

I: *The Summer Before the Dark* and Dream Symbolism

This thesis studies Doris Lessing's novel *The Summer Before the Dark* (1970) from the perspective of Freud and Helene Cixous's concept of unconscious as source of freedom. The novel explores the dream of the protagonist Kate Brown, a middle aged woman from the Southern part of London. She undertakes the journey of self discovery and consciousness through her dreams. So, the thesis tries to interpret her repressed desires and feelings which ultimately inspire her to seek her 'self.' Kate frequently dwells upon her dream journey as she identifies her dying with a dying seal in her recurring dreams. She is constantly haunted by her own dream that resembles with her threatened ego and her private self. She attains solace after the completion of her dream journey. In order to interpret Kate's dream, the research primarily uses Freudian psychoanalytic theory of dream symbolism, which holds that dreams and delusions come from what has been repressed. Dreams disguise unfulfilled wishes as to evade our censorious conscience and they are fulfilled in fantasy.

The Summer Before the Dark is the story of a middle-aged Kate's unfulfilled wishes her search for freedom. Her four children have left home, her husband is otherwise occupied, and after twenty years of being a good wife and mother, Kate Brown is free for a summer of adventure, which she undertakes through the medium of dream journey. Kate's serial dream of a seal runs throughout the novel. She discovers the seal near death one night, as it attempts to drag itself over the rocks. Despite its weight and her own tiredness, she begins to carry it north, to the sea. The seal is dry and at times in such dire shape that Kate's dreaming self is certain it would die. But she cannot allow that. She thinks she must carry it to water. The seal is the projection of herself and her struggle. In the meantime, she plunges into an affair with a younger man, travelling abroad with him, and, on her return to England, meets an

extraordinary young woman whose charm and freedom of spirit encourages Kate in her own liberation.

This study deals with psychological and social aspects of female protagonist with a particular focus on the quest for "self". *The Summer Before the Dark* is told in direct narrative simply; but through dreams, archetype and myth, the woman is related to the dark impersonal forces -- Social and political circumstances--that underlie our lives. The significance of dreams and visions, their symbolism, and their relation to reality is also included in the analysis. They are, undoubtedly, an important element within the search for one's self and they reveal the subconscious of the Kate Brown. In addition, psychological aspects in the novel have been linked to the concept of identity and quest.

The study explores how Kate attempts to find her 'self' through memory and dreams. As she has served her family for the last twenty-five years, her desire to explore her inner and outer world becomes repressed. When Kate is offered a job as executive for Global food, she gets chance to explore outer world. There, her job involves her flying to Istanbul. There she works as "a group mother" for lots of people from many countries who attend the conference. She thinks she is away from home and its demands but she is performing the same task as she is at home as she has to take care of others. In the quest to attain self-knowledge, Kate goes to Spain. During her stay in Spain memories of home haunts her. She feels that she is deserted by her children and family. She feels that she is going to achieve something. Kate recalls an event when her younger son told Eileen (Kate's only daughter) that Kate is in a state of menopause. Though it is not true, Kate begins to question her identity as a mother and as a wife. Kate's memory undergoes an intense examination where she reviews her identity as a mother for more than twenty years. She is in transition because she is

facing a mid-life crisis where a woman no longer can bear or rear children. By analyzing her past and her present she is trying to know her inner-self. The tension throughout the novel is between Kate's exploration of inner-space and the literal journey she makes from England, to Turkey with Global Food, to Spain with a younger lover, back to London.

During her journey, she has a recurring 'seal' dream. It keeps haunting her the whole summer. And the dream continues gradually. The activities and performances at home in the daylight supply her dream process. In the day time, she is busy; most of the time helping others and at time recollecting the past. Due to this, she has had a problem with sleeping. She starts to work and then it continues until she sees herself as an individual rather mother and wife. Her dream begins in the dark cold north and ends there. This reflects her plight at home, dominated by patriarchal values. The dream is like a journey to knowledge for Kate, darkness and cold can be seen as a metaphor for aging and exile. In the seal dream, the landscape is rocky, slippery, and dark which can be seen as her fear of obstacles and being alone. Despite the difficulties, this dream helps her to fight with emotions that make her weak inside. In the journey towards survival, which she completes at the same time she completes the journey.

In this way, her dream of rescuing an injured seal and of travelling over hard terrain to return it to the ocean represents her growing concentration on her own developing sense of an integrated self. She deliberately immerses herself in the dream of the seal, and acts out many different roles such as being the manager of Global Foods conferences, the lover of the irresponsible young man and the confidante of Maureen who is both a mother and daughter figure for her. By taking this approach

Kate is able to return to her marriage, safe in the knowledge of who she really is and less likely to become trapped again.

Kate Brown in *The Summer Before the Dark* tries to seek her 'self' through exile. During her exile, she suffers a deep spiritual crisis which affects her physical appearance. The color of her hair fades and she loses quite a lot of weight. Her dress sense is also changed. She has no makeup on her face. While looking in the mirror, she gets the knowledge of how she looks at the age of forty-five. In this way she confronts her fear of ageing. By confronting the fear of ageing, she has the knowledge that physical appearance doesn't reveal anything about our true selves. By refusing to take care of her hair, she finally takes control of her appearance. Thus, Kate goes through many ups and downs to find her identity as a woman beside a mother and wife. Like the seal returns to the sea, she returns to her family. She learns that besides being attached to someone else first and foremost she is an individual. Kate finds out that it is not unusual to be alone, have grey hair, be old, and have wrinkles. She also realizes that it is not outer appearance that defines the women; rather it is the inner experiences that justify her.

Her lack of personal will and vitality to form a life of herself in earlier of her life, stimulates Kate Brown to explore her 'self.' She finds that in middle-age she must evaluate her past, since the conflicting stories and myths of her personal and collective experiences confuse and de-centre her, and she puzzles over who she really is. Kate thinks about a role in a life which is increasingly becoming more unreal to her. She thinks that she is "becoming more and more uncomfortably conscious not only that the things she said, a good many of the things she thought had been taken off a rack and put on, but that what she really felt was something else again. She

gradually realizes that she needs to have a personal definition of self instead of always adapting herself to meet her family's needs.

Since the publication of *The Summer before the Dark* in 1970, it has become able to attract the attention of many critics and scholars. Some of the critics have focused on the title and some others have gone for its theme regarding the critics they have given their own opinion about its title. In this connection regarding the title M. Klein writes:

As we read this novel, we often search for signs of the significance of this title. Many times by the end, the significance becomes clear.

However, as it has been the case for many readers of *The summer Before the Dark*, reconciling the title and the ending can same time became a problem. As the first world of a text the title sets the stage for out reading and interpretation of world that follows. (228)

In the above lines, M Klein forwards behaviour regarding the relevance of the title "The Summer Before the Dark". At the first glance it seems that she is appreciating the title and is writing in favour of its. However, her main concern is on the problem of reconciliation of its title and its ends which are not compatible according to her. M Klein appreciates as well as frowns at the use of title *The summer Before the Dark* by Doris Lessing for this novel. But her concern is about the problem that the title creates for the readers to find its significance while reading the novel. Hence it can be well asserted that she is not positive towards the selection of the title.

