

FEMALE PHENOMENA IN PETER ROBINSON'S *PAST REASON HATED*

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Abstracts

Canadian crime fiction writer Peter Robinson is the writer of the new era. He is popular for his prevalent and present-day novel writing style. His Inspector Banks series is renowned over the world. He is famous for his well-crafted and multi-layered plot. His art of characterization is noteworthy. He has expertise in minute observations and proficiency in detailing. Secondly, as a writer of the genre Crime Fiction, his narration of the female gender in his writing is also of modern type. As per unwritten but strong and long-standing law of patriarchal society female gender is secondary, at present also. The present study explores the female phenomenon reflected in Peter Robinson's novel Past Reason Hated .

Key words: Police procedural, Detective, Lesbianism, Feminism, Domestic Violence.

Past Reason Hated is the fifth novel in the Inspector Banks series of novels written by Peter Robinson. This novel has won the Arthur Ellis Award for literature in 1991. The main theme of the novel is a murder mystery of a young woman. In the present novel, the writer does not directly comment or criticize the new lifestyle of the young generation of Homosexuality, Lesbianism but put forth problems regarding the same, in such a way that readers start thinking about it seriously.

As per Collins online dictionary, Domestic Violence means violence committed by one member of a family or household against another. Domestic violence is now generally defined broadly to include all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that may be done by an intimate partner or a family member. In the present novel, various female characters have confronted Domestic Violence at some point of time in their lives.

The profound and gradual consideration of all major female characters narrated in the novel directs readers to determine that the novel consists of the notion of male domination and subjugation of females in society. As per modern education, constitution and laws women have their rights but the execution of those civil rights is coarse.

Caroline Hartley

In the present novel, Caroline Hartley gets assassinated in her house. She was living with her Lesbian mate Veronica Shildon. 'Veronica and Caroline were respectable, middle-

class, conservative lesbians; they didn't cruise the gay bars or try to lure innocent schoolgirls back to the house for orgies, like the lesbians one read about in lurid tabloids.'(199)

The information provided by the writer regarding Caroline and Veronica provides insight about the pair and also covertly indicates that there are certain lesbians exist in our human realm who brazenly abuse little girls for their vicious lust, which is disgusting.

Robinson has created the character of Caroline with a very bizarre history. Caroline Hartley left her family at the age of sixteen and relocated to London. There she worked in a bar to run her livelihood. During her London stay she had an affair with Colm Grey and very soon she had a baby from him. Somehow, in a short period, her interest and love got vanished and she left Grey and her baby also. She never felt the significance of family, attachment towards it, obligation or any empathy. After the separation from family, she developed her lesbianism under the impact of Ruth Dunne. Ruth is a lesbian and popular as a poetess in the locality.

In reality, Caroline's indifferent attitude towards family is the result of her own past experiences. Her father never paid sincere attention, fatherly affection and carefulness towards her. Quite the reverse, he used his offspring to cater to his thirst. This is the illustration of domestic violence which is very terrible and heart-rending. Her father started exploiting his daughter as his stimulating partner when she was only eight years old. Hence it resulted in Caroline's antipathy towards relationships and family ties. As well as the whole wickedest experiences directed her to loathe the whole male kind. The childhood incident got engraved very deeply on Caroline's mind, as mentioned by Dr. Ursula Kelly in the novel. Dr. Kelly is not a medicinal doctor, but an analyst, predominantly using Jungian methods to cure her patients. Although Caroline was young still she was struggling with her juvenile molestation experience. To overcome this foulest crack in life Caroline took assistance from Dr. Kelly. In the precise words of Dr. Ursula Kelly :

‘The things Caroline and I worked on were childhood traumas, often nebulous in the extreme.’(142)

The molestation incident headed her to lose her all self-confidence and self-esteem. She got disheartened and felt to commit suicide. In a short time, she lost her love for her younger brother and mother too. This emotional uproar in the family made Caroline skeptic regarding social norms, family and marriage bonds.

Her emission from her own family, again a departure from her lover Colm Grey and her child demonstrates her impetuous and cynic nature. Further, she developed lesbianism and during this chapter of life also, she kept changing her life partner for instance- Ruth Dunne, Nancy Wood, and finally Veronica. Caroline is the prey of psychological unpleasant persona which made her an illustration of extreme emotional commotion present in the human mind and race. Her skeptic temperament ran her to mock feelings of her director James Conran which finally directed her to her tragic end.

