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*Abjection, Melancholia, Marginality and Resistance in Jesmyn's Ward
"Salvage the Bones" (2011) and Alice Munro's Selected Short Stories
from "Dear Life Collection" (2012) and "The Dance Of the Happy
shades" (1968)*

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Dedication

I dedicate this work to my dear parents.

To my beloved siblings.

To my lovely nieces and nephews.

To my mate Tafsut.

To everyone who has supported and helped me along the way.

Nassima

To the memory of my beloved father.

To my dear mother.

To my dear bother Adel and my sister Lydia for their support.

To my beloved friend Lotfi who has been a listener and supporter.

All those who love me.

To my dearest mate Nassima.

You reader.

Tafsut

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Abstract

This master's dissertation explores on a comprehensive examination of character portrayal within Jesmyn's Ward "*Salvage The Bones*" (2011) and Alice Munro's selected short stories from "*Dear life collection*" (2012) and "*The Dance Of The Happy Shades*" (1968) through the theoretical frameworks of Julia Krestiva's concepts of "Abjection" and "Melancholia", coupled with bell hooks theory "From Margin To Center". The first chapter delves into Krestiva's thesis, getting into characters' complicated emotional landscapes, showing their innermost complexities, and finding underlying tensions. By applying Krestiva's analytic tools, this chapter illuminates the character's intimate relationships with their environments, examining the boundaries of self and other, and ultimately offering a profound understanding of their multifaceted identities. In the second chapter, the exploration extends to include Hooks' theoretical lens, shedding light on how characters navigate their positions within social peripheries. Through Hooks' theory, this chapter demonstrates the agency and resilience displayed by characters as they strive to transcend societal constraints and asserts their own narratives. This thesis not only provides a detailed portrayal of the characters' struggles, but also offers a study on issues of identity, societal norms and the capacity for agency.

Key words: Abjection, Melancholia, Resistance, Marginality, Julia Krestiva, bell hooks.

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I. General introduction

Within the field of academic research, the intersection of psychology and feminism is a fascinating opportunity to gain deep understanding of the complexity of human experience. With their different but complementary approaches, both fields advance our knowledge of the complexity that shape people's lives within larger societal environments.

Feminism as a theoretical framework offers a critical lens through which we can disrupt societal conventions and systems of power. It rejects deeply held beliefs about gender roles and provides a forum for examining complex relationships that affect people's lives. Conversely, psychology explores the complex mechanisms of the mind, revealing the inner workings that influence the development of identities and actions. This thesis takes a trip through the area where these two disciplines meet, with a special focus on the examination of characters in two literary works.

Julia Kristeva, is one of the notable name among the experts in this field who have made significant contributions to our knowledge of the complex ideas of "Abjection" and "Melancholia". These themes, which are deeply rooted in the human experience, have imprinted themselves into the foundation of art and literature which have consistently provided a forum of the examination of societal dynamics and stories of those who have been marginalized. The distinguished and activist bell hooks has shed light on this narratives with her "*From Margin To Center*" theory emphasizing the importance of disadvantaged voices, claiming that they question popular narratives and provide important views. These voices provide an important counterbalance, extending our understanding and motivating us to tackle injustice. It also depicts diverse kinds of resistance, highlighting the perseverance of marginalized groups.

In this work, we are going to analyze literary works from feminist and psychological perspectives to interpret various literary themes and issues. For this, we are going to explore

two literary works, the first one untitled “*Salvage The Bones*” (2011) by Jesmyn Ward and the other one is Alice Munro’s short stories from “*Dear Life*”(2012) collection and “*The Dance Of The Happy Shades*” (1968) (Leaving Maverely, The Eye, Amundsen and Boys and Girls) by drawing on Julia Krestiva's theoretical concepts of "Abjection" and "Melancholia" on the one hand, and Bell Hooks' theory "*From Margin To Center*" (1984) on the other, where we adopted the terms "marginalization" and "Resistance."

1. Review of Literature

From our review of previous literature on Jesmyn Ward’s “*Salvage The Bones* (2011) and Alice Munro’s selected short stories, we noticed that both works have received criticism from different perspectives since their publications.

In “The Washington Independent Review Of Books” (2011), Anthony Grooms criticized the novel from the level of characters and style, he describes the female character Esch, the narrator of the story in “*Salvage The Bones*” as observant and poetic, he assumes that “As a narrator, rendering the story in the present tense, Esch is observant, poetic and often given to reminiscing about her mother who died in child birth”

(www.washingtonindependentreviewpfbooks.com).

According to Anthony Grooms, Ward’s poetic language and qualities contribute to the richness of the story, allowing readers to connect deeply with her expressions and emotions. He adds that Ward’s lyricism is fresh and incisive, although it occasionally threatens to stop the narrative in a confusion of metaphors that weakens rather than improves the voice. This critic starts with a positive note; it commends Ward for her ability to write with a style that is both innovative and incisive. "Lyricism" refers to the quality of the language that makes it poetic and musical, suggesting that Ward's writing is particularly artistic. Then it indicates that while Ward's lyrical style usually works well, there are times when it may block or slow

down the story's development, this may occur because the narrative's rhythm can be disrupted by an overemphasis on poetic language.

In another article entitled “Surviving Katrina” (2011), Parul Sehgal considers Jesmyn Ward’s “*Salvage The Bones*” (2011) as an outstanding book, highlighting its literary recognition within the literary community. He states that “*Salvage The Bones*”, the 2011 National Book Award winner for fiction, is a taut, wily novel, smartly plotted and voluptuously written. It feels fresh and urgent, but it is an ancient, archetypal tale”. (www.nytimes.com). The critic asserts that the narrator is expertly skilled; it describes “*Salvage the Bones*” as a well regarded book that combines good storytelling, clever presentation, well structured, and carefully developed prose. It successfully creates a balance between the ongoing impact of classic stories and a sense of present urgency. This suggests a piece of art that is not only expertly created but also profoundly relatable.

Alice Munro is a Canadian writer who has produced several short stories collections, as *Dear Life* (2012) collection. The latter has captured the interest of numerous critics. In “*Radiant, everlasting: Dear Life by Alice Munro*” (2012), Susan Sheridan thinks that the author's purposeful and effective narrative method was to use common people and everyday life as the main characters and plot points of her work. She gives her stories a relevant foundation for readers by rooting them in the everyday. This makes it simple for them to put themselves in the characters' shoes and become fully engaged in the narrative. By doing this, the author creates an instant bond between the reader and the story, facilitating their emotional and intellectual interest in the developing events. The critique argues: “She uses ordinary characters and events to explore the human condition. The situations they enter into are banal like marriage and adultery, conflicts between parents and children, aging and its discontents, loneliness in many forms”. (<https://sydneyreviewofbooks.com>).

According to Sheridan, Alice Munro captures the essence of human experience by

artistically and vividly portraying characters and events in her canon or writing, prompting readers to connect their existence through the adventures and challenges faced by the novel's characters. Sheridan is applauding Alice Munro for her capacity to uncover deep insights in the ordinary lives of common people. She concentrates on the regular and commonplace, using these situations to highlight deeper truths about the human condition, as opposed to focusing on large, remarkable events or individuals.

In an article published in *The Boston Globe* entitled "Book Review: *Dear Life* by Alice Munro" (2012), Jane Ciabattari describes Alice Munro's collection of stories as exceptionally immersive and profound. He claims: "Her 14 stories are so fluid and close to the mystery of life that reading them is like being inside the mind of a writer as she creates, shaping language within her spacious imagination, and suffusing words with empathy"(www.bostonglobe.com). According to Ciabattari, Munro's skills and attempts for portraying the essence of life with a considerable fluidity, making lecturers feel as if they are inside the author herself, and creating her stories by shaping language within her creative process. The stories are praised for being not only skilfully written and interesting, but also for serving as doors through which readers can enter the creative process and observe the author in action. A rich narrative experience is produced by the vast and powerful use of words and imagination. A deep awareness of the human condition is also suggested by the Munro's use of empathy, which adds to the profundity and power of her works.

2. Issue and Working Hypothesis

Contemporary literature often deals with the complexities of identity, agency, and societal positioning. Within this context, the characters in Jesmyn Ward's "*Salvage The Bones*" (2011) and Alice Munro's selected short stories emerge as compelling subjects for examination. Both works present a diverse range of individuals at different complex environments, each burdened with their own struggles and aspirations.

This research paper seeks to explore characterizations in these works, using the frameworks of Julia Krestiva's concepts of Abjection and Melancholia, as well as bell hooks' theory of transitioning From Margin To Center. By employing these critical lenses, we aim to uncover hidden layers of meaning and shed light on the transformative journeys of the characters.

We predict that by applying Krestiva's theories of Abjection and Melancholia, we will gain insight into the complicated emotional landscapes, revealing their interactions with others. Furthermore, through Hooks feminist theory of moving from margin to center, we anticipate identifying instances of agency, marginalization, and collective action among the characters particularly female ones. We expect that this dual theoretical approach will provide a comprehensive understanding of the characters' struggles, resistance, and ultimate evolution within the narratives.

3. Methodological Outline

Concerning methodology, our dissertation starts with an introduction, which presents our main purpose and the different reviews of literature that studied the primary sources Jesmyn Ward's "*Salvage the Bones*" (2011) and Alice Munro's selected short stories. Then it brings up our issue and working hypothesis. In terms of "Methods and Materials" section it provides a summary of Julia Krestiva's theory of Psycho poetical theory, bell hooks' theory of From Margin To Center, summary of *Salvage The Bones* and for last summary of Alice Munro's selected short stories (*The Eye, Leaving Maverley, Amundsen* and *Boys and Girls*). The result section sums up the findings of our work. The "discussion" section is divided into two parts. The first chapter shows the concepts of Abjection and Melancholia as experienced by Ward's and Munro's characters. The second chapter focuses on resistant and marginalized individuals in both works. Finally, the "conclusion" summarizes the main results and points of our research paper.

II. Methods and Materials

1. Methods

This section of our work contends to explain Julia Kristeva's theory of the psycho-poetical, as she writes it in "*Powers of horrors: an essay on abjection 1982*" and "*black sun 1987*". This being said, we will borrow the concepts of abjection and melancholia; and bell hooks' "*From margin to center*" 1984 theory, where we will discuss the concepts of marginality and resistance.

