



The Praxis Of Body Shaming In Mitch Albom’s “For One More Day”

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ABSTRACT: *The book ‘One more Day’ by Mitch Albom narrates the importance of keeping relationships in life, the most important factor behind for keeping things intact. The book tells to what extend our mind travels to get a glimpse of the people whom we forgot to regard in our own busy little world. Charley Benetto, a broken man who loses his family and became useless to that point in which his own daughter does not invite him for her wedding, contemplate to commit suicide in his maternal home where his dead mother used to live. In a drunken frenzy he meets up with an accident and in a semi-conscious state, Charley imagines to be with his dead mother like old times in their home and he remembers all the times he did not stood for his mother and wanted to get away with his father’s dream only. The entire book is a longing for Charley’s mind to have one more conversation with his mother so that he can at least attempt to get a sense of what he had lost in the past.*

KEYWORDS: *Body shaming, Identity formation, love-hatred relation, patriarchal domination.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

“For one more day” by Mitch Albom portrays a dream- reverie of the protagonist Charley Benetto about his strange meeting with his mother after her death. It is a story in a back and fro motions where Charley remembers about his mother during his childhood days and how the socio- circumstances framed his perception about his mother. The research analysis mainly focus on the body shaming trend that is still going on in our society no matter however we consider ourselves modern and practical.

II. THEMES IN MITCH ALBOM’S NOVELS

Mitch Albom’s novels mostly talk about the transience of time and how human life is bound to be bonded with guilt and hopes all over again upon different difficult realizations. They deal the most ordinary themes in life and make us realize how extra ordinary each ordinary instances can turn, at least for the people concerned. The guilt of negligence for the trivialities and the later realization that those small things were the things that mattered is explicitly woven in this novel too. The existential crisis and unending quest to find out what that lasts and what not make up the philosophical stoic stand of the writer.

III. BODY SHAMING IN “ FOR ONE MORE DAY”

The novel “For one more day” is seemingly a novel on a lighter note about relationships and how these fragments of tiny little things keep us go miles in life. The author who has also authored the famous “Tuesdays with Morrie” and “The five people you meet in heaven” gives out the existential angst- how long and what for are we truly surviving in a world that seems indifferent to us in many ways. The protagonist Charley Benetto represents a whole lot of mid-life crisis that most of us can equate with. He is a man who is broken and his entire life is destroyed by alcohol and regret. It opens with this kind of a situation in which he felt completely useless for anyone in the world and ends up thinking about suicide- a typical theme that we find at least as some instances in many works of fiction. And at the culmination point he gore to his hometown as his final journey. But as he staggers into his old home, he finds the most unbelievable thing that he had not even thought in his wildest imagination. He meets his dead mother there, not as ghost but like the old times when he was a child and a teenager. And what follows is a dream- reverie that most of the people yearn to have - One more chance to have a conversation with the person we missed, a chance to make good with a lost parent. And then there the novel begins with the flashbackFrom his earlier days onwards there is an explicit distinction of gender roles been practiced in the narration of this novel. The boy should idealize and strive for the affection of his father and not his mother for mother’s affection and love is always already present. Girl child left in the care of mother and

boy child left in the care of father was the usual norm. This kind of a gendered notion is still in practice and this theory is interwoven in the novel. The novel is based on the theme of how perceptions are created in regard with social circumstances and hierarchical structures. In the novel when Charley look at his mother for an encouraging smile and nod, his father scolds him saying that there is nothing there that would help him in his field. The compelling notion that soft emotions and feelings are not meant for men but for women is well presented in that scene. This is how every scene goes by conventions and societal traditions and rule the upbringing of a child based on patriarchal stereotypes that works in the present scenario Body shaming literally goes by the definition - "action or practice of humiliating someone by making mocking or critical comments about their body shape or size". [1] The practice was taken up by many people in social media and so many people have expressed their opinions and ideas about this trend. Most often the people who fall as victims of body shaming are women and people of colored origin are marginalized doubly and triply. In the novel people used to make direct comments upon Charley's mother Pauline as a "bit too much" and "showy" out of jealousy and women found it uncomfortable with their husbands and Pauline being around. [2] This usual gossips and tiny talks did not bother Charley and in a way he always admired his mother for her attractive figure. Everything became very stranger and not that easy when Leonard, Charley's father left home or rather when Pauline separated herself and kids from Leonard. The usual gossips went a bit over the top, and a situation came Pauline came to have no friends at all because of her "hot" body and "sexy" feeling, men have when she is around just because she became single. The most pivotal notion of a stereotypical patriarchal society that, a women's attitude and her warmth is controlled while she is a wife turns upside down when she becomes single. The same woman becomes a dangerous "thing" that needs to be isolated and discriminated. One instance upon which Charley attacked his friends when they secretly started watching Pauline's bedroom after she got "divorced" became one of the most tormenting memories for Charley. But the most important factor is that even the kids thought it to be okay to watch someone else's dressing room just because she is a divorcee. As if a divorcee is a person who has no self integrity and courage. And thereafter Charley was always against his mother wearing make-up and all. Instead of protecting her mother from the outside dangers or warning her, he put the typical manly power in controlling the female notion of sexuality. He used to judge his mother based on her body and found it irritating and unbearable to watch that she can become a possible threat to his escaped life. Another instance was in which Pauline was fired from her job for being too hot to be handled in the hospital as a nurse. The explanation was that the male staffs in hospital are digressed by her body. The issue was clear; she got fired as part of the conspiracy hatched by some other man, about whom she complained the other day. The point is that the hospital authorities did not find their explanation for her firing sounded even descent or not. Expressing derogatory comment upon someone's body and firing her from job based on gendered and bodily discriminations were viewed as "normal". A son's affection to his own mother changed from pure love to contempt by hearing these kinds of comments from his friends and the public. Though the novel talks about relationship priorities and one more chance for doing the same thing in a better way with his mother, Charley Benetto missed his very first chance because of the ideologically existential position he had gone through because of the trend set by society. The very notions that escalate motherhood and womanhood degrade a woman when she loses the stability of a married life. And this causes the whole emotional turmoil of not just one individual, but an entire family and the next generation too. The novel leaves to the readers a scope to think about how the praxis of body shaming changes the way a person constructs the world and especially the female folk. It is as the silenced and unheard voice of the subaltern than is always ignored to be heard. [3]

IV. CONCLUSION

When hierarchy and patriarchy determines norms and conditions, it is the power that constructs society, as explained by postcolonial critics' [4] In this regard the Foucauldian notion that the body and sexuality are cultural constructs rather than natural phenomena is worthwhile to think about. [5]. The power play regulates people and this same dominating power expresses itself as body shaming of the weaker and marginalized session. The violation of body rights occur and that shapes perceptions and that is exactly what happened in Charley Benetto's relationship with his mother Pauline.

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