

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**  
**Fragmented Subjectivity in *Waiting***

**Fragmented Subjectivity in *Waiting***  
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**Submitted By:  
Bodh Raj Gautam**

**University Campus  
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**Tribhuvan University**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

The thesis titled, Fragmented Subjectivity in *Waiting* by Bodh Raj Gautam  
Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, has been  
approved by the undersigned members of the research committee:

Members of the Research Committee:

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Internal Examiner

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External Examiner

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Head  
Central Department of English

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

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Bodh Raj Gautam

## **Abstract**

Ha Jin's *Waiting* carves a picture of commoners who get victimized in the rigid system that binds each individual into its unnatural and impractical rules and regulations. The protagonists, Manna and Lin long time lovers working in the army hospital guided by strict ideals of the Old Chinese Culture are not permitted to have sexual relationship outside marriage despite their high inclination towards each other. They indeed attempt a lot to reach the goal of new marriage but are made to wait till his wife Shuyu gets ready to accept the divorce. Though both of them make numerous efforts to release them from the cultural boundary, they fail to do so. Their every attempt for wholeness and perfection of new conjugal life remains incomplete which displays the conflict between individuals and rigid military system and society extant basically in the Chinese culture. The very tussle deteriorates the designed plan of individuals and their subjectivity in totality.

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## I: Introduction

### Ha Jin and Fragmented Subjectivity

*Waiting* displays the conflict between a life of scholarship and of carnal adventure. The novel scrutinizes the protagonists' hospital's professional life and rural life. Using imagination and wit, he has produced this novel that goes beyond the pretties of the movement and instead attempts to do justices to the mental and physical drives and complex motives that characterize human relationship in the academy and out of it.

Ha Jin – a pen name that Xefei Jin adopted for easier pronunciation was the first Chinese born American writer to win both the National Book Award and the PEN/Hemingway Award. However, Jin became an English language writer almost by happenstance. His father was an army officer. Therefore, when facing the choices between going to work in the country side and joining the People's Liberation Army at age fourteen, he chose the latter patrolling the border between northern China and the Soviet Union for six years. After leaving the army, he worked as a railroad telegrapher in Harbin, the capital of Heilongjiang province from 1975 to 1977 and learnt English by listening to the radio. In 1988, he went to Heilongjiang University also in Harbin, a city he loved so much that he used the first character of it, Ha, in his pen name. He graduated with a B.A. degree in English in 1982. Then he moved with his father, who had just been retired from the army, to their home province of Shandong.

Two years later, Jin received his M.A. in American literature from Shandong University; where he was taught by writing American full bright scholars and was imposed for the first time to the National Book Award – winning novels of William Faulkner and Flannery O' Corn or. While Jin enjoyed reading these works, he never

imagined he would one day follow these authors' footsteps. He wanted to be a scholar and a translator.

Shortly after his marriage to a young mathematician, Lisha Bian, Jin was given the opportunity to pursue a scholarship overseas. In 1985 he went to the United States to begin doctoral work on modern American poetry at Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. His wife joined him in the United States in 1987. He had planned to return to China after four years. But because of the shooting during the political protests in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989, he decided to stay in the United States. It was difficult for him to find job in academia. By then he had published a book of poems in English, *Between Silences*, so he thought if he continued to publish some books in English he might find a job for teaching creative writing.

In 1992, Jin received his Ph.D. degree from Brandeis. One year later he was accepted by Emory University as an assistant professor of creative writing. In the following years, he published two collections of short fiction: *Ocean of Words* which received the PEN/Hemingway Award, and *Under the Red Flag*, which won the Flannery O' Connor Award. Jin's novel *In the Pond* was selected as a best fiction in 1999 as well as the PEN/Faulkner Award (2000). His short stories have been included in the anthologies, and *The Norton Introduction to Fiction* and *The Norton Introduction to literature*, among others. He also became the young J. Allen professor of English and creative writing at Emory.

While American literary circles praised his effort to transform the figures, statements, ideas, and plans found in history books about China into universally accessible image of struggle, thus presenting a complex view of ambivalences and

hypocrisies that flourish in an intensely nationalistic culture, Hu Jin's works have, to date, received little attention in China.

Since coming to the United States in 1985, he has published six books including two collections of poetry *Between Silences: A Voice from China* (1990) and his first novel, *In the Pond* (1998). *Ocean of Words* won the PEN/Hemingway Award and *Under the Red Flag* won the Flannery O'Connor Award. *Waiting* his second novel, was a winner of the *National Book Award*.

One of the most prominent characters is Manna whose life history is fully miserable and fragmented. Orphaned girl, Manna whose parents died many years ago in traffic accident, now, works in the army hospital as a nurse. Her childhood has been very miserable and tormenting that she has been brought up in shortage of parental love and care. While working as a nurse in the army hospital, Manna Wu meets Mai Dong, lieutenant of army hospital with whom she has immediately fallen in love. They sit together in the park and touch each other's parts of body. Within few days each is separated due to their work and never meets again. Her longing for permanent partnership gets ruined and she becomes alone. Later she develops her relationship with King Kong, the army doctor of same hospital. Manna again falls in love with Kong but she is uncertain whether he loves her or not because he is already a married man. Suffering from loneliness, illusion, and dilemma with Kong, she meets Geng Yang, an army person with strong and attractive personality. But Geng Yang, on the contrary, rapes her and abandons the job. Again Manna tries to tell herself this sweet and stable life, health and happiness are worth for Lin so, she goes to be seduced by Gin. But, by contrast Lin is restricted by law to perform sexual intercourse with Manna because the Chinese law does not allow intra-sexual activity if the person is a



married man. Yet there is emerging relationship between the doctor and the nurse as a lover who are closer with the compound of hospital.

Hence society and the army hospital stand against the relationship of Lin and Manna and limit them to a certain boundary. Despite their long suppressed desire for sex, they cannot perform sexual intercourse. They are unconsciously too much willing to come out of the social trap and do whatever they prefer. But as being economically dependent on the army hospital they cannot that so as well. Every summer Lin returns to Goose village to divorce his wife, Shuyu. He has dismayed his fiancée – "She looked as old, her face wrinkled and her hands leathery. Though Lin wants to divorce Shuyu he is still in dilemma whether he would abandon the previous pleasures of rural life. In fact he is happy when he is in the village and he is tensed when he is in hospital. But his inclination towards Manna compels him to divorce his wife, Shuyu as soon as possible and gets unified into the marriage bond with Manna who tries to cure his loneliness. After all the Chinese system does not permit him to divorce Shuyu until she gets ready for. Kong tries to tell himself the sweet and stable new life, health and happiness, are worth when he gets chance to marry Manna. He tries, in short, to convince himself that Manna is enough.

After waiting for eighteen years, Lin and Manna are finally free to marry. Their so long waiting for each other to get unified into a marriage bond is because of strict rules and regulations of the army hospital as well as the rules of the Chinese culture. Indeed they have been suppressed in the Chinese and have been deprived of their natural rights they need to make their life fruitful and meaningful. But the preventive society has always antagonized every possible opportunity and blocked the path of happiness and romance. This is how their subjectivity never gets unified. Rather it keeps on dividing. The more Manna and Lin attempt to release them from

the trap of dark and desolate world but more troublesome situations come before them. But when they become free to fulfill their long suppressed desire of sex, Lin finds him less energetic and excited. His inclination towards sex is not as powerful as of Manna. As a matter of fact Manna has expected a lot from Lin that he fails to provide her with after they get unified into marriage bond. She turns out to have an insatiable appetite for sex, partly because she has waited so long to indulge in her fantasies. Poor Lin finds it difficult to satisfy his head strong new wife and begins to change his attitude about the humble devoted, traditional bound Shuyu, who demanded so low of him. He even wonders whether he has ever really loved Manna or Shuyu. Eventually Manna gives birth to twins but the motherhood does not give her the satisfaction as much as it would have done when she was young. Now she is approaching middle age. She is becoming a querulous, chronically dissatisfied wife who blames most of her troubles on her patient, hardworking husband. She feels that he is not really much of a man.

Mana dissatisfaction due to lack of sexual pleasure that she has ever fantasized dismantles her subjectivity and makes her life fragmented. She becomes neither a complete wife nor can she play the role of a mother. Her individual identity is still in dire crisis despite her frequent efforts to make it success even after marriage and birth of twins. Lin is not an especially satisfactory lover, and if he had had more strength of character he might have been able to do something to prevent her from waiting eighteen years for the fulfillment of her dreams. At the end of novel Lin is staging away from home more and more frequently and paying visits to his first wife, Shuyu, in her room. What makes the novel moving and important is Jin's evocative and compelling prose. Thus, near the novel's end, a beautifully depicted revisit of Lin's previous wife Shuyu represents the life long conflict. Lin Kong, the doctor and

Manna, nurse take pains to profess what they can not always feel. So their subjectivity is not unified but always fragmented.