1.1 The Psycho-poetical theory of Julia Kristeva:

Julia Kristeva, a Bulgarian-French intellectual, is a notable figure in the field of psychoanalysis. Her work encompasses various roles, including philosophy, literary critic, psychoanalyst, feminist, and novelist. She is primarily linked to significant concepts like the semiotic, the symbolic, abjection and melancholia. The Psycho-Poetical theory of Kristeva is a literary theory which emerged during the 1970s.

Julia Kristeva's Abjection and Melancholia:

1.1.1 Abjection

The concept of "Abjection" was first theorised by the Bulgarian-French philosopher Julia Kristeva; it refers to the condition of being expelled and isolated from conventional norms and regulations, particularly within the context of society and morality. In the realm of post-structuralism, the concept has been examined as something that inherently disrupts established notions of identity and cultural principles. Kristeva defines the concept of the abject as that which disregards boundaries, positions, and rules while unsettling notions of identity system, and order. According to her, abjection is deeply intertwined with our sense of self. She asserts that the object possesses only one characteristic of an abject. Kristeva argues that we shape our identities by establishing boundaries that distinguish the self from the other, and anything that falls beyond or challenges these boundaries must be forcefully excluded as

it threatens our sense of self.

Abjection arises from the close connection with one's self, specially the human body. Kristeva explains that the act of expelling waste and bodily fluids serves to eliminate impurities from our bodies but also serves as a stark reminder of the vulnerability of our bodies to illness and morality. She writes:

The abject is not only a threat to meaning and identity, but also a threat to the very existence of the subject. The abject is that which threatens life that must be radically excluded in order to maintain the boundaries of subject and social order. (Kristeva, 1982, p 17).

1.1.2 Melancholia

Melancholia is a psychological and emotional state characterized by persistent feelings of sadness, despair, and lack of interest or pleasure in activities. It involves a deep sense of loss, introspection, and a diminished sense of self-worth. In other way it is mourning for lost things. In the 1987 essay "Soleil Noir" or "Black Sun", the melancholic or narcissistic character is portrayed as someone who seldom communicates or engages in physical activity, spending a significant amount of time sleeping. This character experiences a complex blend of love and hatred directed towards an internal or external object, and frequently contemplates suicide as a means to eliminate this troublesome object. Consequently, the melancholic individual in transition may be compelled to engage in unlawful activities or self-harm. However, there are instances where certain melancholic or depressed individuals manage to progress and reintegrate into the 'symbolic' realm. Kristeva elucidates that a 'melancholic individual' can find reconciliation with the 'imaginary father', allowing them to reintegrate into the realm of 'the symbolic'. As a result, a subject in transition may undergo a psychological transformation or engage in micro-political actions to restore their identity at the juncture between the semiotic and the symbolic domains.

1.2 bell hooks theory of “*From margin to center*” (1984)

It is an essay written by the American author Gloria Jean Watkins, who is known as bell hooks in 1984. It is divided into twelve chapters; she discusses various aspects of feminism and its intersection with race and class. She argues that feminism should not be limited to the concerns of white, middle-class women, but should instead address the needs and experiences of women from marginalized and oppressed groups. She explores the two concepts of “center” and “margin”. This essay helps us to understand that society has two groups: those in the mainstream of center and those pushed to the sidelines or margin. In particular, it sheds light on how women, who were traditionally seen as powerless, are often marginalized. bell hooks uses these concepts to challenge and change our understanding of power and marginalization. Additionally, the expression from margin signifies how women can move from being oppressed to finding freedom. hooks explains that non-white and poor women face even greater marginalization, which means they are pushed to the outskirts of American society, and their lives are often overlooked or ignored. Therefore, they are not part of feminist theory. In her view, feminist theory primarily represents the perspectives of white women in the mainstream, and it does not encompass the experiences and struggles of black women living on the margins. She writes:

The central problem within feminist discourse has been our inability to either arrive at a consensus of opinion about what feminism is or accept definition(s) that could serve as points of unification. Without agreed upon definition(s), we lack a sound foundation on which to construct theory or engage in overall meaningful praxis. (Hooks 1984, p17)

hooks emphasizes that sexist discrimination and oppression are the primary causes of conflicts between men and women. She asserts that these forms of oppression often originate in the home, and the feminist movement aims to bridge the gap between the sexes, fostering an environment of intimacy and understanding, which is positive aspect often overlooked by

liberal feminism. Furthermore, hooks argues that various forms of oppression in the United States stem from traditional Western thought, where power is held by the superior and used to control the inferior. She underscores the critical importance of addressing sexist oppression since it is an experience that affects everyone. By challenging and combating this form of oppression, hooks suggests that it may pave the way for eliminating other types of oppression.

hooks theory of *“From Margin to Center” (1984)* addresses both the experience of marginalization and necessity of resistance against it, advocating for a more inclusive and intersectional feminist movement.

2. Materials

2.1 Biography of the authors

2.1.1 Alice Munro’s Biography

Alice Munro, born as Alice Ann Laidlaw in 10/1931, a celebrated Canadian author renowned for her mastery of the short story genre. She hails from Wingham, Ontario, Canada. Munro’s literary journey began at the University of Western Ontario, where she pursued English studies and saw her initial short story published in the University’s literary magazine. Her first book entitled *Dance of the Happy Shades* 1968 published in the United States of America. Munro’s notable works are *Lives of Girls and Woman*, *Something I Have Been Meaning to Tell You*, *The Moons of Jupiter*, *The Love of Good Woman*, *Runway*, *Too Much Happiness*, and *Dear Life*.

A number of its stories were previously features in Canadian periodicals like *Tamarack Review*, *The Montrealer*, and *The Canadian*. In 1951, she got married to James Munro and they co-owned a bookshop, relocating to Victoria, British Columbia.

Through her impressive career, she won many awards, including three Governor General’s Literary Awards, two Giller Prizes, the Rea Award for short stories, the Lannan literary Award, England’s W.H. Smith Literary Award, the United States’ National Book

Critics Circle Award, the Edward MacDowell Medal in literature, the O, Henry Award in 2006, and the Man Booker International Prize in 2009 and 2012. Her crowning achievement came when she was honoured with the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2013.

2.1.2 Jesmyn's Ward Biography

Jesmyn Ward is an American author known for her powerful works of fiction. She was born in April 1977, in DeLisle, Mississippi. Ward attended Stanford University, where she initially studied science, but later shifted her focus to literature and creative writing. She completed her undergraduate degree at Stanford and then pursued a Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Creative Writing at the University of Michigan. After completing her MFA, Ward taught creative writing in various universities, including the University of South Alabama and Tulane University.

Her first novel "Where the Line Bleeds" was published in 2008. However, it was her second novel "*Salvage the Bones*" (2011) that brought her widespread recognition and won the National Book Award for Fiction. And "Sing, Unburied, sing", which also received the National Book Award in 2017, making her the first to win the awards twice. Her works often focus on the lives of African Americans in the Deep South and grapple with themes of family, race, and poverty.

Jesmyn Ward's writing has been celebrated for its raw and emotional portrayal of characters and settings. She has received numerous accolades and honors for her work, including MacArthur Foundation fellowships, and she has become a significant voice in contemporary American literature.

She is a mother of two children and has often spoken about the challenges of balancing her writing career with motherhood. Jesmyn Ward's powerful storytelling and commitment to depicting the experiences of marginalized communities in the American South have cemented her status as a prominent and influential author in the literary world.

2.2 Synopsis of the primary sources

2.2.1 Jesmyn Ward's "Salvage the bones"(2011)

Salvage the Bones is a novel written by the American novelist Jesmyn Ward in 2011. It tells the story of the poor Batiste family in Bois of Sauvage, Mississippi, who is preparing for the incoming storm named Katrina. Claude the father salvages and then sells scrap metal to support the family, which is poor and black. The family's living conditions mirror their economic hardships, as they search for materials and live in a decaying house.

The absence of their mother casts a melancholic shadow over their lives and strengthens when hurricane Katrina approaches, functioning as a symbolic storm reflecting their inner suffering. The story is narrated by Esch, the protagonist of the novel, 15 years old who is pregnant in hidden from his family. She narrates the family's struggles against the big storm Katrina and their daily life. Socially marginalized, the batistes contend with societal neglect and indifference.

Their community remains largely unseen, and the family's struggles go unnoticed by the wider society, nevertheless, the characters show resiliency in the face of these difficulties. Despite the stigma from society, Esch approaches her upcoming parenthood head-on. The family's joint efforts to weather the hurricane and get ready for it demonstrates their agency and resistance in controlling their own destinies.

The novel explores the themes of poverty, sacrifice, danger and survival. The novel ends with the arrival of the hurricane and the family surviving the damage done to the Bois of Sauvage.

2.2.2 Alice Munro's selected short stories

a. The eye

It begins with a young girl named Alice, she is five years old, she narrates how she spent her childhood and her relationship with her mother after giving birth to her little brothers. She started to understand the difference between the way she thinks and her mother's one. She noticed that her mother didn't give her much time so she was ignored. Since the mother was busy with her babies, she decided to hire a young woman called Sadie to help her; she was a celebrity, singing popular songs and also playing guitars in a radio station, but only farmers like her song because she sings about their lives' disappointment. Sadie was enjoying her job and doing it with confidence, she was talking about life, every weekend she went at the dance halls, all this, is what made Alice to be close to her, and have a good relationship. As school started, Alice met two boys there, she did not like them and they did the same. One night when Sadie comes out of the dance hall, a car had hit her. She passed away. The narrator and her mother went to Sadie's funeral; Alice was shocked when she saw a dead body for the first time.

b. Leaving Maverley

The story took place in a town called Maverley, it starts with Morgan Holly who is a theatre owner, and he lost his ticket taker and has to hire someone instead. The new employee's name is Leah. She is a young girl raised in a very religious family, she is allowed to take the job of the ticket booth after her parents are assured that there is no possibility to see the movie, but they did not realize that Leah can hear it, because Morgan had lied on them saying that the theatre is soundproof. Ray Elliot is a policeman who employed to escort Leah back to her parent's house in the late evenings. He is married with Isabel; they were a childless couple because of the wife sickness. One day Leah left the town and she got married with the son's minister, everyone was shocked especially Ray who was already attached to her in a fatherly way. Ray suffers much as his beloved wife Isabel gets in coma and never wakes up again.