Similarly, another critic Charmaine Wellington takes its title in positive way. He compares other novels with this novel and claims that "the Dark" using here is signified in the sense of positive image in much of Lessing's fiction and that the dark

in this novel represents the inner world that Kate reintegrates with her outer self" (7).

Another critic Susan Kress writes:

Lessing here seems to be taking a new departure in what she says about human responsibility. The outrage at and condemnation of political cultural and social intuitions run throughout all her fiction are still present. The force of the condemnation is not diminished but, its direction is changed. Lessing seems to have come to an acceptance or acknowledgement of the continuing power of repressive institutions (115).

According to Kress, Lessing seems to be deviated from her tradition of expressing human responsibility. However according to her the outrage of the condemnation of political cultural and social intuitions is still present in her novel *The Summer Before the Dark* as it is prevalent in her other novels too. She further states that the force of her condemnation is not diminished however the direction has been changed.

Likewise another critic Walter Poznar regards this novel as about mental strain. Throughout the novel the problem is between Kate's exploration of inner self and the literate journey. In this regard Poznar argues:

Lessing uses Kate's memories of a privileged girlhood spent in England and Africa as well as her memories of her marriage to map deftly the social constructs which shape the life among words and people bred to use and used by words spurs her to take a non-verbal stand by not dying her hair. (56)

In the works of Lessing, there are mothers and daughters, as old as archetypes get. No one before or after Lessing has better anatomized the sick self-sabotaging of smart women who allow themselves to settle for "indentured servitude as house mothers,

group mothers, householders, hostesses, caretakers, nannies, nurses, and 'neurotic nurturers.' " (3). We can see this from Kate Brown in *The Summer Before the Dark*, who so efficiently organized her family, her office, and the care and feeding of a whole continent that she practically abolished herself. This shows that how women become neurotic in the course of working for the family.

Doris Lessing's *The Summer Before the Dark*, has often been viewed as the hero of a quest narrative. Her journey in search of enlightenment, proceeding according to the ancient pattern of departure and return with a midpoint come back into an underworld, closely shows traditional quest form. In this regard, Janis P. Stout says:

The phases of the quest journey are marked structurally. The scheme of the novel falls neatly into a two-chapter setting-forth, located in London, followed by a long single-chapter descent into a hell of disorder and madness, located in far-flung *terrae incognitae* (Turkey and Spain), and concluding with a two-chapter recovery and reintegration, located again in London. Indeed, the quest structure provides a clear pattern for the novel's seeming vagaries and a particularly rewarding interpretive approach, as the concerns and experiences of a fairly ordinary woman are shown to comport quite well indeed with a deeply traditional, hence typically masculine, narrative pattern. Nevertheless, reading Lessing's novel according to its fulfillment of this traditional, and surely resonant, narrative pattern raises interpretive problems. The mythic reading does not encompass the fullness of the novel. As structural readings often will, it blurs the

full particularity of Kate's story and obscures the importance of elements that do not readily fit the quest pattern. (5)

One such element is the distinctly female quality of Kate's experience and understanding. Her journey expresses an awareness and a set of possibilities which are completely different from those of most traditional questing heroes.

Lessing has boldly described Kate's experience of motherhood as ambivalent, defined as noted by Rozsiska Parker as she writes that Kate possesses "a complex and contradictory state of mind, shared by all mothers, in which loving and hating feelings for children exist side by side" (qtd. in Podnieks and O'Reilly 15).

From the above mentioned critics and criticism regarding Doris Lessing's novel, *The Summer before the Dark*, it is pretty obvious that most of them have focused on the relevance of title and her style and strategy of writing. The issue of female domination and subordination which is obvious in the novel has been able to draw the attention of the most of the critics mentioned above. However, the scholars have failed to notice the issues of repressed desires and manifestation of such desires via dreams in the novel *The Summer Before the Dark*.

Departing from all the above mentioned criticism, this research explores the unnoticed issues of repression of desires and the expression of such desires via dream symbolism. Therefore this study attempts to explore different aspects which have not been researched. My stance here is to prove the novel as the expression of repressed desires via dreams.

After Sigmund Freud's theory, views on the origins and meaning of dreams have shifted over the centuries from the revelations of the divine to symbolic messages from the unconscious. Freud's dream-analysis described in his major work *The Interpretation of Dreams* has undoubtedly has had a tremendous influence on

modern day dream theory. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud takes a great look at the meaning of important psychic events that are a product of one's individual mind. He addresses the questions such as: If we dream to fulfill fear? Can the dream tell the nature of the human mind? What makes a person dream? Is a dream a by-product of the previous day? Freud theorizes about these questions, and concludes that dreams are a convenience in a world where people can give into their impulses and break the barriers that imprison them in human society.

Sigmund Freud advanced in *The Interpretation of Dreams* the hypothesis that dreams have both an obvious or manifest meaning and a symbolic or latent meaning. The manifest meaning of a dream is simply what appears most obvious as a dream's theme. Freud also used the phrase 'pictorial value' to describe the manifest content of dreams. Freud and other dream theorists have made the argument that the latent meanings of dreams are far more useful. Freud thought that the latent and symbolic meanings of dreams provide for a much richer interpretation.

Freud thought that the manifest meanings of dreams were chosen from our waking daily life. Much of this material might be from the previous waking day, yet frequently there might also be scenes from our childhood. However, Freud believed that no recent waking idea or scene from the past is chosen randomly. He believed that strong unconscious issues are ultimately selected from the many waking ideas and old memories. He thought these unconscious issues are still too scary and powerful to be perceived even by the consciousness of the dream state. Thus, the issues become symbolized or hidden by an automatic process of the psyche.

Freud believes that there are at least two major processes operating to turn unconscious issues into manifest content – condensation and displacement. The process of condensation involves taking more than one unconscious issue and

combining them into a single dream image. Freud also called these unconscious issues dream-thoughts and that we should distinguish these from what we actually 'see' in the dreams. What we see, he called dream-elements or dream content. Thus, there can be more than one correct interpretation, and thus more than one meaning of a single dream element, so Freud says that a dream is made in the following manner:

A dream is constructed, rather, by the whole mass of dream-thoughts being submitted to a sort of manipulative process in which those elements which have the most numerous and strongest supports acquire the right of entry into dream-content...the elements of the dream are constructed out of the whole mass of dream-thoughts and each one of those elements is shown to have been determined many times over in relation to the dream-thoughts. (qtd. in Coolidge 48)

Displacement is a process of transformation where the fearful unconscious issues become changed into approachable subject matter. Freud describes the process in the following manner:

It thus seems plausible to suppose that in the dream-work a psychical force is operating which on the one hand strips the elements which have a high psychical value of their intensity, and on the other hand, by means of over determination, creates from elements of low psychical value, new values, which afterwards find their way into the dream-content. If that is so, a transference and displacement of psychical intensities occurs in the process of dream-formation, and it is as a result of these that the difference between the text of the dream-content and that of the dream-thoughts comes about. The process which we are here presuming is nothing less than the essential

portion Freudian dream interpretation of the dream-work; and it deserves to be described as 'dream-displacement.' Dream displacement and dream-condensation are the two governing factors to whose activity we may in essence ascribe the form assumed by dreams. (qtd. in Coolidge 49)

Freudian dream theory allows the dreamer to use free association in relation with the symbolic elements which are brought into the realm of consciousness through the manifest content of the dream. The latent content of the dream can be revealed through the symbols. The interpretation of the latent content exposes true inner thoughts and feelings which have visually been distorted and repressed by the personality consisting of the id, ego, and superego. Freud believed that the systematic interpretation of dreams would expose the fears, wishes, and desires of the unconscious mind. As Freud stated firmly: "A dream remains the fulfillment of a wish, no matter in what way the expression of that wish-fulfillment is determined by the currently active material. ... [T]he meaning of *every* dream is the fulfillment of a wish, that is to say that there cannot be any dreams but wishful dreams" (312). Thus, dream illustrates the theory that dreams are by-products of the human mind and a way of fulfilling one's unfulfilled desire.