Jin does not, of course, write about souls but about bodies and their endless needs. The novel constitutes an extended complaint about male/female plight, a plight finally spiritual though manifested through the physical. The writer thus leaves his protagonists in their fragmented condition in the sense that Manna and Lin remain unsatisfied even after a very long period of waiting. In the beginning they were unhappy and wanted to be happy getting unified with each other. They have spent so long time keeping them away from sexual intercourse due to the oppressive rules and regulations of the army hospital. Their hope and wants still remain unfulfilled as they turn old and physically desolate. But conflict that arises between Manna and Lin is due to imbalance in their desire and wants of sex. Manna is still zealous and feels energetic but Lin finds him not as much energetic as he was before. There is psychological conflict between them due to unfilled sexual desires Lin feels humiliated as he has not been able to satisfy her sexually and Manna's expectation gets rotten. Thus their subjectivity gets fragmented.

*Waiting* since its publication in 1999, it acclaimed lots of critical reviews and controversies as well. The novel basically critiqued for new criticism, cultural conflict, and the nature of love, family, duty and divorce. In the novel, Hu Jin accomplishes something close to magic on the printed page by the selective use of detail that arouses the sense and makes things real. Food, names of objects and physical characteristics and activities of people are coupled with parsimonious description of sights, sounds and smells, so that a culture alien to most of us becomes vivid and the reader becomes an occupant of the tale. The novel is written in totally original fashion that studies the interpersonal intricate relationship of Chinese people

in a highly textured prose. The style of the novel is to a Fable or Fairy tale. As in those genres, its language is straight forward and simple, but *Waiting* is filled with irony and subtle meanings. Hu Jin structures the tale with a prologue and three equal parts of twelve chapters each. He weaves together complex stories, but in its simplest outline the plot unfolds the story of Gin Kong and his desire to have happiness and love in marriage. The novel details the story of Kong's eighteen year long efforts to divorce Shuyu and marry Manna Wu. It reveals how the collision between the old cultures of rural China, where divorce is rare, and the new world of Cultural Revolution towards Lin Kong's best efforts and creates the life we experience in this beautifully written and powerful novel. *Waiting* can also be analyzed concentrating on the cultural conflict at the centre of the novel. As a matter of fact cultural conflict is at the centre of the novel, where two worlds collide in the story of a man seeking a divorce from his wife by an arranged marriage: the ancient feudal cultural of China and the world of Cultural Revolution led by Chairman Mao.

Similarly the power relation network between authoritative Chinese bureaucratic system and the individual is also the matter of great importance. It is a love story set in a bleak landscape from which all spontaneous beauty and pleasure have been banished. The authoritarianism of the Chinese Cultural Revolution makes for an obstacle so forbidding that thwarted yearning of Red Army doctor Lin Kong and his devoted colleague, nurse Manna Wu, stretch across nearly two decades.

Issues of love, family duty, divorce, rich image and complex ideas are the elements of Jin's novel. My claim, in this research is how Manna's self is fragmented because of extra sexual activities and how a person Lin Kong, suffers from the identity crisis when his subjectivity is fragmented because of the attraction towards Manna, because of the imbalance between sexuality and intellectuality his self

explodes. In my research, indeed Manna, and Lin Kong are victimized internally by themselves.

Before entering next chapter, I would like to define some key terms briefly related to my study for instance, "self", 'identity' "desire". Self is the identity of anything/anybody regarded abstractly. Moreover, self is the unity (ego, subject, memory, mind, I, awareness, and consciousness known) that endures throughout change and is aware of its unity, its endurance and change. Therefore self (subjectivity) is the entire sequence of mental events of which one can be aware of at any given moment. Self and identity usually come together. There is proximity between them. The identity is oneness which endures as a self regulating unity throughout change. In as much, identity is that which can be identified as being the same from among a diversity or plurality of things. Self is fragmented or torn when the unity is subverted.

Simply, desire means a strong wish to have or do something. And in the context of my research this wish is sexual one. To become a 'self' the individual must seek reorganization by demanding the other to recognize him – self or his desire. In this regard there is unalienable relationship among self, identity, and desire.

The purpose of this research is to portray protagonists Manna Wu and Lin Kong's "fragmented subjectivity" in the light of how they create their impossibility when they try to get love through lust. The thesis will try to prove that the perfection of subjectivity is never achievable. Manna Wu and Lin Kong suffer from identity crisis when they can not maintain the balance between instinctual lust and their intellectual status.

## II. Psychoanalytic Scrutiny of Self

As a theoretical tool, Lacanian psychoanalysis is chosen to picture how the protagonist is maneuvered in the play of illusion/desire. It is hypothesized that perfection of libidinal desire of the protagonist becomes a mirage because the more he tries to possess it, the farther it slips away. Lacanian view of "desire" is similar to Derridian idea of "meaning". Both of them are slippery in nature. Desire, according to Lacan, is like a signifier but, having no signified. Meredith Skura, in *Psychoanalytic Criticism*, writes, "Desire, for Lacan, is never assuage able in reality. Lacan's call is to question what passes for reality, not to accept it, and certainly to question all authoritative versions of it" (354).

If we analyze the history of study on "Self", Enlightenment is the period when human subject was considered as a unified individual with a centre, an inner core that was there at birth and developed as the individual grew, while remaining essentially the same. This core of the "self" was the source of the subject's identity. However, contemporary philosophy has followed the natural sciences in shattering this notion which is linked with a cosmology that puts "man" at the centre of the universe and has de-centered the subject itself. In Enlightenment period, the subject was constructed in the interaction between self and society. The postmodern subject, by contrast, has no fixed, essential, or permanent identity. Subjectivity is formed and transformed in a continuous process that takes place in reaction to the ways.

Psychoanalysis studies the oftentimes skewed ways in which the mind expresses feelings. Ryan Michael views that it is also "concerned with the dynamics of interpersonal relations and with the way self is formed through interactions with its familial and socio-cultural environment" (103). The study of the mind's operations in literature is concerned either with the unconscious and the instincts or with the family,

personal history and social world that shapes the self. The focus of the psychoanalysis is, therefore, unconscious part of mind. It can help us better to explain literary relationships, actions, motives, and the very existence itself of the text. Moreover, it engages in the interpretation and source of information therapeutically. Themes and motives central to psychoanalysis are desire and loss, delay and repletion of doubling, lack and so on. In his book *Ecrits* Lacan opines:

Psychoanalysis is the science of the mirages that appear within this field. A unique experience, rather abject one after all, but one that cannot be recommended too highly to those who wish to be introduced to the principle of man's follies, for, by revealing itself as akin to a whole gamut of disorders, it throws light upon them. (119)

For Freud, consciousness is not primary but only the aspect of the unconscious. This is how the birth of psychoanalysis took place.

Freud believed that unconscious motives and the feelings people experience as children have an enormous impact on adult personality and behavior. He was the first modern psychologist to suggest that every personality has a large unconscious component. Life includes both pleasurable and painful experiences. For Freud, experiences include feelings and thoughts as well as actual events. He believed that many of our experiences, particularly the painful episodes of childhood, are forgotten or buried in the unconscious. But, although, we may not consciously recall these experiences, they continue influence our behavior. The "unconscious" is the mental realm into which those aspects of mental life that are related to forbidden desires and instincts are co-signed through the process of "repression". Freud theorized that all of life moves toward death and that the desire for final end shows up in human

personality as destructive and aggression. But the life instincts were more important in his theory, and he saw them primarily as erotic or pleasure-seeking urges.

Freud had described what became known as the structural components of mind: "id", "ego" and "superego". Though, he often spoke of them as if they were actual parts of personality, he introduced and regarded them simply the model of how the mind works. In other words, id, ego and superego do not refer to actual portions of the brain. Instead, they explain how the mind functions and how the instinctual energies are regulated. The id is the reservoir of the instinctual urges. It is the lustful or drive-ridden part of the unconscious. The id seeks immediate gratification of desire, regardless of the consequences. The id is, therefore, treasure house of such desires and buried thoughts which are guided by "pleasure principle". The personality process that is mostly conscious is called the ego. The ego is the rational thoughtful, realistic personality process. The part of the personality that would stop us is called the superego. This is guided by "morality principle". Rules, regulations, standards, values, and codes of society are the concerns of superego.

The ego's job is so difficult that unconsciously all people resort to psychological defenses. Rather than face intense frustration, conflict or feelings of unwillingness, people deceive themselves into believing nothing is wrong. If the demands of the id and the ego cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to distort reality. Freud called these techniques defense mechanisms because they defend the ego from experiencing anxiety about failing in its tasks. Freud felt that these defense mechanisms stem mainly from the unconscious part of the ego and only ordinarily become conscious to the individual during a form of psychoanalysis. A few of the defense mechanisms he identified are shortly discussed below.



