truth is that there is mystery on both sides: as the *other* who is of masculine sex, every man, also, has within him a presence, an inner self impenetrable to woman; she in turn is in ignorance of the male's erotic feeling. But in accordance with the universal rule I have stated, the categories in which men think of the world are established *from their point of view, as absolute*: they misconceive reciprocity, here as everywhere. A mystery for man, woman is considered to be mysterious in essence. (263)

It is due to the othering of Kathryn by Jack, there is the mystery on the both sides. Both of them are equally mysterious to each other but the difference between them is the fact that Jack has established himself as the absolute one in the family. It is due to

the realization of the mystery and the patriarchal ideology, Kathryn has to live the fake identity, the identity that she needs to act as if she had really known her husband:

‘I just know,’ Kathryn said.

There was another silence.

‘It’s probably true,’ Mattie said.

‘Mattie, you *knew* your father.’

‘Maybe.’

‘What does that mean?’

‘Maybe I didn’t know him,’ Mattie said. ‘Maybe he was unhappy.’

‘If your father was unhappy, I’d have known.’

‘But how do you ever know that you know a person?’ she asked. (121)

With his daughter, Kathryn needs to act that she really knows her father but actually she does not. It is due to the realization that she is living a fake life in the confusion about her husband, she starts gathering information about him.

She also sees the patriarchal ideology in her mother’s tragedy that she drank a lot and quarreled with her father because she could not get the love from her father to the same extent she used to get from him at the beginning phase of her marital life:

The tragedy of her mother’s life, Kathryn had always thought, was the gradual withdrawal of Bobby Hull’s attentions to her, which began naturally enough, in the way that even two people who are deeply in love are eventually able to carry on with life and go to work and take care of babies, but became, as soon as her mother felt the withdrawal and named it — labeled it, so to speak — a way of being. Kathryn could hear her mother calling from the upstairs bedroom, in an agonized voice, over and over, the single word *Why?* Sometimes . . .

her mother begged Bobby Hull to tell her she was beautiful, which automatically caused Kathryn's father, who could be stubborn, to be stingy with his love, even though he did love his wife very much and might have told her so if she had not asked. (64)

Though the mother of Kathryn pleads to her father for her love it is totally upto the father to decide. She does not understand her husband and asks him many times why he has withdrawn his love towards her. Her husband never complies with her because he is a male who thinks himself the superior between the two. So he never understands her feelings.

Bobby Hull's thought is informed by the patriarchal ideology. It is clear that women must be subservient to the males even if they love them or not; the females are not expected to enter into the important spheres dominated by the males in the family and society which is very suggestive of the domestic, political and civil oppression which is observed by Mary Wollstonecraft as:

The mighty business of female life is to please, and restrained from entering into more important concerns by political and civil oppression, sentiments became events, the reflection deepens what it should, and would have effaced, if the understanding had been allowed to take a wider range. (398)

Though Kathryn does not take the patriarchal ideology embedded in the family matters seriously at first, she is compelled to examine them critically because she has no option left. She has found herself very less informed about her husband. So, she critically evaluates the changes that come in her husband and suspects her husband to be similar to her like her father to her mother. She doubts about the treachery of Jack



that might have victimized her because he is a male too, not aloof from the patriarchal ideology that informs his superiority over his wife:

He had begun to turn to her less often in bed. And then, when he did, it seemed as though an edge was gone. It was just a gradual sliding away, so gradual as to sometimes be almost imperceptible, until one day it occurred to Kathryn that she and Jack hadn't made love in over two weeks. She'd thought at the time that it was his need for sleep that had overwhelmed him; his schedule was difficult, and he often seemed tired. But sometimes she worried that possibly she was responsible for this new pattern, that she had become too passive. And so she had tried for a time to be more imaginative and playful, an effort that wasn't entirely successful. (65)

As Wollstonecraft suggests, Kathryn thinks that it is her duty to please her husband. She conforms to the traditional role of a wife rather than complaining her husband. Since she did not protest to her husband for his indifferent behavior, he might have encouraged going to other women to have the sexual enjoyment.

