

It is with great pleasure and honour, that we wholeheartedly dedicate this humble research to our families, relatives and friends for their unconditional love, support and prayers, to our teachers, to us, because without our enduringness and steadiness we would not be here today. Thank you all.

DJAMILA & MALIKA

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Abstract

*This following research paper, aimed at comparing and studying James Joyce's **A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916)** and Meena Kandasamy's **When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife (2017)**, in the light of the "Anxiety of Authorship" theory developed by the two female theorists Sandra. M Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their collection of essays **The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (1979)**. Our issue aimed at comparing these two novels together, examine how Meena Kandasamy experienced the anxiety of authorship. At the end and by taking into consideration our issue and working hypothesis, and the theory we have relied on, we came to the result that both writers hold a relationship with each other, as their work showcased important similarities despite being different. As Joyce's novel earned him, the forefront of modernist literature, Kandasamy wanted him to be her literary father, she took him as a predecessor, and thus she experienced the anxiety of authorship.*

Keywords: James Joyce, Meena Kandasamy, influence, Anxiety of Authorship, Modernist literature, Predecessor, Literary father.

I. General Introduction¹

Within the vast realm of literature, certain works transcend their time and place, leaving a lasting impact on readers across generations after they were written. James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (2017), are two such remarkable works published nearly a century apart, yet they offer thought provoking comparisons from various angles.

James Joyce as an Irish novelist, poet and writer made a significant impact and contribution to the Irish literature and the modernist movement. Through his works, he shaped his country's literary tradition, especially with his *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which earned him the summer of modernist literature. Likewise, Meena Kandasamy as a South Indian poet, novelist, translator and activist, made a significant contribution to the Indian literature as well. She worked alongside the Dalit Movement, a reaction to the systematic oppression faced by the Dalit community, and considered as the lowest caste in Hindu hierarchy. Kandasamy's powerful and fearless works have earned her many prizes and recognition.

As our research paper, focuses on the influence of writers on one another, the Irish novelist and poet W.B Yeats influenced Joyce. Especially the fact that this Irish Nobel prize-winner was one of the Irish literary revival figures. This made Joyce experience what Harold Bloom called "The Anxiety of Influence", claiming that young poets suffer from the anxiety of belatedness, which makes them enable to rival their literary predecessors. Joyce influenced Kandasamy, since he was the avant-garde of modernism, due being the father of stream of consciousness technique; she eventually took him as her literary father, thus experiencing the anxiety of authorship.

¹ NB: From now on the title of the novel *When I Hit: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* will be mentioned as *When I Hit You*.

a. Review of the Literature:

Based on our reading of previous literature upon examining the works of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* (2017), we have noticed that the novels gathered criticism and have been studied from different perspectives.

On the one hand, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* has been widely lauded by literary reviews and critics from various standpoints, gathering books, essays and articles about his life and his works. To start with, *Approaches to Joyce's Portrait: Ten Essays* (1976) by Thomas F. Staley and Bernard Benstock is a collection of critical essays that offer various approaches and perspectives to James Joyce's novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The essays likely provided in-depth analysis and interpretation of the novel, exploring different themes, literary techniques, and historical contexts related to Joyce's work, offering valuable insights on his writing. The work featured contributions from different scholars, providing critical analysis and interpretation of the novel. The collection aimed to deepen the reader's understanding of Joyce's novel and its significance in the context of modernist literature.

Another piece of literature is David Seed's "*James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*" (1992) offered a detailed and insightful analysis of the novel. The critic reviewer noted that Joyce's work is remarkable for its use of language and its innovative approach to narrative structure, as it is a Bildungsroman and a coming-of-age story that traces the development of its protagonist Stephen Dedalus. Seed demonstrated how Joyce's innovative use of language and symbolism creates a complex and layered portrait of Stephen's evolving understanding of himself. One key aspect of Seed's analysis is his attention to the novel's historical and cultural context where he emphasized on how Joyce's work reflected the important social and cultural changes of early 20th century Ireland, including the rise of Irish nationalism, the formation of The Abbey Theatre, the death of Parnell, the decline of the Catholic Church's influence. Seed's book also

included a critical reception of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as he said: "The reviewers' reactions to A Portrait on its publication in 1916 were divided between recognition of its obvious artistic skills and diffusive recoils from its subject-matter."(Seed, 1992, p.15). It included critics such as H.G Wells, Hugh Kenner, and Morris Beja among others.

Lastly, a collection of essays edited by Suzette Henke alongside Elaine Unkless entitled "*Women in Joyce*" was published in 1982, marking the beginning point of substantial feminist reading of Joyce's works. Henke in this work examined the ways in which Joyce's female characters challenge and undermine traditional gender role. She supplied as well a great close discussion of female characters in the novel who collectively constitute a psychological "other" to the male perspectives. She made a strong analysis of the psychodynamics of Stephen's shifting attitude to women. Henke wrote another work shortly after *Women in Joyce* entitled "*James Joyce and the Politics of Desire*"(1990) where she centred her discussion on Joyce's works, mainly around questions of language, desire, and gender. In the Joycean canon, Henke affirmed that the woman is both seen as a desirable object and a subject to desire. She added that the female characters are thinly sketched and two-dimensional. (Henke, 1990). In both of these two works, Henke labelled the novel as a misogynist one and Stephen as somehow a narcissistic boy in his mid-teens by asserting that biographical evidence suggested that he came to a kind of misogyny earlier exhibited by his fictional surrogate Stephen." (Henke, 1990, p.17).

On the other hand, *When I Hit You* has received criticism and reviews as well from different standpoints mainly studies that raise issues regarding violence, women and liberation struggle of Indian women in particular. To begin with, Mohana Roy in her work entitled "*When I Hit You- Reading through a Psychological Lens*"(2020) reflected the psychological underpinnings of inter personal violence in the novel. This work is both a reading and an analysis of the psychological and behavioural traits of the characters, particularly the young wife and her husband. At the beginning of the article, Roy gave a general idea of the novel, where she talked

about the protagonist who is a newly married woman whose husband soon after started controlling and abusing her. She then discussed about the historical, social and cultural context by citing several research studies on domestic violence and abuse. Roy analysed the novel from a psychological and behavioural perspective and she said: "A few instances from the book reveal the personality traits of the abusive husband."(Roy, 2020, p.5). The man controls his wife, manipulates, abuses and belittles her in every way possible. In his mind, it is a kind of punishment for what he believed was her wrong doings; as Roy asserted, but actually, he slowly and systematically oppresses and subdues her leading her to be a victim of mental health.

Another literary review is Niranjani Majhi's *'A Dalit Woman's Struggle Against Patriarchy and Society To Be a Writer: A Study of Meena Kandasamy's When I Hit You'*(2018) in which she highlighted the Dalit women's struggle against patriarchy and society as well as domestic violence. Majhi first spoke about Kandasamy and her contribution in the Dalit movement and she says: "Being come off in a Dalit family she has to put with the atrocities of the upper Caste and patriarchy."(Majhi, 2018, p.115). Women are seen as the other by the patriarchal social order. They are marginalized, especially if they come from a Dalit family "first by caste and the by gender."(115). She affirmed that the male dominated society always tries to keep women under control as if they have no freedom and authority. Majhi then highlighted the narrator's experience with domestic violence and how she went through all sorts of assault, physically and verbally, enduring extreme forms of torture and "when she screams in pain and asks him to stop, her husband's words are too shameful to hear for a girl."(Kandasamy, 2017, p.119). The critic affirmed that at the end of the story the narrator decides to break free from that toxic relationship as she stands up and struggles against violence.

Finally, Manik Mandal's *'Resistance Through Empowerment in the Light of Meena Kandasamy's When I Hit You'*(2021) is a study of those painful experiences the narrator has been through and her strategies to survival and resistance. He said : "The book is one of the finest

examples of love, marriage, violence, and trauma and how the female protagonist who is by heart a feminist gets trapped in an abusive marriage."(Mandal, 2021, p. 140). Manik mentioned that the painful experiences are faced not only by the narrator, but also faced by "any assertive, powerful, idealistic and educated woman living in the 21th century." (Mandal, 2021, p.145). He then added that Kandasamy's book is powerful that it may be like "an advice to every woman living in India and even in any part of the world."(145).

b. Issue and Working Hypothesis

Through the above review of literature, we notice that James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* received critical attention from different perspectives. However, to our best knowledge, no research has tried to put and study the two novels together. To elaborate, the criticism reviewed remains limited in perspective concerning the issue of influence. It remains therefore, our task to undertake this piece of research, as to explore the extent to which Meena Kandasamy was influenced by James Joyce's artistic journey in the writing of her novel, and how she experiences therefore this anxiety. To do so, have formulated the following working hypothesis:

Firstly, James Joyce is considered one of the major writers and novelists of Ireland. His novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* earned him the forefront of the modernist literature. He is regarded as the avant-garde of literature as well, because he mastered the stream of consciousness technique. However, before earning this name, was he influenced by other writers? Why did he finally choose to exile from his homeland?

Secondly, in our study we relied on Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar's "Anxiety of Authorship" theory developed in their collection of essays *The Mad Woman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (1979)*. To what extent this theory is relevant on both works?

Thirdly, in both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *When I Hit You*, the main characters struggle to define their identities and their existence as artists in society. Therefore, they decide to break free from all what trap them and undergo a transformative journey.

Lastly, James Joyce and Meena Kandasamy views of women are different in the two novels. Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* depict them either as marital figures, figures of desire or objects of romantic pursuits, whereas Kandasamy aimed to give voice to silenced and oppressed women to stand up, especially in the patriarchal societies.

c. Methodological outline

In this piece of research, we have followed the IMRAD method. We divided our work into five sections. The first section was devoted to a general introduction that included a short introduction of our topic, alongside the writers with their respective works. In the review of the literature, we have cited some previous critiques gathered around the two novels. Then, we have raised our issue, set our working hypothesis, and lastly the methodological outline. The second section concerned the methods and materials, in which we introduced and defined the “Anxiety of Authorship” theory on which our work is relied. It included also the synopsis of the novels and the biographies of the writers. The third section focused on the results concerning our important findings. The fourth section centred on the discussion and the analysis of both novels, and we divided it into three chapters; the first chapter turned around the context of both works, the second discussed the journey to becomingness, and the third focused on the representation of female characters in the two books. The last section of our study is devoted to the general conclusion, which was a summary of the whole work and a restatement of our main findings.

II. Methods and Materials

a. Methods

This section of our study explores the two female theorists Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar's theory "The Anxiety of Authorship", developed in their collection of essays called *The Mad Woman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979). It is a feminist theory, and an adaptation of Harold Bloom's "Theory of Influence" which he developed as well in his work *The Anxiety of Influence*. As it is described by Bloom, it pertains to the fear experienced by a young poet due to the belief that he cannot successfully rival his literary predecessors. This anxiety of belatedness stems from the artist's fear of not being his own creator, with the works of his predecessors assuming priority over his own writings. In essence, the dynamics of literary history, according to Bloom, arise from the artist's anxiety of influence, which hinders his ability to establish originality and precedence in his work and focuses on the unique anxieties experienced by female writers.