Other defense mechanisms discussed by Freud are: "repression", "reaction formation", "projection" and "regression". When a person has some thought or urge that causes the ego too much anxiety, he may push that thought or urge out of consciousness down into the unconscious. This process is called repression. The person simply forgets the thing that disturbs him, or pushes it out of awareness without ever realizing it. Reaction formation involves an unacceptable feeling or urge with its opposite. Another way the ego avoids anxiety is to believe that impulses coming from within are really coming from other people. This mechanism is called projection because inner feelings are thrown, or projected outside. It is a common mechanism which we have probably observed in ourselves from time to time. Many people, for instance, feel that others dislike them, when in reality they dislike themselves. Lastly, regression means going back to an earlier and less mature pattern. When a person is under severe pressure and his other defenses are not working, he may start acting in ways that helped him in the past. For example, he may throw a temper tantrum, make faces, cry loudly, or revert to eating and sleeping all the time the way he did as a small child. Transferring of feelings is originally associated with the infantile object, childhood trauma or other object of psychoanalytic investigation, from its sources to investigating psychoanalyst. That is why, transformational activities are regressions.

*Studies on Hysteria* provides the example of Freud's concept on transference. Closely related to his discovery of the unconscious and his development of the first version of psychoanalytic theory and practice was his identification of the phenomenon of transference. In an effort to probe the unconscious mind, Freud found that his patient's responses to him were, in many cases, distortions based on their earlier experiences with other, usually parents or associated with "image of the father

and through transference patients unconsciously re-dramatize their relationship to the parental figures of the past in the analytic process, therefore, revealing Oedipal structure" (xii).

These transferences, defined as distortions of unconscious feelings, thoughts and behaviors from the past projected onto the present figure of the analyst, became central to the psychoanalytic cure.

According to Freud, transference is a process of exploration of the unconscious mind, exploration of the self-experience of patients, which is referred to as self-object transferences. It reflects deprivation in the early childhood and early objects. In the self-object transference the past emerges in the present.

In recent literary theory the concept of transference is sometimes broadened to include any process whereby the analyst of a text becomes inextricably involved in the object of his or her process of analysis. This method of transference is becoming very popular in the research of literary text. Moreover, transference is acknowledged as ubiquitous in human interactions. Its meanings have provided a basis for life span development of the psychology of the self.

It should be noted, however, that whereas in Freud's writing it is the person analyzed who is responsible for the transference. But in the extended concept it is the person doing the analysis who is responsible, so that, perhaps, counter transference might be more appropriately involved. This notion first appeared in Freud's writings in 1910: "We have become aware of the 'counter-transference', which arises in [physician], as a result of the patient's influence on his unconscious feelings [...]" (144). Freudian concept of counter-transference is based on an inherently developed from his theory of "transference". He regards it as a dangerous phenomenon that jeopardizes the analytical process. In *The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic*

*Therapy*, Freud defines counter-transference in terms of desire that arise in the analysis "as result of patient's influence on [the physician's] unconscious feelings" (144-145). To keep the psychoanalytic discourse scientific and natural, Freud insists that the analyst must resist the analysand's unconscious transference toward him and overcome the analysand's influence or interference. He believes that all transference reactions are determined by unconscious, irrational wishes and desires based on person's own faculty of past and insignificant relationship. Likewise, counter-transference is manifested through anxiety, inappropriate and defensive behavior and distorted perception based on counselor's unconscious conflict. In this regard, counter-transference is essentially an obstacle to be overcome. The physician unconsciously experiences the patient. Freud argues that this reaction is caused by an unconscious and intolerable wish of the counselor to love the client which must be defended against through distancing punishing behavior. This Freudian view is commonly referred as narrow perspective, and it is still espoused by some modern classical analyses.

In modern psychoanalysis, Freud's concept of transference is questioned. What Freud does not realize is that counter-transference might occur before rather than after transference, the cause instead of the effect of transference. In place of other's desire through counter-transference and the narrative of the unconscious, thus, inserted into the analyzed eventually reverts to his own: tautological and narcissistic. This characterizes, what J.B. Ponnytails called, "death of Oedipus, and triumph of narcissus" (78). Freud's attempts cannot discover at all the unconscious of the other, but the desires of himself. Instead of a reaction to transference the other's unconscious desires, counter-transference initiates an intra-subjective relationship within oneself in narcissistic space of self reflexivity.

Thus, the concept of subject had been de-centered, fragmented, and split through the attempt of Saussure and Freud. Fragmentation in human self is also fueled by Marxist view that life is not determined by consciousness but vice versa. Similarly, Darwin's theory of species refused the existing view that man is a son of God. He rather proved human as an ape. Similarly, Nietzsche's work about Death of God questioned the immortality of God (center). In addition to this, feminist theories also de-centered the phallic-centric tradition. Likewise, Derridian concept of deconstruction totally ruptured the idea of unified self.

Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), a new Freudian, also naturally opposes the idea of a whole self that serves as an agent of strength, synthesis, mastery, integration and adaptation to realistic norms. Lacan has unflaggingly insisted that human subject is neither unified nor unifying. But, Lacan delimits consciousness and makes consciousness and language themselves defined against unconscious meaning. The Lacanian subject (*je/moi*) is not unified in consciousness. The ego, however, is intrinsically unified-except in dreams, psychosis, and other unraveling manifestations – and projects itself into consciousness as the principle of individuality. Because it emanates from the unconscious and yet must continually verify itself through the very means of its occultation – consciousness and language – the *moi* cannot 'see' itself as it really is. "The ego is a function; the ego is synthesis, a synthesis of functions, a function of synthesis" (131).

Freud sees the subject as de-centered and marked by a lack. Lacan follows Freud in this regard. He moves from the individualist orientation of Freud to a more social view, with the concept of big Other (the symbolic order). He does this by incorporating Saussurian insights concerning language into his work alongside Freudian concepts of unconscious. Hazard Adams, in his book *Literary Theory and*

*Criticism*, writes, "[Lacan] privileges the Saussurean signifier over the signified, thus de-centering both unconscious and language and calling and old style empirical analysis". He further adds on the same paragraph, "Analysis cannot escape from the chain of signifiers to point to any origin beyond signification itself (897). We can think of Lacan as the symposium of Freud, Saussure and some reasoning of Derrida. However, his main influence is Freud. Lacan reinterprets Freud in the light of structuralist and poststructuralist theories, turning psychoanalysis from an essentially humanist philosophy or theory of mind into a poststructuralist one. His concept of psychoanalysis aims to understand the unconscious of human mind in terms of language which he derives from the growth of infant to adulthood. For Lacan, the unconscious undermines the subject from any position of certainty, and from any relations of and simultaneously reveals the fictional nature of the category to which every human subject is none the less assigned. He divides human growth into three phases: Mirror, Imaginary and Symbolic (Real). These three are the phases in the constitution of the psychic subject.

Lacan states that the mirror stage is far from a mere phenomenon which occurs in the development of the child; it illustrates the conflicting nature of the dual relationship: "It is an experience which leads us to oppose any philosophy directly issuing from the *cogito*" (193). The mirror stage describes the formation of the ego via the process of identification, the ego being result of identifying with one's own specular image. In this regard, Lacan opines in his book *Ecrits* in this way: The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extend from a fragmented body image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of

the armor of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire development. (4)

At six months the baby still lacks coordination; however, he/she can recognize himself/herself in the mirror before attaining control over his bodily movements. He/she see his/her image as a whole, and the synthesis of the image produces a sense of control with the insubordination of the body; which is perceived as a fragmented body. This contrast is first felt by the infant a rivalry with his/her own image, because the wholeness of image threatens him/her with fragmentation, and, thus mirror stage gives rise to an aggressive tension between the subject and the image. To resolve this aggressive tension, the subject identifies with the image: this primary identification with the counterpart is what forms the ego. Thus, at first, the infant identifies himself with his mother. Gradually, he begins to see a visual image in his mother. The spatial distance is created between the child and the mother because of this reflection. Now, the child finds himself in the series of gestures. He looks his own experience in the mirror (mother). So, the first phase in the mirror stage is called Gaze phase. The spatial distance between the child and the mother gives birth to illusion. He can not distinguish himself and his [m] other.

The imaginary order is the formation of the ego in the mirror state. In this phase a child becomes jubilant. Jubilant phase is full of illusions and gazing activities. The child sees no gap between him and his image. Later, the ego is constructed by identification with the specular image. The subject becomes aware of the spatial gap between him and the image. Then, the alienation phase begins. The relationship between the ego and the specular image means that the ego and imaginary order itself are places of radical orientation. Therefore, alienation is constitutive of the imaginary order. In his regard, Lacan states:

[T]he spatial and temporal categories in which the ego and the object are constituted, experienced as events in perspective of mirages, as affections with something stereotypical about them that suspends the workings of the ego/object dialectic. (17).