At the end of the novel, Kathryn discovers that he had actually kept an ex-flight attendant named Muire as his mistress in London and his sexual indifference to her was the result of his sexual involvement with Muire. She repents for not complaining her husband and blaming his busy schedule responsible for his sexual indifference. She understand that if she had complained him of his changed sexual behavior, she might be able to get a clue of his betrayal but unfortunately, she did not protest his unusual behaviour at bed when it first appeared:

Kathryn had vowed not to complain. She would not panic. She would not even discuss the matter. But the price for such steadfastness,

Kathryn soon realized, was the creation of a subtle gauze all around her, a veil that kept her and Jack just beyond easy reach of each other.

And after a while, the gauze began to make her anxious. (65)

In the hope of better conjugal life, Kathryn remains silent. She vows she would not complain her husband for his sexual indifference to her. She never thinks that the patriarchal ideology has systematically silenced her but her condition in this case is very similar to the category subaltern as proposed by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Her condition is pathetic because of the ideological construction of gender as Spivak asserts, “. . . the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow” (32).

Kathryn’s silence and her husband’s dominance over her is ideological and is historically emergent. The patriarchal ideology that informs Kathryn’s father also informs her husband Jack. At least Kathryn’s mother pointed to the indifference of her father and protested it, but Kathryn never protested him. She is silenced systematically in the name of love. Only after the invasion of the mass media, she regains her critical attitude, but it is too late to protest her husband as he is already dead.

Antonio Gramsci discusses the notion of ideology in his essay “The Concept of ‘Ideology’” as:

Indeed the meaning which the term ‘ideology’ has assumed in Marxist philosophy implicitly contains a negative value judgment and excludes the possibility that for its founders the origin of ideas should be sought for in sensations, and therefore, in the last analysis, in physiology.

‘Ideology’ itself must be analysed historically, in the terms of the philosophy of praxis, as a superstructure. (15)

In the novel *The Pilot's Wife*, Kathryn has been cheated and dominated both by the media culture and the patriarchal ideology. She becomes the victim of patriarchal ideology because of her inability to assess the family history with the example set by the case of her father and mother. Her mother's life had ruined due to her father's withdrawal of love. Her husband Jack repeats the same but he does it very unknowingly so that Kathryn would never become aware of it. If the death had not happened and Jack did not die, she might probably never be aware of the treachery and the fraud of her husband.

As we analyze the novel *The Pilot's Wife*, we see the mass media as operated with the powerful capitalist ideology and the women being the helpless victims in the net of media ideology and the patriarchal ideology in the post-industrial societies at the same time. So, Shreve has underscored the need of better understanding the operation of the capitalist ideology in the mass media and be conscious of the small changes in the attitude of their husbands to cope with the patriarchal ideology and the males' betrayal in the novel.

Shreve has the strong urge to empower the female subjects in the post-industrial societies underscoring the need that the individuals like Kathryn should be media literate, so that they could understand the capitalist ideology being operated in it and resist it. Further they should have the better understanding of the patriarchal history and critical evaluation of their family life so that they would not be cheated by their husbands in the name of love. To sum up, Kellner's view that how one can be able lead the life that is haunted by the mass media in independent way is very

important where he has advocated the media literacy and the conscious resistance to the ideology embedded to it so as to cope with the hegemony of the mass media:

In a contemporary media culture, the dominant media of information and entertainment are a profound and often misperceived source of cultural pedagogy: they contribute to educating us how to behave and what to think, feel, believe, fear, and desire— and what not to.