Right before Isabel's death, Ray meet Leah again. She also lost everything when she divorced.

c. Amundsen

Vivien, a shy and inexperienced young lady, who travels from Toronto to Amundsen for working in a sanatorium for children with tuberculosis in order to teach them. There she met a doctor named Fox, a lung specialist, he is much older than her and very specific man that is not that easily understood. She falls in love with him. They marry shortly after, but their union does not last long when Dr. Fox suddenly changes his mind and calls off the engagement. Vivien is heartbroken and is returned to Toronto. On her journey, she meets Mary who plays a significant role in her life. She is the energetic and outspoken daughter of the kitchen manager. Mary doesn't have tuberculosis and is attending her first year of high school in town. Mary is on Vivien's train, returning to Amundsen with her basketball team from a lost match. Although Mary is oblivious to her situation, Vivien draws strength from her because she does not show any signs of being upset after being treated badly by Fox. Years later, after Vivien is married to someone else and living in Toronto, she sees Fox in the street. He calls her and asks how she is doing, she says that she is fine and happy; all he says is good for you. The story ends with Vivien observing that nothing changes really about love.

d. Boys and Girls

The story is set on farm, the unnamed narrator, a young girl, helps her father with various tasks, including their fur operation. Her father owned a fox farm, he had a business of raising the foxes and the selling their pelts. She is a tomboy and is a very involved in her father's world, helping him with the work and even naming the foxes. Her father appreciates her assistance and refers to her as a "helper". The girl has a younger brother, Laird, who is a favoured by their father. Laird is destined to inherit the farm, and this fact becomes a defining element of the story.

The girl, on other hand, is expected to help her mother with domestic chores, such as

cooking and cleaning, which she finds less appealing. As the story progresses, the girl becomes increasingly aware of the gender roles and expectations placed upon her. She witnesses how her father and brother are involved in haunting and other farm-related activities, while she is confined to more traditional female roles. She is conflicted because she wants to be part of the activities she admires but is discouraged by her mother and the traditional norms of the time. The girl believes in her ability to do more work than her younger brother. However due to the prevailing male dominance during that time, she is not encouraged to assist her father with his work, while her brother enjoys the freedom to choose his tasks.

The story predominantly depicts male dominance and gender inequalities of the time, where boys have more liberty and dominance, while women are often blamed for any wrongdoing and have to live within a more restricted environment.

III. Results

This section of our dissertation is concerned with stating of the major findings and results, that we reached after our study of the work of Jesmyn's Ward's "*Salvage The Bones 2011*" and Alice Munro's selected short stories "*The Eye*", "*Leaving Maverley*", "*Amundsen*" and "*Boys and Girls*". Our research paper is a character analysis of the works mentioned above like Esch, Skeetah, Alice and others by relying on Julia Kristeva's theory of Abjection and Melancholia coupled with bell hooks theory of "*From Margin To Center*".

In the first chapter we have dealt with the concept of Abjection and Melancholia in "*Salvage The Bones 2011*" and selected short stories. This chapter highlights the complexities and fragility of human identity when confronted with experiences of abjection and melancholia. The analyzed characters go through unstable and frequently painful experiences, leading them to question their own worth and place in the world around them. It also underscores how societal norms, family pressures and external events can contribute to the experience of abjection and melancholia.

Furthermore, we deduced the void left by the absence of significant figures in the characters lives, such as Esch's mother and Vivien's husband, exerts a profound influence on their sense of self. Overall, this chapter indicates the strength and resilience within the human condition, emphasizing that in the front of abjection and melancholia experiences, individuals have the capacity to find ways to reconnect with their identity and the ability of human to endure in the face of terrible losses.

In the second chapter, we have studied the works with the lens of Bell Hooks' theory of "*From Margin To Center*" where we have explored the concepts of marginalization and resistance. This study delves into the experiences of marginalization and oppression faced by the main characters. It shed light on the diverse forms of marginality encountered by black people mainly women. Additionally it serves as a call to action and combat oppressive

systems by working towards equality. Moreover, this chapter is based on the resilience and determination of the characters in both works to face gender roles imposed on them by patriarchal society. Despite the expectations and limitations placed on them due the gender, the characters resist and seek to define their identity.

To conclude, the chapters explore themes of marginalization, resistance, melancholy, and rejection in selected works, highlighting the profound impact of familial relationships, cultural norms, and personal losses on protagonists' self-perception. They emphasize the resilience and fortitude of human beings, highlighting their ability to overcome difficult circumstances. bell hooks' theory is used to deepen the study, emphasizing the importance of promoting equality and elevating underrepresented voices.

IV. Discussion

Chapter one: *Abjection* and *Melancholia* in Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage The Bones* (2011) and Alice Munro's selected short stories

This chapter intends to be a study how the novel *Salvage The Bones* (2011) and Alice Munro's selected short stories discusses the characters as being subjects to *Abjection* and *Melancholia*. The concept of *Abjection* means experiencing something that disturb the line between one's inner and the external world, breaking our sense of identity and challenging what is clean, pure and proper. It causes people to experience *Melancholia*, which is a state of grief for lost things and typically denotes a condition of extreme sadness. Many characters in those works are good examples for the two concepts *Abjection* and *Melancholia*.

Abjection

To start with *abjection* in the novel *Salvage The Bones* we can apply it to the character Esch who is the novel's narrator, aged 15 years old, the only girl in a male dominated family. She is surrounded by men and masculine energy which led her to retreat into her imagination and the myth she reads. She tries to learn what a woman from other sources. Esch becomes pregnant at a young age. Her pregnancy journey is presented as both transformative and difficult. The lens of maternal abjection can be used to understand Esch's experiences as a young mother. Julia Krestiva argues that the maternal body is perceived as deplorable because of its association with bodily fluids, childbirth and the blurring of boundaries of self and other (Krestiva 1984). Esch physical sensations such as morning sickness and labor pain can be viewed as examples of rejection within the maternal notion. As an illustration Ward writes:

"Every time I dozed, the hurt that I am pregnant was there like a bully to kick me awake. I woke at seven with my throat burning my face wet. This is what it means to be pregnant so far: throwing up.

Sick from the moment I open my eyes, look up at the puckered plaster ceiling, remember who I am, what I am. I turn the water on so no one can hear me vomit". (J. Ward, 2011.p 33).

Esch begins to live and discover the body of a pregnant woman, she starts to understand what pregnancy means, her life becomes difficult and complex, she struggles with the body change and her secret, she tries to hide her pain and suffering from her family and friends what puts her in a worrying and uncomfortable situation as it is shown in the novel:" If I throw up again, somebody would ask me what my problem is. And I don't want to have to speak the lie, to be convincing. To have them looking at me and asking". (Ward, 2011. P42).

Julia Krestiva contends that the female body particularly in a relation to events like menstruation, pregnancy and birth is frequently regarded as abject in societal norms, in other words, a woman who is pregnant and gives birth is seen by the society as abnormal and weak. In a chapter named "Sabat Mater" extracted from the essay "*Powers of horrors: an Essay on Abjection*" Krestiva says : "The body which is not clean and proper is seen as abnormal. When we encounter the abject body, we distance ourselves from it. The abject body is that which is marginalized and socially rejected". (J.Krestiva,1982). Esch's young age and single position contribute of the stigma and discrimination she faces, society frequently associates young and unmarried women with stereotypes and unfavorable perceptions, viewing their pregnancies as irresponsible and wrong. Therefore, this social judgment puts her under stress and suffering. She does not want to expose her conditions to the boys around her; she tries to control her body. Esch is afraid to be isolated more and devalued when her family knows about her secret. She keeps behaving ordinarily despite her discomfort and the pain she feels when they are preparing for the incoming Hurricane Katrina, even her conditions she expected to participate in male works ignoring her sufferance. She suffers from emotional isolation as a result of not having the support or understanding of those around her especially

lack of maternal care. Her family members frequently fail to provide her the assistance she needs; occasionally, rather than showing empathy, they judge and criticize her, adding to her emotional burden. For example, when Esch's brother Skeetah learns about her pregnancy, he becomes enraged and disappointed, compounding the sense of judgment she feels. Esch tries to understand her place in the world and find meaning to her life. She wants so badly to reveal her secret and get rid of it but she is still afraid of judgments and reaction of her family "I wanted to finish my story. I wanted to say, I am pregnant". (J.Ward,2011.p190). From this, we can notice that her situation is perceived as a threat to the existing order, and it might be argued that society is trying to separate itself from her in order to preserve the ideal level of cohesion. What led her to think about abortion and search for an option to get rid of the baby inside her.

Additionally, another example of abjection in this novel is the character Skeetah, the novel's second protagonist, 16 years old. He grew up poor and faced various hardships, he focuses on taking care of his pit bull China which has just given birth to litter of puppies and he desperate to keep them alive so that he can sell them to make money for his family. Skeetah's experiences with poverty have a significant influence on his personality and actions; it is seen as example of Abjection. Living in the fictional Bois of Sauvage a poor and rural community in Mississippi with lack of access to basic needs such as an adequate housing, healthcare and education. He is excluded from many of the opportunities and resources that are available to others in community and this exclusion has contributed in strengthening his feelings of isolation, depression and anger. Skeetah's character embodies the concept of *abjection* in numerous ways; his close relationship with his Pit-bull China and her puppies crosses the line between humans and animals evoking a mix of fascination and unease. His determination to care for her and her puppies, despite their difficult situation, can be seen as a deviation from the traditional standards of the animal-human interaction, because

of his love and care for his pit-bull China he is often seen as an outsider. Skeetah's intense attachment to his dogs evident through his actions, emotions, and thoughts, even when resources are limited. In this light Ward writes: "Skeetah ignores Junior because he is focused on china like a man focuses on a woman when he feels that she is his, which china is" (J.Ward,2011.p7). From this quotation, we understand at what extent Skeetah is attached to China, he ignores and marginalize his brother Junior to take care and support his dog instead of listening and helping him, in many scenes in this novel skeetah is showed interested and helpful for China more than his family, he is often absent during the preparation for the incoming storm, all his brothers and sister participate except him, busy on feeding and protecting china and her puppies, he ignores the efforts that his family make to get ready for the storm he concentrate only on his dogs. They ask for his help many times but he escapes and make excuses about China. We can see this through their conversations: "hold up" Daddy says. "I need y'all help"

"I got to see after China" (J .Ward, 2011. p50).