According to this theory, female writers face a radical fear that they cannot create, that the act of writing will isolate or destroy them, and that they cannot become precursors in the literary tradition. This anxiety stems from the lack of female literary predecessors and the pervasive view of writing as a male activity. Gilbert and Gubar's work *The Madwoman in the Attic* explores the different anxieties women felt when writing, and how male and female writers have different approaches to writing. Anxiety of authorship also addresses the lack of female literary predecessors and the pervasive view of writing as a male activity, which contributes to the anxiety felt by women writers.

This work marked a founding moment in feminist literary history, as the two female theorists quite simply put women writers in their places, at the highest rung of the literary ladder. They implied that the female writer uniquely struggles to believe in her capacity to creation. They revised Harold Bloom's theory to make into account that female writers like Jane Austen or

Emily Dickenson do not fit into his concept. In simple words, there are no material precursors under the female literary tradition, which makes it hard to these female writes, as male authors have the tendency to revise the writings of their male predecessors, which is a kind of father-son battle. They affirm: "Bloom's model of literary history is intensely (even exclusively) male and necessarily patriarchal [...] Bloom describe literary history as the crucial warfare of fathers and son." (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p.47). Nevertheless, female writers do not fall under this model as they note,

Certainly if we acquiesce in the patriarchal Bloomian model, we can be sure that the female poet does not experience the "anxiety of influence" in the same way that male-counterpart would, for the simple reason that she must confront precursors, who are almost exclusively male. (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p.48).

Thus, women writers started seeking a representation and a reflection within the male-inscribed literary texts.

One key area that the two theorists explore extensively is the role of patriarchy in shaping female writers, as literary production is traditionally dominated by men, giving them authority. Gilbert and Gubar argue in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, that Western literary histories are predominantly patriarchal and male-dominated, with male precursors attempting to confine and limit women's potential, will, and creativity. The two writers contend while speaking about the male-authority precursors

[...] despite their authority, they fail to define the ways in which she experiences her own identity as a writer...Thus the "anxiety of influence" that a male poet experiences is felt by a female poet as an even more primary "anxiety of authorship. (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, pp. 48-49).

In their collection of essays, Sandra M.Gilbert and Susan Gubar explore the anxieties experienced by early nineteenth-century women writers who worked within a male vision of creativity, negotiating with male fantasies of the submissive female as an angel or the dangerous female as a monster. The book also analyses the social conditions of female authors' lives, the literary canon, and the archives. In the context of literature, literary canons refer to a collection of

texts considered to be of exceptional value and importance in a specific cultural, historical, or literary context. On the other hand, archives are a repository of historical documents, records, or other information that has been collected and preserved for future reference or study. Gilbert and Gubar's work has had a significant impact on feminist literary criticism, shifting the focus from examining representations of women in literature by men to literature by women. They examined Victorian literature and the Victorian female writer particularly, from a feminist perspective. The title of the work is a reference to Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre (1874)* whose female character Bertha Mason is imprisoned in an attic apartment by her husband.

In this work, the two feminists examine the notion that women writers of the 19th century specifically Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte and Emily Dickenson among others were confined and locked in their writing. In fact these female writers used imagination and even adopted pen-male names so that their work were taken seriously and to escape those stereotypes put by men that claim women's writings were limited. Furthermore, in this male governed world of literature, women writers needed to create their own writing and to achieve what they wanted in order to go beyond those ideals, which are put on them by society. Additionally, women were not only struggling for self-redefinition as writers, but also as people in society.

To elaborate, rather than experiencing the "Anxiety of Influence," women encountered the "Anxiety of Authorship," which entails a profound fear that they cannot create because they can never become a "precursor" the act of writing will isolate or destroy her."(Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p.49). This concept, developed by Gilbert and Gubar, reflects the radical apprehension felt by female writers that they cannot be precursors and that the act of writing inevitably isolates them from male predecessors. Unlike the "Anxiety of Influence" experienced by male writers, the "Anxiety of Authorship" felt by women writers implies that they cannot become as their male precursors or doubt if they fight them, they would never win the battle. This has urged her to struggle in order to find a place where she can be. Female authors were frightened of not being

recognized as writers by the male's authority. This feeling of fear has been ingrained in women by the pervasive perception of the writing domain as exclusively male, where they are perceived to lack the capacity to become precursors and are consequently isolated from it.

Gubar and Gilbert explore also the concept of the angel/monster dichotomy in their work. The concept of the angel/monster dichotomy is a literary device that reflects the societal expectations of women's behaviour and character. This dichotomy portrays women as either angels or monsters, with no in-between. The angel represents the idealized, submissive, and pure female, while the monster represents the dangerous, rebellious, and independent female. Thus they say that women as citizens were seen as either "angels" or "monsters", or as either pure or dangerous. It is also the case when male writers categorize their female characters. This means that if women are not ideal and perfect, they must be doing evil.

Moreover, the two theorists affirm:

"Her battle, however, is not against her (male) precursor's reading of the world, but against his reading of *her*. In order to define herself as an author she must redefine the terms of her socialization."(p.49).

This emphasizes that women writers do not fight against the male-dominated literary tradition, but rather against the way male writers have interpreted and defined them. In order to establish oneself as an author, women must challenge the limitations and expectations imposed by male-dominated literary traditions, and demonstrating their competences and creativity in writing, which can lead to the development of unique and innovative literary styles. These views made the female artist experience feelings of loneliness, alienation, and fear of antagonism from male readers due to her anxiety about the propriety of female invention. She also has an urgent need for sisterly predecessors and a female audience, which highlights the gender inequalities and injustices that persist in society and literature. This perspective emphasizes the importance of incorporating a feminist perspective in literary analysis and criticism, promoting a more inclusive and equitable representation of women's voices and. They state: "all these phenomena of

“inferiorization” mark the woman writer’s struggle for artistic self-definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creating from those of her male counterpart.” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p.50).

Consequently, women writers as we said, experience an “anxiety of authorship” that is built from complex fears of that male-authority which seems to them to be by definition inappropriate to their gender. The two feminist theorists affirm:

In comparison to “male” tradition of strong, father-son combat, however, this female anxiety of authorship is profoundly debilitating. Handed down not from one woman to another, but from the stern literary “fathers” of patriarchy to all their “inferiorized” female descendants. (p.50)

This anxiety forms a unique bond that links women in what we might call the secret sisterhood of their literary subculture, which constitutes a crucial mark of that subculture as Gilbert and Gubar contends.

b. Materials

1. Biography of James Joyce

James Augustine Aloysius Joyce (1882-1941) was an Irish novelist, poet and playwright, born in Dublin, into a lower middle class Catholic family. He was the eldest son of John Stanislaus Joyce and Mary Jane May Murray. He started his education at age of five, where he was sent to Clongowes Wood boarding school, which he left due to financial issues, as his father could not pay his education. At the age of thirteen, he was admitted to Belvedere College in Dublin thanks to a friendly Priest, where he led a successful academic career by being a popular student and winning multiple prizes for scholarships in national exams. In his teen years, he underwent a religious crisis that would bring him to abandon and reject his Catholic faith. This crisis had been influenced by the political and social upheaval in Ireland during that time.

After graduating from Belvedere College, he continued his studies at University College where he found inspiration in European writers like Henrik Ibsen, which exerted a powerful influence on

his career as an artist. In his first year, he wrote an essay entitled *When We Dead Awaken (1900)* on Ibsen's last play, and later criticized Irish literature in another essay entitled *The Day of Rabblement (1901)*. He graduated with a degree in Modern Languages and briefly studied medicine in France before returning to Dublin to care for his dying mother. He wrote *Dubliners*, *Stephen Hero*, and *Chamber Music* while working various jobs. He married Nora Barnacle and went into exile in Europe, where they had a child named George and settled in Trieste. He worked as a language teacher and wrote his greatest works between 1914 and 1922, including *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, and *Ulysses*. James Joyce published his last work, *Finnegans Wake*, in 1939 and in Zurich, leaving behind a rich history of significant works.

2. Synopsis of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*:

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is a novel by James Joyce. It follows the life and the inner journey of the hero Stephen Dedalus, a young Irish man who struggles with his identity and artistic aspirations, and who decides to break free from social, familial and religious constraints to devote his life to the art of writing. This novel is divided into five chapters, each representing a significant period in Stephen's life. At the beginning, it covers his childhood, then his time at Clongowes Wood College, and his family's move to Dublin. He struggles with his artistic perspective, religious upbringing, and encounters with sin and guilt, shaping his worldview and leading to a rejection of traditional Irish society and the Catholic Church.

After having a discussion with his sister, he finds out that the family moves again for financial reasons, and he experiences a personal epiphany, which he defined as a sudden spiritual manifestation, on the beach, understanding that love and desire for beauty should not be sources of shame. He liberates himself from the constraints he calls "nets" and realizes he can express the complex realities of human experiences. The novel ends with Stephen leaving Ireland for self-discovery and creativity, drawing inspiration from the mythical character "Daedalus."

3. Biography of Meena Kandasamy:

Ilavenil Meena Kandasamy (1984) is a South Indian fiction writer, poet, translator and activist, born in Tamil, India. She had an interest in poetry from a young age, and then she adopted the name Meena. She completed her doctorate in socio-linguistics from Anna University, Chennai. She starts writing poetry at age 17 and translating books into many languages. She writes columns for platforms like Outlook India and The Hindu, and her parents' involvement in the Dalit movement influenced her work. She worked alongside the movement, which is a religious and a socio-political movement challenging the caste system in India and defend the rights of Dalits, the lowest people in the Hindu hierarchy. Her debut collection of poems, *Touch (2006)*, was themed around caste and untouchability, and her second collection, *Ms Militancy (2010)*, was an explosive, feminist reclaiming of Tamil and Hindu myths.

Her works are generally anti-caste or annihilation of classes and how people are put into stereotypical roles based on their categories because of society. This led her to write her first novel entitled *The Gypsy Goddess* in 2014. It is based on a 1968 incident in which 44 low class and their families in Tamil village were locked in a hut and burned alive because they wanted better pay conditions. Her latest novel *When I Hit You (2017)* which is based on her own experiences of maltreatment and abuse at the hands of her husband made her win prestigious awards and recognitions.

4. Synopsis of *When I Hit You: Or A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*:

When I Hit You: A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife (2017) is a novel by Meena Kandasamy that tells the story of a newlywed writer, who experiences rapid social isolation and extreme violence at her husband's hands. Set in modern India, the story is based on Kandasamy's own experience of marriage, in which she tells her story from the lens of the unnamed narrator.

The novel is structured as a series of diary entries written and narrated by the unnamed protagonist, who is a writer and a highly educated woman from a well-to-do family. The novel begins with the story that the mother of the unnamed narrator tells about her daughter's escaping from her husband and abuser. The young woman falls in love with a charismatic and intelligent university professor and agrees to be his wife. At the start, their relationship seems to be perfect; however, soon after their marriage, things start to change just after they move to Mangalore. The husband becomes more controlling and possessive. She finds herself in a situation in which she cannot speak the language of that new city. Eventually, she experiences extreme violence at her husband's hands, and finds herself socially isolated.

As the story progresses, her husband becomes increasingly abusive both emotionally and physically. She talks about this to her parents. Her mother often appropriates her daughter's tale of survival, exaggerating aspects and adding a tone for entertainment, particularly to highlight the heroism of the parents in receiving their daughter after fleeing. Thus, the husband forbids her to write as he considers her writing as a threat to his ego and authority. Since he knows that, if she becomes a writer involves at the mercy of others. He controls every aspect of her life and does not want her to have an independent voice. Even though she is forbidden to write, she secretly continues to journal and write poems as a way to process her thoughts and emotions.