Consequently, the gaining of critical media literacy is an important resource for individuals and citizens in learning how to cope with this seductive cultural environment. Learning how to read, criticize, and resist media manipulation can help individuals empower themselves in relation to dominant media and culture. (2)

Media culture which actually is the vehicle of the capitalist ideology, in Kellner's view, has been gained the legitimization as the source of cultural pedagogy in the post industrial world. But this legitimization of mass media and its acceptance as the source of cultural pedagogy is misguided one. In the name of informing and educating the people with the representation of the role models for the thought and behavior of the audience, they manipulate the desire of the audience and create the consumers among them who surrender to the capitalists as their consumers and thus, they turn to the hegemonized subjects of the capitalist ideology.

As a solution to the capitalist hegemony, in the move to liberate the hegemonized subjects of the post industrial society, Kellner advocates the change in the attitude to the mass media. One need not regard them as the source of cultural pedagogy and follow them blindly. The subject of the post-industrial society needs to be media literate; they should become able to decipher the ideology embedded to the mass media so that they could resist them whenever they feel hegeminized by its

capitalist, hegemonic ideology. The mass media has created the seductive environment in the post-industrial society that can be coped only with the resource of media literacy. One needs to be able to read, criticize and resist the media manipulation.

In the novel *The Pilot's Wife*, Kathryn, Mattie and Muire all believe that Jack had not committed suicide rather he might have been betrayed. They are critical of the lies that are promoted in the mass media but their resistance is not informed by the media literacy or the understanding of the inherent capitalist ideology of the mass media rather it is due to their shock and anger to Jack's death, understanding of his behavior and so on. Their unwillingness to believe mass media should not generate from the frustration and trauma of Jack's death rather it should generate from the media literacy; the resistance should generate from the media literacy which is their only resource to counter the capitalist ideology embedded to the mass media and make them able to cope with the seductive environment created by the mass media in the post-industrial society. Thus, in the novel *The Pilot's Wife*, Shreve has not only made her readers aware about the capitalist ideology inherent to the reports of the mass media rather she has also presented the solution to empower the post-industrial, hegemonized subjects to cope with them with the resource of the media literacy.

### **III. The Media Culture and Patriarchy at the Core of *The Pilot's Wife***

In this research Shreve's novel *The Pilot's Wife* has been analyzed so far, we become aware of the condition of the individuals in the post-industrial society and the ideologies they are entangled with. The post-industrial society is operated by the media culture that is operated by the capitalist ideology. The system of radio, television, press and other mass media form the media culture or the mass culture which is responsible to shape the public opinion and the views in the interest of the capitalists. They create the fictions, myths and the lies and report them to the audience without the verification of the truth value of the report. It helps them turn the audience into their consumers to sell their lies as per their profit motive. The individuals who know that the media is reporting the false report and cannot adjust themselves to the views of the media, they head to the extinction of their identity. In *The Pilot's Wife*, the media is reporting the plane crash in which the American pilot Jack Lyon and many passengers died. The reports on media keeps on changing with the interest of the capitalist though the pilot's family does not believe on the truth of the report.

At the beginning, the media reports the crash to be mechanical failure that might affect the reputation of the airlines company called Vision. As the capitalist company sees that this version of the report could harm its reputation, the blame shifts to the dead pilot Lyon. It shows the inconsistency in the media report on the behalf of the capitalists and the motive to sell their own false news report to the masses making them interesting. Kathryn Lyons, the wife of Jack and his fifteen years old daughter Mattie who are already traumatized due to the shock death of Jack in the crash are

more traumatized by the media. Media is running on the behalf of capitalist ideology thus, reporting the lies so as to make their news curious interesting and earn profit.

Since the media invades the private life of the Lyons family after Jack's death, and questions start to arise about his past, marital life, Kathryn Lyon starts to examine the past, marital life in which she sees nothing unusual. But slowly she starts to see that Jack had started to avoid her and he had not shared many things of his life to her. In the exploration of the past life of Jack whom she thinks she knows very well she discovers the treachery. Jack had kept another wife called Muire in London. Thus, the novel also highlights the patriarchal ideology and criticizes it.

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