As a result, ego is formed. Imaginary state is the field of images and imagination and deception: the main illusions of this order are synthesis, autonomy, duality, similarity. The narcissistic relationship develops in this phase.

Imaginary stage, thus, overlaps with mirror stage and forms a path to symbol stage, which starts from eighteen months (of child), but properly begins after two years. To underpin his concept Lacan provides the concept of "other" and "Other". The little other is the other who is not really other but reflections and projection of the ego. The big Other designates a radical alteration and Lacan equates this with language and the law: the big Other is inscribed in symbolic order. The big Other is, the, another subject and also the symbolic order which mediates the relationship with that other subject. In this respect, Lacan states in his book *Ecrits*, "It is *the name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law" (67).

In short, the "other" is the conceptualized image of a substitute object of desire, whereas, the "Other", which opposes the subject's initial desire, is the law of father or language. But, as the "center" in Derridian term, the other cannot be merged with. Nothing can be in the center with the other; so the position of the other creates and sustains a-never-ending lack, which Lacan called desire. Desire is to be Other. Therefore, "the satisfaction of human desire is possible only when mediated by the desire and the labor of the other" (26).

The last stage in which an infant comes across in his childhood is the symbolic phase. In this phase the child arrives at a sense of identity. Gaps between the child and the mother and signifier and signified is further disclosed. "The Symbolic conceived as the other of orders, as the separator (as well as the agent of separation)" (*Returns of the French Freud: Freud, Lacan and Beyond* 103).

Desires on language are spatially distanced. Here, Lacan states that "the desired affect may be obtained merely by placing the individual within reach of the field of reflection of mirror" (*Ecrits* 3). The child, indeed, enters into the world of "lack" and "anxiety". Dreams for him become the patches of fragmentation. He, in this stage, recognizes his "Father" and the "Law of his Father", that is language. To crystallize this concept of Lacan, Martin Jay states:

[A] difference between normal and psychotic behavior which depends on the partial transition from the imaginary to a further stage, which Lacan termed 'the symbolic'. Coincident with the resolution of the Oedipus complex, the symbolic meant the child's entry into language. (349-350)

The more an infant grows the more fragmented his/her self (ego) becomes. In addition to this, the primal oneness with the mother's body becomes possible only at the cost of death. The child enters into and finds bound by all man-made rules and regulations of morality, religion and of social affairs. He maneuvers from "the 'I' to socially elaborated situations" (5). This means there is the existence of two "I" individual or subjective and social. This process is, in other words, "the deflection of the mirror I into the social I" (97). For him the interpretation of dreams by Freud by constituting condensation and displacement is nothing but linguistic in nature and they correspond to metaphor and metonymy. But Lacan goes a step further and goes on proving that



the so called stable structure is, in fact, fragmented, and thus, Lacan gives the deconstructive study on Freud. For Lacan unconscious is structured like a language. "The unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual; what it knows about the elementary is no more than the elements of the signifier" (170). As Lacan opines condensation and displacement both are essentially linguistic phenomena where meaning is either condensed in metaphor or displaced in metonymy. Lacan states that the contents of the unconscious are actually aware of language and particularly of the structure of language. He points out this fact in *Ecrits* in this way:

This signifying game between metonymy and metaphor, up to an including the active edge that splits my desire between a refusal of the signifier and a lack of being, and links my fate to the question of my destiny, this game, in all its inexorable subtlety, is played until the match is called, there where I am not, because I can not situate myself there. (166).

Saussure paved the way for Lacan regarding the concept of signifier and signified. Lacan modifies his concept further whereas, Saussure talked about the relationship between signifier and signified. Lacan focuses on relations between signifiers only. Because of this lack of signified the chain of signifiers is constantly sliding and shifting and circulating in the play (in Derridian sense); there is no way to stop this sliding down of this chain. Rather, one signifier only leads to another and never to a signified. Lacan further clarifies that "signifiers are taken from the material to which the second give the signification" (141).

The signifier will, therefore, be the signifier for which all the other signifiers represent the subject. That is to say, in the absence of this signifier, all the other signifiers represent nothing since nothing is represented only for something else.

Language is the distinctive form of human communication, both in life and in analysis, but it is coupled with emotional induction at every turn. Lacan revises Freudian notion of transference and argues for a symbolic relationship between the subject and the unconscious in his book, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Hence, 'transference' is the actualization and dramatization of the unconscious subject. Lacan states in his book *Écrits* as below:

It is memory, a comparable to what is called by that name in our modern thinking machines (which are in turn based on an electronic realization of the composition of signification), it is in this sort of memory that is found the chain that *insists* on reproducing itself in the transference and which is the chain of dead desire. (167)

Transference is a theory where we transfer our feelings and expectations for help onto another (an analyst). Because we think they know something about who we are and who we should become. Lacan argued that the analyst does not have the correct reality paradigm to help on analysand with his or her impasses in knowledge and desire, but he maintained, the phenomenon itself (including the fact that it includes feelings of love and hate) tells us more about an unstable base for knowledge in being, than it does about who actually has the correct theory. The analyst is like a role player who sits silent, the patient knows and that he/she can speak only in the (logical) time it takes to unravel repressed traumata, drop harmful to live by.

In Seminar XL Lacan says that "through transference [...] the analysand "acts" out of the reality of unconscious" (158). It is essential to relocate Lacanian counter-transference from the imaginary into symbolic realm, into the locus of the other. It involves not only the presence of the analyst and the analysand, but also the co-presence of their different subject positions and repetitive unconscious. The subject is

not a person but a position, an "I" defined relatively, by his or her difference from the "you" he or she addresses. In the counter-transference "the analyst returns to the sum of the prejudices, passions, embarrassments, even insufficient information which characterize the analyst at a given moment in the dialectical process (xi-xiii). Lacan offers this definition in the course of his examination of the Dora case, in which he attributes Freud's failure in the case of counter-transference. Freud's failure, according to Lacan "was to recognize Dora's love for Frau K. as a function of his counter-transferential belief that Dora ought to have fallen for Herr K., instead of Frau K" (42).

Lacan notes that had Freud utilized this wrong material in a transference interpretation (relating Dora's relationship to Freud to that of Herr K.). It would have kept the case moving by virtue of her response to it. Thus, Freud's mistake here is two fold: one, the wrong "understanding" of the case, caught up in the imitation of Freud's view of the case; and two, the failure to act decisively, even with that, in his interventions. In *Hysteria and Feminism* Lacan discusses the concept of counter-transference written as below:

[T]he analyst does have passions, wishes, whims, prejudices and so forth, with regard to the analysand in treatment. The analyst has desires, as it were. But, the analyst also has a stronger desire, a desire brought about by the change in his desire through the very process of analysis, which has dubbed the desire of analyst. And, further, it is the desire of the analyst, a desire focused on the treatment – the exigencies of the treatment – that maintain the treatment purified, as it were, from these other more pedestrian desires. (viii)

Counter-transference is partly determined by the therapist's preexisting internal object world and partly influenced by feelings included by patient. The concept is now regarded as inevitable and minor enactments of counter-transference may provide valuable information about what is being recreated in the therapist – patient dyad.

Self-disclosure of counter-transference may be useful in some situations, but the sharing of some feelings will overwhelm patient and burden them in a way may be destructive to the therapeutic process. P. Heimann suggests that "the analyst's total emotional response to the patient is not simply an obstacle or hindrance based on the analyst's own past, but an important tool in understanding the patient's unconscious (31). This view is often referred as the broad or totalistic perspective on counter-transference.

In fact, Lacan implies that resistance comes primarily from the analyst who tries to reify the past and unconscious and to freeze the flow of analytic dialogue into answer. The notion of projective identification enables the connection between intrapsychic and the inter-subjective field of the analytic process. Grigoris Vasiamatzis opines, "The communicative aim of projective identification and the metaphor of the container-contained relationship between the mother and her infant" (116). When the infant is overwhelmed by unmodulated effects, it tends to project them into the mother. The mother receives the infant's feelings, and her own capacity for reverie modulates, transforms, and finally returns to the infant in a more tolerable and structured experience. In this way, containment is not a passive reception of what is projected.

Thus, counter-transference is to articulate a double relation: the subject's relation to the Other (the other subject) and to the other (the unconscious). In "Intervention and Transference", Lacan insists that "what needs to be understand

regarding psychoanalytic experience is that it proceeds entirely in a relation to subject" (93). The Lacanian subject, who is determined by the unconscious desires configured in the symbolic system, emerges as the other to itself. Lacan further says, "[T]he subject appears first in the Other, in so far as the first signifier, the unary signifier emerges in the field of the other" (218). Unlike Freud, Lacan views counter-transferential effects positively. He opines that analyst's emotional response to the patient is not just an obstacle based on analyst's own past but also an important tool in understanding the patient's unconscious. Hence, counter-transference focuses more on intra-personal or intra-subjective relation than inter-personal or inter-subjective relation. The unconscious in terms of the other constitutes the other scenes in counter-transference which articulated a relationship of the other (the subject of the unconscious) to the other (the symbolic structure of desires). In this respect, here, psychoanalysis' focus is on person's self.