Furthermore, as the story continues, the young wife finds herself threatened by the husband of killing her. That is why she has to protect herself by trying to get a secure divorce. After many efforts, she succeeds to get the legal separation she needs and escapes leaving everything behind her. By the end, she goes on a self-discovery journey, in which she finds herself in a healing place to create a new life for herself.

III. Results

This piece of research established a comparative study of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (2017). It attempted also on answering our issue, which is exploring the extent to which Meena Kandasamy was influenced by James Joyce's artistic journey in the writing of her novel. In doing so, we relied on the theory of "Anxiety of authorship theory" developed by the two feminist theorists Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their collection of essays *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979). By adopting this theory in the study of the novels and by answering our issue, we came to these important resolutions:

The first finding concerns James Joyce and how he was considered as the avant-garde of the modernist literature, and one of the major writers of Ireland. We came to the result that, his novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* earned him the forefront of the modernist literature. His experimental approach to writing and his ability to push the boundaries of traditional literary forms established him as a pioneering figure of the modernist movement. He pioneered as well the stream of consciousness technique, which depicts the inner life and growth of his protagonist Stephen Dedalus. However, before achieving this recognition, he was influenced by other such as Ezra Pound and William Butler Yeats, who helped shape his Irish identity. Yet, Joyce from being easily influenced, became more independent and progressed from naivety and weakness under the weight of convection to rebellion and self-exile, and this appears vaguely in his novel.

The second finding concerns the extent to which Gubar and Gilbert's anxiety of authorship theory is relevant in the works. This theory as defined by the two theorists concerns the woman writer and her struggle in attempting the pen in the male dominated world of literature. By examining the relevance of the theory to Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You*, and Joyce's novel, we found out that there is a strong relation between the two novels and the anxiety of

authorship theory. Kandasamy's experiences align with the concept of the female writer's challenge in asserting her voice and authority. As a woman writer, she recognizes Joyce's impact on modern literature, and she is influenced by his artistic journey. For instance, in one interview with *The Hindu* she spoke about how Joyce's writing style had influenced her writing process. She makes use of the stream of consciousness technique in *When I Hit You*, conveying the deep insights into the unnamed narrator's mind. Therefore considering him a predecessor in her work, she lived on the anxiety of authorship.

The third finding concerns the main characters' struggle within the two novels to define their identities as artists in their society. By exploring the inner working and the journey to self-discovery of both Stephen Dedalus and the young wife, we came to the result that, the two protagonists underwent a transformative journey, to arrive to the point of breaking free from all what restricted and enclosed them, and going into a journey toward becomingness. We came to the result that as Joyce's protagonist managed to break free from the vision of the "nets", representing his family, religion, culture and nation to pursue his artistic journey of becoming a writer, also Kandasamy's protagonist, breaks free from an abusive marriage to go on a journey of becoming a writer. We came to the result as well that both novels share similarities in their semi-autobiographical nature, drawing on significant experiences from the authors' lives. The protagonists' artistic journeys reflect their respective writers' experiences and influences.

The last finding concerns the representation of the female characters in both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *When I Hit You*. We reached the result that both Joyce and Kandasamy depict their female characters differently. While Joyce portrays women as either maternal objects or objects of sexual desire, she gives them voice and autonomy, particularly when she speaks about the way they are treated in the patriarchal society. Her novel is told from the lens of an unnamed narrator, so her anonymity allows female readers to slip easily into her skin. Thus, she makes a different view to Joyce's views of women

IV. Discussion

This section of our work is divided into three main chapters, in which we explored both James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You*. The first chapter focused on the context and the background of the two novels. The second chapter discussed the journey toward self-discovery, and the last chapter focused on the representation of female characters, and the way both writers view women. To do so, we relied on Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Anxiety of Authorship*.

Chapter One: The Context and Background:

In this following chapter, we look into discussing the context and background of James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1916)* and Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You (2017)*. Exploring the elements that make them semi-autobiographical, as well as the political-cultural contexts that shaped the writers' lives and works, and the literary background that influenced them. Joyce's novel is a major work of Irish literature, and it is considered as an avant-garde of the modernist literature as well. It is a semi-autobiographical novel charting the artistic journey of its protagonist Stephen Dedalus, an Irish man as he struggles to find his place in the world and pursue his artistic vision. The chapters of the novel describe the life of Stephen from childhood to adulthood. In parallel, Kandasamy's novel is considered as a feminist literary and a semi-autobiographical work as well. It tells the story of a young woman who marries a university professor only to find out that she is trapped in an abusive relationship. The novel provides an honest account of the writer's experiences with domestic violence and her struggles for liberation and self-expression.

While these novels hail from distinct corners of the literary landscape, separated by time, locations and cultural settings, their narratives intertwine in various ways. For instance, the titles of the novels are significant, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* reflects the novel's focus on the development of Stephen as an artist. Similarly, *A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife*

highlights the novel's focus on the experiences and growth of a young woman writer. The word "portrait" suggests a visual representation of a person. At the first glance on the titles, they appear identical in a certain way, indicating therefore the matter of influence. Her novel's title bears a striking similarity to his novel's title, and not only that, since he had an influence on her, which she did not hide.

a. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man and When I Hit You as semi-autobiographical novels

Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* are both semi-autobiographical works, drawing on a part of their personal lives and experiences in their journey towards self-discovery. In his novel, Joyce writes about his own life growing in Ireland through the lens of Stephen Dedalus and his journey to self-discovery and artistic aspirations. The novel depicts the life and the inner thoughts of a young man who struggles with the urge to liberate himself from the social, religious and familial restrictions that hinder his artistic pursuits. Joyce says: "He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering the snares of the world." (Joyce, 2008, p. 184). This citation reflects Stephen's struggle with his identity and his unique path to self-discovery. He realises that he is fated to seek and develop his own understanding, independent of social influences, or to gain wisdom from others while navigating the challenges and temptations of the world. This quote highlights Stephen's internal conflict and his journey towards individuality and self-discovery as well.

Much like Joyce, Stephen comes from a Catholic background, who has a strong desire for artistic and intellectual pursuits. The novel presents a complex and critical portrayal of religion, and its influence on Stephen's evolving identity, which also plays a central role in his early years. For instance, when Stephen comes back from college to home for the holidays, his family all sat down on the Christmas table, and then an argument arose between Mr Casey Stephen's

grandfather and Simon Dedalus and Dante around catholic religion and Parnell's death. Joyce writes:

__And I may tell you, ma'am, that I, if you mean me, am no renegade catholic. I am a catholic as my father was and his father before him and his father before him again when we gave up our lives rather sell our faith. (Joyce, 2008, p. 35)

Just like Joyce, Stephen has a conflicted relationship to his Irishness and religion. His relationship with religion undergoes significant transformation, from his devout Catholic upbringing to his eventual rejection of the constraints of the Church, as he seeks intellectual and artistic freedom. Therefore, he experiences a struggle with his faith and identity, as he says to his friend Cranly: “__ I said that I had lost faith [...] I will not serve that in which I no longer believe”. (Joyce, 2008, pp. 290-291).

It is evident as well that several events and characters in the novel are drawn from Joyce's own life, including the portrayal of Stephen's father, Simon Dedalus, who is a reflection of Joyce's real father, John Stanislaus Joyce. For instance, there is a sense of failure associated with Simon and John, as they struggle with their respective roles in their lives, particularly the financial issues. Alongside some political figures such as Charles Stewart Parnell to which his father worked for. Despite not being a character in the novel, but he played a major role. Joyce writes: “__He is dead. We saw him lying upon the catafalque. A wall of sorrow went up from people. __Parnell! Parnell! He is dead!” (Joyce, 2008, p. 26). His death choked many characters in the novel especially Stephen's father.

Furthermore, there are several passages in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, which suggest that it is semi- autobiographical indeed. All along the novel, there are many references to real people and places, which were important to the writer. Such as the school, he attended when he was young named Clongowes Wood College. Joyce writes:

He turned to the flyleaf of the geography and read what he had written there: himself, his name and where he was.
Stephen Dedalus

Class of Element
Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
County Kildare
Ireland
Europe (Joyce, 2008, pp. 11-12)

This suggests that Stephen Dedalus is in some sense a reflection of James Joyce himself, because they attended the same college when they were younger.

Additionally, many of the important events that happened in Ireland in the late of the 19th century and the turn of the 20th century, particularly the political and cultural events, are mentioned throughout the work that we will be discussing a part later on in this chapter, makes it another element that gives a sense of authenticity and realism.

Similarly, Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* is considered a semi-autobiographical novel, because it draws heavily on Meena Kandasamy's own experiences with marital violence as well. Kandasamy writes: "I must take some responsibility over my own life. I must write my story." (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 10). This citation is a prove that the unnamed narrator is in fact a shadow of Kandasamy, because as Kandasamy took the responsibility of writing her own story of marital abuse the young wife as well chronicles it all along the novel. This only proves the way this novel is realistic.

The novel is a powerful contemporary work, which tells the story of a young educated woman trapped in an abusive marriage. The characters of the novel are based on real life people, especially the marital characters and the husband of the young wife. Kandasamy introduces him as "my husband" when she says: "I met the man who was going to become my husband." (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 28) all along the novel. The narrator is a young educated woman, who falls in love with a university professor who is portrayed as a good moral person at first but he soon changes his behaviour. Kandasamy writes: "I fall in love with the man I married because when he spoke about the revolution it seemed more intense than any poetry." (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 90). This quote demonstrates the way her husband was before they got married, and the reason why

she fell in love with him. Yet, after they got married, he reveals his true colours as an abusive, violent, and sadist man. Kandasamy writes:

The effects of adhering to my husband wishes gives me the appearance of a woman who has given up. But, I know attired in this manner, I am all set to play the part of the good housewife. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 16).

This implies that the unnamed narrator follows the wishes of her husband without question, which makes her seem like she is submissive to him and have lost her identity.

The novel also references real-life events and experiences important to the writer, such as the political climate of India in the late 20th century and the struggles of being an Indian from a Dalit background, trying to become a writer in a patriarchal society. The author uses her work to explore issues of gender-based violence, oppression against women, and patriarchy in Indian society. Kandasamy writes:

Consequently, both Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* are semi-autobiographical works, which look into the writer's personal experiences and lives. These novels are not straightforward retellings of the writers' lives, but rather powerful and engaging works of literature that offer an authentic and realistic portrayal of the characters and their experiences.

b. Political, Social and Historical Contexts

Both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *When I Hit You* depict the political, social and historical atmosphere of their societies from the lens of their main characters. We see that these two works portray the impact of British colonialism, as both Ireland and India were British colonies. This is seen as one of the similarities both works hold.

Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is set in Ireland during the late 19th century and early 20th century, which is a period of great political, cultural and historical change. Throughout the novel, we get to know Joyce's literary genius, the political and cultural richness of Ireland of his time, and the important historical changes and events that shaped the country.

Yet, Stephen Dedalus throughout the novel struggles not only with familial and religious constraints, but also with political and historical influences of British imperialism in Ireland.