From this, one can notice the importance that sketaah gives to his dog ignoring his family needs and struggles in their daily life preparing for Katrina. His love for China is strong that he is ready to risk his own life to save hers. For example, in the chapter four named "Worth Stealing" when the dogs were contaminated with a virus, Sketaah was unable to bring a veterinarian to examine them due to his situation, but he did not sit with his arms folded. He tries to navigate the harsh reality of what he must do. Sketaah's grief about the puppies' illness represents his deeper fear of losing them. Moreover, as he is in a difficult position, he dared to steal medicines from the white people's home to save and make them alive. He put his own life in danger to let the puppies survive. "You going to lay there, and if the white people come, you going to whistle. And then you going to keep low and start running to the woods". (J. Ward, 2011.p55).

This action demonstrates Sketaah's attachment to China, and makes it clear that he views the puppies as more than business opportunity; they are a part of him that he will stop at nothing to keep them safe. At the end of the novel, when the storm Katrina is here, Skeetah brings China and his puppies inside the house to protect them from the storm, what his father have not agreed but Skeetah insist to let them inside. "Everything deserves to live", Skeetah says. "And her and the puppies going to live". (J.Ward, 2011.p 166).

Skeetah's sensitivity, his unwillingness to share his profound emotions, and his passionate desire to protect and nurture the dogs emphasize the fragile line between acceptable emotional manifestations and uncomfortable extremes. Krestiva's idea of abjection involves encountering things that challenge our understanding of what is acceptable and normal as she writes in her book "*Powers of Horrors: An essay on Abjection*": "The abject is not only a threat to meaning and identity, but also a threat to the very existence of the subject. The abject is that which threatens life that must be radically excluded in order to maintain the boundaries of the subject and social order". (J. Krestiva,1982). This commitment to caring for the dogs above what is necessary, as well as his willingness to disconnect from society, exemplifies this disruption. All of these factors contribute to Sketaah's sense of self and his relationship with others. His experiences show the obstacles and difficulties faced by many people who are excluded or rejected by society, and his experiences are affected by these larger institutions of power and inequality.

After examining the manifestations of Abjection in Jesmyn's *Ward "Salvage The Bones"*, the analysis now shifts to the second literary work that deals with the complexities of human experiences and vulnerability (Munro's) selected short stories. To start with the first story untitled "*The Eye*", it begins with Alice 5 years old when her life changed by the arrival of a newborn brother followed soon by another one. This arrival affected her life as well as her connection with her mother who believes that it is her duty to tell her daughter about what

she should feel, almost controlling her. Since the mother was busy with the babies, they hired a young woman named Sadie who was a singer and playing guitar in a radio station to do house works. The introduction of Sadie into Alice's family disrupts the familiar dynamics and challenges her identity and belonging. As the newborn babies take the center stage, Alice may feel ignored, marginalized and cast aside what leads her to a sense of alienation and unease. She is pushed aside from her previous place of familiarity and comfort; she tries to navigate the changes that have happened in her life; she tries to cope and deal with the change that has occurred by finding means to adapt and adjust to the new situation. Now, Alice finds herself in the midst of a delicate and difficult shift. She feels obliged to accept her little brother's presence and face the fact that the family includes more members. The narrator says:

Up until the time of the first baby I had not been aware of ever feeling different from the way my mother said I felt. And up until that time the whole house was full of my mother, of her footsteps her voice her powdery yet ominous smell that inhabited all the rooms when she wasn't in them. (A. Munro, 2012.p140).

While reading this quotation we notice the strong impact of Alice's mother had on their life before the arrival of the baby, she became aware of her own feelings based on how her mother expressed them. Alice also describes how her mother's presence permeated the entire house, even when she was not there physically. This suggests a significant influence and presence in Alice's life. However, now the things have changed the relation between the mother and the daughter reflects a sense of rejection and discomfort as Julia Krestiva mentioned in her essay *The Powers of Horrors; An essay on Abjection 1982*: "It is death infecting life. Abject. It is something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an abject". (J.Krestiva,1984.P 13).This new situation has created a distance between them what makes Alice became close and related to Sadie the hired house

worker even if she is not a direct family member. This dynamic shift in Alice's house brings unexpected bond between her and Sadie, providing Alice with a source of support and companionship during a period of change and disruption in her family environment, this connection represent a way for Alice to regain a sense of stability and belonging. Julia Krestiva says: "It is thus not of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disrupts identity, system, order". (J. Krestiva, 1982.p13). In other words Krestiva means that abjection refers to experiences or substances that disturb existing systems, identities, and orders, rather than worries about cleanliness or physical health. Alice spends much time with Sadie more than her mother; she helps her in housework and share moments together while talking about life what makes Alice more connected to Sadie. This is well shown when she asserts: "... but in her job with us she was full of energy and confidence, happy to talk and mostly to talk about herself .There was usually nobody to talk to but me". (A. Munro, 2012.p 141).

Alice adds:

After dinner, which was the noon meal, Sadie and I were alone in the kitchen. My mother took time off for a nap [...] Sadie heated water on the stove washed the dishes with me helping and the blinds down to keep out the heat. All this while Sadie was telling me about her life. (A. Munro, 2012.p 141).

In this part of the story, we can deduce Sadie's role blurs the line between the private space of the family and the external world; she enters the intimate sphere of the family, bringing an unfamiliar element into Alice's life. Alice starts having a good relation with Sadie, she describes her as a strong and confidante person doing her job with energy, she perceives her as content to talk about herself .We notice also that Alice's mother leaves her daughter with the servant to assist her in the kitchen, what make the girls spend time together. Sadie narrates her days in the dance halls and even invites Alice to dance. She told her how to

become a strong and independent woman and teaches her to love life and follows her dreams: “There’s nothing in this world to be scared of, just look for yourself.”(A. Munro, 2012.p142).

All these events and moments helped Alice to know about life and pushed her to think about her dreams and see Sadie as a guide, source of strength and attraction. It contributes to Alice’s formation of identity as Julia Kristeva suggests that abjection plays an important role in the formation of identity by differentiating between what is regarded as self and what is regarded as other. In this context, Sadie’s presence encourages Alice to reconsider her perception of her place in the family. The friendship grown between Sadie and Alice could be interpreted as her attempt to figure out her own space and belonging in the midst of the changes brought by her brother's arrival.

The second story untitled “*Leaving Maverley*” it deals with a girl named Leah 16 years old, she is raised in a religious family. Leah starts working as a ticket taker in a movie theater, she is not allowed to listen to the dialogues or look at the movie screen because of her religion but the theater owner deceives Leah’s father by telling him that the theater is soundproof, and he employed a policeman called Ray Eliot to escort Leah back to her parent’s house in the late evenings in accordance with the father's demand. Leah's parents' permission for her to work in the theater while making sure she does not hear or watch the movies can be interpreted as an act of abjection meant to keep her away from anything they consider immoral or improper, this boundary might be interpreted as a way of maintaining purity or protecting Leah from potentially corrupting influences. The abject for Kristeva is closely connected to both religion and to art, which she sees as two ways of purifying the abject : “The various means of purifying the abject—the various catharses—make up the history of religions, and end up with that catharsis par excellence called art, both on the far and nearside of religion” (J.Kristeva, 1982.p17) By imposing these boundaries, her parents are effectively rejecting or removing the theater from Leah's life, which can cause discomfort or even revulsion; it highlights the conflict

between Leah's personal preferences and the expectations imposed by her religious family. In this light Munro writes: "Her father agreed, but he had to be satisfied on other accounts. Leah was not to look at the screen or listen to any of the dialogue. The religion that the family belonged to did not allowed". (A.Munro,2012.p40).

In the passage mentioned above, we detect that the father is strict and shaped by a strong adherence to religious principles and struggles with the conflict between religious beliefs and personal desires. He forbids his daughter from engaging with movies reflects a power dynamic within the family. He tries to control her actions and decisions based on religious beliefs, this control may extend to other areas in Leah's life enhancing her perception of her dependence on and subjection within the context of the family. The dominance of Leah's father serves as a source of abjection for her; he distanced her from the norms of culture. Abjection is frequently associated with a sense of being thrown out or rejected from society norms. In Leah's case his father strict adherence make her feels like an outsider and strange or different from her peers who do not share the same instructions. This situation could have a significant psychological impact on Leah. She is divided between her desire to submit to her family's views and her desire for social involvement and cultural engagement. She enters in a case called by Julia Krestiva double-minded state. She is troubled because she is not living on the borderline between her inner semiotic and the external symbolic worlds. Leah is in between two things, whether to follow his father's instructions or to listen to her desires, she sees his father as a refuge that wants to protect her on the one hand, and on the other hand she considers him as a barrier which separates her from her aspirations. This inner struggle causes her psychological distress and a sense of crisis in identity, she questions about her own beliefs, values and the role of religion in her life. After some time of work in the theater Leah was missed, and then she sends a letter saying that she got married to the minister's son as it is explained in the story:

The day after that, the mail truck came through and there was a letter. It was addressed not to anyone in Leah's family but to the minister and his wife. It was from Leah, to report that she had got married. The bridegroom was the minister's son, who was a saxophone player in a jazz band. (A. Munro, 2012.p45).

Leah's disappearance and decision to marry the minister's son without informing her family can be interpreted as a courageous act of rebellion against her religious family's traditions and expectations. Perhaps this courage to do such act is derived from the dialogues she listens in the theater, it's like her own movie plot, where she takes control of her own story and breaks away from the constraints of her religious upbringing. Marriage outside her religious community becomes Leah's escape from the limits imposed by her father's beliefs, much as movies provide an escape from reality. Julia Krestiva, affirms that abjection is the simultaneous attraction and repulsion to something that threatens to disrupt the boundaries of the self and society (Krestiva,1982). In Leah's instance, marrying against her religion is regarded as a type of abjection because it defies convention and creates feelings of both fascination and revulsion. Leah's decision becomes a symbol of liberation, self-discovery and the pursuit of personal desires even if it means going against the norms of her religious family and community.