James Conran, Caroline's director tried to dominate and molest her. On the account of a male boss, he endeavored to receive special favours from her. As a dominating male supervisor and erotic male persona, Conran attempted to make use of other female participants of his drama team. Against Caroline's desire, he tries to make love with her. 'He didn't know she was gay. Given his masculine pride and confidence, he probably assumed that she would come around eventually; it was just a matter of time and persistence.'(343) The disgraced denial of Conran by Caroline resulted in her assassination.

The last statement is certainly frustrating. Such things have become the reality of society. We can demand to stamp it out but we cannot find any concrete remedy.

DCI Banks interrogates Dr. Ursula Kelly regarding Caroline's case. The doctor informs him that she 'had been seeing Caroline for just over three years.' (140). Further, she adds that 'she came because she was unhappy and she felt her unhappiness was preventing her from living fully. That is why people come to me.'(141)

The further explanation provided by Dr. Ursula Kelly is significant:

'... If the patient makes the connections, they cut so much deeper. The people who consult me generally feel that they are living empty lives, living illusions if you like. They are aware of what potential they have; they know that life should mean more than it does to them; they know that they are capable of achieving, of feeling more. But they are emotionally numb. So they come for analysis. I'm not a psychiatrist. I don't prescribe drugs. I don't treat schizophrenics or psychotics. I treat people you would perceive as perfectly normal, on the outside.'(141)

During the same conversation, later on, she stated that:

'I deal with a world of shadows, of dreams and nightmares, signs and symbols. What my patients feel is the only reality we have to work with...' (144)

The information provided by the doctor reveals that people are struggling with their inner, intangible, buried dreams and nervousness. Those are converting them into abnormal patients. Overtly, they appear normal and healthy for everyone. They will regularly accomplish their liabilities. But at the core part of the mind and internal life, they need a lot of consideration, care, and support. In a true sense, they are struggling hard and going deep into their abstract life. This life is full of mental uncertainties, dark visions, and lifeless worries. At times these people actually, patients need months and at times years to get on with life in a normal way. Veronica and Caroline both were such kinds of sufferers. Being a female part of the family and society already they were suffering a lot, besides this mental oppression was also there to harass them.

Concerning the homicide case of Caroline DCI Banks pays a visit to TuffyTelfer, an old-fashioned British gangster. This person is created in the novel to add a small chapter of organized crime, and to ponder on the problem of prostitution. He has various businesses and his one business is of prostitution. He was making young girls act as a prostitute. Utilizing

girls to earn money is a wicked business; in reality, it is a sin, not a business at all as per social norms and law. Caroline was working for him during his stay in London.

DCI Banks is demonstrative of the goodness of mankind. About the whole circumstances Banks reveals his opinions in the following words to Veronica:

'It'd just spring up somewhere else, wouldn't it? That's what I mean about the spirit. Every big city has its vice area: the Red Light district in Amsterdam, the Reeperbahn, Times Square, the Tenderloin, the Yonge Street strip in Toronto. . . They're all much the same except for what local laws do and don't allow. Prostitution is legal in Amsterdam, for example, and they even have licensed brothels in part of Nevada. Then there's Las Vegas and Atlantic City for gambling. You can't really stamp it out. For better or for worse, it seems to be part of the human condition. I admire its energy, its vitality, but I despise what it does to people. I recognize its humour, too. In my job, you get to see the funny side from time to time. Maybe it actually makes policing easier, so much vice concentrated in one small area. We can keep closer tabs on it. But we'll never stamp it out.'(258)

The picture portrayed in the novel by the writer showcase that though there is civilized society present under the governance of law and order in today's world, such erroneous people do exist. They stay alive among ordinary people in a fine manner. Also, they possess a good portion of wealth and subsequent power. They do get socialize with sophisticated strata of the society. The weirdest thing is that the society, the law and order department are visibly aware of the presence of such individuals around them but still can't take proper actions against them. They cannot arrest them and punish them as per rulebooks and the rule remains true in books only. The small episode of Tuffy Telfer is one more example of male domination. The remark made by Tuffy '...These punters are constantly demanding fresh meat. See the same dance twice they think they've been had...' (269), indicates that for the male sex, female sex is nothing more than meat. As if females are there just to entertain them and cater to their physical hunger.