The political, social, and historical contexts are indeed part of the elements that make *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* a semi-autobiographical work. Additionally, the novel is set against the backdrop of significant historical and social events that influenced Joyce's own life, such as the struggle for Irish Nationalism, which is reflected in the protagonist's journey and the themes of alienation and rejection. His struggle to find his identity parallels also the Irish struggle for independence. Thus, the political, social, and historical contexts are integral to understanding the semi-autobiographical nature of the novel and its reflection of James Joyce's personal and intellectual development. The early 19th century was described to be a great tragedy in both the Irish history and politics, particularly the fall of the famous leader Charles Stewart Parnell. Joyce writes:

_He is dead. We saw him lying upon the catafalque.
A wall of sorrow went up from the people.
_Parnell! Parnell! He is dead!
They fell upon their knees, moaning in sorrow. (Joyce, 2008, p. 26)

Though he does not appear as a character in the novel, his fall and death affects many of the characters mainly Stephen's father, Simon Dedalus whom he worked for.

Joyce in the novel depicts the cultural landscape of Dublin with its pubs, churches and schools, which serve as both social and intellectual spaces for the characters. He uses vivid imagery and symbolism to create an immersive atmosphere of Dublin's nature, culture and society. He says of Dublin: "Dublin was a new and complex sensation." (Joyce, 2008, p.72). Or; "Here and there warm isles of sand gleamed above the shallow tide [...] The clouds were drifting below him. (Joyce, 2008, p. 197).

The beginning of the 20th century marked the starting of the Irish Literary Revival. It brought up and apprised a sense of intellectual and cultural rebellion against the dominance of the British. A group of Irish writers including William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and John M. Synge

founders of Abbey Theatre led this movement. These writers sought to revive Irish language and culture, which had a significant influence on Joyce's novel as it explores many of its central ideas through Stephen's journey such as the Irish nationalism, language and culture.

In parallel, Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* is a work from contemporary fiction that depicts the pervasive influence of British colonialism in India, and its lasting impact of the country's social and political structures. The novel initially portrays a young woman's struggling with domestic abuse and her enduring of redefining her identity in a patriarchal society. It is set in contemporary India, where patriarchal values have historically been ingrained in society. Women have traditionally been seen as subordinate to men and their primary role has been that of a wife and a mother. Kandasamy writes: “

The effects of adhering to my husband wishes gives me the appearance of a woman who has given up. But, I know attired in this manner, I am all set to play the part of the good housewife. Nothing loud, nothing eye-catching, nothing beautiful. (Kandasamy, 2017, p.16)

The unnamed narrator's experience within an oppressive marriage and society, reflect the continuation of patriarchal and colonial power dynamics. The novel also examines the border context of post-colonial India. As the young wife was lecturing on Post-colonial Literature, she mentions the British colonialism. She speaks about the picture of European women saying:

Loose hair was seen as an influence of European women – a corruption of the social ideal, a symbolism of unbridled, shameless desire; an effort at modernity at the expense of tradition; a betrayal of the national through an allegiance to the white man through a replication of the white woman's styling. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 78)

This quotation implies that the adoption of loose hair and style is viewed as a betrayal to the national identity, given the context of British colonialism in India. That the adoption of the white cultural norms and standards is perceived also as a form of cultural assimilation and a reflection of the European influence on Indian customs and traditions. In fact, she affirms: “In the six decades since the British left some perceptions do not seem to have changed.” (Kandasamy, 2017,

p.74). It means that despite the Colonial rule have ended decades ago, yet nothing has changed and its impact persist.

Moreover, *When I Hit You* depicts the pervasive influence of colonialism in India and its lasting impact on the country's social and political structures. The unnamed narrators' experience within an oppressive marriage and society mirrors the continuity of patriarchal and imperialism dynamics. For instance, the young wife shares that her husband is a supporter of a political organization, and that his is a communist. He often uses its ideology to justify his abusive behaviour towards his wife. Kandasamy writes: "Marriage became a Re-education camp. He transformed into a teacher, and I became the wife-student learning from this Communist Crusader." (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 32). Marriage became for her as a re-education camp where she turns into a student and learns from him. Besides, he often cites socialist ideologies in order to gaslight her into believing that her resistance to his violence is a sign of her ignorance and lack of political consciousness. However, she realises that her husband's political beliefs are used only to hide his abusive behaviour and to silence her. (Sitaram, Meshram, 2023, pp.99-100). Kandasamy says:

Communist ideas are a cover for his own sadism [...] I wonder how an opportunist like my husband managed to make inroads into a political party that I have always respected. (Kandasamy, 2017, pp. 80-89).

This citation demonstrates how the husband uses his ideology as a justification for his cruel and abusive behaviour towards his wife. She wonders then how he as an opportunistic person was able to become involved in a political party that she holds in high regard.

c. Literary Background

James Joyce is considered as one of the major writers of Ireland, as *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* earned him the forefront of the modernist literature. However, before earning this position, he was influenced as well by many other writers whether European or Irish, such as

Henrik Ibsen, Tolstoy, Ezra Pound, and William Butler Yeats among others who affirmed his Irishness.

Growing up in Dublin, Ireland, Joyce was exposed to a rich tradition of poetry and storytelling, which he incorporated into his writing, especially in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. One of the biggest influences on him was the Gaelic Revival, which had the aim of reviving the Irish language, culture and literature. The beginning of the 20th century marked the starting of the Irish Literary Revival, which apprised an intellectual rebellion against British dominance. W.B Yeats is one of the fathers of this movement. This eventually had a significant influence on Joyce and his novel, as it explores many its central ideas through Stephen Dedalus's journey towards artistic aspiration. For instance, his struggle with Irish nationalism, independence and the dominance of Catholic Church that he identifies as the "nets" and which at the end he finally reject. Joyce writes:

When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets. (Joyce, 2008, p.238).

This quotation is a conversation between Stephen and his friend Lynch, in which he is asked about his nationalism, language and religion, and responds that they are nets that prevent him to fly, so he must reject them to be free.

Moreover, Joyce in his book tells the story of a young Irish man and his formative years in Dublin. In doing so, he drew extensively from the Irish language and dialects to create an authentic portrayal of the novel. For instance, when he writes: "Ay, bedad" (Joyce, 2008, p.27) which is an Irish expression for by god. Or "Never to peach on a fellow." (Joyce, 2008, p.4) that means not to betray or inform on someone. As Seamus Deane affirmed that this incorporation into his writings is to exploit the complex linguistic situation in Ireland. (Seamus, 2004). His works remains vital, because he forcefully strived toward an idiosyncratic form of expression to the story he wanted to tell.

Greek mythology also takes place in the novel, as Joyce uses the myth of Daedalus, a Greek figure in mythology, which he associates with Stephen who is named after him. This name represents freedom that Stephen hopes to fulfil. He hopes to make wings like Daedalus to exile from Ireland. Joyce writes: “Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead” (Joyce, 2008, p. 288). At the end of the novel, Stephen calls Daedalus old father old artificer to help him exile. This is Joyce’s strategy to provide a mixture of styles, to challenge the adequacy of aesthetic tendencies as well.

Furthermore, James Joyce’s sources of inspiration are not just limited to the Irish literature, but he was also influenced by the urban culture that looks towards European traditions. He was drawn by the emerging European ideas and innovations that were popular among the artistic communities of Dublin at that time. Eventually, he sought to incorporate them into *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Among these European figures is Gustave Flaubert, Baudelaire, Henrik Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, and William Shakespeare among others. This explains the way James Joyce wrestled with anxiety of influence before then deciding to rebel and choose self-exile.

In the novel, when Stephen is discussing literature with his friend Cranly, he mentions Ibsen’s play *Ghosts* and the controversy surrounding it. Joyce writes:

Stephen said that it was a very beautiful and a very true book but there was something cold about it: “I suppose it is that”, said Stephen. “Iridescent flakes fall on it and on the ropes that moor the boat the flakes make a pattern like scales. The water is cold and quiet and the flakes are very beautiful.” Cranly took his chin in his fingers, saying:” [...] Ibsen. Did you? I did not. (Joyce, 2008, p. 124).

Joyce references from Oscar Wilde as well. When Stephen is in college and talks with his classmates about Wilde’s trial and imprisonment, Joyce says:

They began then to gather in what they had won [...] “Wilde”, he said, “was only a boy when he wrote his first play. “What? Cried Dorian Gray. “A boy? [...]. (Joyce, 2008, p.140).

In addition, Joyce draws inspiration from the aesthetic theory of Aristotle, and mention it in his novel. He writes:

His mind when wearied of its search for the essence of beauty amid the spectral words of Aristotle or Aquinas turned often for its pleasure to the dainty songs of the Elizabethans. (Joyce, 2008, p.205).

Stephen's encounter with Aristotle and Aquinas works cause him to begin quoting them. He spends most of his time studying the aesthetics theory, which is in fact a manifesto of Joyce's own conception of art, concerned with the notion of beauty and art that are shaped by classical teaching of Aristotle and Aquinas. Joyce is in fact invoking an attitude common to modernist literature, of blending traditional and classical perspectives to create new ideas.

Joyce's captivation includes also from William Shakespeare's works as his plays provided him with literary models, stylistic techniques and classical concepts that he incorporated in this novel. Besides, the epigraph of the novel "Et ignotas animum dimittit in artes" (Joyce, 2008, p.1) is a quote taken from the Daedalus section of *Ovid's The Metamorphoses* which is also used by Shakespeare in *Hamlet*. It means "and he puts his mind to unknown arts". It is important in the book, because it reflects Stephen's journey of self-discovery and artistic development. This quote also suggests that Stephen as an artist is willing to explore new and unknown realms of thought and creativity.

Above all, the literary background of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* invites us to say that before he earns the forefront of the modernist literature, many other writers either Irish or European influenced Joyce. It invites us to say as well that Joyce experienced a sense of anxiety of influence, which is developed by Harold Bloom in his work *The Anxiety of Influence*. In which he claims that the poets who came before them influence young poets, and this led to create a sense of struggle for the new poet as he suffers from the anxiety of belatedness, which makes him to be unable to rival his literary predecessor. Yet, Joyce successfully rebels this and goes on a

self-exile. Joyce's rejection of anxiety of influence makes of his legacy to be the epitome of modernist literature.

In comparison, Meena Kandasamy is considered a powerful contemporary Indian writer. Her writing style has an identity that breaks away from inflexibility of writing standards and conventions. (Sangetha, et al, 2022). This is shown in her work *When I Hit You*, a novel that is set in India and it is captivated by a rich literary background from the classics into the contemporary literature. Being a feminist literary critic and writer, she addresses in many of her works issues of misogyny, gender-based violence and women's resistance, particularly in *When I Hit You*, where she evokes the issue of marital violence and gender injustice at the hands of the unnamed narrator's husband in the Indian society.

As we are speaking about inspirations and influences, Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* draws upon the rich traditions of Indian writing in English literary figures such as Arundhati Roy, Amitav Ghosh and Kamala Das among others. In her novel, she mentions Kamala Das; she uses as well her poem *A Losing Battle*. In the novel, the husband of the young wife mentions Kamal Das and says:

Three inches of cleavage, two books of poetry, plenty of sex and depression - that's all it takes to make a woman a famous writer. Beginning from Sylvia Plath to Kamal Das, that is the only trajectory you have all followed. (Kandasamy, 2017, pp.150-151).