Jin's *Waiting* portrays the life of his protagonists that is desolate and confusing. Their search for wholeness of self remains incomplete despite numerous efforts they make. The reason behind this entire fatalistic situation is indeed the conflict between id and superego. Manna has long been hungry of sex and has expected that Lin after getting divorced from Shuyu will satisfy her sexually and socially. This solace of life expected by Manna ultimately cannot be possessed by her. Similarly Lin has intended to have a successful life in the company of Manna who is educated and literate. She is in contrast to Shuyu in the sense that Shuyu is uneducated and illiterate. This contrast haunts Lin and has compelled him to seek Manna at any cost. He has not slept with Shuyu since their first child Hau was born. There is no sexual contact. He wants to have sexual relationship with Manna but cannot simply because the army hospital where Manna and Lin work as nurse and

doctor respectively do not permit them to have sex outside marriage. There are morals and regulations that they have to follow and suppress their desire for sex and other wants. There is always a kind of tussle between these two but they are helpless before the entire society. The society stands as a barrier on the path of their romantic and sexual life that they want to have and fulfill their desire. Unconsciously they prefer to sleep together but cannot. The army hospital represents the superego and their suppressed desire stands for the id.

### III: Fragmented Subjectivity

In *Waiting*, Manna, the protagonist is squeezed between her life of hospital profession guided by morals and customs and instinctual aspect of her life that seeks shelter in marriage institution. She keeps on waiting for a long time with the hope that Lin will get divorced from his present wife Shuyu who is traditional and unapt to him and marry her. Her long suppressed desire for sex does change her thought process. This is why there is a frequent alteration in her decision in the course of waiting as well. Her attempts throughout the novel are for harmony and systematic conjugal life style which indeed goes beyond her wishes and intentions. More or less similar situation seems in the life of another prominent protagonist, Lin who does suffer a lot due to the fact that his conjugal life is not commendable. Rather it has become a burden that he prefers to unload as soon as possible. But Chinese culture and his profession stand as barriers to prevent him from getting rid of unhappy marriage life. His gloomy life makes him feel disappointed and thus he lives in two worlds struggling with the conflicting claims of two utterly different women as he moves through the political minefields of a society designed to regulate his every move and stifle the promptings of his innermost heart.

For more than seventeen years, Lin Kong a devoted and ambitious doctor has been in love with an educated, clever, modern woman Manna Wu with the optimism his life will take a turn and bring about happiness and satisfaction in the restructured conjugal life that he is deprived of at the moment. His wife Shuyu lives in the village away from him who was chosen by his parents. Despite the fact that he does not dislike Shuyu, he likes to get divorced. Therefore he asks for a divorce again and again. But his petition is not responded favorably by the court. In a culture in which the ancient ties of tradition and family still hold sway and where adultery discovered

by the Party can ruin lives forever, Lin's passionate love is stretched ever tauter by the passing years. Every summer, his complaint wife agrees to a divorce but then backs out. In this way Ha Jin vividly conjures the texture of daily life in place where the demands of human longing must contend with the weight of centuries of custom.

*Waiting* in fact charms and startles readers with its depiction of China that remains hidden to Western eyes even as it moves them with its piercing vision of the universal complications of love. Emma Hasan comments on *Waiting*:

Like a fairy tale, masterful novel of love and politics begins with a formula [...] and like a fairy tale, *Waiting* uses its deceptively simple framework to encompass a wide range of truths about the heart. Lin Chinese army doctor trapped in an arranged marriage that embarrasses and repels him. (13)

Hence Hasan merges both politics that stands on reason and love which bases on emotion. In fact these two aspects of human life stand opposite each other. Nevertheless these simultaneously go in every individual who causes one to lose singleness and perfection in the life.

Lin Kong and Manna Wu do suffer from fluidity of subjectivity and wholeness due to the very factor in their life. Lin Kong is very much indecisive in regard to his personal affair and family issues. In fact he is fragmented within himself. The delay in concretizing his plan speaks a lot about his divided personality:

But despite accepting Shuyu as his bride, he believed she was absolutely unpresentable outside his home village. That was why, after they were married the next summer, for two decades he had never let her visit him at the army hospital. Furthermore, for seventeen years, since the birth of their only child, he had remained separate



from his wife. Whenever he was home, he would sleep alone in his own room. He didn't love her; nor did he dislike her. In a way he treated her like a cousin of sorts. (9)

Lin's obscure situation creates a great many complications in success of his divorce from the present wife. He cannot express his innermost desire before his family members simply because cause of divorce does not seem so strong and genuine that he easily forwards. He is in dilemma. This is why he postpones it every summer.

Lin, though, is inclined to the city life style, he does not feel good and rather reproaches the drawbacks extant there at the level of human and social rapport. His discern towards the urban life needs to be presented here to show his alienation in the bizarre world where everything is weighted in terms of money: "He was aware that they didn't greet him the way the villagers would do one another. The man didn't shout, "How's your day, buddy?" And the girl didn't say, "How are you, Uncle?" Perhaps this was because he was wearing the army uniform, he thought" (5). It gets pretty clear that he is not satisfied with the job he is doing at the moment since the way people look at the armies and regimental people is not so sound. He feels that he is alone in the commercial world and does not get respected.

Lin is fragmented emotionally and even seeks the existence of his life shaping a new conjugal life through divorce from his present wife, Shuyu. Lin is emotionally a weak person since he has not been able to develop love with his wife which is more or less due to his superiority complex of his education. He believes in the superficial life that is highly cultured and decorated. Love in fact flourishes in the uncultivated things more than in the educated and cultured ones. He states that there is no love between Shuyu and him despite the fact that she has been his wife for many years. This can evidently be shown here from the text as he states: "There has been no love between

us, so we are applying for a divorce. Please don't take me for a heartless man.

Comrade Judge. My wife and I have been separated for seventeen years. I've always been good to her"(11). There is contradiction in this saying. Once he says that he has not been in love with her. Meanwhile he further justifies his role as of husband that he has always been good to her. There is no consistency in his psyche as well since his stance is vague.

The judge does focus on his drawbacks that Lin carries up despite his high and responsible citizenry role. To show Lin his duty of a conscious citizen, the judge asserts:

Comrade Lin Kong, you are a revolutionary officer and should be a model for us civilians. What kind of a model have you become? A man who doesn't care for his family and loves the new and loathes the old-fickle in heart and unfaithful in words and deeds. Your wife served your family like a donkey at the millstone. After all these years, the grinding is done, and you want to get rid of her. This is immoral and dishonorable, absolutely intolerable. Tell me, do you have a conscience or not? Do you deserve your green uniform and the red star on your cap?"(12-3)

The above extract is much suggestive and commendable. The judge deeply understands the fleeting psyche of Lin Kong. This is why he has strongly presented his convincing words before Lin. Lin does not have any fixed and genuine ground that he is applying for the divorce. His reasoning is not strong enough to support his demand for divorce. He is entangled between the public life and private one. Since both are closely related with each other, either affects other too much. Lin as a public figure is a doctor in the army hospital, which directly affects his personal life and

makes him mute before the judge. The judge sounds just and humane as he endeavors to save Shuyu's conjugal life by persuading and showing Lin his duty towards his family and especially his wife who has spent his youth for the sake of Lin's family. In this regard Vicki A. Sanders in his book, *A Criticism to Waiting* states:

The judge can find nothing in her conduct to justify a divorce; on the contrary, she has been such a model wife that she makes Lin look like a monster of ingratitude. Shuyu's cunning, avaricious brother Bensheng always accompanies his sister to the court and speaks in her behalf. He is opposed to the divorce because it would affect him financially. He has been able to borrow money from his brother-in-law on a regular basis, partly because Lin is a soft touch and partly because he feels guilty for virtually abandoning his wife and daughter.

(17)

Sanders' view about divorce is reasonable and reliable. Doubtless to say Shuyu is an obedient, honest, selfless, perfect, tolerant, and peaceful wife. Her mannerism while dealing with the issue of divorce reflects her personality which is pious and appreciative. But dismantled personality of Bensheng discloses the fact how selfish and opportunist even relatives like Lin and Bensheng are who illogically run after their benefits and pleasure by ignoring humanity completely.