Caroline's murder mystery opens the main story of the novel. Her character is shaded with mystery. In her case, her father is the real offender. It is shown how inhuman father seduces his daughter. He is the oppressor of his wife and daughter also. Due to her father Caroline, finally decided to split from family. To support her life she started working as a dancer in a red-light area. Her job profile indicates that how male sex has subjugated female sex. The demanding males are compelling females to work as exotic dancers, waitresses and sex workers to cater to their wicked lust. Whatever way she chose, whatever situation aroused in her life Caroline tried her best to overcome the problem. She was the fighter but became the prey of male authority.

Veronica Shildon

Veronica was married to Claude Ivers who is a recognized artist and skilled pianist. In the company of Caroline, Veronica started losing love and faith in her spouse. Under the influence of Caroline, Veronica broke her marriage with Claude and started leading her life with her new companion Caroline. Veronica was frustrated with deadly, childless marital life with Claude. Hence Veronica got easily carried away with Caroline. In this way, Caroline became the reason to break the wedlock of Veronica and Claude.

The present novel possesses few pages regarding class consciousness. The conservative class consciousness finally becomes the oppressor of womankind. The case of Veronica is the specimen of this problem. She reveals her views and releases her inner feelings to DCI Banks in the following words:

‘Solid, suburban, upper middle class. Very repressed. Utterly cold. We never spoke about feelings and nobody told me about the facts of life. My mother was well bred, very Victorian, and my father was kind and gentle but rather distant, aloof. And he was away a lot. I never had much contact with boys while I was growing up. I went to convent school, and even at university I didn't mix very much. I was in all-girls residence and I tented to stay at home and study a lot. I was shy. Men frightened me with their deep voices and their aggressive mannerisms. I don't know why. ..’(229)

Veronica has a shy and timid temperament. Before the wedding, she never had any sort of relationship with boys or men. She confesses that, ‘...I was reclusive, frightened as a mouse.’(229) Her diffident persona was the result of typical conservative class consciousness as her mother's Victorian philosophy and upbringing made her submissive. Secondly, after her marriage, her diffident persona received more nourishments as her husband made her timider. They were together for fifteen years but this long period was unable to make them happy couples. She was fearful to utter a word of her choice. She was thinking that her views will result in disagreement with her spouse. On the contrary, Claude was enjoying his music and friends. He was a successful musician but he was not a successful life partner and family man. As mentioned by Veronica, ‘Claude is a great artist. But great artists make lousy husbands.’(230).

The more shocking thing was that without the consent of his wife he had a vasectomy. He always felt children will hamper his harmonious musical world. Music and career were his priorities and not his wife or family life. He never displayed any sort of affinity towards his nuptial life. These experiences made Veronica conclude that:

‘...But at the same time I seem to be saying we'd all be better off without any feelings or any other attachments. I want it both ways, don't I?’(230)

Veronica's personal life makes us think that the class system has given birth to hollow families during the past Victorian era. As a result, we have detached the younger generation and the timorous female gender. This burdened generation and womankind doesn't have any

emission to reveal their sentiments and stress. Veronica is a victim of conservative class consciousness in the present novel; she is the prey of arid middle-class conservatism. The past story of her life made her frighten about men and the whole phenomena. As she informs to DCI Banks:

‘... but I certainly don't hate men. I suppose I fear them somewhat, like Caroline, but perhaps not as much. They threaten me, in a way, but I have no trouble dealing with them in the course of business. Mostly they confuse me. I certainly have no desire ever to live with one again.’ (113)

When Veronica informs about her marital life and relations to DCI Banks she quotes:

‘... I was a housewife. I had not outside job. I suppose I cleaned and cooked and watched daytime television in a kind of trance. Then there was the Valium, of course.’(229)

She also adds:

‘We were together for fifteen years. I never complained. I never took an interest in life outside his circle of friends and acquaintances. I had no passions of my own. I don't blame Claude for that. He had his own life, and music was more important to him even than marriage...’ (229)

These mentioned sentences are not only connected to only Veronica but also to other females of that era. Veronica is just an example to showcase the fearful women present in society. Such kind of females becomes the victim of a husband like Claude Ivers. He dominated his wife's life. This supremacy made his wife helpless, timid and lonely. As a result, his wife ‘was living like a zombie, denying everything that counts ...’ (226).