In this citation, the husband means that to be mad is no longer fashionable, because depression has replaced it. He means also that to be a famous woman writer, his wife must be almost naked and depressed and to follow the footsteps of women writers before her.

Kandasamy also mentions Hélène Cixous. In her letter to one of her fake lovers, she says: "I read *Hyperdream* by Hélène Cixous. There is a sentence that I hear forever, a sentence that wraps itself around an action; [...] I love Cixous." (Kandasamy, 2017, pp.102-103). Simone De Beauvoir also is mentioned in the novel. Kandasamy writes: "During a semester when I learnt about French philosophers [...] we were outraged that Simone De Beauvoir had passed on her young lovers to

Sartre.” (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 189). Gubar and Gilbert also mentioned Simon De Beauvoir in their work, commenting on human male’s nature that is symbolized by his ability to hunt and kill, saying, “just as the human female’s identification with nature, her role is a symbol of immanence” (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979, p.14). This implies that as male are symbolized by the ability to write; women also have this ability from the view of De Beauvoir. Thus, from the husband statement of female writers following other female writers and the unnamed narrator’s talk about women writers confirms that, Kandasamy truly experiences the anxiety of authorship. Other female writers inspire, this is echoed in Gubar and Gilbert’s *The Madwoman in the Attic*, in which they affirmed that women writers have often had to create their own literary communities and find solidarity to support each other’s work. By referencing these figures, Kandasamy is drawing attention to the legacy of female literature, and the way they represent important voices in literature.

Moreover, in an interview with The Hindu, Meena Kandasamy spoke about James Joyce’s use of language and writing style that influenced her, and made a profound impact on her writing process. She states:

Joyce exceeded the parameters of language, navigating his way through the subjectivity of life experiences, which has always been a fascination for me. He showed that language could in fact be a layered, complex and coded element. (The Hindu, 2017).

Joyce as she says showed her the power of language to transform the way we see and experience the world. This demonstrates the way she acknowledges his legacy and his position in the world of literature, thus she took him as a predecessor and lived on the anxiety of authorship.

Overall, the context and background of James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Meena Kandasamy’s *When I Hit You* offer valuable insights into the semi-autobiographical nature of these works. Joyce’s novel follows the personal and artistic development of Stephen Dedalus who mirrors Joyce himself. Thus, the autobiographical elements in the novel are evident through the similarities between the two, their artistic journey and their

exile from Ireland. The novel is set as well against the backdrop of a conservative and politically tumultuous and upheaval society, where Stephen struggles with his desires for independence and artistic expression. It also highlights some literary background from where Joyce draws inspiration. Similarly, Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* as a semi-autobiographical work, draws from her own experiences as a victim and a survivor of domestic violence from the lens of an unnamed narrator, who is a young woman dreaming of becoming a famous writer. By using the first person narrative and exploring the political-cultural contexts, Kandasamy gives the novel an autobiographical quality, shedding light on the issue of marital violence and the important events that happened in India during the 21st century. As Joyce, Kandasamy also was inspired by many literary figures and literary traditions that she attempted to highlight in her novel. She acknowledges Joyce as the avant-garde of the modernist literature and this led her to live on the anxiety of authorship.

Chapter Two: The Journey to Becomingness

In this chapter, as it is obvious from its title, attempted to discuss the artistic journey and the self- discovery of the two central characters of both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *When I Hit You*. It explored as well the way Joyce's artistic journey influenced Meena Kandasamy in the writing of her novel. The themes of identity and self-discovery are powerful and significant in literature, which are the most prominent in both these novels, as they are the perfect example to the inner journey of life. They depict the protagonists' inner journey of life and their struggle to find and assert their own voices in a world that is limiting. Stephen Dedalus and the young woman undergo a process of self-discovery as they struggle to claim their identities that are shaped by their society, culture and family.

Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* traces the transformative journey of the most complex character in the novel, Stephen Dedalus from childhood to maturity. He divided his novel into five chapters, depicting Stephen's gradual growth into artistic self-consciousness. For instance, in the first chapter, he is introduced to us as a young boy. His father Simon Dedalus tells him an old-fashioned children's story, in which he uses babyish words. Joyce writes:

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby Tuckoo. (Joyce, 2008, p. 1)

Then the story shifts to his experiences at Clongowes Wood College, which is a Jesuit boarding school. Through his interactions at school, we realized that he sees himself highly in comparison to his classmates. Joyce writes:

The wide playgrounds were swarming with boys. All were shouting and the perfects urged them on with strong cries [...] he felt his body small and weak amid the throng of players and his eyes were weak and watery. (Joyce, 2008, p. 3).

Apart from being fascinated from a young age by intellectuality and creation, he also grows feelings of isolation, as in comparison to other children at school, he is weak and has a bad eyesight.

From a young age, Stephen struggles with his identity, in which he sees the complex sense of what he called the “nets” that represent his family, Catholic Church, culture, and Irish society, which are designed to trap him. Stephen believes that all these “nets” are compound and related. For instance, In Ireland’s long history as a British colony, Catholicism was never just a Question of religious faith, but also a matter of national identity. His insecurity regarding religion develops into dillusionment. In a series of conversations with his friend Lynch in chapter 4, Joyce writes:

When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets. (Joyce, 2008, p.238).

This citation demonstrates the way Irish people are born in the Irish society; there are elements, which Stephen refer as “nets” that restrict those people and hold them back from freedom. These elements eventually have ultimately a relation to the post-colonial Ireland. For Stephen nationalism, the Church and home are a threat to the development of his individuality. James Joyce represents various complex experiences of Stephen, as he wrestles to assert his individuality and his ongoing search for self-identity within the background of these various notions. By doing so, he makes use of the stream of consciousness technique that includes interior monologue to focus on the inner life and development of Stephen. This technique made of him to be in the forefront of the modernist literature. It helped the readers to experience Stephen’s progressive increase in awareness and thought as he wrestles with conflicting desires in his journey to self-discovery.

In Wildon Thornton’s view, Joyce, like Wordsworth focused upon the progress of Stephen’s life from childhood to maturity in a leaner narrative. (Thornton, 1999, p.70). He argued that Joyce

represents his hero as withdrawing into his inner world, striving constantly throughout the novel as Joyce writes:

Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul. (Joyce, 2008, p.299).

This resounding final passage includes a powerful writing, as other passages in the novel, which only affirmed Joyce's wittiness and creativity in writing. Seamus Deane argued that his stylistic innovation in the opening and closing of the novel launched him into an original modernist experimentalism, including his use of stream of consciousness technique, imagery and symbolism to convey the experiences of Stephen growing up and his journey of becoming an artist.

Moreover, Joyce's novel presented a new view of character and charted the role of art in society in shaping the individual. In doing so, he developed a new narrative that is flexible. Virginia Woolf identified him as "spiritual" and suggested that him as a writer is a "free man" who based his work "upon his feeling and not upon convention." (Woolf, 1949, p.189). Joyce as a modernist writer, escaped from as he calls in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* the "nets" and limitations. Thus, Joyce's rejection of the anxiety of influence makes of his legacy to be the epitome of modernism.

Stephen's striving for his identity as we mentioned above, starts from the first chapters, as he struggles with his family and his Irish identity that makes him to be a complex character, who feels conflicted about his name and nationality as he is aware of the stereotypes and prejudices associated with being Irish. His aim as he says: "To discover the mode of life or of art whereby [his] spirit could express itself in unfettered Freedom." (Joyce, 2008, p.267).

As part of his inner development, Stephen is able to escape into his own world, when he begins to be captivated by art and literature. Joyce writes:

His mind also moves correspondingly into new spiritual localities that subsume the older ones and readjust them as parts of a larger whole. (Joyce, 2008, p. 68).

As he grows older, his movements take him into new localities and consequently into new experiences. His interest to the opposite gender and sexuality grows with him. His romantic relationships introduce him to the complexities of human emotions and connections. These relationships prompt him to question his own identity and the roles he is expected to fulfil. As part of his rebellion against his father's oppression, he begins to seek out sexual affairs. Joyce writes:

His blood was in revolt [...] He wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin. (Joyce, 2008, p. 113).

He encounters a young prostitute, who invites him to initiate a sexual relation. However, Stephen "feels morally uncomfortable and guilty because in fact he considers the action to be a big sin in relation to religion." (Joyce, 2008, p.125). He decides then, after making several sins to repent and conform to the rules of the church in the aim of searching an autonomous self, but he arrives at the realization that religion is used as a means to transform honourable individuals into betrayers. He was unable to make a parallel between his religion, his aesthetic and artistic pursuit and his sexual derives, Joyce writes:

His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious order. The wisdom of the priest's appeal did not touch him to the quick. He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world. (Joyce, 2008, p.184).

In this citation, Joyce highlights the role of religion in shaping Stephen's life. Having born into the Catholic faith, he feels a need to be part of the church to the extent that he considers the priesthood, but soon after he shifts away from what he views as a repressive life to one in which he can experience the beauty and essence of life and expressing these experiences in form of art.

The theme of Stephen Dedalus' alienation with his religion is evident in his connection with the church. The Dedalus family live a resolute Catholic life and expect Stephen to share their beliefs. He questions the authority of the church by saying: "Is baptism with a mineral water valid? How comes it that while the first beatitude promises the kingdom of heaven to the poor of heart the second beatitude also promises to the meek that they shall possess the land? (Joyce, 2008, p.).

In his way to the seaside, Stephen encounters a group of his friends calling him to join, but he ignores them because he was determined to follow his path, which makes him break free from the physical world and make his soul rise. The writer says:

His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude and made a radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit. An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath. (Joyce, 2008, pp.196-197).

This passage portrays the moment when his body and soul are combined preparing him to be an artist. Like Joyce himself, Stephen realizes that his own wishes and demands cannot be satisfied by the notions that restrict him, and decides then to establish his own identity as a writer somewhere else. Joyce shows that through rejecting social and familial constraints, Stephen seeks freedom and a life without boundaries. Bulson Eric a professor of English at Clermont Graduate University says that in a series of conversations with his friends Lynch, and Cranly, Stephen tries to elaborate on the reasons why he must break with his nation, home and church. (Bulson, 2012, p.52). It is because for him nationalism and religion are a threat to the development of individuality, Joyce says:

The soul is born he [Stephen] said vaguely, first in those moments I told you of. It has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of the body. When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets. (Joyce, 2008, p.238).

In this quotation, Lynch asks Stephen about Ireland and his nationalism, and then he responds that nationalism is a one of the nets and a threat to the development of individuality. He says that it is

existing just to hold back the individual from flying away, and when a person tries to speak about them, he ultimately rejects it, because he is caught up in his own vision far from the visionary of the nets. Cranly asks him then about Jesus and religion to test his reactions, Stephen, interested in his own individuality as being devoid of any constraints answers him by saying:

You have asked me what I would do and what I would not do [...]. I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my father land or my church, and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use –silence, exile and cunning. (Joyce, 2008, p.291).

In this citation, Stephen answers Cranly's question concerning religion and beliefs. He is committed to express himself freely and completely in both his way of living and his artistic endeavour by rejecting all what restrict him in the aim of asserting his independence.

