

## **Jewish Identity: A Study of Fantasy VS Reality in Joanne Greenberg's I Never Promised You a Rose Garden**

**C. Subashini,**

Ph.Dscholar, S. T. Hindu college, Nagercoil -2, India

### **Abstract**

The concept of identity has become widespread within the social and behavioral disciplines. All individuals claim particular identities given their roles in society. Greenberg is based on Jewish American community, through her novel she exposes her nature being of an immigrant identity in the character Deborah. It reveals how the Jewish American society survive?. The entire novel would focus the sufferings of Jewish Americans especially children. The character Deborah in the novel has created the two collisions of world. It refers to her identity as Jewish American which comforts and the conflict world of Americans. It discusses about how she will overcome from this conflict world of fantasy and reality. Education is emphasized as a crucial factor for the liberation of women from oppression and economic dependence.

**KEYWORDS :** Fantasy, Reality, Identity, Jewish American, Education, Oppression.

Joanne Greenberg's work is related to Deaf community, feminists, mental illness, cultural moment. She focuses Jewish on the themes of immigration, identity and ethnicity in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The representation of Jews in a multicultural social setting, dominant American Jewish setting of New York. Jews have played a central role in American literature. It emphasizes on the social equality and the immigrant to all Americans. Jews are still to be considered as socially oppressed minority in America. Jewish American literature drawing the theory of diasporic and post-colonial theory. It depicts the social vulnerability, painful histories and cultural anxieties.

*I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* cited an example of the mixture of fantasy and reality. The imagination must lie on the reality and that the fantasy contains the unreliable grand. Deborah, a pretty middle class teenager has created an imaginary terrifying world that exists beyond reality. Though she is a ruler and its slave. It is the acceptance of Deborah's fantasy world. *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* focuses on the authenticity of Deborah Blau's illness and treatment on the one hand. Greenberg is based on Dr. Clara Fried and Dr. Frieda Fromm-Reichmann, the Psychiatrist, is idealized that the people who knew her from Greenberg's description of her physical appearance, background and personality.

Deborah suffered from an unrecognized tumor discovered only after she had been agonizing her at the severely distressing the family until it was surgically removed, an operation that left to the girl in which physical pain at first and later psychological world. At the birth of her sister Suzy drew the attention of her family away. They all showed interest to the newly born baby and taking care of her. Deborah feels that she becomes loneliness. Severely troubled young woman in a battle for her sanity. This is a battle that sixteen year old Deborah Blau who has been fight with a difficult conflict

by physical and emotional pain, rooted mental distress, hallucinations, self-mutilation etc. Deborah tried to kill her sister Suzy when she was a baby, so she attempted to throw her sister out of a window.

As she confronts she has been created an imaginary world of her own, the imaginary kingdom of Yr, a secret, a fantasy world that appeared to her in the wake of profound sadness and enormous pain. "If loving one another a man and a woman continuously create one another; in the act of love they create the child; in creating the child, they create the family; and in creating the family, they create society" (Marus 23). But this is entirely different from Deborah's life..she lost love and affection from her parents. Thus she created an imaginary kingdom.

The Yr of Deborah's imagination has vast pains and darkness, this instability made Deborah feel unstable and it cause tension in her parents line. The landscape of Deborah's mind hold the experience of exhilarating, disorienting and frightening. Her internal world makes her dark and scary. Yr, the fantastical beings that Deborah createto keep her company since she was five. Yr loses her colourful sceneries over time. It controls her.

Secrets give Deborah a sense of powerful and special identity but her secret inner conflicts becomes burden to her. The world develops a barriers between the imaginary Yr and the reality earth. She calls herself Januce, a Janus the Roman mythological figure who acted as a gatekeeper between two worlds. Her own life in opposition to the destructive forces imposed on her from outside and to fantasize the world of Yr with a language of their own that Deborah alone in the outside world could understand.

Deborah starts telling about Yr, at first Yr was a peaceful and comforting heaven and it has become a source of pain, fear and oppression. Yr said to Deborah about the three changes of mirrors. She has created a meaningful connection between these three events in order to understand and survive in the confusing real world. She can never go out from the world of Yr. Yr rules all over Deborah, it had it's own language and logic. The language of Yr was q deep secret kept always more rigidly away from people as it crept toward greater control of the inner voice. Yr's language expresses the suffering and pain. Yr as an imaginary world but this creative world is real for Deborah and the physical Paine were real for her.

The reality of the inner world is a primary reality because the accurate perception of external realities is so highly influenced by unconscious phantasms relations. The inner world poseess3e undeniable psychic reality despite its subjectivity and despite the fact that it may contain and create nuclear views of external situations.

Dr. Fried helps Deborah to realize the logic of Yr and tries to convince her to understand her illness and to fight against it. She realize that her grandfather's bitter anger and dislike her father. She feels alone when her parents had to go away from her. Throughout her childhood she gave the anti-Semitic prejudices of her peers and neighbors. In Ancient literature girl children were not protected by their families. Girls are pictured as victims of many evils in the patriarchal system.

Sometimes Deborah heard a man named Hitler, was in Germany and was killing Jews with the same kind of evil joy. This was mentioned that the Blau's are a

Jewish family who live in anti-Semitic neighborhood. Jewish life had been centralized on problems of immigration and absorption. It gives an account of the struggle between father and sons and their ideologies due to the modern revolution and described the lives of the people caught up between past and present religion and freedom. It also speaks about the individual in the life of their history and suffering.

Deborah is always confusing her life with real and unreal. Deborah was moving from the intricacies of Yr's kingdom from the collect of others, the censor and the Yri gods. She rolled over and slept a deep, seamless and restful sleep. Over the years the power of censor had grown greater and greater, in the collision of two worlds ahead moved on.

With the help of Dr. Fried, Deborah develops friendship with other patients sometimes she got fear, anxiety from the fellow patients. She was not completely on the presence of mind. Dr. Fried insights observation and reflections that serve Deborah, help to her journey in the voyage of self-recovery.

As the title *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* brings an idea of the character Deborah, needs love and affection from her parents but she didn't receive, because of her parents wants to survive in this community and to seek their own identity as they could suffered a lot with their busy schedule of earning their economic status they might have not been seen her. Thus Deborah's internal and external pains causes severe problems in her growing life. She was hospitalized over years and develops a relationship with the fellow patients and Dr. Fried. Dr. Fried instincts about her situation and helps her to overcome. Deborah trust her. *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*, Dr. Fried said someone will support, motivate, inspired you but you yourself have to realize your self-recovery, self-assimilation, self-identify etc ..or it would not be possible to recover one's own identity.

Social identity theory is defined as "a social psychological analysis of the role of self-conception in group membership, group processes and intergroup relations" (Burke). In this novel Deborah chose a way of her social identity as education. She earns a GED (General Educational Development) and resolved to win her struggle between the two worlds. Eventually, Deborah knows how to live on Earth and she says goodbye to the magical world. Education played a significant role in safeguarding the culture of the Jewish community. It became a major survival around the world.

#### **Work Cited:**

1. Greenberg, Joanne. *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*. St. Martin Paperbacks. New York, 1992. Print.
2. Ward, David. *T. S. Eliot Between Two Worlds*. Routledge Publishers, 1973. Print.
3. Burke, P. *Social Identity Theory*. In *Contemporary Social Psychological Theories*. Stanford University Press, 2006.
4. Ed. Ron Feldman. *The Jew as a Pariah: Jewish Identity and Politics in the Modern Age*. New York, Grove Press, Print, Print.