“Amundsen” is the third short story that we are going to analyze through the lens of Julia Krestiva's theory of abjection. The story concerns a young teacher named Vivien Hyde who travels from Toronto to Amundsen to teach children who are infected with tuberculosis in a sanatorium there despite the hard conditions. She meets Dr Fox, a lung specialist and falls in love with him. Shortly after they decided to get married but the doctor changes his mind a moment before the marriage and calls off their relation without any reasons. Vivien returned to Toronto with a heartbroken. In analyzing Vivien's character through the lens of abjection, we

can see how Dr. Fox's sudden breakup without explanation causes her to experience sentiments of disgust, rejection, and confusion. This experience challenges her sense of self and disrupts her emotional well-being; Vivien is forced to confront the abject nature of the situation, going through the unsettling emotions and trying to make sense to the sudden end of her relationship. The absence of closure adds to the overall feeling of abjection, leaving Vivien to grapple with the aftermath and find ways to rebuild herself. A sense of confusion and instability is created when the marriage is suddenly called off; disrupting the expected order of events, this unexpected change also adds a layer of uncertainty and emotional distress for Vivien. At the beginning, she was happy to have met the right person and get married with; she was excited to her wedding she does not even invite her grandparents as we read in the story: "Our sudden engagement He was a little wary the world was a private settled fact. I was not to write a word to my grandparents. The wedding would take place whenever he could get a couple of consecutive days off". (Munro, 2012. p 35).

She adds: "we have begun the day that I am sure I will remember all my life". (Munro, 2012. P 36).

Those quotations are a proof that Vivien was preparing for his wedding with happiness and confidence ignoring what will happen after. Unfortunately, the things have changed Dr Fox announce his broken decision without explaining the reasons. Dr Fox acted in a hurtful and confusing way which leads Vivien to feel rejected and heartbroken, this rejection leaves her feeling humiliated and cast aside, and it harms her feeling of value and of her own worth like she is no longer valued or accepted. When Julia Krestiva talks about abjection, she means that the abject is a concept that is often used to describe bodies and things that are considered taboo or disgusting by society (Krestiva1982); this is exactly what Vivien feels about her situation deep sense of shame, alienation and loss of identity because Vivien's identity have been intertwined with her anticipated role as Dr Fox's wife. The fact of abandonment challenges her perception of herself and her place in the world, she questions her worthiness,

her ability to be loved and her understanding of her own identity. According to Krestiva the abject is that which disrupts our sense of belonging, this is what we have noticed in Vivien's case. She has seen herself as part of a future family unit with Dr Fox but this sudden decision disrupts her sense of belonging and upends her place of the world, she feels like an outsider in a place that was once familiar and comforting especially because this sudden departure was without reasons and explanations from the bridegroom, as it is explained in this conversation:

I can't do it, has said.

He has said that he can't go through with this.

He can't explain it.

Only that it's a mistake. (Munro, 2012,p38).

It is clear from the above that Dr Fox is expressing that he is unable to continue with his partner, he states that he cannot go through the marriage and he simply describes it as a mistake. This is what led Vivien to experience a range of emotions, including confusion, hurt and even shock. She is faced with a sudden and unexpected change in her relationship dynamic, and she is left with a lack of clarity and many questions answered regarding Dr Fox's decision.

2. Melancholia

In the novel '*Salvage the Bones*', the main character Esch experiences various emotions and struggles that can be associated with melancholia. Losing her mother at a young age leaves her feeling alone and without the support and guidance she needs, she feels a deep sense of grief and sadness. She struggles to find comfort and solace; memories of her mother bring her both joy and pain as she navigates through life without her. The day she lost her

mother she lost herself too. Her mother's absence creates a void within her, as she grapples with the reality of never being able to see her again, as it is shown in the novel:

“...But Mama, Mama always here see? I miss her so badly I have to swallow salt, imagine it running like lemon juice into the fresh cut that is my chest, feel it sting”(J. Ward, 2011. P174)

Esch's grief over the loss of her mother is a profound and haunting melancholia that permeates her every thought and action. It lingers in the corners of her mind, casting a shadow over her days and nights. The weight of her sorrow is palpable, weighing down her heart and soul. She yearns for her mother's presence, her comforting touch, and sound of her voice. The absence of these cherished moments leaves Esch with an emptiness that cannot be filled. Her grief becomes intertwined with her identity, a constant reminder of what she has lost. As an illustration Ward writes:

I want to say that I know her voice. I want to open my mouth and have her voice slide out of me like an impression, to speak Mama alive for him as I hear her. But I cannot. (J. Ward, 2011. P173)

She really attached to her mother, she cannot forget her or spend a second without thinking about her and the memories she had with her. According to Julia Kristeva melancholia is often associated with a profound attachment to an object or person that has been lost or inaccessible.

Esch's sadness immobilizes her at times, making it difficult for her to move forward and fully engaged with life. Her grief becomes a heavy burden, hindering her ability to experience joy and find meaning in her daily existence; she experiences a diminished interest in life and a loss of pleasure in activities she once enjoyed. For Esch losing a mother is also losing a source of unconditional love and emotional support, and the valuable advice and guidance she provided, the girl feels a deep longing for her mother's wisdom, knowing that she can no longer access it. The absence of her mother's advice can be particularly challenging as she

faces new experiences and decision in life. She feels unsure of how to navigate certain situations; for instance, her mother likely played a central role, she was one of the supportive figures who offered guidance, comfort, love, and safety in her life. After the death of her mother everything was changed As Ward wrote:

After Mama died, Daddy said, what are you crying for? Stop crying. Crying ain't going to change anything. We never stopped crying. We just did it quieter. We hid it. I learned how to cry so that almost no tears leaked out of my eyes, so that I swallowed the hot salty water of them and felt them running down my throat. This was the only thing that we could do. I swallow and squint through the tears, and I run. (J. Ward, 2011. P162)

Esch feels insecure and uncertain about the future, especially during the period of her pregnancy, she desires the presence of her mother for various reasons, and for example her mother's guidance and experience can provide reassurance and support as she navigates physical and emotional changes that come with pregnancy. Her mother can offer advice on topics like maternity clothes, baby items, prenatal care, childbirth, parenting, helping to alleviate any anxieties or uncertainties, and preparing for the arrival of the baby, providing encouragement and support. Additionally, the bond between a mother and daughter can be a source of comfort and emotional connection during this transformative time. Without her mother around, Esch lacks a direct female role model to guide her through the transition into womanhood, this absence leaves her feeling unsure about what it means to be a woman, she feels disconnected from the feminine aspects of her body and struggles to understand the changes she is going through. As the only girl in a family of boys, Esch adopted certain behaviours and characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity to fit in and be seen as an equal.

Esch goes through a different kind of emotional journey, she faces difficult circumstances and experiences a mix of emotions like fear, determination, and love, and melancholia in the specific sense described by Julia Kristeva. She contends that melancholia arises from the inability to fully separate from the lost object or person (Kristeva,1987). In the book she wrote in 1987, *Soleil Noir* or *Black Sun*, Kristeva says:

I shall call melancholia the institutional symptomatology of inhibition and a symbolia that becomes established now and then or chronically in a person, alternating more often than not with the so-called manic phase of exaltation. When the two phenomena, despondency and exhilaration, are of lesser intensity and frequency, it is possible to speak of neurotic depression.(Kristeva, 1987 p 9).

This quote defines melancholia which is when someone feels emotionally inhibited and disconnected, it can happen on and off or last for a long time, this feeling of melancholia alternates with a phase of intense excitement called the manic phase.

Additionally, another example of melancholia in this novel is Hurricane Katrina; it is a looming, destructive force that threatens the characters' lives and homes. It plays a central and powerful role, shaping their decision and actions as they prepare for and face the storm. It is like a dark cloud hanging over the characters, making them feel anxious and uncertain about what will happen next. The hurricane in the story brings them a sense of sadness, and impending doom; such as the loss of loved ones, poverty, and difficult life circumstances; it casts shadow over their lives and influences their emotions. It upends their sense of normalcy and security, leaving them feeling disoriented. The characters are well aware that Hurricane Katrina is coming. As an illustration, Ward writes: "If one of Daddy's drinking buddies had asked what he's doing tonight, he would've told them he's fixing up for the hurricane. It's

summer, and when it's summer, there's always a hurricane coming or leaving here.”(J. Ward, 2011. p8).

All the family experiences melancholia due to Hurricane Katrina, including Esch, being pregnant, becomes acutely aware of her vulnerability as the storm draws near. Her fear for the safety of her family, her unborn child, and herself. She is uncertain about how her family will survive and is especially worried about her young brother Junior. The hurricane amplifies Esch's grief for her mother, making her absence even more prominent, and the storm acts as a stark reminder of this loss. Esch describes the flooding and the challenges she faces during this time. We can see this through her words: “I kick extra hard, like I am running a race, and my head bobs above the water but the hand of the hurricane pushes it down, down again. Who will deliver me? And the hurricane says sssssssshhhhhhh” (J. Ward, 2011. P184).

In this quotation we understand how Esch struggles in the water, trying to stay afloat in the hurricane's powerful and indifferent grip, combined with her desperate plea for help, create a feeling of sadness and helplessness. The hurricane response “ssshh” adds to the overall sense of melancholy, emphasizing Esch's isolation and vulnerability in the face of nature's situations.

Surviving a catastrophic such as Hurricane Katrina can have enduring effects on individuals, Skeetah included; leading to profound feelings of fear and anxiety. The impending disaster and its potential consequences on his family and his beloved dog, China, weigh heavily on him, contributing the lasting impact of this trauma. There are moments when he feels helpless, unable to do much to change their circumstances. In addition to the storm, Skeetah's heart is heavy with sorrow as he witnesses the injuries inflicted upon China during the hurricane. Her suffering becomes his own, and he feels a deep sadness as he tries his best to alleviate her pain and provide her with the care she needs. It's a heartbreaking experience for him, as he grapples with the helplessness of seeing his beloved companion in

such agony. Skeetah makes significant sacrifices for China, even using money meant for his family to provide for her medical care and recovery. His emotional connection with her is evident in the tender moments when he speaks to her and worries about her well-being. However, it is in the heart-wrenching moments when Skeetah must make the agonizing decision to end China's suffering that his grief is most poignant.