In dealing with James Joyce, it is very important and significant to consider the question of exile. Joyce, like Stephen could be seen as becoming fully Irish through the act of leaving his homeland. He uses Stephen's detachment to illustrate the journey that the artist must take to achieve maturity and art. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is a well-written exhibition of the Irish Catholic life of an artist. Stephen Dedalus, infamously connected to the mythical Daedalus, becomes independent of his family, religion, and nation. Stephen understands the meaning of the name "Daedalus" which is a mythical character that represents freedom and which he hopes to make wings like him to find a way cut from Ireland. It is not surprising that at the very last sentence of the novel we hear Stephen is calling to Daedalus "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead." (Joyce, 2008, p.299) and it is exactly what he does when he left Ireland for a freely chosen exile.

Joyce in the last chapter, depicts Stephen's final stage of development and his formation growth as an artist, who rebelled against the "nets" that represents his family, his religion, and the Irish society, which were confining and sculpturing onto him.

As Fleischer affirmed: “Stephen’s aim is ultimately to create and identity for himself and by himself as a great writer and at the same time present this image to the world as based on a true story.” (Fleisher, 2012, p.18). Stephen is loyal to artistic individuality. His decision to leave his family and country behind to become a writer at the end of the novel, suggests that Joyce recognizes the artist as a necessarily isolated figure. Joyce uses as well Stephen’s detachment to illustrate the journey that the artist must take to achieve maturity.

In comparison, *When I Hit You*, as a semi-autobiographical work, written from the first person narrative, contains echoes of Meena Kandasamy’s own experience with domestic violence, and this is what we have already mentioned in the first chapter. It traces as well the transformative journey of the protagonist of the novel referred as the unnamed narrator, taking the readers on a journey that probes the complexities of identity and the artistic journey of the young wife. The novel begins with the stories that the mother of the unnamed narrator tells to neighbours of her escape from her husband. Kandasamy writes:

My mother has not stopped talking about it. Five years have passed, and with each year, her story has mutated and transformed, most of the particulars forgotten [...] when she tells the story of my escape, she talks of my feet. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 3).

Her work depicts how the unnamed narrator becomes a victim, whose self-identity is eroded and destroyed by the abuse of her husband, and who feels that she has to write her story, when she says:” I must take some responsibility over my own life. I must write my story.” (Kandasamy, 2017, p.10). The young woman, who is a teacher dreaming of becoming a famous writer, faces numerous obstacles and difficulties throughout the novel. From domestic violence to isolation to trauma and pain at the hands of a man, she once thought was a good and a moral person, as Kandasamy writes: “I fell in love with the man I married because when he spoke about the revolution it seemed more intense than any poetry, more moving than any beauty.” (Kandasamy, 2017, p.89). This citation demonstrates how and why the unnamed narrator fell in love with her

husband. That because of his words about the revolution evoked strong feelings of admiration within her. Soon after the couple get married, they move to a new town named Mangalore. Then she swiftly learns that what for her is a bond of love is for him a contract of ownership. Kandasamy says: “Marriage became a re-education camp. He transformed into a teacher, and I became the wife-student learning from this communist crusader.” (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 32). The young wife comes to the realization of the oppression she faces within a short period after her marriage.

Moreover, the husband begins to control her, she becomes aware of this injustice, and that her life may have changed completely as the writer says:

Long before I signed up for Communism 101 (Marriage course), I led a fairly normal, fairly eventless, fairly middle-class life, with very little drama-no starvation, no orphanage, no refuge crisis, no asylum seeking, no interest, no jail term. (Kandasamy, 2017, p.34).

She realizes then that she is trapped in an abusive and traumatic relationship where she becomes a victim of domestic violence. She feels as if her body and identity are tired apart and robbed by her husband, especially when he forbids her of writing. Kandasamy writes: “ I feel robbed of my identity. I’m no longer myself. If another person can do easily claim to be me, pretend to be me, assume my life while we live under the same roof. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 55). This quotation demonstrates how her husband is controlling everything in her life, from the moment when he forces her to deactivate her Facebook account, to the moment when he replies to his emails by signing both their names at the end of every email. “ I find that my name has been co-signed in letters to students, in group emails to his activist friends, in making book recommendations to his colleagues.” (Kandasamy, 2017, p.55). He wishes to reduce her to his idealized version of an obedient wife, bullying her and devouring her ambition of being a writer in the process.

Furthermore, and as we said, the husband of the unnamed narrator devours her ambition of being a writer in the process. Kandasamy writes:

My husband is not aware of this. He knows that my being a writer involves being at the mercy of others, being visible, being remembered at the right time so that someone throws an opportunity my way [...] I know that it is an end of career suicide. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 52)

This citation proves that the unnamed narrator's husband is not aware of the challenges that she faces to be a writer. Because he knows that, her being a writer will require her to depend on others and constantly seek visibility and recognition in order to receive opportunities. According to Gilbert and Gubar, when women writers try to work from inside patriarchal cultures, they would be torn in two directions. Despite being desperate to tell their own stories, society would tell them that they are mad for feeling that way. Here, the young woman is frustrated and concerned about her husband's negative impact that will surely end her career of a writer. She continues to say,

Being a writer invites constant ridicule from my husband [...] I realize that my husband does not hate anything in this universe as much as the idea of a writer, so I forge a sense of reverence towards the job of being a writer. (Kandasamy, 2017, pp. 74-80).

This quote highlights the way she faces criticism and ridicule from her husband for pursuing her passion. She exhibits on the challenges of being a woman writer reflecting the emotional and psychological abuse that she experiences in her marriage. The young wife then realizes that her husband despises the concept of her being a writer, but she feels the need to respect this job and want to convey this sentiment to the world. Considering the anxiety of authorship, which is defined by Gilbert and Gubar as that anxiety women writers felt in attempting the pen in the male-dominated literary world. In *When I Hit You*, the unnamed narrator's husbands forbids her to write, because he wants her to be submissive to his idealized woman version. Though behaving as a good wife, her attempt of writing would still be considered improper for him. The two theorists

affirmed that the act of writing is inappropriate to her sex. (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979, p. 51). For her husband, it is almost felt that his wife was committing a sin when she attempts the pen.

Meena Kandasamy flows the young wife's pain in a poetic way. Her poetic voice alternates between the gloominess of hopeless and the brightness of dynamics resistance. Through this poetic way, she highlights how the husband devastates the existence of his wife in the male-authoritarian society. Kandasamy makes use of the stream of consciousness techniques in a powerful way to convey the intimate insight into the narrator's mind, senses of trauma she is undergoing and the expression of her individuality. It represents her fragmented thoughts and her inability to understand anything beyond her husband's physical abuse. James Joyce uses this technique in his novel, and this made him to be the avant-garde of modernism. Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* earned him the forefront of modernist literature and because Meena Kandasamy recognizes this, she wanted him to be her literary father, thus she experiences the anxiety of authorship.

Furthermore, and as we said Kandasamy's protagonist feels her identity is robbed when her husband decides on her behalf, she struggles to articulate her perspective within a patriarchal cultural tradition. Susan Gubar and Sandra.M Gilbert asserted in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979)

The quest for identity is central to much of a woman writing, it is a quest, however, always shadowed by the awareness that any search for an essential self is bounded to lead to frustration. (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979, p. 141).

In *When I Hit You*, the unnamed narrator experiences this frustration, and realizes that her passion will remain unfulfilled unless she leaves everything behind her. Thus, the novel examines the experiences of a woman writer struggling to reclaim her voice and identity after falling victim to an abusive marriage. It represents a female voice considering herself a writer, keeping her pen and maintaining her independent subjectivity despite the abuse of her husband. Kandasamy

writes: I remind myself of the fundamental notion of what it be a writer. A writer is the one who controls the narrative. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 207). For Gubar and Gilbert the question of the woman is a social question. As broad as their work is, the two theorists wanted to show that women writers specifically the nineteenth century ones, have struggled to find acceptance in literary community, because men governed it. In the case of the novel we are studying, the young wife struggles to find acceptance by her own husband, which affected her possibility to attempt the pen. In *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), the two female theorists use the Charlotte Bronte inspired concepts of “madwoman” that symbolizes the female characters in classic literature who were relegated to marginalized roles and dismissed as insane or unruly. They argued that the figure of the madwoman symbolizes the anxiety and frustration that women writers have felt throughout history, as well, since they struggled to articulate their own experiences and perspectives within a patriarchal cultural traditions. Meena Kandasamy herself experienced this and relate this through the lens of her protagonist, whose frustration is portrayed when she is not allowed to write, as her husband is aware that her being a writer will affect his ego. She realizes that her dream to be a writer will remain unfulfilled unless she leaves him and goes on a journey towards becomingness, even though she is aware of the time it takes.

The nineteenth female writers were oppressed in the literature world, by the dread patriarchal authority of art, as Gubar and Gilbert implied: “What does it mean to be woman writer in a culture whose fundamental definitions of literary authority are, as we have seen, both overtly and covertly patriarchal?” (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979, p.46) Because of the male dominated society, it made it for them to develop feelings of timidity and frustration of the male readers’ antagonism, developing afterwards the anxiety of authorship. As Gubar and Gilbert affirmed that, this inferiorization mark the female writer’s struggle for artistic self-definition. (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979). The young wife’s anxiety about her writing is compounded by the constant of the abuse she faces at the hands of her husband and the views of the patriarchal society she belongs to. Her

anxiety about not respecting the society's standards affects her and her passion for creating.

Kandasamy writes:

I must learn from the people around me. I must learn that walking to the grocery store without a *dupatta* on top of my turic makes people frown because I am not respecting their standards of decency. I must learn that my husband does not hold my hand in public out of respect for the people's social mores. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 34).

In the eyes of society, she is seen as a disgraced woman and she is not respected or valued neither by her husband nor by the society. Yet she is determined to break free from these views by reclaiming her identity.

I decided that I will not allow myself to be portrayed as the hot-blooded woman who ran away from one man into the wide-open arms of another. I will not allow myself to become the good wife, the good mother, the good-for-nothing woman that marriage aims to reduce me to. I will not allow my story to become [...] about lonely writers. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 208).

The young wife then begins to reject gendered expectations, cultural norms and her marriage. She learns to prioritize her own desires and needs. At the end, she reclaims her sense of self and emerges as a strong woman by leaving her husband and everything behind her to follow her passion and become a writer. The fact that she ran away demonstrates her determination for artistic pursuit and to escape from what she depicts as “ a re-education camp” (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 32).

Consequently, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* highlights Stephen's artistic awakening that represents Joyce's own exploration of the creative process and the artist's desire to break free from societal norms to express his unique vision. We see Stephen Dedalus undergoing a transformative journey, questioning all what limit and enclose him to arrive actually to the point of breaking free from the "nets" that enclose him, and define his own identity as an artist by exiling from Ireland. Similarly, Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* represents a nuanced portrayal of strugglers that a woman faces in patriarchal society. It portrays a woman writer's journey towards self-discovery, highlighting the importance of standing up against violence,

abuse and oppression. By relying on the anxiety of authorship, we notice that women writers who are confined in their writing due to the male dominated society, aim to set free themselves by correcting the views of society brought upon them by men. Meena Kandasamy as a contemporary female writer is influenced by Joyce's artistic journey, and this is shown in the writing process of her novel, as she also strives for her becomingness. She recognizes Joyce as the avant-garde of the modernist literature. Wanting him to be her predecessor, she lived on the anxiety of authorship.

