

CHAPTER – IV
A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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As we have seen many scholars and critics have categorized Rendell's writing into three types as 'Wexford series' 'Psychological crime novels' and the novels published under the pseudonym 'Barbara Vine'. Both the select novels are published under her own name. These novels are called as 'Psychological Crime Novels'. Depicting crime and criminals Rendell is unique. She gives more emphasis on the psychology of criminals rather than the technical process of investigation, which differentiates her writing from the classic 'Whodunit' novels. Her novels are called as 'Whydunnit' or 'Psychological Crime Novels'. Both the select novels come under the main title 'Psychological Crime Novels' but there is a difference between them concerning crime, criminals, motives and effects of criminal actions.

Both the novels happen in London suburb areas. First novel *Make Death Love Me* is a story of a thirty eight years old daydreamer Alan Groombridge, who is a bank manager in a very tiny bank which is a branch of the Anglican Victoria in the British Isles. The second novel *Live Flesh* is a story of a sexual psychopath character Victor Jenner, who has just emerged from prison after over ten years who tries to build a new life for himself with little money, no job, no friends, no family and psychiatric treatment.

Alan is a normal human being. He has family. He lives with his wife, two children and sixty-eight years old father-in-law. He wants one year's freedom because he is bored with his tedious career and dull home life. He wants to rescue from all the things which makes his day-to-day

life nervous such as his tedious career, his job, his wife to whom he is never in love and his hypocrite children. He has great influence of literature on him. He is daydreamer. He wants to live life depicted in books or shown on TV. Through him Rendell shows desires of middle class man and its effects.

Unlike Alan, Victor Jenner, the protagonist of *Live Flesh* is not normal human being. He is unmarried; he has no family, no friends and no relatives. He is psychopath character who needs psychiatric treatment. He has split personality. He is confused about his panics. It is the main difference between the two novels that the protagonist of the first novel is a normal human being but the second is a sexual psychopath character. That is why; the second novel is more dark and brutal than the first. *Make Death Love Me* is plain psychological crime novel creates suspense in the minds of readers but *Live Flesh* because of the mentally disturbed character creates more thrillers in the minds of readers. So it is called as 'Psychological thriller novel'. Both heroes are frustrated and disturbed by their family life. Though, they have anti-heroic qualities both are lovable characters to which we feel sympathy.

Rendell is very stylish about her writing. About *Make Death Love Me*, she is very cinematic. She presents Alan and his life in a very lucid way. Rendell's every description of Alan's life creates homogeneousness, which makes reader curious to know more about him. Creating curiosity and suspense she keeps the reader attached with the novel. Unlike, *Make Death Love Me*, *Live Flesh* starts with a very thriller scene in which a serial rapist Victor and a policeman confront each other in the bedroom of a young woman where Victor tries to shoot the police, in it the police becomes the crippled man who can never walk and for this Victor gets

punished for ten years. In this way, creating thriller in the minds of readers, she tries to peep into the mind of Victor.

Rendell uses crime as a vehicle to express her views about human life. She has very innovative ideas concerning crimes and criminals. Through these ideas, she presents the real issues of the twenty-first century. She is not much interested to find out the criminal but the psychology of the criminals behind their criminal actions. *Make Death Love Me* the whole novel moves around to find out the reasons and the effects of the criminal actions on the life of characters. Bank robbery, kidnapping, murder, and keeping hostage these crimes happen in this novel, on the other hand, *Live Flesh* presents the life of psychologically disturbed character. He is a serial rapist. So in this novel rape, murder, shooting and crippling, deceiving, hostage these are dominant factors in the novel. Both the novels are best examples of crime novels.