Veronica revealed her experience in the following words:

‘...Somehow I just felt completely stifled by his existence. That's the only way I can put it. Like it didn't matter what I thought or felt or did because he was the one our lives revolved around. I depended on him for everything, even for my tastes in music and books. I was suffocated by his presence. Anything I did would have been significant besides what he did. He was the great Claude Ivers, after all, always the teacher, the master. One dismissive comment from him on anything that mattered to me and I was reduced to silence, or tears, so I learned not to let things matter. I was the great man's wife, not a person in my own right.’ (227)

Veronica discloses that :

‘he was far too wrapped up in his work to notice me. And I was dying, drying up inside.’(227)

....

‘... Time passed and I became so miserable I had to do something or I was frightened I would try to kill myself.’(228)

The character of Veronica is created to reveal the effects of class conservativeness and male-dominated society. Veronica is shown as a typical example of female subjugation and male domination. Previously women were facing mental and physical torture from other family members. Nowadays the humiliation is not physical but mental and this mental torture is the bigger problem. This is more hazardous because physical injuries are visible and one can consult a doctor to cure them but the mental torture cannot get detected easily and hence it cannot get proper treatment also. These things are hidden and need more hard work and support to deal with them. The whole recovery process is time-consuming besides it demands a lot of energy as well as efforts.

After the sad demise of Caroline, Veronica was alone. There was no one in the world for her to be with and rely on. But then again Veronica was firm about her not going back to her husband. She feels that he wants her back but then also she is not ready for the reunion. Her strong decision indicates that she got harassed with her husband previously. She does not want to face similar experiences once again in her life. She reveals her firm decision to Banks, 'No, whatever the future holds for me, it's certainly not more of my miserable mistake of a past.'(234)

In Veronica's case also Dr. Ursula Kelly's role is significant. Veronica and Caroline both were her regular patients. It displays that both ladies are not psychologically fit. They were mentally pressurized in their lives. Indefinite nervousness, anxiety, agitation were hampering their minds and life. Caroline Hartley's female companion Veronica is also an example of female subjugation. In Veronica's case, the family acts as the persecutor. Veronica's husband Claude Ivers completes her suppression. Veronica is young and full of potentiality. But her strength never gets exposed and utilized. She 'had tried to face some difficult truths and start a new life.'(397) Likewise, Caroline, Veronica is also shown as a fighter. She was timid at first, but finally, her strong nature comes forward. Though Claude is a successful, rich and popular artist, still he doesn't have any rights to control his wife like a puppet.

This situation is the product of the new modern lifestyle of mankind. Both females left their respective life companions. They relocated together for a better life. But the truth is that they are unhappy. They require psychiatric supervision. The writer has presented characters in the novel in duet; they are in love relationship but then they are underprivileged regarding true love, support, and care.

The modern lifestyle of the modern era has given birth to a strong urge to utter freedom. This freedom may result in chaos. Every character in the novel has decided to make his or her life better but none can reach the destination of true love and happiness. As a result, no one is seen in relishing their lives. Though the period in the novel is of festivity, it is Christmas Eve, still, murder happens, revolving everything and everyone more sad and sullen.

Ruth Dunne

The character named Ruth is shown as a lesbian person and a poetess in the novel. Likewise, Veronica and Caroline, she was also disinterested in heterosexual relationships. It was Ruth who introduced lesbianism to Caroline and Caroline to Veronica.

Regarding Caroline's case, DCI Banks interrogates her at her place. The dialogues between them not only reveal Caroline's history and personality but also reveal the inhuman male domination over women kind.

When DCI Banks cross-examines Ruth about Caroline, she informed that Caroline worked as an exotic dancer in London. She was doing peep shows; turning tricks etc. The information provided by Ruth is the bitter truth. Such most horrible things happen around us. As Ruth asserts:

‘A lot of men around that scene have a taste for fourteen – or fifteen-year-olds, or even younger, and Caroline could fulfill that fantasy when she was eighteen.’ (247)

The statement indicates the inhuman qualities of the male sex. Surely female subjugation in the wicked business of prostitution is a punishable offense. Secondly, the malpractice of younger girls is a hanging crime.