Regarding the symbols in psychoanalytic theories invented by Freud and Lacan of which Cixous makes a mention in "The Laugh of the Medusa." Freud, in his essay "Medusa's Head", puts forth the idea that the decapitation of Medusa's head is a symbol that manifests the castration complex in males in the Oedipal stage wherein realizing the absence of the penis or phallus in the mother, the male child inevitably identifying with the father, for the fear of being castrated, thus rejecting the mother and overcoming his fear. Psychoanalyst Lacan, adopting Freud's theory in the domain

of language development, states that with the rejection of what he calls the “womb worlds” of the mother, the child enters the patrilineal world systematized by order and concrete rules which Lacan terms the “Symbolic Order”. As a member of the Symbolic Order the male child learns the spoken word that is the language of the world, while rejecting the pre-linguistic language of the mother, whereas the girl child, being anatomically similar to her mother, continues to identify with her and hence with the prelinguistic language of the mother. Thus Lacan believes that girls acquire a different language than boys, a language that, according to Lacan, is primitive, silent like the womb world of the mother. The language of women thus remains undeciphered by men and is thus repressed and silenced by the male ordered discourse. This draws us back again to the myth of the Medusa whose death signifies the triumph of the Symbolic order (i.e the spoken word) and the domination of the female voice, the pre-linguistic, primitive language of the womb world.

By rejecting such male oriented theories, Cixous in her essay, “The Laugh of the Medusa”, urges women to write beyond the order of binary opposition of the Symbolic Order, to speak and write through their bodies, to explore the beauty of the unconscious, to uncensor their erogenous pleasures, thus deconstructing the value hierarchies that shape the androcentric world. She writes, “Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring them to writing...Woman must put herself into the text as into the world and into history by her own movement” (qtd. in Leitch 2035). According to Cixous, the domination of the female voice and in turn the absence of a feminine discourse in the past had stagnated and concealed the creative force of the female writers thus chaining them within the barriers of masculine language. She believes that such writing, which is in no way different from the male writing, could only aim at “obscure[ing] women or reproducing the classic

representations of women (as sensitive – intuitive – dreamy etc.)”, something which distinctly reminds me of women writers of the Victorian period internalizing and imitating the dominant structures of male tradition, their writing reflecting a conflict between “obedience and resistance”. So, women's representation of unconscious activities is the expression of their mind and the dreams are the creative source of their search for freedom.

The thesis has been divided into three chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the work – a short introduction to the research and a short literature review. Moreover, it gives a general outline of the whole research work. The second chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length, taking theoretical support from psychoanalysis, especially liberal feminism. It analyzes how the novel *The Summer Before The Dark* raises women's consciousness and resistance through the means of dream symbolism. Owing to the restraint upon female as structured by sexist society, the females are obliged to repress their feelings and desires which ultimately get manifested via dream symbolism along with the projection of private self with it. Finally, the third or the last chapter sums up the main points of the present research work and the findings of the researcher.

II. Projection of Self via Dream Symbolism in *The Summer before the Dark*

Doris Lessing's *The Summer before the Dark* deals with the women's issues and their position in society and role in the family in male dominated society, which is represented by Kate Brown, who is the main character of the novel. She is a housewife of forty five years, who has undergone a suffocating situation at home. Her wishes of leading an independent life remain unfulfilled until half of her age. As a result, she always dreams about her better life. Through her dreams, Kate's ordeals, wishes and aspirations are reflected. Although her story of sufferings is related in third person narrative, Kate directly reveals her grievances, which is written in italics in the novel. We get to hear the voice of the protagonist, as there are many cases of reported inner monologues.

Realizing that Kate has devoted most of her adult life to her husband, Michael and children without a thought for herself, she sets out tentatively on a journey of self discovery and identity. She throws herself into a temporary job translating for a global food conference, which leads to an affair with a younger Jeffery and ends in a startling confrontation with herself when she gets to know a young girl Maureen whom she shares temporary accommodation with while her family is away. Maureen may not know what she wants to be, but what she does know is that she doesn't want to end up like Kate and her own mother. While her good friend, the selfish and amoral Mary, isn't a role model, she has always retained that sense of self that has gone missing from Kate's life. The novel consists of internal monologue, words and responses from Kate's mind and soul, all timidly spoken.

Kate is a full time wife who becomes victim of despair after realizing that her real 'self' has been devastated during her marriage. She awakens from her bad dream, that is, her bitter past and further dreams about her freedom. Through the means of

her dream, Kate questions the fundamental aspects of her life; she breaks loose from the social norms in which she is or feels trapped, and can return to her life more free and on her own terms. When we first encounter Kate Brown, she is a nice, ordinary, British housewife. In the course of the novel she leaves her home and her role as a wife and mother, sets out on a journey both interior and exterior, and finally returns to her home and family.

Through the unconscious latency of the dream-wish, as a dreamer Kate arrives at a creative answer in the dream activity; or she uses creativity to represent the dream-image in the dream itself. In either case, the activity generated by the dream is represented in the creative activity that follows the latent output of the dream. What is interpreted might be less creative than what is manifest, and in this manner, the interpretation serves to change the dream image into something understandable to the dreamer, and in doing so, tampers with the fresh image that the dream in its primary state affords to the dreamer. Freud writes:

Let us go back to the latent dream-thought. Their most powerful element is the repressed instinctual impulse which has created in them an expression for itself on the basis of the presence of chance stimuli and by transference on to the day's residues—though an expression that is toned down and disguised. Like every instinctual impulse, it too presses for satisfaction by action; but its path to motility is blocked by the physiological regulations implied in the state of sleep; it is compelled to take the backwards course in the direction of perception and to be content with a hallucinated satisfaction. The latent dream-thoughts are thus transformed into a collection of sensory images and visual scenes. (48)

These fantasies are influenced by creativity and are represented in pictorial form in dreams themselves. We have a picture of the dream in the dream-state that is infused with creative qualities that are representative of the unconscious psychic activity of dream-thought itself.

The novel's opening sentence, "A woman stood on her back step, arms folded, waiting" (5) describes Kate's situation at the beginning of the novel. The opening words of the sentence, "A woman" are repeated several times during the first chapter and throughout the novel, and the anonymous use of the indefinite singular suggests that Kate has the function of a "common insignificant woman", and that she herself as a person is insignificant. Her position is passive, and this is underlined as she is "waiting" as opposed to acting. Half a page further down, the sentence is repeated, with an addition: "A woman stood on her back doorstep, arms folded, waiting for a kettle to boil" (5). Now her waiting has a purpose because she is waiting in connection with completing a household activity or chore. In between the two sentences we are presented with a third person narrative with features of stream-of-consciousness. This tells us that Kate is "trying to catch hold of something, or to lay it bare so that she could look and define; for some time now she had been "trying on" ideas like so many dresses off a rack" (5). We are told that Kate would not call this thinking, but it seems that she feels a sense of insecurity about her position in life, and instinctively she is "trying on" phrases representing different modes of life, such as:

"Ah, yes, first love! . . . Growing up is bound to be painful! . . . My first child, you know. . . . But I was in love! Marriage is a compromise . . . I am not as young as I once was.", "I wouldn't like to be a child again!" and "Youth is the best time of your life, or Love is a woman's whole existence" (5).