Another character who goes through a tough time because of the hurricane is Daddy Claude, like the rest of his family; he endures both physical suffering due to the harsh conditions of the storm, and emotional, as he grapples with the challenges and losses brought about by the disaster. Furthermore, Claude is marked by a sense of missed opportunities and unresolved issues, which are recurring themes linked to sadness. His difficulties in connecting with his children and the strain in his relationships add to the overall melancholic atmosphere of the novel. He feels powerless as he is unable to offer the protection and security he desires for his family. Daddy often finds himself reminiscing about his late wife, Esch's mother, who tragically passed away while giving birth to Junior. His grief over his wife's death is deeply intertwined with his fear of losing his kids in the incoming disaster; this feeling helplessness makes his sorrow even stronger and more intense. Also, he is affected when he learns that his daughter is expecting a baby, he worries about her future and the difficulties she may encounter as a young, unmarried mother. He knows that raising a child alone without a stable partner can be incredibly challenging; he is concerned about the safety and health of Esch and her unborn child, he understands the potential risks the hurricane and its aftermath could bring to them. To deal with this emotional pain and numb his feeling, he relies on alcohol as a coping mechanism; it is his way of trying to find some relief from the overwhelming misery he experiences.

The analysis now turns its focus to Munro's selected short stories and its intricacies of human life experiences, following an examination of the manifestations of melancholia in

Jesmyn Ward's "*Salvage the Bones*". To begin, in "The eye" by Alice Munro, there is a sense of melancholia that permeates the story, similar to the concept explored by Julia Kristeva, themes of loss, loneliness; and the complexities of human emotions. The young girl Alice, after the birth of her little brother starts to feel neglected and overlooked by her mother due to the attention given to her brother. It explores the complex of emotions and jealousy, longing for attention. The girl experiences a sense of abandonment and melancholic yearning for her mother attention. For example she notices how her mother spends more time with the baby and how a baby sitter named Sadie is brought in to take care of him, this makes the girl feel unwanted and creates a sense of melancholy in her, and it is a relatable exploration of the complexities of siblings dynamic. One example of this when she observes her mother's focus on the new baby, and she had no time for her anymore, also, when the girl watches her mother with a mix of love and jealousy, her heart aching. We can see this through their conversation

Then, "you and I don't get so much time now we have the babies. They don't give us much time, do they?"

"But we do love them, don't we?"

Quickly I said yes. (A. Munro, 2012.p142).

These instances illustrate the depth of the girl's melancholic emotions, and the sadness she feels. We can draw connections to Julia Kristeva's concept of melancholia as it is written in the "Black Sun" which represents a state of depression and emptiness, which the girl embodies as she feels neglected by her mother, this sense of darkness and longing is reflected in the girl's observations and emotions throughout the story. Kristeva states that melancholia and depression are often used in similar ways, even though they have different meaning, she writes: "The term melancholia and depression refer to a composite that might be called melancholy/depressive, whose borders are fact blurred, and within which psychiatrists ascribe the concept of 'melancholia' to the illness that is irreversible on its own (that responds only to

the administration of antidepressants)". (Krestiva,1987 p10). Alice feels that she is no longer as important to her mother as she used to be, and the fear of being replaced or not being loved as much, which can result in feelings of sadness and frustration.

The girl's sadness comes from feeling ignored by her mom, and it gets worse when her babysitter, Sadie, passed away. "I looked straight into the coffin and saw Sadie" (A. Munro, 2012,p146).

She experiences a profound sense of loss; her emotions are a complex mix of grief, confusion and abandonment. Sadie held a special place in Alice's life, serving not only as a caregiver; she also provided love, support and understanding. It is like losing a source of comfort and connection, making the girl feel even sadder and lonelier. The death leaves her with emptiness and sorrow. Alice thinks about Sadie and remembers the times they spent together, the care and support she received, and the moments that they shared. This is well shown when she asserts: "Yet for a long time when I did think of her, I never questioned what I believed had been shown to me."(A. Munro, 2012.p147).

"Leaving Maverley" is another short story from Alice Munro's collection "Dear Life". In this story Julia Kristeva's concept of melancholia can be applied to the character of Ray Eliot the policeman who is responsible for escorting Leah back to her parent's house in the late evening. He serves as a guardian figure for her during her job. Ray Eliot undergoes a deep sense of loss following the death of his wife, Isabel, as she had been suffering from a severe illness. Alice writes: "She had changed from a very thin woman not to a child but to an ungainly and ill-assorted collection of bones, with a birdlike crest, ready to die every minute with the erratic shaping of her breath".(A. Munro, 2012.p50).

Ray Eliot's grief is rooted in the deep love and connection he shared with his wife, Isabel. The memories of their time together, the warmth of her presence, and the love they cherished haunt him constantly.

This loss leaves him in a state of profound sadness and emotional distress. His mourning is a heavy, haunting presence in his life. It casts a shadow over his every action and word, he navigates life as though carrying an insurmountable burden, with each day struggling to reconcile with the void left by his wife's passing. The memory of Isabel is a constant ache in his heart, and he finds solace in little more than fleeting moments when he can temporarily forget the overwhelming sorrow that engulfs him. The absence of his life partner leads him to a various emotional and psychological effects, including feelings of loneliness, depression, and isolation. Kristeva's concept suggests that melancholia can complicate one's sense of self by causing an individual to become entangled in their own emotional suffering. Ray's sense of self may be entangled with his memories of his wife. In her work Kristeva draws on this concept from psychoanalysis, which involves a deep and prolonged sadness or mourning for something or someone lost. She argues that the emotional state can lead to a blurring of boundaries between the self and the object of loss, making it difficult to distinguish where the self ends and the lost object begin. The blurring can result in a complex and ambiguous sense of self, as one's identity becomes intertwined with the pain of loss. In this way, Kristeva highlights how melancholia can be a challenging emotional experience that complicates one's understanding of their own identity(Kristeva,1987).

In quite moments of Ray Eliot's life, he clings to a fragile belief that his wife is not truly gone forever; and we can see this through this quotation:

They had been looking all over for him. Isabel was finally gone. They said "gone", as if she had got up and left. When someone had checked her about an hour ago, she had been the same as ever and now she was gone.(Munro,2012.p51).

The third short story we are going to look at is "Amundsen", and we will use Julia Kristeva's theory of melancholia to analyze it. The story follows Vivien's experiences, emotions, and the challenges she faces in both her profession and personal life, particularly in

her relationships with Dr. Fox. She is taken by surprise when Dr. Fox ends the relationship with no prior explanation or apparent reason. The breakup leaves her feeling isolated and alone, as she is emotionally separated from the person she had grown close to, intensifying her sense of solitude. Vivien's affection for the doctor is sincere and profound, and his abrupt rejection inflicts a severe emotional wound. The pain in her heart is tangible, it is as if a piece of her has been taken away, and she is left with an emptiness that is difficult to feel.

As Vivien prepares to leave Amundsen, a heavy sadness envelops her, for she knows this departure marks the final farewell to Dr. Fox; it is the realization that she will never see the person she deeply cared for again. Every memory created in Amundsen flashes before her. It is mourning for her, knowing that their paths are diverging, and this chapter in her life, with the person who means so much to her, has reached its end.

"I watch the streets. It's something like being driven to the place of execution. Not yet. A little while yet. Not yet I do hear his voice for the last time. Not yet". (Munro,2012,p37).

The quotation captures the mix of sadness, anticipation, and longing she is experiencing, repeating the phrase "Not yet" reveals that she is not ready to say a final goodbye for Dr. Fox, she is still hoping for one last chance to hear her voice, to have final conversation with him before their separation becomes permanent.

Vivien's ongoing attachment to Dr. Fox, even after their breakup, can be seen as an incorporation of the lost object into her sense of self, a key aspect of Krestiva's concept of melancholia, she explains that when a person experiences a significant loss such as the end of a close relationship, the memory of that person becomes deeply ingrained in their emotional and psychological world. It is not just a matter of recalling memories or thoughts; it is about how the essence of that person and the emotions attached to them become a part of the individual's inner self(Krestiva,1987). So, when Vivien carries the memory of Dr. Fox, it means that the feelings and emotional impact of their relationship remain a fundamental and

lasting aspect of who she is. This emotional attachment shapes her identity and continues to influence her thoughts, even after the physical presence of the person is gone.

As a conclusion, our exploration of characters like Esch, Skeetah, and Alice; has revealed how they experienced both Julia Kristeva's concepts of abjection and melancholia, due to the different emotional disturbances they have faced at various points in their lives and how these experiences contribute to the depth and complexity of their portrayals in the novel and the short stories.

Chapter Two: Marginalization and Resistance

This chapter will be a character analysis of people who were marginalized and how they responded to or opposed the limits imposed on them due to a variety of characteristics such as gender, class, color, and other social identities in Jesmyn Ward's "*Salvage the Bones*" (2011) and Alice Munro's selected short stories. Marginalization is the process through which some people or groups are driven to the margins or borders of society, where their experiences, viewpoints, and voices are reduced or even rendered invisible. It causes lack of representation, restricted access to opportunities and resources, and frequently results in an ongoing state of injustice and inequality. For oppressed people and communities to reclaim their power and fight toward a more just and equitable society, resistance is an essential strategy. It is a way to speak up, fight for rights, and ultimately work toward freedom from oppressive regimes. (<http://www.liberties.com>).

1. "Salvage the Bones"

To begin with Marginalization in the first novel "*Salvage the bones*", as we have read before Esch is a young black woman living in a poor part of Mississippi. She experiences many forms of marginalization, both within her community and in the larger societal context. Her marginalization is shaped by intersecting systems of oppression including racism, poverty, and sexism. Esch faces racism on a daily basis as a black girl. She is frequently excluded from mainstream society and forced to negotiate a harsh world. This exclusion is compounded by her poverty and gender, which limits her access to resources and opportunities. Since she is the only girl in a family of boys, Esch's voice is often drowned out by the male domination what makes her world isolated and savage. Throughout the novel, we notice that Esch's father and brothers do not take her opinions and desires in to consideration; she is often ignored and pushed aside. Because she is a woman and young, Esch faces

difficulties establishing her and being taken seriously, it is challenging for her to have her thoughts accepted and valued. For example when her brother Skeetah is focused on his dog China, he tends to dismiss Esch's opinions and concerns as shown in this conversation:

“Maybe you need to help her push”

“She don’t need no help pushing”(Ward, 2011. P7).