Ruth Dunne is a recognized poet and independent woman. Ruth discloses her views about Caroline, women, and lesbianism to DCI Banks in the following words:

‘... Women don't suddenly, quote, turn into lesbians, unquote. They discover that's what they are, what they always were but were afraid to admit because there was too much working against them – social morality, male domination, you name it.’ (249)

As per Ruth there are many females present in our society and facing similar problems. The trick is that not every one of them understands how to tackle it. Regarding Caroline she responded DCI Banks in the following way:

‘...I seduced her. It didn't take her long to figure out that she loathed and feared sex with men. The only difficult thing was overcoming the taboos and learning how to respond to a woman's body, a woman's way of making love...’ (250)

According to Ruth, it is not required to find satisfaction only in a heterosexual relationship. There are different ways. Her manner of thinking is new-fangled. Ruth is also shown as a victim of male domination. The interview session held by DCI Banks with Ruth is an example to prove that society is male-dominated until today.

In Ruth Dunne's episode, readers can observe her distaste and fear of male sex. Though the exact reason is not given by the writer, readers can probe that some bad experiences must have made Ruth dislike male sex. She does not require any male support and love as she is independent.

Patsy Janowski

Patsy Janowski, Claude's girlfriend is always seen under mental pressure. Patsy is grabbed by the feeling of uncertainty and instability. She has felt that maybe one day Claude will break up with her to get his wife.

To receive Claude's love and care Patsy tries to fulfill his desires. She is keen to accomplish her responsibilities towards Claude. But the feeling of insecurity is not present in Claude as if male sex is not bound and is not need of any love and relation.

Patsy's conversation held with DCI Banks clearly shows her anxiety. 'Yes. He still loves her, there's no doubt about that...'(175) She admitted that she was 'checking up on him'(174), on the night of December the twenty-second when Caroline got slaughtered.

Patsy Janowski is in doubt and fear that she will be deserted by her lover Claude. She is young and has good potential to lead her life successfully. But again she failed to do that. She got tangled in a relationship with Claude. He is always happily engrossed in his music, no matter who is with him as his companion or a life partner. With Veronica, he was content in his musical life and now with Patsy also he is equally content. However, both female partners are not fully happy and satisfied with him. Patsy is doubtful about her relationship with Claude but she is not at all meek hence she tries to keep track of him.

Brenda Meers

Brenda Meers is not directly presented to the readers by the writer. Her references are made with the character of Reggie Becker. This character is created in the present novel by the writer to show the malicious nature of mankind. With few pages regarding this character, Robinson has also given a pathetic picture of women. Reggie is shown as a pimp who tries to dominate girls for his monetary profits.

His nasty temperament made his life end by the hands of young Brenda. By giving the reference of Brenda writer has pinpointed the issue of prostitution and female harassment.

The short story of Reggie is narrated by the writer as:

The stabbing of Reggie Becker was also as clear cut as could be. The killer, a seventeen-year-old prostitute called Brenda Meers, had stabbed Becker five times in broad daylight on Greek Street. At least two of the wounds had nicked major arteries and he had bled to death before the ambulance got there. Eyewitnesses abounded, though fewer came forward later than were present at the time. When asked why she had done it, Brenda Meers said it was because Reggie was trying to make her go with a man who wanted her to drink his urine and eat his feces. She had been with him before and didn't think she could stand it again. She had begged Reggie all morning not to make her go, but he wouldn't relent, so she walked into Woolworth's, bought a cheap sheath knife and stabbed him. As far as the police were concerned, Reggie Becker

was no great loss, and Brenda would at least get the benefit of psychiatric counseling. (281)

Reggie Becker was involved in the bad business of prostitution and he was treating a young girl as a prostitute. He was forcing Brenda to follow inhuman orders placed by some wicked customers. The force and pressure placed by him on Brenda suddenly got exposed in the form of violence. This abrupt explosion of anger and violence resulted in Reggie Becker's death.