The most prominent aspect of the novel is the sexual frustration that has fragmented almost all vital characters especially Manna. She has been waiting for several years with the hope that Lin will be successful in getting divorced from Shuyu and then she will get shelter in Lin sexually and socially. But when she finds Lin postpone the divorce every year, she gets distressed and feels frustrated. To state evidently, her innermost feelings need to be presented here: "She lifted her face,

staring at him. “Look at me, Lin. Am I not becoming an old woman?”(15) Her appealing saying is very miserable and sympathetic since it directly touches the heart. Though she is not so old, she is tired of waiting and still feels sad due to the fact she has been virgin. In the name of protecting her virginity she has been suffering from scarcity and taste of sexual intercourse. She is indeed very much hungry sexually and sees no meaning outside marriage as she does not have family. Moreover her identity is in dire crisis that she prefers to create by marrying with Lin that is possible in the Chinese culture only when the married person is divorced from his wife. As Lin and Shuyu delay to get divorced, she is hopeless and sympathetically tells Lin to look at her plight. Her self is thus divided.

The Chinese culture of the contemporary time does seem to have antagonized in the relationship between Lin and Manna. They keep their sexual desires suppressed due to the social and cultural restrictions. Manna and Lin do everything together as if they are husband and wife but they never attempt to involve in sexual intercourse due to the oppressive culture that does not permit unmarried couple to have sex:

Though they were an acknowledged couple, they couldn't live together and could only eat at the same table in the mess hall and take walks on the hospital grounds. The hospital's regulations prohibited a man and a woman on the staff from walking together outside the compound, unless they were married or engaged. (16)

The hospital as a representative of the state represses the burning desires of two opposite sexes and compels them to suppress their innermost wants. This is how both Lin and Manna feel alienated and their subjectivity is divided. This is suppression of the self and personality. In this regard Sunil Sen states: “Lin has fallen in love with an intelligent, relatively liberated woman who might be said to represent the new China.

They work together, but Manna Wu remains a virgin because their activities are so carefully monitored” (7). Shuyu represents the old China whereas Manna does the new one. Sen’s remark clarifies that the old China before People’s Liberation Movement is much rigid and disciplined. Shuyu has got all these qualities and stands for the very old society and the new one is symbolized by Manna as she is educated and economically independent.

Lin’s thirst for sex is so high that it does not seem to be quenchable from single wife. He often thinks that he should have many wives with whom he can fully enjoy. He is always tempted to other women who are not his relatives. He sees solace of life within them and comparatively finds his wife, Shuyu ugly and old. His innermost desires for many women can be disclosed from his wish which he states in this way:

If only he could have eaten dinner with the nurses in there. He would not mind walking twenty miles just for that. He wondered whether he had visited them for some unconscious reason other than to deliver the dinner. Then a strange vision came to his mind. He saw himself sitting at the head of a long dining table and eating with seven young women and the old woman too. No, the old woman turned out to be his wife Shuyu [...]. Apparently they all enjoyed themselves as his wives living under the same roof. He remembered that in the Old China some rich men had several wives.(42)

The sexual desire has been suppressed in the bureaucratic system due to over rules and regulations. He is not happy with his passing days. Unconsciously he is expecting a lot of sexual pleasure that he sees possible only he has many beautiful wives different from old cabbage, Shuyu in whom he is no more interested. He favors

polygamy which is strictly prohibited in China. His personal life is highly motivated by the institutional regulations. He wanders psychologically here and there and does not feel content with present realities. His divided self is easily perceived in the extract above. He is the victim of the inflexible bureaucratic system that knows no pity but only rules and regulations. Similarly the plight of Manna who is without any parental support has become a lame in the rigid society which never provides people with the solace of life. Rather it binds one with its unwanted and pigheaded rules that do not help in the flourishing of individuality. She even lacks identity and wishes she had parents who could be safeguard and support for her advancement. Her wish and thought are as such: “The thought made Manna more wretched as she remembered the deaths of her parents. Had they been alive, they could have been ranking officials as well” (47). She is an orphaned old girl in the male dominated society and is compelled to walk on the path paved by the inflexible male system. Indeed she is helpless and feels fragile alone. She needs help and company to create meaning into her bizarre life which is gradually withering. Her subjectivity is fragmented at the psychological level in such a way that it is very complicated to gain the wholeness of her personality.

Coincidentally Manna meets Lin Kong and falls in love with her but her love is Platonic and regulated. She is in the prime of her youth, however, she is deprived of the sexual life outside marriage institution which obsesses her and she feels depressed. An English critic Robert Brown in his book *Chinese Novels*, states:

In their highly regulated military society, Lin and Manna develop a chaste love affair. They cannot leave the hospital grounds together, their every move is scrutinized for an “improper” relationship (meaning one with sexual contact), and their promotions and pay raises are influenced, but they are tolerated as a couple. Each year

when he returns home, Lin asks Shuyu for a divorce. Each year she agrees and then backs out. The only solution available to Lin in his passivity is to wait for 18 years to pass to fulfill the army's time requirement for an uncontested divorce. (23)

Brown is in the view that Lin and Manna are not independent and rather their every move is guided by the military society on which they are professionally dependent. Needless to say about their intimacy that has reached at the peak and they are determined to waiting for each other till Lin gets divorced from Shuyu. But the militarism controls their every breath of pleasure. They are, though, considered as a couple; their rights of living are curtailed in such a way that they cannot have sexual relationship which is highly prohibited. Their discontented personal life is as a burden to them which they tend to unload as soon as possible but cannot and yet they to wait for 18 years. In fact this long tenure will finish their flowering youth and make them reach to the stage when their sexual desire is towards minus. But the military department does not pay attention to their fragile situation any more. Rather it imposes on them a number of regulations and restrictions.

Lin Kong is mysterious as well since he is not sure whether he loves Manna or not. He has developed intimacy with her perhaps just for the sake of alternative to Shuyu who is not educated and modern. His ambivalent position is very touching and reflection of his fragmented personality:

He was unsure whether he was really attracted to her.[...] Her face was no longer that youthful. Thin rings appeared around her eyes when she smiled, and her complexion had grown pasty and less firm. He felt bad for her, realizing that a young woman could lose her looks so easily and that however little the loss, it was always irretrievable. He wanted

to be kind to her, but sometimes her smiles and her expressive eyes, which seemed eager to draw him to her, disturbed him. (48)

Lin's attraction towards Manna is only physical and sexual. He does not see any charm in her since she has lost her physical flavor in the course of time. He feels disturbed as his sexual wants are unlikely to be fulfilled by Manna. Her youth has withered and does not look attractive and pretty beautiful that trigger questions in Lin's mind and makes him unsure about his attraction. He is in a dilemma and swims in the pool of dissatisfaction and anxiety. Lin's emotional indifference towards his family and his apathy for sexual intercourse with Shuyu who is his obedient, honest, hardworking, and reliable wife discloses his wretched plight that seeks emotion and feelings to provide him with satisfaction and pleasure. He suffers from a fleeting mind that compels him to wish for companionship for nothingness which is fanciful and futile. In this regard Jin in the text asserts:

When he saw a couple walk hand in hand on the street, he couldn't refrain from looking at them furtively and wishing he were able to do the same. As a married man, why did he have to live like a widower? Why couldn't he enjoy the warmth of a family? (48-9)

Jin displays Lin's suppressed desire for sex and an apt life partner who can accompany him and make his life meaningful and resultant. Lin feels jealous and becomes envious when he sees someone else accompanying his/her partner and roaming with the purpose of pleasure. Lin thinks he is alone in this world where nobody shares his emotions and feelings. He is emotionally as well as geographically detached from his family since he does not take the family in the village as his own in reality. If he were entangled to the family bond, he would not live like a widower despite being socially married. Moreover he does not enjoy the warmth of a family as



it has been established against his consent and taste. He didn't agree with the marriage that his parents forcefully arranged for their benefit. On this ground he seems not entirely responsible for his detachment and alienation. Rather his parents as well as the extant custom of contemporary China are partially responsible as well.

Lin seems as if he were a great coinsurer of sexual taste. His hunger of sex maddens him and makes him indulged in intercourse. Jin shows his temptation for sex in the text: "Gently her fingertips stroked his palm, as though tracing his heart and head lines. He touched her hand and felt it was warm and smooth, without any callus. How different her palm was from Shuyu's" (51). He compares these women's sexual power and charm and feels unhappy as he cannot go a step ahead that he is doing at the moment.