These repeated expressions, which continue to emerge throughout the novel, reflect many of the unfulfilled dreams of Kate's emotional and physical life. She is haunted by the painful past when she went through multiple sufferings. So, she does not want to recollect those days.

As the novel opens, Kate has come to sense that she has let herself be defined by roles assumed much as one puts on a readymade dress off the rack. Further, as a distillation of her sense of entrapment, frustration, and subjection to the will of others, she senses that her dress itself is not determined by her own wishes but by others' expectations of her role:

A woman in a white dress, a pink scarf around her neck . . . hair . . . done in large soft waves. . . Her own choice would have been to go barefooted, to discard her stockings, and to wear something like a muu-muu or a sari or a sarong — something of that sort — with her hair straight to her shoulders. (7)

So this awareness of her situation leads Kate on her way to seek freedom. She tries to explore her life and her problems by trying to find an expression that fits her situation; "trying on" pieces of "common knowledge" and considering what they really mean, and mean to her. By this process, Kate is starting to realize her situation, the extent of it, and trying to analyze whether she is satisfied with it or not, and what her alternatives are in the days ahead. This impulse to analyze her life and identity is what starts her on her quest towards an independent identity. That this is the goal of her quest, which only gradually becomes clear to her, as she begins to realize that her situation is that of an object in other people's lives, not a subject in a life of her own. Kate was lost in the midst of her household chores. She was nobody, no meaning no any worth. She tries to take a job not because she wants to do but because she wants

to carve a niche for herself. Lessing writes, "Not because she [Kate] needed a job, or wanted to do one. She had been set like a machine by twenty-odd years of being a wife and a mother" (47). This shows how Kate has been exploited as she has been used as a machine at home.

The frequent references to clothes 'tried on,' 'changed,' 'discarded,' 'fitting well' or 'poorly,' express or conceal her changing sense of her 'self.' Changes of role require changes of wardrobe. The dress motif becomes entwined with the journey as each change of place, conveying a shift in self-awareness and a trying on of a new self, involves a change of clothes and hair style or, at the end, lack of a hair style. During her time as lodger in Maureen's apartment, Kate engages in repeated experiments with dressing this way and that, presenting herself 'made up' or not, and observing the drastically varying reactions of men on the streets. Through this process she seems not so much to be seeking for an identity as much to be reinforcing her sense that she does not have one.

Throughout her life, Kate has adopted existing male values and norms under which she has defined herself, understood and acted out her life. As a young woman in Portugal she has tried on the role of the innocently submissive seductive woman. Later, she tries to act as the liberated woman in an open and modern relationship, in the period before she had children. And for the remaining part of her life, she acts out the role of dutiful housewife and mother, according to the ideal of femininity. Now that the children have left home and the housewife and mother is no longer needed, she is looking for a new medium for her identity, but in the course of the novel she comes to realize that this time she has to invent it herself, if she wants a role more satisfying than the one she already has. Kate's identity or individuality becomes clear to her when she enters the labour market. Although starting out as a simultaneous

interpreter, she is soon promoted to organizer of conferences. She recognizes that she has become the person who gives advice to her colleagues, helps them, takes care of them. Kate likes her job as an interpreter and is good at it, but is quickly promoted to a job which basically is the function of a career. She becomes successful in the public sphere once she gets opportunity. Lessing remarks:

"[S]he, Kate, had been promoted: because she had allowed herself to emanate an atmosphere of sympathetic readiness, which had been "picked up" by the bureaucracy of the organization? Were they conscious why they had chosen her to be a group-mother in Turkey? "A warm personality" is what they said. "Sympathetic". *Simpatuca*."
(41)

Her dream of seeking her individuality materializes with this event. In fact, all this probably happens in her dream as she keeps dreaming about her better situation because everything happens perfectly for her, as such perfection takes place in dream only in human life. This is evidenced by Kate's answer: ". . . she could swear the people who had engaged her had not any idea of why they were engaging her, why they were so very set on having her" (46). All of a sudden Kate's prosperity goes up. In fact, all these things occur in Kate's fantasies which she entertains and gets satisfaction from.

These fantasies and wishes are the material from where creativity is generated. The satisfaction of these wishes and fantasies in the dream-state culminate with a representation of a desire that answers to the dreamer's needs and satisfactions. Not all dreams, however, are satisfactions of instinctual wishes. There are those dreams that cause the dreamer to reel in fear and find little solace in the message of the dream itself.

These dreams are the representation of a fantasy that the dreamer has as a wish-fulfillment that needs to be satisfied. The creative element in these dreams has to do with the manner in which these dreams, or instinctual-wishes, are expressed in the latent dream. Unconscious impulses are the true creator of dreams; they produce the psychical energy for the dream's construction. As unfulfilled desires are reserved in the unconscious, dreams emanate from this reservoir. Freud writes:

Like any other instinctual impulse, it cannot strive for anything other than its own satisfaction; and our experience in interpreting dreams shows us too that that is the sense of all dreaming. In every dream an instinctual wish has to be represented and fulfilled. (Freud 47)

Ideas are transformed in the dream into visual pictures; these are the latent dream thoughts that represent the ongoing tension present in unconscious activity. This tension necessitates a discharge of psychic energy that will enable the dreamer to satisfy a need or erotic desire. This satisfaction can take the form of a creative intervention that the dreamer utilizes to represent that dream-thought itself. This creative intervention, or activity, is dependent on the dreamer's ability to access things that may be repressed yet present in the unconscious.

Drawing on Lacan's paradigm of Symbolic Order, which states that while men possess the phallus and are henceforth closer to the Symbolic, women on the contrary are the peripheral beings of the Symbolic Order. Cixous considers this marginal position of women within the Symbolic Order an advantage because she believes that women, being far from the vicinity of the Symbolic, are unlike their male counterparts closer to the imaginary and fantasies and far removed from fixed meanings and reasons. Cixous speaks of women's marginal position in the Symbolic Order which in turn favours women: "He is assigned the scene of castration. He must defend his

phallus; if not it is death...Women do have another chance. They can indulge in this type of life because by definition and for culturally negative reasons they are not called upon...to participate in the big social fete – which is phallogocentric” (qtd. in Conley 135). Women’s language is thus unstable and free flowing, a language that surpasses the confines of fixed meanings and reason, which, when represented in writing. This gives women an access to her strength. Cixous thus advocates the world of feminine freedom, that would help women reclaim their buried voice thereby escaping the language of the father.