While reading the dialogue above, we understand that Skeetah ignored Esch’s suggestion; the girl’s voice is being overshadowed and over looked by the louder male voice. Here, we see how society tends to value and pay more attention to the viewpoints of men; being a woman means experiencing marginalization. In her book “*From Margin to Center*” (1984), bell hooks argues that women voices have been silenced and marginalized throughout history; she also emphasizes the importance of listening to woman’s voice and taking them seriously rather than dismissing them (Hooks,1984), what have leads her to create the feminist movement and calls to fight oppression: “being oppressed means the absence of choices” (hooks, 1984,p17). This quote highlights the idea that oppression is not just about being excluded from the mainstream of social life, but also about being denied the ability to take choices. It emphasizes the power dynamic between the oppressed and the oppressor, and the ways in which the absence of choices can be used as a tool of oppression. From the example mentioned before we can observe that Esch has faced gender oppression from her brother, this dynamic underscores the marginalization of Esch’s voice within her family.

In addition to this, Esch’s experiences with boys particularly Manny Skeetah’s friend highlight the power dynamics in her relationships. She struggles with the demands on her to live up to particular ideals of femininity and desire, which further weakens her agency. bell hooks argues that Women are the group most victimized by sexist oppression. (hooks,1984.p54).

Manny is initially in a sexual relationship with Esch, she loves him from afar but he does not return her affections. Despite the fact that he treats her poorly and dismisses her at every point, Esch's love for Manny is real and honest, as it is indicated in the first chapter of the novel: "But with Manny, it was different; he was so beautiful [...] Even though I knew all the other boys, I knew him and his body best; I loved him best". (J. Ward, 2011.P 17). According to Esch's words we observe that when she first meets Manny, she has different emotions that she does with other boys; she believes that she has given Manny her true heart, but sadly Manny takes advantage of her. Sexism for Bell Hooks is both discrimination based on gender and the attitudes, stereotypes and cultural elements that promote this discrimination, the belief that women are less capable than men in certain roles is a stereotype that contributes to gender discrimination (hooks 1984). In the case of Esch, Manny often talks to her in a condescending way because he considers that Esch is inferior to him and she does not worth attention. Esch's pregnancy increased her marginalization more than anything else; after Esch tells Manny that she is pregnant, he reacts negatively and dismisses her. Manny tells Esch that he doesn't want to hear about her pregnancy and she should take care of it herself. Even worse, he comments that being a mother weakens women and calls Esch a slut as we read: "you think they don't know you a slut".(Ward,2011.p161). Manny adds: "how you come to me saying something's mines when youeverybody in the Pit". (Ward.2011.p161).

This demonstrates Manny's ignorance to Esch's pregnancy and reflects the ways in which women are often socialized to prioritize men's desires and needs over their own. Esch's experiences force her to confront societal stereotypes about young women, particularly pregnant teenagers. Despite this, Esch is constantly required to conform to gender roles within her household. After her mother passes away, she assumes a significant role in their household, taking on care giving duties such as watching over her younger brother and helping with domestic chores, she even helps his father and brothers in male works ;"tell

daddy I don't know how to start the truck" (Ward, 2011.P 73). This quotation shows when Esch assists her father to start his truck even if this act is a man job. In the context of "*From Margin to Center*," hooks emphasize the importance of recognizing and valuing the experiences and contributions of marginalized individuals (hooks 1984). Esch's care giving responsibilities regardless her difficult situation can be seen as a form of labor that is often undervalued, but hooks would advocate for acknowledging and appreciating this labor as central to the family's well-being. Despite being the family's only girl, she receives no extra attention or acknowledgment for her efforts. Instead, her efforts are frequently viewed as part of her expected responsibilities as a female. These examples indicate how Esch's character is often ignored by the people around her, including her family and the boy she loves.

After delving into Esch's marginalized experience, we have to turn our attention to her incredible journey of resistance. Despite her conditions; poverty, pregnancy, and marginalization she did not give up by trying to survive and overcome the difficulties she faces in her daily life. According to bell hooks individuals are empowered by education to confront oppressive systems and bring about social change. It serves as a tool for achieving emancipation and developing critical consciousness, she asserts: "encouraging women to strive for education, to develop their intellects, should be a primary goal of feminist movement". (hooks.1984, P125).

The previous quote shows how education is viewed as a way for oppressed people to reclaim their voices and challenge dominant power structures. It turns into a tool for liberation, enabling people to escape from repressive institutions. In the case of the character Esch, because she comes from a marginalized community, her access to formal schooling is limited due to her family's poverty and her state in the community (black). She attends school, however it appears that her education is not a priority for her family, and she faces various challenges in this regard. Despite this situation, she is intellectually curious and frequently

reflects on her surroundings and considers her place in the world. As we have read in the novel, Esch engages in a self-education; she often turns to books, particularly Greek mythology to make sense of her own experiences and emotions. Regarding this Ward writes:

In every one of the Greek's mythology tales, there is this: a man chasing a woman chasing a woman, or a woman chasing man. There is never a meeting in the middle. There is only a body in a ditch and one person walking towards or away from it. (Ward.2011, P28).

Esch's connection to Greek mythology serves as a lens through which she interprets her life. Just as the Greek gods and heroes face immense challenges, she navigates her own trials and tribulations. The mythological references provide her with a sense of identity and purpose, helping her find meaning in the chaos of her life. Esch can't resist noticing parallels between Medea Myth and her own life throughout the novel, for instance when she and her brother Skeetah go on adventure together, Esch again reminds about her favorite myth. Esch says: "I will go to Sketaah like Medea went to her brother when they fled on their great adventure with Argonauts" (Ward, 2011.P87).Esch learns how to be a strong and independent woman through education, which she utilizes to regain her identity and find empowerment. She is able to face marginalization, establish her own agency, and advance her knowledge by using these myths as bell hooks states in a chapter named Educating Women: A feminist Agenda in her From Margin to center theory:"Women of color need to develop intellectually".(hooks,1984.p125). That is to say, because black women do not receive the same education as white ones, they must seek equality and be educated in the same manner in order to fight injustice, which is what Esch is attempting to achieve.

As Hurricane Katrina approaches, we see solidarity between Esch and her family as a powerful sort of resistance against the forces that attempt to destabilize and marginalize them. They do not passively await rescue or rely on external assistance in the face of approaching

tragedy; instead, they take preventative measures to ensure their safety and well-being despite their harsh environment. Solidarity emphasizes the significance of unity and collective action in opposing oppressive regimes by bringing disparate marginalized groups together and supporting one another. The characters face the Hurricane Katrina, which poses a significant threat to their lives and their marginalized community. They stand hand in hand, collaborate, and take many actions to fight off the storm. One of the biggest concerns when coping with the hurricane is finding a safe location to stay. Regarding this they started gathering the essential supplies like food, water, batteries to sustain them through the storm and after the aftermath. This is shown in the ninth chapter “Hurricane Eclipse” when Esch says:

I make Junior hold the nails in his shirt and stand next to Randall and me as we try to match board the size up the windows, drag them around the house, set them down where they will be nailed. Randall has the one hammer with a full handle we could find. It is my job to hold the wood in place at the bottom, at least as far as I can reach, while Randall drives the nails in. (Ward, 2011.p148).

This passage demonstrates collaborative efforts that the Batiste family makes; every member is contributing their skills and strengths, regardless of gender what shows sense of unity and support among the group, breaking down traditional gender stereotypes. bell hooks debates in a chapter titled “comrades in struggle” the need of black men and women working together to face oppression in their communities, she writes: “There is a special tie binding people together who struggle collectively for liberation. Black women and men have been united by such ties”. (hooks,1984.p80).

With those words, the feminist Bell Hooks is presenting the idea that when a group of individuals, particularly black men and women, work together to achieve liberation or independence from oppression, they develop a unique and powerful relationship(hooks,1984). This relationship is distinguished by a shared sense of purpose, a common

knowledge of their difficulties, and a collaborative commitment to overcome the obstacles they encounter. It is the case of the characters in the novel “*Salvage the Bones*”, despite their individual hardship and differences unite with a shared determination to resist the devastating impact of hurricane Katrina. Even if they suffer from poverty and racism, and lack of materials but they are determined to survive. Randall, Esch’s brother asks her to escape to the white people’s house to bring supplies because their own resources and preparations are not sufficient to survive the force of the storm. This act shows the extreme poverty that Esch and his family live in everyday life, they risked themselves to steal food and medicines from the white’s house.

Ward writes: “we are going to the white people’s house”.

“Who?”

“You and me”

“For what?”

“We need supplies”(Ward,2011.p161).

This decision to escape to the white people’s house speaks to their resilience and determination in the face of poverty and adversity. It showcases their agency and their refusal to be defined solely by their economic circumstances, emphasizing their capacity to resist and work together to find ways to preserve even in the most challenging situations.

2. Alice Munro’s “ Boys and Girls”

Alice Munro examines the many gender roles imposed to women by a male-dominated patriarchal society. Each narrative seems to have a similar theme that is connected to women's struggles for human freedom and equality. “*Boys and Girls*” is a short story which deals with themes of gender roles, identity and the expectations placed on young girls. The narrator is an

anonymous young girl who lives with her family that values boys more highly. Laird is her brother, who their father prefers because he is a man and will someday take over the property of the fox farm, while the narrator is expected to help with housework; she is discouraged from participating in more physically taxing farm work. Because of her gender, the narrator's experience as a young girl on a fox farm places her at conflict with her family and society, she faces marginalization in her daily life. She is given female household obligations, whereas her brother Laird is given manlier farm tasks. This marginalization reinforced by the favoritism shown toward her brother, who is given more freedom and opportunities simply because he is a boy, this situation shows the narrator in the margins while her father and brother in the center.

bell hooks in her theory of "*From Margin To Center*" argues that in patriarchal society, women in general often find themselves on the margins, their voices and experiences dismissed or overshadowed by dominant male narratives. This is the narrator's case in the story of "*Boys and Girls*", since she is raised in a patriarchal society where women are seen inferior to men, she finds herself dominated by her father and brother even if she is a young girl, for her family and society in general; being a girl means to be dismissed and devalued, this is well shown where her father tells: "wait till Laird gets a little bigger, then you'll have a real help". (Munro,1968.p115). From the father's words, we can understand that he is implying that Laird will be more capable of providing assistance in the future. It also suggests that the brother's value and usefulness are prioritized over her sister what reinforce her marginality as a girl, this indicates that the father adheres to traditional gender roles and does not see her daughter as capable of doing the same work as his son. At the same page the narrator's mother answer: "And then I use her more in the house" (Munro,2012. p115). The mother's answer shows that the narrator's value lies in her ability to fulfill traditional domestic roles, further marginalizing her and limiting her opportunities for growth and

independence. Here we deduce that women were taught to be powerless; the narrator's mother instead of helping her to be liberated from male domination, she invites her to do house tasks and accept men oppression.