Chapter Three: The Representation of Female Characters

In this final chapter of our research, we attempted to discuss the representation of female characters in both *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *When I Hit You*. We shed light as well on the way Joyce and Kandasamy view and show women in their works. Regardless of the striking similarities between the two novels, they hold some significant disparities, which are particularly shown in the representation of their female characters as they present them in different ways holding diverse roles. In Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, female characters are depicted in various roles and ways, ranging from maternal figures to remarkable interests. In the novel, Joyce explores particularly the impact of women on Stephen Dedalus, as they are viewed from his perspective. These female characters, which represent his mother, his early childhood love interests and romantic encounters, play important roles in his personal growth, as they reinforce his identification that often represent society's expectation on him.

At first, we meet Stephen's mother Mary Dedalus as the primary female influence in his early life. She is depicted as a devoted religious woman who values the Catholic Church. "His mother had been a woman who had seriously of life. A religious thought partisanship and tempered time." (Joyce, 2008, p.3). As a child, Stephen views motherhood in a traditional way, He sees his mother as a source of warmth and comfort. He connects with his father as through vision, and associates his mother with a nice smell. Her influence on Stephen is significant, as she struggles to reconcile his own desires and interest with the rigid expectations she has for him, yet, she provides him with maternal comfort. She was able to change his reactions. For instance, when he was a young boy, and after being bullied by his peers in school, he is given advice from her. Joyce writes:

His mother had told him not to speak with the rough boys in the college. Nice mother! The first day in the hall of the castle, when she had said goodbye she had put up her veil double to her nose to kiss him and her nose and eyes were red. (Joyce, 2008, p. 4)

Mary Dedalus's character shows the conflicts inherent in Irish Catholic cultural values. Stephen represents religion as one of the "nets" that trap him from artistic pursuit. Instantaneously, her power is lost as he began to question his relationship with his mother. This is because of when he is questioned by his friends about the relationship he has with his mother, they ask: "Tell us, Dedalus, do you kiss mother before you go to bed?" (Joyce, 2008, p. 9) The young Stephen takes this provocative question literally, and the original positive warmth that his mother provided is replaced by embarrassment. Religious faith also erodes his relationship with his mother. Eventually, Joyce depicts Stephen's rebellious attitude as a necessary aspect, in order for him to preserve his own beliefs and values and to follow his artistic pursuit in the face of the constraints, which try to make him conform.

Apart from his mother, the governess Dante becomes the other woman to give him some experience of the exterior world. Joyce writes:

Dante knew a lot of things. She had taught him where the Mozambique Channel was, what was the longest river in America, and what was the name of the highest mountain in the world [...] Dante was a clever woman and a well-read woman. (Joyce, 2008, p.6)

This citation demonstrates the kind of woman Dante was, and the way she had a power over curious young Stephen in the form of knowledge, as she was his educator. She works for the Dedalus family during the years when the family was having financial issues. Joyce depicts her as Stephen's original power figure who has influence over his decisions as a young boy. Dante as a powerful female character in the novel, attempts to break free of the female stereotype of being a subservient woman. This by arguing with Simon Dedalus over the Irish leader Charles Stewart Parnell at the Christmas dinner. Joyce says: "At the door Dante turned around violently and shouted down the room, her cheeks flushed and quivering with rage." (Joyce, 2008, p.41). She attempts to stand up for her views, but rather being opinionated she makes herself look ridiculous when Mr Dedalus scornfully laughs at her. To Stephen, women are either saintly images admired from afar, or flesh and blood women who can answer a physical need.

Moreover, the female characters become more sophisticated as Stephen matures. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* is written from his perspective; it is very likely to say that his observations of the women should mature as he does. The opposite gender became such an enigma to him. Joyce writes: “When they were grown up he was going to marry Eileen. “ (Joyce, 2008, p. 2). As a young child, Eileen Vance became his first love and plan to marry her. However, since she “was a protestant” (Joyce, 2008, p. 36), religious constraints restricts this marriage between Protestants and Catholics in Ireland. For young Stephen, Eileen was the first in a long line of women who were desired by him. The image of her hands enables him to understand the meaning of the term “Tower of Ivory”, a phrase that he had often repeated without comprehension in the Litany to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Soon after, he encounters Emma Clery, a young girl from his teenage years, who represents innocence and purity. He constructs her as an ideal of femininity even though he does not know her well and afraid to talk to her. Stephen writes a poem “To E-C-“about her. Joyce depicts her as a shadowy figure throughout the novel. For him Emma represents the pure, distant and inapproachable figure of a woman. She is often in his mind, as he writes poetry. Stephen thinks about how he had foolishly biked down an avenue where he might run into her. Joyce says: “He could not understand how he had been such a fool as to bicycle down the avenue but perhaps in the morning commute to business he might see her.” (Joyce, 2008, p.44).

During his years at university, he began to initiate sexual driven fantasies when he read Alexander Duma’s *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Joyce writes:

His evenings were his own; and he pored over a ragged translation of *The Count of Monte Cristo*. The figure of the dark avenger stood forth in his mind for whatever he had heard or divined in childhood of the strange and terrible. (Joyce, 2008, p. 68).

Stephen began to have sexual feelings about the female character in Duma’s work. Her role in his development is significant, as she represents a new step in his relationship with women. (Kibin, 2023). The image of Mercedes fascinated Stephen “as he brooded up on her image, a

strange unrest crept into his blood.” (Joyce, 2008, p.70). Joyce portrays Mercedes as a literary guide that shapes and controls Stephen’s newly awakening sexuality. Stephen’s movements take him into new places and consequently into new experiences, as part of his rebellion against his father’s oppression, he started to seek out sexual affairs, Joyce writes:

His blood was in revolt. He wandered up and down slimy streets peering into the gloom of lanes and doorways listening eagerly for any sound [...] He wanted to sin with another of his kind, to force another being to sin with him and to exult with her in sin. (Joyce, 2008, p.112).

This quotation demonstrates the way James Joyce depicted Stephen as feeling lost and desperate as he wanders through the dark streets, searching for something to fulfil his desires and “ the whores would be just coming out of their houses [...] He would pass by them calmly waiting for a sudden movement of his own will or a sudden call to sin.” (Joyce, 2008, p.115). This passage captures as well the tumultuous and conflicted emotions he struggles with. These prostitutes are viewed as the other side of the Madonna/Whore dichotomy, which represents danger temptations.

One day in his attendance of a school meeting organized in honour of one of the priests named “Saint Francis Xavier” (Joyce, 2008, p. 123) for a religious crisis. He listened to the sermons, which made him feel uncomfortable. He felt as “Every word of it was for him, against his sin, foul and secret, the whole wrath of God was aimed.” (Joyce, 2008, p.131). Because of this, Stephen is frustrated, and is driven to confess his sins, renounce the prostitutes, and repent. However, he arrives to the realization that religion is used as a means to transform honourable individuals into betrayers. Joyce writes

His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders. The wisdom of the priest’s appeal did not touch him to the quick. He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world. (Joyce, 2008, p.187).

Because of his inability to make parallels with his religion, his pursuit of art and desires, he decides to break free from religious faith.

Furthermore, Stephen's relationship with women and art becomes increasingly clear. His early experiences with women, such as his love interest with Emma and the encounter with the prostitutes contributed with his growing awareness, and his involving approach to art and artistic development parallels his relationship with women. His dedication to his creativity endeavours became clearer and more pronounced as he matures. Joyce says:

A girl stood before him in midstream alone and still, gazing out to sea. She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful sea-birds [...] Her image had passed into his soul forever and no words had broken the wholly silence of his ecstasy." (Joyce, 2008, p. 200)

Stephen while walking on the beach, he encounters a young beautiful woman. She became the muse and inspiration, which shows him that he is destined to create art out of what he sees and that he must become a writer. Joyce depicts women as representatives through which life provides Stephen with raw experience that he eventually transforms and refines into writing. He becomes aware after his experiences with women, that they hold the power to transform him.

Besides, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* emphasises that women can be considered as symbols of productivity, sexual figures, and death, same as what figured in the life of Christ: the virgin, the mother and the temptress. Margot Norris, who wrote about James Joyce, argued that his portrayal of women in the novel reveals a "lack of understanding or sympathy for women's experiences and subjectivity." (Norris, p.389) She affirmed that the female characteristics exist primarily as mirrors for the male shown by Stephen is depicted in the novel as the patriarchal Irish society's emphasize. This is echoed in *The Madwoman in the Attic (1979)*, in which the two theorists argued that women particularly women writers, are seen as either pure or angles, or dangerous and monsters. This binary reinforces patriarchal notions of women and either objects of idealization or fear, which is evident in Joyce's novel particularly his depiction of Virgin Mary, who represents purity and the prostitutes who represents danger temptation.

In comparison, Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* is a powerful analysis of modern marriages through literature, in which she portrays a young educated woman writer. Taking us into her world of an abusive and misogynist husband, a father embarrassed by the shame that a possible divorce would bring, and a mother who tells her daughter that this is how things are; to be silent and accept the situation because she was unable of protecting her. As a semi-autobiographical novel, Kandasamy writes about her own story of domestic violence through the lens of the unnamed narrator or the young wife. She is not named because her anonymity allows female readers to slip easily into her skin, as it is the case for the other characters. The novel as well brought up forth the patriarchal norms of society that helps men to dominate and subjugate both emotions and body of women. They are often denied access to education, healthcare, and other basic services, and are more likely to be victims of sexual violence and forced labour.

The female characters in *When I Hit You* are presented as multifaceted individuals who face various forms of oppression and struggle to assert themselves in a patriarchal society. Kandasamy has made her women characters instantly voice to reject the imposed burden of patriarchal supremacy of men, hence of gender perception. The first female character is the protagonist or the young wife, who is portrayed as a strong-willed and intelligent woman and who is passionate about writing, as Kandasamy writes: "I forge a sense of reverence towards the job of being a writer." (Kandasamy, 2017, p.80) However, she is forced to give up her passion for the sake of her husband. The narrative primarily revolves around the experiences of the protagonist. It deals with her journey and her battle against the oppression she faces. Despite being subjected to physical, emotional and sexual abuse by her husband, she resists being silenced and expresses her pain and anger through writing, as she says: "I remind myself of the fundamental notion of what it means to be a writer. A writer is the one who controls the narrative." (Kandasamy, 2017, p.207).

Kandasamy expresses with audacity the gut-wrenching experience of the way the protagonists feels to be raped within a marriage. She define it as a slow death by disintegration “I never understood rape until it happened to me [...] The man who rapes me is not a stranger who runs away [...] He is the husband for who I have to make coffee the following morning” (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 167). By using language as a weapon, she includes epigraphs at the start of each chapter from many women writers who influenced her such as Kamala Das, Margaret Atwood, and Anne Sexton among others, correlating herself to these feminist writers.

Moreover, through her protagonist, Kandasamy depicts the internal and external battle that women face when confronting marital violence. She talks about the way the husband controls and condescends his wife, and forbids her of writing to suit his idealized version of women. And the unnamed narrator expresses with audacity the painful and traumatic experiences, and calls her body learns “to play dead” and “extends in own threshold of pain and shame and brutality.” (Kandasamy, 2017, p.169).