In the novel, Lessing writes about women's body and mind through the medium of dream symbols. In the structural level, Cixous asserts that "women by writing their body and mind will create a new signifying order. She will no longer remain passive but emerge as a source of power and energy, an identity by itself" (qtd. in Chakraborty 2901). In fact, the story of Kate's leaving home and her family comes in a dream, which hints at the possibility that the novel is the construct of her unconscious. Her unfulfilled wishes become a source of creativity in the sense that they motivate her towards independence and securing of self. Freud concludes that there is abundant and convincing evidence for the unconscious id taking a great part in the formation of dreams. Freud considers the dream a 'projection', because it is “externalization of an internal process” (36). Consequently, we can regard Kate's dream narrative as a projection of his inner turmoil. Furthermore, Kate mentions in her utterance that the story mirrors her deeply hidden torments. In other words, Kate's dream is a projection of her repressed desires. Hence, it can be concluded that connections exist between the workings of the unconscious and the events of a dream, and that is true not only for the characters in the novel, but for the author herself: “One cannot expose oneself . . . so ruthlessly as a thorough interpretation of a dream

would necessitate; for, as you already know, they touch upon all that is most intimate in the personality” (*A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* 194).

Kate’s ongoing dream about the seal reflects Kate's learning to take care of herself and seeing and fulfilling her own dreams of freedom as an individual. The seal represents herself and her individuality; she learns in the course of the dream to value herself more highly than others. The dream continues as a parallel story throughout the novel, and when Kate sets off on her quest for her space, the seal is still in her arms, wounded and in need of care. This reflects her struggle period. It is in this position that Kate realizes that she sees herself as a mother and wife, not a separate individual. Only then can she continue on her quest towards breaking free of that role and finding a separate identity which relates to her as a subject in her own life, not as an object in others’ hands. Now she is a person capable of swimming freely in the sea, not having to be carried by others. When the dream ends with Kate reaching the sea and releasing the seal into it, Kate feels that her quest has ended and she is ready to go back to her family, which is her former reality. It is only the dream journey that fulfills her needs and aspiration long repressed within her.

Kate's journey is circular; all completed quests are circular because they include a return to her reality. Kate's dream of the seal which she is compelled to return to its native element follows a linear progress from the place where the seal is found to the water into which it is released. Both journeys, however, end with homecomings — the seal is at home in the salt-water where the carrier leaves it. She is herself nearing her marital home at the end of the novel. If the dream journey is more linear, and thereby seems more purposeful, than the real journey, it is perhaps because the dream, for all its puzzling symbolism, is a clarification of Kate's important needs and purposes which are obscured by the contraries and distractions of

daytime life or reality. It is, in fact, the more important of the two journeys; it is "her business for this time in her life" (128), exactly because it does support her in understanding her life journey. The two journeys are similar in nature. Thus, Kate's dream journey to the sea parallels and interprets her realistic journey of her search for freedom and her 'self.'

Kate's journey begins and ends in uncertainty as it is purely a dream journey propelled by her repressed desire. At the opening of the book, she finds herself feeling increasingly uncertain not only of that all-encompassing matter, who she is, but of what she thinks, whether the phrases that move through her mind are really her own thoughts or merely ready-made substitutes. She is uncertain even of what she feels: "Was she depressed? Probably. She was something, she was feeling something pretty strongly" (5). Her departure on her quest for freedom is compulsive as a result of her plight and circumstances. In other words, with no clear destination, plan, or purpose, she goes only because events push her to go. Indeed, at its beginning, her journey almost resembles the involuntary journey. She remembers her "movements" of only a year ago as "always fitting in with those of the children, as of course they had to do" (9). That is, they were determined not by her own preferences, but by her conventionally feminine roles of wife and mother. Just as the work she takes up for Global Food is very similar to her caretaking, organizing, and leading role in her family, so her departure on the journey of enlightenment is an extension of her earlier travels. Though she does indeed take the important step of accepting a job, and an interesting one at that — thus moving away from the house, where she has been a "base for members of the family" (9). She does so at the instigation of others. Other people such as her husband are the ones behind her undertaking her dream journey. In a sense, she resists her family by abandoning it or by maintaining a distance.

Resistance functions inversely to removal or distance, conceivable as the number of associations, distortions, or links between the repressed content and its manifest derivative. Freud elaborates:

In carrying out the technique of psychoanalysis, we continually require the patient to produce such derivatives of the repressed as, in consequence either of their remoteness or of their distortion, can pass the censorship of the conscious. . . . The patient can go on spinning a thread of associations, till he is brought up against some thought, the relation of which to what is repressed becomes so obvious that he is compelled to repeat his attempt at repression. Neurotic symptoms, too, must have fulfilled this same condition, for they are derivatives of the repressed, which has, by their means, finally won the access to consciousness which was previously denied to it. (25)

Here, Freud notes that resistance is associated with maintaining a certain distance between the repressed content and its manifest derivative by the patient's behaviour such as abnormal activities. Such activities in the case of Kate reflect her resistance and search for individuality.

Kate moves on into the real journey that becomes her fall into hellish life. It is only dream journey which is pleasant and adventurous. She again does so only in response to external pressures and accidents at home in patriarchal society. She cannot help going along with the choice of others, who, after all, are higher up in the organization. This is another aspect of the typically feminine circumstance for her. In an effort to deal with an emergency involving hotel accommodations for a conference, "one European city after another was thought of and discussed and dismissed: Rome, Barcelona, Zurich" (32). The list is extended to include Beirut, Nairobi, Rome, North

Africa, Stockholm, and Istanbul — it does not much matter where she goes. Even after the destination is picked, Kate's progress towards it is uncertainly zigzag, her course from one city to another is determined not by her own plan of how to reach her destination but by such outside forces as strikes, timetables, "traffic jams, muddles, all kinds of delay" (48). Her actual arrival at her destination gets as lost in the verbal sense as it does in the traffic. Noting merely that "her surroundings were as she had expected," (59). She gets to work taking care of these new delegates just as she had those in London. Even the day trip with a younger man, Jeffrey, is an abortive journey as the hired car breaks down; they never get where they were going. All this happens just like in the dreams.

Three seal dreams occur in this opening section of the novel. The first of these, the first "installment," (32) as she thinks of it, occurs at the point when Kate has moved from her family to accept the Global Food job and is feeling reservations about her role there. The dream of being free expresses her doubts and fears as she has become just a care giver at her house. However, Lessing sets Kate's dream of achieving liberation. She writes:

She had become what she was: a nurse, a nanny, like Charlie Cooper. A mother. Never mind, in a few days she would be free of it all. She would no longer be parrot with the ability to be sympathetic about minor and unimportant obsessions; she would be free . . . Kate noted that the thought brought with it a small shiver. (32)

When Kate first dreams about the seal, she becomes confused as to its identity as herself, which is "lying stranded and helpless" in an unfamiliar landscape and takes it up, hoping to get it to water (32). Lessing writes about Kate's dream:

She [Kate] came down a hillside in a landscape that was northern, and unknown to her. Someone said 'Look, what is that strange thing, look, something dark is lying there.' She thought: A slug? Surely it can't be, no slug is as large as that. But it was a seal, lying stranded and helpless among dry rocks high on a cold hillside. It was moaning. She picked up it up. It was heavy. She asked if it were all right, if she could help it. It moaned, and she knew she had to get it to water. She started to carry the seal in her arms down the hill. (32)

The plight of the seal seen in the dream in the strange and unfamiliar landscape reflects Kate's plight at the hands of oppressive patriarchy which has made her life helpless. If we can assume that both the seal and the carrier, that is, Kate herself, we see translated into the dream Kate's dissatisfaction, her sense of abandonment by her family, her caretaking behaviour, and her start on a journey towards new life, imaged as water.