All the criminal characters in both novels are being obsessed by different purposes behind their criminal actions. Alan is a victim of unhappy middle class life and his family. His desire to rescue from day-to-day life and live freely is the reason behind his crime. On the other hand, Victor is sexually psychopath character. He commits crimes because of his psyche mind. He is a victim of his own life. He claims that he is unaware about his behavior, and his actions are unintentional. He is incapable of restraining himself because of the chorea, which acts up when he is stressed. His parents' lovemaking is greatly influenced on him. All the women characters in the novel such as his neglectful mother, his old aunt Muriel, his girlfriend Pauline and Rosemary Stanley all are antagonistic to him. His failure to win Clare, impact of his parent's sexual relationships, his mysterious diseases, anger and jealousy these are the responsible factors for his behavior. He cannot control his anger. He

needs psychiatric treatment. Society could not understand him. He has no job and no friends, as well. These factors also become responsible for Alan's criminal behavior. Marty and Nigel these are also the bank robbers and keep Joyce as a hostage. Their hatred for their parents and hatred for society become the responsible factors for their criminal actions.

To show the effects of criminal society is the main concern of Rendell. She wants to make people aware about the effects of crime and how does the society become disordered because of criminal actions? Through crime element, she wants to presents the real picture of contemporary society. Though, Alan has money with him he is not happy man. He feels guilt for his behavior. Alan wants to repent about it by saving her life. At the end, he realizes that money is not the solution to live a happy life. Marty and Nigel also want to rescue from everything. They do not want anything. They realize that money without any hard work confines us within four walls. They both want freedom. After prison life, Victor could not adjust with society. No one understands him. He becomes alone. He has no friends. At the end, he becomes a murderer. Crime is the ill of society that affects everyone. Society gets disturbed because of these criminal actions.

Alan takes punishment for himself when he realizes his mistakes and tries to find out Joyce and rescue her from the kidnappers. Alan saves Joyce from Nigel's gunshot and gets murdered. In this way, he takes punishment for his wrong behavior. Marty and Nigel the other bank kidnappers also get punished for their work. Marty falls ill, and Nigel also gets murdered by four unknown people. On the other hand, Victor is punished for ten years by government for shooting and crippling a police officer. He does not feel any remorse for his behavior. After prison also

police tries to find out Victor for his crimes. Before police reach at him, he dies mysteriously.

Victor's death happens because of mysterious diseases, but Alan gets murdered by the hands of Nigel's shooting. Both the novels have proper end. All the characters come to an end and go away to their own ways. It is the similarity between two protagonists that both are dies at the end of the novel. Alan gives more optimistic note about life than Victor. He tells that, at next time, he will not wish to fly away from his life. He will fight for the betterment in his life on his own way, and he will make death love him. In *Live Flesh* Rendell raises very serious questions and left us to think on that and find out the solutions.

The novels are not conservative in their social attitudes both have good social relevance. Rendell is a good social critic. She does not want to romanticize the life of human being. She writes about what she finds in the society. Rendell talks on many social issues. For this, she uses crime as her weapon. She wants to make us aware about those social issues.

Rendell's roots of writings lie in her own family. She was a victim of family disturbance. Her parents had a terrible marriage. Hence her family relations are not healthy. In her novels also she depicts this family disputes. Through both the novels, she says how family becomes one of the most root causes of crimes. Victor and Nigel's parent live alienated from the society, and this hatred grows in the minds of their children forever. Victor and Nigel both have influence of their parent's sexual relationship which becomes later the main reason for their criminal behavior. That is why these novels are called Psychological crime novels. Rendell criticizes the family institution.

In both the novels, she presents the condition of women in the cities of London. In the first novel, *Make Death Love Me* Joyce, the bank cashier becomes a victim without any reason. The bank robbers keep her as a hostage without fulfilling her basic needs. She is treated very inhumanely by the bank robbers. In the second novel, *Live Flesh* Rendell deals with the very issues of rape and shows that how easily women become victims of rape. Victor Jenner is a serial rapist, but he is not punished for shooting and crippling a policeman. Rendell touches the issue of safety of women in the countryside of London. Clare wants to live with Victor but due to Fleetwood she cannot express herself. Fleetwood becomes dominant in her relationship with Victor. It is her internal conflict which makes her upset. Through these characters, we understand Rendell's feministic point of view.