The protagonist’s mother is another female in the novel. She represents a generation of Indian women who are taught to place the sanctity of the family above personal well-being. Indian women have been progressive a lot with resilient strides from generation to another. The mother then is portrayed as a source of support for her daughter, as she stands by her in the time of need, despite telling her to be silent and tolerate her husband. The novel starts with lines by the unnamed narrator’s mother and how she never stopped talking about what had happened past five years ago. Kandasamy writes:

My mother has not stopped talking about it. Five years have passed, and with each year, her story has mutated and transformed, most of the particulars forgotten [...] when she tells the story of my escape, she talks of my feet. (Kandasamy, 2017, p. 3).

The mother of the unnamed narrator is someone who appropriates her daughter's tale of survival, exaggerating aspects and adding a banterous tone for entertainment, particularly to highlight the heroism of the parents in receiving their daughter after fleeing. Kandasamy says:

My mother on the phone:

All change is slow. A marriage is not magic.

You will have to give him time. He will come around [...] Finding the perfect Man is a myth. Do not believe in it. Work with what you have.

(Kandasamy, 2017, pp. 158-160)

The mother tries to shield her daughter from the harsh realities of life by advising her to be silent, keep her thoughts to herself, and tolerate her husband's abuse for the sake of honour. Her inability to protect her daughter or speak out against her husband's violence demonstrates how deep-rooted patriarchy in Indian society is, as Kandasamy says:

Every day, newspapers smelling of fresh kill bring us morbidity from Central India. Defiant tribal women raped [...] in India, a bride is burnt every ninety minutes. This is the official statistic the deaths the police do not even bother trying to hide in semantics. (Kandasamy, 2017, pp. 180-187).

This quote uncovers the societal and cultural norms that enable violence against women and normalize it. The mother is also introduced as a critical figure who expects her daughter to conform, to these traditional gender and cultural rules, and exhibits these expectations by pressuring her daughter to marry and settle down. The mother says: "A daughter is burden, she needs to be married off and you are already touching your twenty-seven." (Kandasamy, 2017, p.23). This quote implies that daughters are considered like a burden when they pass the age of 25, and this is because of the social norms.

Through the protagonist's voice, Kandasamy portrays the annihilation of classes, gender and power dynamics that women face in India. This is echoed in *The Madwoman in The Attic: The woman writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination (1979)* in which

Susan Gubar and Sandra.M Gilbert affirmed that women particularly women writers, are primarily represented as victims of patriarchal oppression and culture marginalization. They argued as well, “The woman writer and we shall see women doing this over and over again searches for a female model”. (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979, p.50). What female writers are lacking is for an urgent need for sisterly successor and a female audience, which eventually forbid them to struggle or develop fear of the antagonism of male readers. As a result, female authors have often had to create their own literary communities and find solidarity with each other in order to support each other’s work. Charlotte Bronte’s novel, *Jane Eyre (1874)* for instance, is analysed in the book as an example of a work, which explores female solidarity as Jane finds support and encouragement from other women, including her friend Helen and Diana (Eyre, 1974), as it is the case for *When I Hit You* where the unnamed narrator finds support from her friends. One of the key themes of the book as well, is the idea of the poem *The Angel in the House (1854)*. The two theorists affirmed:

The Angel in the house has generated a female tradition largely characterized, in this century, by a preoccupation with the problems of exclusion, self-effacement, and fragmentation; for although the Angel provided women with a model of the female ideal. It also tended to divide women into competing selves, to induce them to see the world in rigidly moralistic terms, and to force them, as Virginia Woolf pointed, to write as men, towards men. (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979, p.41)

In this citation Gubar and Gilbert affirmed that throughout history, women have been forced into binary construct; the angel is idealized feminine figure who is pure, nurturing, and submissive to men, while the monster represent the antithesis of this construct she unruly disruptive and dangerous. The two theorists argued that this ideal was a part of a larger culture of domesticity that served to keep women confined to the home and out of public life. As a result, many women in literature are represented as either overly virtuous or angelic or as “fallen women” who violated social norms, and this also portrayed by Joyce in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* through Stephen Dedalus’s perspective, who sees women as either objects of desire or romance. Meena Kandasamy makes a reaction against this limited

representation of Joyce's view of females, by giving to her women voice and agency in the patriarchal society. Joyce's novel, portrays female characters occupying peripheral roles and presented as figures of desire or objects of romantic pursuit, and whose their agencies and complexity are limited within the narrative, Kandasamy makes a sort of response to this limited representation of females and highlights the lack of explorations of their experiences and perspectives in Joyce's novel. Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* aims to give voice to silenced and oppressed women, challenging traditional narratives and exposing the realities of gender-based violence.

Moreover, Kandasamy as Joyce uses stream of consciousness in the novel as we have said earlier. This technique is used to convey the inner workings of the protagonist mind and to portray the complexity of traumatic experiences, which give the readers a more immersive and visceral experience of the female's characters emotions and thoughts processes during and after the abuse they experienced. As she depicts the protagonist's state of mind during physical abuse, Kandasamy writes: "Trying to recollect the first time I was hit by my husband, there's only hot glass tears and the enduring fear of how often it has come to pass." (Kandasamy, 2017, p.90). In this citation stream of consciousness illustrates the wife's state of mind during physical abuse. She feels that as though the distance between herself and the normal work around her is expanded, it is as if the pain and trauma of the situation consumed her senses. It represents as well her fragmented thoughts and her inability to understand anything beyond her husband's physical abuse. Her use of this technique demonstrates the way she recognizes Joyce as an avant-garde of the modernist literature, thus taking him as her literary father

It is worth noting that any contemporary female writer is in a way or another, inspired and guided by her female precursor, because she permits and leads her to impose her power to write and express her ideas. Yet, Meena Kandasamy because of not having a female

predecessor, she took James Joyce as a model; therefore, she develops the anxiety of authorship. This is because she wanted to get as close as possible to her male predecessor.

However, the anxiety Kandasamy experienced becomes an anxiety of discontinuity. As Gubar and Gilbert affirmed, “Not because she wants dutifully to comply with male definitions of her “femininity” but because she must legitimize her own rebellious endeavours” (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979, p.50). Joyce’s rejection of his anxiety made of his legacy to be the epitome of modernism. Kandasamy felt the need to reject her anxiety as well. Only to differentiate herself from her male counterpart, she has to define herself. According to Gubar and Gilbert

Her anxiety about the impropriety of female invention _ all these phenomena of “inferiorization” mark the woman writer’s struggle for artistic self-definition and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterpart [...] only a full consideration of such problems can reveal the extraordinary strength of women’s literary accomplishments in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (Gubar and Gilbert, 1979, pp.50-51)

Overall, James Joyce and Meena Kandasamy’s representation of the female characters differ significantly. It is evident that Kandasamy’s reaction to Joyce’s portrayal of women is shaped by her specific socio-cultural context and her intent to address gender equality and violence against female in the patriarchal society. While Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* portrays female characters occupying peripheral roles and presented as figures of desire or objects of romantic pursuit, and whose their agencies and complexity are limited within the narrative. Kandasamy makes a sort of response to Joyce’s limited representation of female characters, and highlights the lack of explorations of their experiences and perspectives in Joyce’s novel. Kandasamy’s *When I Hit You* aims to give voice to silenced and oppressed women, challenging traditional narratives and exposing the realities of marital violence from the lens of the unnamed narrator. Relating to *The Madwoman in the Attic (1979)* we came to the conclusion that it examines the portrayal of Victorian women and discusses the impact of patriarchal system on female writers and their anxiety experienced while attempting the pen.

By relying on the concept of the anxiety of authorship, developed in the book, we came to the result that Meena Kandasamy, experiences this anxiety and took James Joyce as a literary father, but she rejects her anxiety, because she needed to define herself as a female writer.

V. Conclusion

In this research paper, we have undertaken a comparative analysis between two remarkable works of literature, James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) and Meena Kandasamy's *When I Hit You: Or, A Portrait of the Writer as a Young Wife* (2017). By shading light on the "Anxiety of Authorship" theory developed by Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their collection of essays *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Ninetieth-Century Literary Imagination* (1979). It is mainly an analysis of the social conditions of Victorian female authors' lives, the literary canon, and the archives of the Victorian period.

This comparative study allowed us to examine the similarities between the two authors and their works despite the disparities they both hold, to recognize James Joyce as Kandasamy's predecessor, and the extent to which she is influenced by his artistic journey in the writing of her novel. By the exploration from the lens of the central characters of the two novels, we probed into the context and background of the writers' works, their respective journey to self-discovery, and their representation of female characters in the novels.

We divided our discussion into three chapters; the first chapter concerns the context and the background of both the writers in the process of writing their novels. In this section, we shed light on how these two works are semi-autobiographical; we spoke about their political, social and historical contexts that showcased significant events happened in their countries, and the influence of some literary traditions. In the second chapter, we discussed and analyzed their journey towards self-discovery and becomingness through the lens of their two central characters Stephen Dedalus and the unnamed narrator. Within this chapter, it made it clear that both the protagonists struggled for self-identity, by going on a transformative journey. Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* highlights Stephen's artistic awakening, when he decides to break free from the visionary of the nets, which enclose him. Kandasamy's *When I Hit You* emphasize

the importance of self-care and resilience in the face of trauma and breaking free from an abusive marriage to go on a journey of self-discovery. In the third chapter, we examined the distinct views of female characters in both novels. We first introduced the most important female characters in the two books, and then we reached the result that both writers represent their women characters in different ways. Joyce portrays them as either maternal objects such as his mother, or objects of desire. While Kandasamy give her women voice and autonomy by speaking against the patriarchal society, making a reaction against Joyce's limited representation of female.

The "Anxiety Authorship" is a feminist theory, developed by the two feminist theorists Susan Gubar and Sandra M Gilbert, which is built from complex and conscious fears of that authority which seems to the female writer to be by definition inappropriate for her gender. This concept is a revision of Harold Bloom's "anxiety of influence", used in order to expose how male authors oppressed women writers, and the way they characterized their female characters in their writing by making them passive. It is used as well to describe the way these women felt frustration whenever they attempt the pen, since it is seen as a tool that only males can use. This concept serves as a lens through which we examined both novel, particularly Kandasamy's *When I Hit You*.

By applying the theory, we have shed light on the way in which Kandasamy's writing reflects her own anxiety as woman writer, as she confronts societal expectations and challenges in power structures, especially in literature. What she really needed for is a sisterly precursor and a female audience. Additionally, Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* earned him the forefront of the modernist literature, Kandasamy recognizes this, and she wanted him to be her literary father. Thus, she experiences the anxiety of authorship. However, for any female writer, she only wants to distance herself from her male precursor, gain a place in the society, and differentiate her efforts at self-creation from those of her male counterparts. Kandasamy's *When I Hit You*

reflects the anxiety of authorship that becomes an anxiety of discontinuity. Since Kandasamy felt the need to distance herself from her male predecessor. Only to define herself as a woman writer.

At the end, we want to add that our space of research is open and extended to many other analyses for future surveys. We may suggest for further comparative studies concerning the theory of “Anxiety of Authorship”. Or some themes such as the representation of female characters, the journey to self-discovery, religion, nationalism and identity in James Joyce’ *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, resistance to misogyny and patriarchy in Meena Kandasamy’s *When I Hit You*, and surviving domestic violence in Meena Kandasamy’s *When I Hit You*.

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