In the dream, though she has resumed her carrying of the seal "north, north, always north" (146), she fears that it is dying. The dark and frozen landscape seems to offer no means of satisfying its needs. But she discovers that, after all, the seemingly hostile land holds within it — "in a hollow between this rock and another" — a minimal bit of saving moisture. Once she finds this water and spreads it over the seal, it greets her and is "saved," and she is able to go on (146). It is a curious and curiously vivid dream. Kate does not consciously assign this interpretation; she is still searching; but the dream provides her the emotional state of hope and expectation.

The second seal dream occurs as the first conference is ending. At this point, Kate feels both dissatisfaction with the mothering nature of her work and an uncertainty as to whether she will go on to the next conference. In her dream, she is

equally uncertain, both as to whether the seal-self will survive its apparent injuries and as to whether she is "going in the right direction", a doubt that will torture her repeatedly during the sequence of dreams (47). The seal itself has been unable to progress effectively alone, and as a carrier she can only "struggle" uncertainly on (47). She feels a need to take the seal north, into colder and colder weather, just as in her real-life situation she feels a need to face "the cold wind" of discrimination and other cruel truths (46).

The third dream of this first narrative stage occurs as the Istanbul conference is nearing its ending and Kate is hesitating about going to Spain with her short time lover Jeffrey. She knows she ought not to go, because the trip is likely to interfere with the serious, solitary thinking she needs to do. Accordingly, in this dream, the seal is missing, lost. She knows the animal is her "responsibility," but instead of carrying it she sits in a movie theatre watching a film of confused sea turtles who will certainly die. She "could do nothing for the turtle;" she ought to be doing what she could for the seal (68). Here, it implies that she fails to uplift her own situation.

After this dream, Kate enters a period when her dreams of the seal are lost to her; she cannot remember them the next morning. She knows only that the dream journey goes on, that it remains tortuous, and that the carrier remains fearful she is going the wrong way. But this very quality of uncertainty reflects Kate's present condition. Her time of withdrawal for self-scrutiny is running out, and she can neither resolve her own doubts of what she is to make of her life nor help her young friend Maureen decide what to make of hers. As Maureen says, she " 'must finish the dream' " before going back to her family, she "'mustn't go back before it is finished'" (210) . Together, they wait. And while they wait Kate tells Maureen stories of her early married years and her children. It becomes clear to her that even if men are exploiters,

a distraction, her family life has given her some very good memories. It is not, then, an all-or-nothing situation, as she was seeing it in Spain: family or happiness, family or self.

The next dream confirms the hopeful intuitions of the dream before it. The seal itself directs the carrier's attention to a cherry tree in full bloom in the snow — again, reassurance and redemption within the wintry landscape. Breaking off a twig, she proceeds on her way carrying this emblem of rebirth. When she tells Maureen this dream, Maureen comments, "Well, I suppose it won't be long now" (229). And indeed it is not. After a peculiar incident in which Kate watches Maureen watching a boy and girl at the zoo, an incident which Lessing seems to offer as being particularly illuminating but which strikes us as excessively symbolic. Kate dreams again. In emotional mood, this dream is utterly different from those before. In fulfillment of the promise offered by the cherry tree charm, both she and the seal are "full of life, and . . . of hope" (241). Though the landscape has remained a "thick cold dark" (240), a warm breeze now springs up and grass and flowers grow. She reaches the sea and puts the seal in the water, the place where it belongs; it gives her one long look; and "her journey was over" (241). This is the stage of her fulfillment of her dream.

At once Kate decides that she needs to go home the next day. During a casual party given by Maureen, she simply picks up her suitcase, packed with the assortment of clothes (projections of self) which she has collected over the past months, and goes to catch a bus "and so home" (247). Returning, she feels far from certain that her family will be pleased with her appearance, particularly with her "unstyled hair" (249) showing a wide band of grey at the roots. Kate herself comments, in bemused tones, "my area of choice . . . well, it's narrowed down to how I do my hair. Isn't that extraordinary?" (245). But she is determined that, whatever else happens, she is not

going to give in and let her hair be dyed again. It is a matter, for her, of facing facts. This shows she would no longer be obliged to do whatever she is expected to do as she has learnt everything in life. She has grown mature so as not to be guided by others. This is the significant step towards gaining independence.

The sea journey has made it clear that the deepest meanings may be symbolic, not directly expressible in words. We can say that she has gained some sense of self-understanding and self-acceptance. She is now aware of a clearer vision of the forces limiting women's choices. We can say, from the way she slips quietly out of Maureen's party, that she no longer needs to attract attention or to demand that others cater to her. She is sufficient in herself. And it is very clear that she means to maintain some margin for self-determination after she returns to her family. Her grey at the roots is an appropriate culmination of the motif of clothes and concern with appearance that has played significantly through the novel. It is Kate's "statement of intent" (244). It is the decision or free choice of Kate.

When she achieves self-confidence, self-determination and maturity, Kate ends up being a more independent and liberated woman. However, Kate has not found all the answers; she still has many of the uncertainties she had when she set out. No doubt, she returns a more independent, self-possessed person than at the time when she left home. Thus, the ending expresses the hope for arrival, for the completion of the quest for liberation and individuality

In the middle section of the novel, the long chapter titled "The Holiday," Kate's real-world journey takes her to Spain, and significantly to a back-country area far away the trampled tourist path. By its unfamiliarity, its remoteness, the site of the real journey readily accommodates the quality of a nightmare journey into the unknown. The tour so lightly undertaken becomes in many ways an ordeal, so much

so that we can readily accept it as a resemblance of the descent into hell, where disorder rules. Roles become confused, as her young "lover" Jeffrey vacillates between masculine pride and boyish confusion and dependence. Similarly, Kate vacillates between the role of free woman enjoying her sexual maturity and that of disappointed matron envying the young people of their pleasures. Past pains and frustrations return to overwhelm them both. The environment takes on a nightmarish form as the beach at Malaga becomes a dance floor beside a forbidden "tainted" sea reached along paths "scented with oleander, sun oil, and urine" (77-79). All these strange and unfamiliar physical environment and situations or (nightmarish scenes) make Kate much more mature and learned.

Freud insists on the interconnection of the entire psychical apparatus and external influence. He says that the whole of the associated environment of the substitutive idea [is] cathected with special intensity, so that it can display a high degree of sensibility to excitation. "Excitation of any point in this structure must inevitably, on account of its connection with the substitutive idea, give rise to a slight development of anxiety; . . . unconscious influence extends to the whole phobic outer structure" (26).

When Jeffrey falls ill but denies he is sick, lapsing into alternating delirium and unconsciousness, he wakes occasionally to offer comments virtually without reference to reality as the two of them wander by bus up the coast and then inland, without map and without destination. Kate passes through a desperately poverty-stricken narrow lane, stared at from all sides. Looking back, she sees the lane "packed, crammed, solid with black-dressed women and barefooted Murillo children staring after her" (121). It is a dream of her struggle towards securing public sphere in society.