From the beginning of the story we see the protagonist and her mother doing female work at home like cooking and cleaning, and they are even forbidden to go to the farm where the father works, this demonstrates that the males have to be strong and the provider of the family, whereas females have to be obedient and submissive as it is shown in the story: "It was an odd thing to see my mother down the barn. She did not often come out of the house unless it was to do something- hang out the wash or dig potatoes in the garden" (Munro, 1968. P115). This sentence highlights the narrator's observation of her mother unusual behavior, as she rarely leaves the house unless for specific tasks. It can be seen as a reflection of marginality and oppression experienced with by the narrator and her mother. The limited roles and expectations placed on women in this society confine them to domestic duties, restricting their freedom and agency. The mother's presence in the barn, which is traditionally seen as a male dominated space, challenges these gender norms and hints at the desire for more autonomy and involvement in activities beyond the house hold. This indicates that the father, who represents the head of the family, is obeyed by both the mother and the daughter. In a chapter titled *Feminism: A movement To End Sexist Oppression*, bell hooks writes: "which men do women want to be equal to" (hooks,1984.p29), that is to say men are also oppressed and exploited just like women but they exercise their authority towards women because they already have the idea that women are weak and they are made to obey them.

Another instance of marginalization is that the narrator do not have an intense connection with his father, there is no a close relationship between them. This is demonstrated by the description of the father by the protagonist in which she says that she and her father do not talk too much unless about job what makes her in a marginalized position "my father did

not talk to me unless it was about job we were doing [...] whatever thoughts and stories my father had were private, and I was shy of him and would never ask questions". (Munro,1968,p114). The absence of communication between the father and daughter puts him distant and inflexible, and also makes the girl feels more marginalized, she receives no attention from him; he dismisses her as " only a girl" when she expresses her feelings about the butchering of animals. This suggests that her opinions and feelings are not important. In contrast to Laird the narrator's brother, he becomes more and more significant as he grows up because he will follow his father steps someday and also because he is a boy. Laird is permitted to participate in activities like branding cattle which are critical to the family's survival and are historically thought to be the domain of males. The participation of the son in such duties strengthens his sense of belonging and value within the family and leads to treat the protagonist differently from her brother. Furthermore, by not assigning the narrator with a specific name the author effectively denies her a distinct individual identity. This decision emphasizes how unexceptional her father views her to be; this anonymity transcends the familial relationship and refers to broader cultural attitudes toward women in a patriarchal environment. Without a specific identity, the protagonist is not perceived as having a unique set of desires, aspirations and capabilities; this increases her sense of marginality and ignorance, in this context bell hooks argues that all sorts of oppression begins at home what helped to create a war between the sexes (hooks,1984.p45)and it is the narrator's case at home, she faces conflicts with her father and brother because of this domination.

Overall, the daughter's anonymous identity, her position as a girl and all the examples mentioned before serve as powerful symbols of her marginalization, emphasizing her lack of agency and individuality within the family simply because of her gender. Despite this imposed marginality of the narrator throughout the story, she tries to overcome and face the

oppression she experiences with her family. We see elements portrayed through the narrator's actions and thoughts, where she resists and challenges the prescribed roles and norms.

In her theory "*From Margin To Center*", bell hooks emphasizes the importance of centering the experiences and perspectives of marginalized individuals, such as women, and challenging the dominant power structures that perpetuate inequality (hooks,1984p 40). By refusing to conform and desiring to engage in activities traditionally reserved for men, she challenges the center, which is the patriarchal system that enforces these gender roles. The narrator of "*Boys and Girls*", She is raised in a patriarchal environment where women are treated like objects and are expected to be servants; She demonstrates moments of resistance against dominant gender norms and expectations.

As we have read in the story, the narrator dislikes being called a girl and would rather be connected to her father and brother's careers. Being labeled as a girl implies being associated with traditional feminine traits like passivity and dependency, therefore the narrator rejects this position because she doesn't want to be seen as weak or in need of protection. This thinking is a form of resistance, she hates doing house work and she tries to learn about the masculine tasks as it is indicated in the story when the narrator talks about her mother: "she was plotting now to get me to stay in the house more, although she knew I hated it (because she knew I hated it) and keep me from working for my father".(Munro,1968.P116). This quotation indicates that the narrator hates being at home but her mother wants to confine her and private her to assist in male tasks, this situation is influenced by a dominant father and traditional gender roles. In this case, the young girl's desires to work outside the house go against the traditional expectations imposed by her father.

By wanting to pursue her own aspirations she is resisting the societal norms that restrict her independence, and also seeking to shift the focus and center her own needs and aspirations, challenging the dominant power dynamics that place her on the margins.

Another example of resistance in this story "*Boys and Girls*" is the narrator's attraction to physically taxing and traditionally masculine tasks is indicative of her resistance to the unfair treatment of boys and girls. She questions why she should be confined to her home while her brother Laird is allowed greater freedom to work outside the home. Moreover, the protagonist challenges the expectations that have been placed on her; she is uncomfortable with the supposed duties of being a girl. The protagonist is expected help her mother in house tasks like other females but instead she escapes and rejects the idea that women are only meant to be at home, as we have seen in the story in several times when her mother talks: "I just get my back turned and she runs off. It's not like I had a girl in the family at all". (Munro,1968. P116).

From the quote mentioned above, we understand that the narrator does not feel responsible for housework and attempts to avoid it at every opportunity. As a result, she does not conform to the expectations of a female at that time. In addition to this the narrator does not fit the stereotypical image of a woman in patriarchal community as she becomes confused by her grandmother's approach to giving advice on how to act as a girl, her grandmother advises her how girls should behave and how they should sit down, but the protagonist has a different point of view and demonstrates rebellious behavior, this is well shown in the following quotation: "I continued to slam the doors and sit as awkwardly as possible, thinking that by such measures I kept myself free" (Munro,1968.p 118-119). The narrator's journey of resistance continues all over the story, her determination to get freedom and overcome the barriers of patriarchy lets her to do many acts even if she knows that her voice is not taken into consideration. The girl's rejection of domesticity is a central aspect of her resistance

against prescribed gender roles. It represents her desire for autonomy, freedom, and the ability to define her outside the confines of traditional femininity. The concepts of resistance in this story "*Boys and Girls*" underscore the narrator's journey to assert her own identity in a society that expects her to conform.

Overall, the story aligns to bell hooks' "*From Margin to Center*" theory, this expression shows that women can go ahead from oppression to liberation, for this the narrator seeks recognition and value for her distinctive agency beyond current norms. Finally, her path is a remarkable sacrifice to the strength required to overcome the limits imposed by gendered norms, stressing the significance of centering marginalized view.

V. General Conclusion

The intersection of feminism and psychology offers a powerful lens through which we can examine the intricate tapestry of human emotions and societal dynamics reflected in literature and art. Through the works of Julia Kristeva, we have delved into the profound concepts of "Abjection" and "Melancholia," revealing how they are deeply ingrained in our collective human experience. These notions serve as touchstones, allowing us to navigate the complexities of self-worth and acceptance, particularly in the context of gendered experiences and power dynamics. bell hooks' seminal theory, *"From Margin To Center"*, has shed light on the transformational power of art and literature in raising the voices of those who are frequently marginalized in society.

We have seen strong stories of determination and resilience through the lenses of marginalization and resistance, which have challenged prevailing narratives and motivated us to address structural injustices. In our exploration of Jesmyn Ward's *"Salvage The Bones"* and Alice Munro's selected short stories we have witnessed the embodiment of these theoretical frameworks. The characters and their experiences serve as moving illustrations of the complexities of human existence, provoking us to consider the larger societal factors that influence their identities. It is clear from connecting all the parts of this study together that literature and the arts are still essential mediums for addressing and comprehending the many facets of the human experience. Hooks' reflections of the voices of those without opportunities serve as an urgent signal to us of how important our social structures and narratives must be inclusive and equitable.

Through the adoption of the perspectives provided by psychoanalysis and feminism, we set out on a path towards a world that is just and compassionate. Every narrative, whether in literature or art, has a unique point of view, providing light into the characters' and, by extension, the author's experiences and feelings. These stories, gathered from a variety of

origins and circumstances, offer vital insights into the human condition. We get a deeper knowledge of the complexity and details that define people's lives by immersing ourselves in these narratives. Interacting with a wide range of stories enables us to live in other people's shoes, view the world from their viewpoints, and feel their pleasures, sadness, and victories. By developing empathy, it creates a deep connection to our common humanity. Through these stories, we are exposed to the rich fabric of human existence and the diverse ways in which individuals deal with life's joys and hardships.

Narratives offer a special ability to transcend social and cultural barriers, serving as links between people from different backgrounds. The rich tapestry of stories offers us deep insights into the wide range of human experiences, encouraging empathy and understanding. These stories also act as catalysts for constructive change, starting discussions and building the route for a society that is more inclusive and peaceful. Let us continue to engage with many tales, recognizing the numerous ways in which they expand our knowledge of the human experience. May we remember their ability to bridge barriers, inspire good change, and eventually contribute to the growth of knowledge and a more inclusive, peaceful society.

Through out our study of the two literary works of Jesmyn's Ward "*Salvage The Bones*" (2011) and Alice's Munro selected short stories from "*Dear Life Collection*" (2012) and "*The dance of the Happy Shades*" collection (1968) by using Julia Krestiva's concepts of abjection and melancholia and bell hooks theory of "*From Margin To Center*" theory, we have discovered more fascinating issues and topics that deserve to be studied. It remains our belief that other students can conduct more research on both works and examine other subjects such as identity and women representation in society or social justice and activism.

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