Lin is restricted by the rules and regulations of the army department where he works as a doctor and Mann works as a nurse. Both of them professionally on the hospital and cannot violate the dictation of the institution established with rigor and firmness. Their long suppressed desire of sex remains without any outlet due to the cultural conflict. In this regard a Chinese critic Chinu Tau in his book *Chinese Literature* presents his view:

*Waiting* reveals how the collision between the old world of rural China, where divorce is rare, and the new world of the Cultural Revolution thwarts Lin Kong's best efforts and creates the life we experience in this beautifully written and powerful novel.(18)

He shows the conflict prevailing in contemporary China at the level of culture. The Old China is oppressive and feudal in nature whereas the new one is easygoing that respects human vitality and needs. It is naturally decent and releases individuals from the trap of sexual depression. Tau is very innovative in the sense he has

comprehended human desires and psyche in depth. The significance of the Cultural Revolution led by Mao is also vitalized and added attention. But the Old China turns to be very oppressive and rigid in dealing with common people like Lin Kong who are made to swear that they will not keep any illicit relationship with the opposite sex. People have to suppress their sexual desires in the system. It shows how impractical regulations are there in the Old China that instead of freeing people enslave and compel them to go against the law of nature which causes them to suffer pain, agony and depression. Lin's promise in the text can reflect the very practice: "I shall keep the relationship normal. Manna Wu and I will remain just comrades" (59). Hence the normal means the relationship without sex. He is made to keep such promise that he will obey the dictation of the militarism which indeed kills his emotional aspect and even ruins the golden time of sexual pleasure. The marriage is as a social license one should have before sexual relationship. But Lin's divorce from Shuyu is frequently postponed and he is bound to wait for. He is gradually losing his grip over his manly power that nobody pays attention to.

There is a constant fight between the emotional aspect and the professional one of Manna and Lin. Both of them are victimized and controlled by the army department where they work for their survival. They are afraid of being expelled from the job and have to go to the rural village as well as both of them then will be separated. Though they are in love with each other, they cannot show and express it due to the oppressive system. To Jin:

Manna had never thought of sleeping with Lin. The fear of being expelled from the army prevented her from conceiving such an idea; she didn't even have a hometown to return to. Furthermore, she was uncertain whether he would continue to love her if she was discharged

and banished to a remote place. Even though he wanted to, love would be impossible under such circumstances, because he might be sent back to his home village and they would have to remain apart. (65)

Thus both Lin and Manna are in dilemma. Manna gets vexed what to do what not to do. She is not confident enough that Lin will continue to love her in case she is discharged and sent to any remote place and Lin to his home village. To suspect Lin and remain unsure causes Manna to feel fragmented. She does not see any way out that can direct her in the right direction. If she obeys every regulation of the army, she will be deprived of sexual intercourse in the prime of her youth. If she violates the law and gives a release of the long suppressed desire of sex, she will be professionally displaced and even expelled. This liquid situation puzzles her and makes her indecisive.

Manna is not an exception of indecisiveness. Rather Lin Kong is an indecisive man. Shirley N. Quan in his book *Asian Literature Collections* states:

*Waiting* is the story of an indecisive man caught between two women: his illiterate peasant wife from an arranged marriage, and his headstrong companion Manna Wu, a nurse in the Muji City army hospital where he is a doctor. Ha Jin's natural storytelling quietly captures the texture of daily life in a dual Chinese culture, where human desires contend with centuries of tradition, and political minefields regulate every move. (9)

Quan especially focuses on the dual nature of the contemporary Chinese culture that implicitly affects individuals of the time as well. Lin Kong represents the dual culture of China that is very obscure within itself. It is neither completely modern nor is it traditional. People of the very do have the similar standpoint and are dangling

between two worlds and remain indecisive. His indecisive position can further be highlighted with the extract from the text:

Ever since he made his promise to Ran Su, he had tried to cool down his passion for Manna, always reminding himself that he must not fall too deeply in love with her. To his mind, it was still unclear whether their relationship could develop fully and end in marriage, which would require him to divorce his wife first. He had better not rush it.

(71)

Due to the restriction from the army hospital's officials, Lin feels numbed and succumbs before the oppressive system that controls each individual related to the hospital. The emotional part of the members is lulled in such a way that they stop even to think about the very matter that is likely to devastate their further career and social status. Lin Kong despite being in love with Manna endeavors his level best to prevent his passion for her since he has been warned by Ran Su which discloses the real plight of every individual victimized by the dual nature of the contemporary culture of China. After all, their singleness gets divided at the emotional level.

The wheels of love revolve slowly in Lin's mind as well as in China. The lovers and the wife struggle and suffer in the simple passing panorama of everyday life in all its boredom and all of its small pleasures and pains add enormously to the attraction of *Waiting*. Lin as an indecisive person keeps on changing his mind and thus feels short of a suitable wife who can meet her taste after death of his parents. Jin asserts in the text focusing on the fleeting mental waves of Lin:

In reality his mind was full of other thoughts. Now that both his parents had died, his need for his wife had changed;[...] he wanted a marriage based on love and a wife whose appearance wouldn't

embarrass him in the presence of others (to his mind, Manna would be a fine choice). Yet the feelings of guilt, mixed with compassion for Shuyu, were draining him. (76-7)

Lin's dual state is even dominant in the above excerpt. He is wandering in the domain of confusion where there is approachable route and seems not to get anything. On the one hand he requires an appropriate wife who can save his social status which competence he sees within Manna and on the other hand he is compassionate towards Shuyu who he has been discarding right from his marriage simply because she is uneducated and illiterate. However, his conscience does not allow him to be totally rude to her since her contribution to his family and their daughter is invaluable. The flow of random thoughts is constant to him which ultimately shows his divided self.

Similarly, Manna does not feel tranquil and rather she sees her life on the verge of ruin. When Lin informs her that the divorce case is postponed again, she gets marveled and questions strongly and outlines her fragile situation:

It's easy for you to say that-to be so rational. After we break up, where could I find another man? Don't you know the whole hospital treats me like your second wife? Don't you see that all men here shun me as though I were a married woman? Oh, where can I hide my face if you dump me like this?" (98)

As a matter of fact Manna's plight is more miserable than Lin's since they are in the male dominated society. The position of males is stronger and safer. Manna is in the search of safe landing of her social life getting with Lin whom she has been waiting for several years and been accompanying him almost everywhere. She is short of identity and association in the oppressive Chinese culture. Furthermore she seeks for identification of her self which is necessarily essential in society she lives in. Her frail

social position frustrates Manna and compels her to ask for shelter. The whole hospital is the source of her anxiety as its dictations are more or less against human emotion and spirits.

Lin is indeed selfish and always thinks of his benefit. When Manna tells him about the commissioner's interest and attraction towards her, he seems to be delighted but he is in fact he gets upset that is pretty clear through the extract from the text:

In his heart Lin was quite upset about the possibility of losing Manna. He was also angry with the commissar, who could choose any woman simply because he had power and rank. As a man, he was as smart as that old bastard, probably more handsome. Why couldn't he keep Manna? The commissar must have plenty of women already, but he had only one woman. How true the saying was: A well-fed man can never feel a beggar's hunger pangs. Lin was unhappy with Manna too, who, in his eyes, seemed eager to jump at such an opportunity. (138)

Both appear selfish and opportunist whose conscience tells them thing and they do something else. Their instability in any decision minimizes credibility for one another and makes them face bad happening which goes beyond their expectation.

At the same the misuse of power gets highlighted here as well. The commissioner the representative of power and the army hospital can do anything he likes. His wants are fulfilled even at the cost of Lin's sorrow and dissatisfaction. Lin is certainly discontent with Manna's temptation for being wife of the commissioner which is natural and Manna's high inclination towards the commissioner does seem probable as she has long been thirsty and has been waiting to quench her thirst via sexual thirst as well as identity scarcity. But duality deep-rooted in Lin loots his happiness and enslaves him emotionally. He feels as if is in dire condition that he is

losing Manna which shows his selfishness. On contrary to Manna's expectation, situation changes that the commissioner denies marrying simply because he does not find suitable to his need and thus Manna is left out in alienated condition. Again her wretched condition makes her think that she should wait for Lin at any cost and does not get melted so quickly for the momentary benefit in the male dominated world. She feels humiliated and frustrated in the selfish culture guided by the outdated regulations and principles. Jin presents her final decision in the text: "Now, for better or worse, she preferred to wait for him. Probably it was already too late not to wait. So with rekindled passion and a heavier heart she returned to Lin" (159). This decision she makes after getting completely deceived emotionally in the dual culture of China paves a way that probably brings glimpse of rapture into her life. She becomes strong enough to face any sort of circumstance now onwards. Her determination strengthens Manna's heart and returns to Lin, the indecisive protagonist whose is psyche is more or less similar to her.

The nature of love, family duty, and divorce are explored with unnerving insight in 1999 National Book award nominee. For 17 years, urbane army-hospital doctor Lin Kong returns annually to his impoverished Chinese village to ask his illiterate, arranged-marriage wife, Shuyu, for a divorce, so that he can marry his girlfriend, Manna. Each year, Shuyu, who has devotedly raised their daughter alone, refuses Lin's request-but the 18<sup>th</sup> year, the judiciary automatically grants him a divorce. After this, Jin states Lin's feelings: "Moving toward the entrance, Lin couldn't help feeling amazed by the whole process, which had turned out to be so easy. In less than half an hour, all the years of frustration and desperation had ended and a new a new page of his life was ready to start"( 219). Now Lin feels delighted as he thinks that his door of pleasure opens and he can enjoy the life in the way as he has

expected for several years. The excerpt above makes it pretty clear that he has never been happy. Rather frustration, depression, repression, scarcity, loneliness, alienation, and detachment have been salient traits of his bygone days. He sees a drastic turn in life and hopes he will pleasantly live every moment of life in the company of Manna. Now he can marry Manna since the system permits them to do so. He commences seeing meaning in living. The hope for betterment of life heightens and energizes him to go ahead.