The disorder of the journey in Spain projects an inner state of mind. The threat that Kate may catch Jeffrey's mysterious illness, which she has from the first perceived as a "spiritual crisis", only reinforces the insanity that she feels overpowering her entire life, which now seems to her one long "betrayal of what she really was" (126). Rather than confronting the dead as she descends into hell, she must confront herself and her past family experiences. At this point, madness and sanity become intertwined. Kate feels "as if she were just coming around from a spell of madness that had lasted all the years since that point in early adolescence when her nature had demanded she must get herself a man" (126). And indeed her aloneness, while Jeffrey is lost in his fever, comes in a sense as a recovery from insanity, because it is the first time in years that she has been able really to think and make her own decision.

Even though she sometimes feels she is recovering from madness, that is dream addiction, however, because she now sees her past life for what it has been. Kate's present feelings are extreme to the point of irrationality, and the ordeal of seeing and judging is itself a period of madness. Reliving the past, thinking in detachment about her husband and her children, she can only wonder why she has lived for years "inside the timetable of other people's needs" (86) and why, even now, she has let herself fall into the stereotype of the woman on her last fling, instead of withdrawing alone to go through the period of self-scrutiny she desires. This prompts her to desire to be:

"really alone — that is, a person operating from her own choices" to submit herself instead to the whims of a man? What would prompt a woman beyond the "drug" of sexual urgency to act out the stale farce of a sexual adventure? The answers are in themselves a hellish

encounter with maddening visions: she views her own life as wife and mother as having brought her "not virtues but a form of dementia".

(92)

She sees that she is not alone in this, that "the faces and movements of most middle-aged women are those of prisoners and slaves" (93). Confronting such realizations, she lapses, like Jeffrey, into a sickness both physical and spiritual. The two of them come to a similar kind of ordeal, but by very different paths, hers being distinctively female even as the quality of her journey through the hell of Spain, following her man's whims and taking all her ideas from him, is a traditionally feminine way to go.

In this way, five seal dreams happening during this descent phase of Kate's journey project her ordeal. The first dream is characterized by domesticity, as the carrier and the seal take refuge in a little cabin where she is distracted from her sense of purpose by a felt need to enact housewifely roles and by the presence of a lover. The second comes as an "inner tutor" speaking to her of her ongoing need to pursue the journey of introspection, but she is "too obtuse to understand" and goes on busying herself with her ailing young man (119). The third, not actually a seal dream at all, is a respite from the engagement with significant issues that is going forward in the dream series, and reflects an actual relief from her efforts to care for Jeffrey, who has been removed to a convent for care, so that she can do nothing but wait. She sleeps lightly in a "shallow lake of dreams where shadows of ideas moved as cool and light as fishes, a very far place from the dark northern country where she and the seal were making their painful journey" (123). The fourth dream, or the fourth which is told, comes as Kate has been thinking how her sexuality had betrayed her into a life-situation utterly hostile to her sense of self, a situation compounded of husband, children, friends, and duties. In the dream, accordingly, the carrier and the seal are

beset by wild animals "leaping up and snapping and snarling at her feet" (129). In the fifth dream, which occurs as she is falling ill, she has reached a very cold, snowy land and feels that both she and the seal will die if they do not soon reach the sea.

This shows that Kate's dreams are the reflection of her situation as Freud claims that the dreams are not only shadows of things appear in one's sleep. The dreams do not come from other world, a dream can be interpreted. The materials of dreams come from experiences which has been reproduced and remembered in dream. But the connection between dreams and reality is not bounded easily as there are factors affecting them such as the memory fault and others. The dreams are not meaningless or absurd. Freud calls dreams as perfectly psychic phenomenon which is a wish-fulfillment as not all wishes of one's psyche could be fulfilled.

The return phase of Kate's quest for individuality in the concluding two-chapter sections maintains the note of uncertainty and a sense of difficulty. This reflects her final struggle for liberation. The last phase of her journey is prolonged into the recovery and reintegration phase, back in London, as she struggles to reach an understanding of the harsh truths she has confronted. It is clear even to Kate herself that she cannot reach a resolution of her suffering by rationality alone, but must work through the unconscious symbolism of her dream. Even though she has enacted, through her dream, a kind of death and rebirth, she must complete the dream journey before she can complete the real-world journey and initiate a new phase of her life.

While she remains in this mental border between suffering and restoration, Kate's dream journey brings her to familiar and strange places at the same time. She is indeed in London, her home city, but it is an alien London, not the familiar environments of her home. She spends her recovery period first in a strange hotel where she is only a short time paying customer, then in a neighbourhood very unlike

her own, where she is a temporary lodger. She returns home slowly, remaining a traveler up to the very last page, where we see her going to catch a bus for home, not actually arriving. This shows her dreaming state only.

Similarly, Kate's physical movements during this period, the last stage of her journey, are marked by erratic, aimless motion. She leaves the apartment and comes back, leaves and walks back and forth and comes back — the very shape of her "travels" around London projecting the groping for resolution in which she is engaged.

After returning from Spain, Kate became ill for few days. During that healing period she goes to the theatre to see Natalia Petronova's "A Month in the Country". While there she understands the true identity of human nature:

What those women had in common with Natalia Petrovna was that she was supposed to be twenty-nine, or so Turgenev said, but she was behaving and thinking like- was being acted by- a woman of fifty. A woman who thought of herself as getting old, grabbing at youth. Obviously the nineteenth century, like the lives of poor people, aged women fast. (149)

Finally, Kate realizes how the play has a deep impact upon the human life. Though Petrovna was barely twenty nine, she sounded and seemed like a woman of fifty. At that particular point in her life Kate understood about her genuine identity:

Those actors were absolutely right. They didn't allow themselves to be shut inside one set of features. One arrangement of hair, one manner of walking or talking, no, they changed about, were never the same. But she Kate Brown, Michael's wife had allowed herself to be roundly slim redhead with sympathetic brown eyes for thirty years. (155)

Throughout the years Kate was trying to impress others and her own family by dressing in a certain way. In a sense, Kate was enlightened by seeing the play. And for the first time she chose to live outside the “cocoon” of social safety. In order to save her life, Kate moves to the dark, to the unknown, to the untrodden.

Cixous believes that women’s speech has always been dominated by the “voice of the mother” which becomes the echo of the “primeval” song she once heard “first music from the first voice of love which is alive in every woman” (113). Drawing on Lacan’s theory of the Symbolic stage, Cixous philosophizes that a woman’s speech and writing is united with the womb world of the mother, a world that is not bound by time that is nameless and with no syntax. (Routledge) Unlike man, the woman never “heaps up [her] libidinal drives”, she never represses the mother, instead she is always closer to the mother. Like the mother her voice, her speech and writing is nurtourous, she is generous – “the dispenser of love, nourishment and plenitude ” (115). This brings us to the concept of the “Other”, which Cixous states, if not elaborates, in “The Laugh of the Medusa.”