The character of Brenda Meers is the total loss of womankind, complete despair and failure. Her character is the instance of inhumanity present in the human race. But, one needs to appreciate Brenda for her courageous nature and strong will power. She was firm not to follow Reggie's orders. Her strong will power demonstrates her well-founded thinking ability. Reggie Becker's episode indicates that merciless male domination will not get tolerated. If the domination reaches its high pick turmoil may outburst. Though Brenda picked up the manner of violence and murders Reggie Becker, readers feel sympathy for her.

Susan Gay

The only female character as a police officer narrated and highlighted in the present novel is of Officer Susan Gay. PC Susan Gay accomplishes promotion and she works as DC at present. Her second day at work as a Detective Constable is described in detail in the novel. Her views regarding work station, her role, and experiences are expressed as:

...Upstairs! The inner sanctum of the CID. She had envied them all for so long – Gristhorpe, Banks, Richmond, even Hatchley – when she had brought messages, or stood by taking notes while they interrogated female suspects. No longer. She was one of them now, and she was about to show them that a woman could do the job every bit as well as a man, if not better. (02)

Her monologue is clear enough to indicate the presence of discrimination and male domination in today's human world, even the police department is no exception.

On the occasion of her first murder case, DCI Banks her boss thinks about her in the following way:

It was her first corpse, he realized, and she was handling it well, better than he had. Not only was she not about to vomit or faint, but she, too, was glancing around the room, observing the details.' (13)

DCI Banks thinks positive about her. As the narrator narrates:

...She was young yet, she would learn, and if they really were dealing with a murder, the time saved by Susan's direct action could prove invaluable. (10)

After the initial brief interview session with Veronica, DCI Banks observes potentiality in Susan Gay. As the writer writes:

Banks looked at Susan and saw a smart young woman with earnest blue eyes, tight blonde curls and a slightly snub nose gazing back at him. Good as she is, he thought, she's got a long way to go yet. (115)

But somehow Susan Gay got transferred to investigate another case of vandalism instead of homicide case of Caroline. About this change she ponders in the following way:

And now she was on her way to investigate a case of vandalism while the others got to work on the murder. It wasn't fair. She realized she was the new member of the team, but that didn't mean she always had to be the one to handle the petty crimes. How could she get ahead if she didn't get to work on important cases? She had already sacrificed so much for her career that she couldn't bear to contemplate failure. (42)

Her thought flow indicates the discrimination made in the department on account of the amateur member and a female too. Her very first visit to Eastvale Community Centre to enquire about vandalism headed to meet James Conran. His words are an indication of male domination. As the dialogue goes on:

'Police?' the man asked.

Susan nodded and showed her new CID identification card.

'I must admit, I didn't expect a woman,' he said.

Susan prepared to say something withering, but he held up a hand. 'Don't get me wrong. I'm not complaining. I'm not a sexist pig. It's just a surprise.'(43)

The statements made by Conran were startling that still in this modern era too the society, certain careers and certain departments are assumed to be run by males only and in their territory females don't have a prestigious place.

The exit of Susan Gay from the place is marked with the sudden visit of DCI Banks. In her words:

Then the door creaked open and Susan saw a familiar face peep around. It was Chief Inspector Banks. At first, she was relieved to see him. Then she thought, why the hell is he here? Checking up on me? Can't he trust me to do a simple job properly? (46)

Male domination is got exposed by Susan Gay. Though DCI Banks is confident about Susan Gay, he at times shows his doubts about her and her activities. As narrated by the narrator:

'She could have gone to check out the scene herself, and she might have found, as nine times out of ten one did, that there had been some mistake, or a prank. Or she might have waited for the PC to call in and let her know the situation before running off and dragging her chief inspector away from his ex-sergeant's wedding celebration.'(10)

The character of Susan Gay is embellished with heroic qualities fitting with the police department. Like her boss, she is also ready to work as per the demand of the police

call. At any moment she can be in action to fulfill her duties. Marcia Cunningham requested DC Susan Gay to see few fragments concerning the case of vandalism happened in the theatre. But DC Gay was on her way to go to a dinner date with James Conran. As the narrator has described:

Susan recognized a deadline when she heard one. Now she was with CID she was never really off duty. She wouldn't get anywhere if she put personal pleasure before the job, however fruitless the trek to Marcia's might seem. And the vandalism was her case. A success so early in her CID career would look good. What could she do but agree? ... (312)

Finally, she decided to follow Marcia at first then to see Conran for dinner date.