Though both the novels come under the main title as 'Psychological crime novels', first novel creates suspense in the minds of readers while the second novel creates more thriller in the minds of readers. So we can call *Make Death Love Me* as a 'psychological suspense novel' and *Live Flesh* as a 'psychological thriller novel'. It is Rendell's specialty of her writing. She is not straightforward while dealing with crime, criminals and other issues related with it. She deals much more with the psychology of characters. Hence, she is called as a pioneer of 'whydunnit' novels. In the first novel throughout the novel suspense is created. Such as will Alan get fulfill his wishes? Will the criminals rescue Joyce? Though, Alan feels guilty, will he go home again? Will police become successful to find out Joyce? What will happen with Alan? On the other hand, Victor's actions thrill the reader. He is a serial rapist. His every rape thrills the reader. Thriller is represented on both levels physical and mental. He is psychopath

character, so his actions are very thrilling. Something controls over him whom Victor also cannot control and the crime happens by him. Memories are never gone away from his head. He always lives as a confused man his every thought, shooting and crippling a policeman, murder of his aunt, his every rape, his mysterious rape these all things are very thrilling. Readers get thrilled when they find out his reason behind becoming a rapist.

Both the novels are not normal 'whodunit' novels as in both the novels from the very start Rendell deals with the minds of character and tries to study the psychology of the criminals. In both novels, her focus is not on to find out the criminal and on the investigation process. Both novels are serious in tone there is no joy and happiness for a single time in the novel. All the characters live under a stress. She deals with very social issues such as family institution, parent-child relations, rape, poverty, greediness of human beings, women's situation. She criticizes government for not providing special schemes for criminals. She shows society is the root for crime. Through these novels, she makes us aware about social responsibilities towards crime and criminals and how to save the society getting disturbed because of criminals.

Both the protagonists die at the end of the novel for what they had done. Both the novels create suspense, thriller and mystery elements in the minds of readers. Even though both the protagonists have antiheroic qualities, they are lovable characters, and we feel sympathy for them. They are the victims of their own life. In both the novels, she creates many social issues and leaves us to find out the solution. Both the novels are very thought provoking. Though, both novels end with the death of protagonist the effect remains on the minds of characters. She tries to

study her characters from outside to inside. Both the novels show her interest in the psychology of characters.

Both novels have woven in different structures increase the readers' intensity. Both novels revolve around the mental twists of the characters. The structure of *Live Flesh* is complex which shows the complexity of the mind of her characters who is a psychopath. On the other hand, the structure of *Make Death Love Me* is simple and easy to understand. The plot of this novel is about various actions and events and there is a lot of thinking on the actions. Rendell creates an artistic and emotional effect by using such plot. From the incident of bank robbery story divides into two levels and come together at the exclusive end of the novel. Throughout the novel, she gives her descriptions about her characters alternatively. She is succeeded to arouse curiosity and keep the reader attached with the story. It is told from the criminal's perspective. On the other hand, *Live Flesh* is a story of a psychopath character having a complex plot. It is equipped with various mental twists and stream of consciousness technique. It is a very brilliant portrayal of a deranged man. Victor is facing so many dilemmas and these dilemmas drive the plot of the novel. It is written from David Fleetwood's perspective. Both the novels are told from a third person point of view. Both stories happen in the London cities, in blurred areas. Through these settings, she depicts the real picture of the contemporary British society of 1980s to 1990s.

Rendell is very strong about her characterization. Both protagonists are round characters. The other characters from the first novel *Make Death Love Me*, Pamela, Christopher, Jillian, Wilfred and characters from *Live Flesh* such as Clare, David, Muriel, and Rosemary are flat characters. She is successful about characterization in both novels. Rendell is a master of creating beautiful starts, conflicting middles, and

shocking or unexpected ends, and it is properly happening with both the novels.

Rendell tries to bring out criminal's de ceased psyches behind their crimes. Both the novels can be thus, categorized under the category of 'Psychological crime novels' but *Make Death Love Me* is plain 'psychological crime novel' on the other hand *Live Flesh* is called as 'a psychological thriller novel'. It is more brutal and depicts more evils of the human mind

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