In the final chapters of *The Summer Before the Dark* Kate resolves all her tensions and issues, which have been troubling her for the past twenty five years. Kate cannot forget those moments when they used to laugh and stay up the whole night enjoying with her children. And Maureen pleads with her to tell stories about their happy times. In other words, by remembering all those glad moments she is setting aside those painful ones. She is in a desperate need to start a new chapter in her life by recollecting the happy moments she shared with her family and children. So due to those happy remembrances, she is able to complete the dream which she was seeing for the whole summer. Furthermore, during that period Kate learned to say “no” to her family: “Terribly sorry, very busy, will let you know before I arrive” (213). This can

be seen as an example of her growth and her determination to complete the dream for finding her lost self. In order to change her identity she changes her hair and clothes. Shopkeepers, who were ready to greet her anytime, do not recognize her. Furthermore, Mary Finchley passes by her without saying anything. Nobody noticed her:

But while her body heaved and manufactured tears, she was thinking, quite coolly, that coming here, coming to the hired room where no one knew her, was the first time in her life that she had been alone and outside a cocoon of comfort and protection, the support of other people's recognition of what she had chosen to present. But no one expected anything, knew anything about her supports, her cocoon.
(165)

However, at times Kate is haunted by past memory. Those memories tend to distract her from her knowledge. In order to get rid of them, she takes help of the sea dream. Equally whenever she has a past memory, it is about the comparison between Kate and Mary. Mary Finchley, in the novel acts as an alter-ego to Kate Brown. Though she is not a good friend to Kate, Mary revolves around her journey time and again. This particular event helped Kate believe her memory. The memory is trying to distract her but she easily realizes that it is a "false" one: "It was not a memory that she could be proud of, to say at least" (144). It is the experience that she gathers through her dream journey that makes her an independent woman.

After gaining her independence, Kate tries to check herself whether she is now different or not. So, near the end of the novel in a section entitled "Maureen's Flat," Kate Brown stops in front of a mirror in a young woman's apartment where she's renting a room:

She saw a thin monkey of a woman inside a “good” yellow dress, her hair tied into a lump behind her head....She noted that she was in the grip of a need to do something for herself – get her hair done, buy a dress that fitted; this was because of the girl with her healthy young flesh, and her fresh clothes. She noted, too, that this impulse had something to do with her own daughter: Maureen was about Eileen’s age. (167)

As she continues to watch herself in the full length mirror, Kate’s realization that she needs to do something with herself encapsulates the main conflict of the novel: “She saw that the moment of returning to her own family was going to be a dramatic one, whether by that time she had pulled herself together – in other words, returned to their conception of her – or had decided not to” (167). This implies that Kate has now become a changed woman from the forty-five year old wife of a successful neurologist and mother of four.

Kate Brown in the novel *The Summer Before the Dark* tries to analyze her 'self' through exile. During her exile, she suffers from aloofness, which affects her physical appearance. The color of her hair fades and she loses quite a lot of weight. Her dress sense is also changed. She has no makeup on her face. While looking in the mirror, she gets the knowledge of how she looks at the age of forty-five. In this way she confronts her fear of ageing. By confronting the fear of ageing, she has the knowledge that physical appearance doesn’t reveal anything about our true selves. By refusing to take care of her hair, she finally takes control of her appearance: “She had lost more weight. Her hair struck out around a face all bones, stiff and frizzy, streaked with orange, grey-rooted. She could not get her brush through it” (142). Thus, Kate goes through many ups and downs to find her identity as a woman besides being a

mother and wife. Like the seal returns to the sea, she returns to her family. She learns that besides being attached to someone else, first and foremost she is an individual. Kate finds out that it is not unusual to be alone, have grey hair, be old, and have wrinkles. She also realizes that it is not the outer appearance that defines the women; rather it is the inner experiences that justify her growth to maturity and consciousness.

In this way, the recurring dream sequence in *The Summer Before the Dark* with the "seal" is deeply poignant and symbolic of Kate's search for her own identity. The novel is a wonderful example of feminist literature exploring issues that are eternal and relevant for women all over the world.

III. Kate's Quest for Self and Identity

The research on Doris Lessing's novel, *The Summer Before the Dark* concludes that Lessing represents women's search for identity and self through the dream symbols. Her dreams become a source of her creative means of achieving freedom. As Kate Brown is dissatisfied with her husband she sets along the road to discovery of her identity. Kate Brown, a mother and wife sets out on her paths to discover who she really is through the medium of dream symbols. As her wishes of independent life remain unfulfilled, she tries to fulfill her dream through dream itself. This dream journey, which is physical as well as psychological opens up new vistas of life and provides an opportunity to Kate to learn more about herself. In the course of her dream journey, Kate sees the seal several times, which is the projection of herself as She finds many similarities in the seal and herself. The plight of the seal and Kate run in a parallel manner in the seal dream. In fact, all the narrative is the narrative of Kate's dream because her journey from home happens in dream.

The Summer Before the Dark traces the journey in the quest of self knowledge and identity in the midst of exploitative patriarchy which has restricted Kate's freedom. In the beginning, Kate seems to be neurotic as her state of mind at the novel's opening is such that she finds herself feeling increasingly uncertain not only of that all-encompassing matter, who she is, but of what she thinks, whether the phrases that move through her mind are really her own thoughts or merely ready-made substitutes. Most of her life till the point has been spent in living life according to set notions of motherhood and marriage as set by patriarchy. She has willingly sacrificed her identity, her likes and dislikes for accommodating her family members. Gradually, she starts feeling unwanted in her home. Her husband does not regard her

as any worth. As a result of all these factors, Kate at the novel's beginning is dissatisfied and the time to start her journey in search of her identity.

The journey begins when she gets an offer to work as a translator for a project at Global Food and does so well that is hired for longer duration of time. At the same time, her children and her husband go out of Britain for various reasons and this further leaves her free to set on her own quest. After she joins Global Food she gets an opportunity to visit Istanbul where an international conference is being hosted by Global Food and here she meets Jeffrey, who becomes her younger "lover" and together they go to Spain. The relationship between Kate and Jeffrey is important because it helps Kate gain further insight regarding her relationship with her family and realizes what distance she has travelled since she was a talented young girl at the university. Though Jeffrey is Kate's lover, she cannot help feeling maternally towards him again and again.

She then rents a room in a flat which she shares with a young girl Maureen. Her stay at the flat is the final stage of her journey before she goes back home and she learns a lot in this stage. Coming to the flat in a exhausted and dull state, she is able to detach herself from the needs and wants of her family and look at herself as an independent individual after a long time. She learns to detach herself from the unnecessary needs created by her family when she learns to keep herself aloof from the affairs of Maureen, who is the same age as her youngest children and on a verge of making a critical decision about the course of her life and marriage. She learns to create a space for herself where she lives a life of her choosing and is not at the beck and call of her grown up children who, she feels, remember her only when needed. An important marker of her awareness and growth is the recurring dream of the dying seal which Kate has to save. In the end of the novel, when Kate becomes strong

enough to assert her own personality wherever needed and stops being a slave to the whims and fancies of her family, she is also able to complete the dream of the seal by saving it. All these developments take place while she is at Maureen's flat and when she finally leaves that flat to go home. We find different Kate than the one we find her in the beginning. It can be concluded that the novel *The Summer Before the Dark* is novel of a long journey. It presents with Kate's dream journey, which ends with a new decision on her part as she becomes more mature, independent and conscious. All this she achieves through the means of dream symbolism. So, in the novel the protagonist, dissatisfied with her initial situation, starts on a journey as she goes to different places and undergoes different experiences that change her outlook towards her old ideas, beliefs and life itself. In this way, Kate completes her journey of wish fulfillment through dream journey, which reflects her quest for private self.

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