On the contrary, another kind of frustration arises in their life. Time now antagonizes and does not support him to be as passionate as he could have been earlier. Manna is very hungry. Her hunger is sexual. She is a passionate lover and has expected a lot from Lin but he gets tired in the course of sexual intercourse before Manna. Thus another chapter of anxiety and detachment opens that fragments both of them emotionally. Observing all these Jin says:

Manna seemed frustrated sometimes, but never lost her temper. One Saturday night she joked with Lin, saying good-humoredly, "I wonder how you could have made a baby with Shuyu. In just three minutes?" Her chin was resting on his chest while her eyes were dreamy and half closed. (247)

As a matter of fact Manna is not sexually satisfied with Lin. She much suspects his manly power and rather indirectly questions him how he could make a baby with Shuyu. Though it sounds humorous and funny, it implies her inner psyche and attitude towards Lin. Thus fragmentation and detachment due to sexual dysfunction begins which frustrates Lin and makes him regret. Though she is physically with Lin, her mind is far away from him which denotes here psychological detachment. Her long repressed desire of sex does not get an outlet that indeed troubles her a lot. The



conflict begins between these long time lovers who are now as husband and wife. Their life again becomes troublesome because of their age. After all nobody is guilty since they have been victimized by the system of the army hospital. Their subjectivity remains fragmented that they have endeavored a lot to make complete and meaningful.

The very prominent aspect of *Waiting is* characters' vexation and ambivalence that dominates the entire text. Lin Kong after getting married with Manna, they become inconsistent and mismatching in terms of sexual intercourse. Manna is too desirous and hungry that she expects a lot from Lin but he feels aged and tired. A kind of numbness has come to him. He does not dare to face Manna's untiring efforts for sexual performance. He gets perplexed when he finds Manna untiring despite her ageless body that has almost lost charm. Jin reveals Lin's puzzled mind in the text: "He would wonder how her body could generate so much desire, which seemed ageless and impossible for him to meet. He felt old and begged her not to indulge herself too much, but she didn't seem to care" (248). He succumbs before her since he feels that he cannot meet her demand. His petition to her that she should not indulge is not because he advises her so her personal benefit but because he is incapable of sexually satisfying her. This is in fact a matter of insult and the implication of impotence. Again Manna's desires of sex remains suppressed and being fragmented and fed up with life she is living. Not only Manna's self is divided but the subjectivity of Lin is more fragmented and the feeling of humiliation haunts as he cannot satisfy Manna in bed.

Lin Kong's situation makes him regret for his mistakes that committed by waiting for Manna for 18 years. His newly married life turns to be more miserable and futile. Now he really understands the value of Shuyu who he has neglected since he

got married to her. Shuyu though stays separately from Lin; she is too much concerned with his life. She often takes care of him sending her daughter, Hua. He realizes that he has committed a great crime by ignoring his wife who never deceived and tortured him in any way. Rather she has always thought of him in a very positive way. At this time his remorse for the past torments him and compels him to condemn himself. In fact his plight is miserable enough that he seems helpless to bring any sort of solution to it. Jin reflects his sympathetic condition:

Lin was stunned. For a moment he was at a loss for words. Then he began cursing himself. Fool, eighteen years you waited without knowing for what! Eighteen years, the prime of your life gone, wasted, and they led you to this damn marriage. You're a model fool. (297)

Lin realization is very just and essential as it makes him know the meaning of marriage and life partner. His previous attitude towards wife changes and gets transformed in such a way that he reaches to the realistic ground of his life and makes him follow the right path that likely directs towards reality rather than fancy and dreamy world. He has wandered a lot in search of happiness and ordered life but ultimately fails and gets bound to take shelter in the traditional one as it proves reliable and sustainable. However, the lost energy cannot be restored to renew the life as it was. This incapacity worsens his wretched condition more and fragments his subjectivity.

#### **IV: Conclusion**

*Waiting* takes place over a period of about 20 years beginning in the mid-1960s. In his tale of the interaction of temperaments, circumstances, and culture, the narrator escorts readers through the lives and relationships of three main characters. Lin Kong is a highly literate medical-school educated physician who was born in a rural village. From adolescence he has been educated away from home; his career is in an army hospital in Muji, a city some distance from his family home in Goose Village. He has been suffering from dissatisfactory conjugal life since he entered into an arranged marriage at his parents' behest. His marriage with an illiterate, uneducated, traditional and obedient woman, Shuyu, has been a burden to him and has been constantly troubling him. His self has been divided from the beginning of his conjugal life. In fact he has not been sharing bed since then even when he comes to the Goose Village during the vacation. Rather he has decided to ask divorce from Shuyu who refuses his request every year. To suit to his status and position he has chosen an educated, literate and modern girl, Manna as his future wife. He cannot marry her before the divorce from the current wife. Even he cannot have sexual relationship with her since the army hospital strictly prohibits it. In case they do this their career will badly be affected. And none of them want to lose either position or any transfer. He is interested in Manna a nurse working in the army hospital where he himself works as a doctor.

After all Lin keeps on dangling between hope and despair. He is hopeful that one he will succeed in getting divorced and then will enjoy the new life that is likely to be more pleasant and romantic. Jin displays Lin's suppressed desire for sex and an apt life partner who can accompany him and makes his life meaningful and resultant. Lin feels jealous and becomes envious when he sees someone else accompanying

his/her partner and roaming with the purpose of pleasure. Lin thinks he is alone in this world where nobody shares his emotions and feelings. He is emotionally as well as geographically detached from his family since he does not take the family in the village as his own in reality. If he were entangled to the family bond, he would not live like a widower despite being socially married. Moreover he does not enjoy the warmth of a family as it has been established against his consent and taste. He did not agree with the marriage that his parents forcefully arranged for their benefit. On this ground he seems not entirely responsible for his detachment and alienation. Rather his parents as well as the extant custom of contemporary China are partially responsible for his loneliness and fragmentation of his self as well.

As Lin wants to get divorced from Shuyu, he regularly applies to the village court for permission to obtain a divorce. Shuyu obediently accompanies her lord and master, but cannot bring herself to tell the judge that she no longer loves her husband or that she willingly agrees to the divorce. Instead she breaks into tears. The judge can find nothing in her conduct to justify a divorce. Rather he finds her as a model wife that she makes Lin look like a man of ingratitude. The demand for divorce is baseless and illogical which shows Lin's fragmented psyche.

Year after year the application for divorce is summarily rejected. Lin and Manna can only wait for eighteen years to elapse, after which time Lin will be free to obtain the divorce unilaterally. In the meantime, everyone connected with the hospital takes it for granted that Lin and Manna are virtually the same as an engaged couple; she has no chance of attracting another male, especially as she grows older and new crops of attractive young nurses arrive every year. Hence she is sexually frustrated since she is deprived of sexual intercourse everywhere. She cannot seek for another male partner as everyone thinks that she is engaged with Lin. At the same time she

does not have sexual relationship with Lin she is not married to him yet and sex is prohibited by the army hospital before marriage. Thus her sexual desire is repressed and she feels alienated and detached from the emotional aspect of life that could pass her energy for her emotional satisfaction. Her self is thus fragmented.

Lin's thirst for sex is so high that it does not seem to be quenchable from single wife. He often thinks that he should have many wives with whom he can fully enjoy. He is always tempted to other women who are not his relatives. He sees solace of life in them. Lin Kong is mysterious as well since he is not sure whether he loves Manna or not. He has developed intimacy with her perhaps just for the sake of alternative to Shuyu who is not educated and modern. His ambivalent position is very touching and reflection of his fragmented personality. The wife he has ever rejected emotionally remained him cut off from her sexually, turns to be valuable when he starts a new life with Manna after 18 years. In fact now he becomes somehow old and so Manna does. But there is much difference between Manna and Lin in terms of sexual passion. She has been too much frustrated due to lack of sexual pleasure and has waited for 18 years. Her expectation from Lin has been too high but her expectation goes beyond when Lin cannot perform sexual intercourse in so active way that she wants. Again they get psychologically detached from each other. He becomes tired and less passionate due to the age. Now her repressed desire of sex remains as it has ever been. When Manna humorously questions to his manly power, he becomes upset and feels frustrated. He realizes that he has committed a blunder that he ever discarded Shuyu who sacrificed her life for the sake of him and his family. This remorse fragments his psyche again and emotionally compels him to take shelter in her life for emotional support. Thus *Waiting* discloses the duality of Lin's self that is fleeting and ever changing. Further it focuses on the fragmented subjectivity of protagonists Manna and Lin who dominate the text.

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