In the same novel, afterward, while she was sleeping, suddenly she receives a phone call at two twenty-three in the morning by Sergeant Rowe. The call was about vandals. She firmly replies that within fifteen minutes she will be at the police station. The night was so cold that 'she shivered as she got into the car.'(345) Truly, Susan Gay is active in her occupation. Being a woman officer she never expects any soft corner or special favours from anyone.

Susan Gay is the only officer mentioned in the present novel. Though she has enough calibers still she got overshadowed by her male officers. Later on, the male criminal himself tries to deceive and use her. The criminal receives partial success too.

Teresa Pedmore

Teresa Pedmore is the teammate of Caroline. They were working together in the drama team. She is living alone in a rented a two-bedroom house. DCI Banks ponders about her as 'She certainly wasn't good looking in the overtly sexual way Faith Green was, but the fierce confidence and determination in her simplest movements and gestures more than compensated.'(334)

During their discussion, Teresa utters, 'I suppose you think I should have stayed on the farm,' she went on. 'Married a local farmer and started having babies.'(335)

The above-mentioned statements reveal that it is the accepted traditional way to get married and have children instead of living a life of spinster or bachelor and to think for a career, as per the society. Teresa is different therefore she is not keen to follow the old way. Her firm statement '...every woman has her pride...' (338) concludes everything. In the very first meeting, DCI Banks sensed that she is 'ambitious' (157). This is a positive trait, which cannot be afforded by everyone.

Sandra Banks

Sandra Banks is the wife of DCI Alan Banks. She has an interest in photography and paintings. In Eastvale Community Center she always has various presentations and projects with her associates and friends. Sandra has her personality, life, likings, and views as an

individual. She is not at all shackled by Banks on the account of a wife, mother or family member. As per Banks:

‘...she has always been determined and independent. She'd hate to be a housewife worrying about meals and threepence-off coupons in the papers. Some people see that as a fault, but I don't. It's what she is and I wouldn't want to turn her into some sort of chattel or slave. And she wouldn't want to depend on me to entertain her or keep her happy...’ (232)

DCI Banks agrees that ‘It's a very hard being a policemen's wife.’ (232), regarding ‘long absences and the unpredictability’ of police husband. Hence he appreciates his wife in the following way:

But Sandra has always had a mind of her own. And a life of her own – photography, the gallery, friends, books. She doesn't let herself get bored – she loves life too much...’ (232)

Irrespective of any social norms and rigid traditions DCI Banks let his wife shine in her own life as per her desires. Besides, her wife is a free spirit with great potentiality in her. Unlike other female characters presented in the novel, she is independent and happy in her life. Sandra is shown as a woman of a new era, balancing family with career.

Sandra Banks is an example of a woman power. She is full of life force. In her personal and professional life, both are running smoothly. She is blessed with a good family. Whenever her husband and his duty demand her sacrifice regarding the family time she is ready to do that. Instead of regretting and repenting she welcomes all things positively,

With the aid of the character James Conran, who is the murderer of Caroline, and who utilized Officer Gay, the writer has shown the egoistic nature of male sex. ‘He was highly strung, egotistical, with a deep-rooted fear of his own latent homosexuality, but he wasn't mad.’(396-397) There is such Conran present in our society who aim to maltreat female sex. The confinement of Conran is the example that female subjugation and murder is not at all tolerable in human society. It is a punishable offense.

Conclusion:

Peter Robison has presented various female characters in the novel. The depiction of all-female personas appears life real. In today's modern world also one can observe the rigid mentality of patriarchy. In spite of the modernity of the human world, women are still trapped, oppressed and leading their lives under male control. As per the traditional notion, the writer has created his female characters with feminine traits. But his entire female star cast is not at all submissive and secondary. The writer has shown his female characters with good merits and strengths.

There are few exceptions like Sandra Banks who have her own identity and personality. Her character represents free and independent womanhood. On the contrary characters like Caroline; Veronica represents shackled women with rebellious nature. They are fighters and have faced many fights to achieve their freedom and rights. Robison has

narrated various traits of womankind in the present novel. The novel ends in the confinement of male oppressors and ray of hope for other female characters.

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