

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

Katherine Mansfield was one of the most famous, leading woman writers during the first quarter of this century. She was born in Wellington, New Zealand on 14th October, 1888. The child was christened Kathleen Mansfield. Her father, Harold Beauchamp was a successful merchant. She grew up in a family group of two older sisters and a younger sister and a brother, with a grandmother and unmarried aunts. Critics have rightly noted the influence of these people on her creative work.

Her first five years were spent at 11 Tinakori Road. At the crucial age of two she was neglected by her mother. She joined the Karori State School. She was good at Arithmetic but bad at spellings. She could memorize verses at her will. She was odd and often moody. Therefore, she was becoming a difficult child at home.

At fifteen she was sent to school in England - Queen's College, Harley Street, London. At Queen's College she had intimate friendship with Ida Baker and it is quite possible that this relationship is reflected in some of her portrayals of relationship between two women. Katherine came to realize that she had a real gift as a Cellist. About this time Kathleen adopted the name Katherine.

In 1906 Katherine returned to New Zealand. But she was not happy at New Zealand. She thought only of returning to London, for freedom. As a reaction to her father's compulsion to stay in New Zealand, she started harassing all the members of her family.

She was wild and headstrong. Finally, she left for London in July 1908 to stamp herself as a writer. She was only eighteen that time.

During the period 1909 to 1916 she tried to discover herself. She realized her strength, her likings and her potentialities which she called "Experience".

She had several love affairs, the most important which was the one with John Middleton Murry. Katherine and Murry could not be legally married until 1918. They were constantly separating, rejoining and living independently. At last in 1918 they were married.

Marvin Maglaner describes her relationship with Middleton Murry :

"Her fiction, therefore, becomes a multifaceted examination of the Mansfield Murry relationship as ideally it might have developed given a series of alternative routes to fulfilment; as it might have been had the woman been different; had the man been different; had the times allowed. The relationship is examined in caricature, in dream, in dramatic form, and otherwise until its obsessive character is quite plain. It is not surprising that Mansfield wrote to Murry..."And now, of course, I see future generations finding you in all my books".<sup>1</sup>

From 1916 until August, 1922 was Katherine's great creative period and from 1918 she was writing at the height of her powers. Her short stories were published in five separate collections:

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(1) In a German Pension (1911); (2) Bliss (1920); (3) The Garden Party (1922); (4) The Dove's Nest (1923); and Something Childish (1924). In 1945 all these were brought together in a single volume entitled Collected Stories of Katherine Mansfield edited by Middleton Murry.

Katherine Mansfield's scrapbook with its lists of stories in order of projected publication suggests a deliberate alternation of her New Zealand short stories. Middleton Murry has edited her letters in two volumes published in 1928.

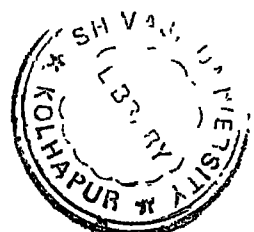
Katherine Mansfield had chosen Chekhov as her master. She was also influenced by Oscar Wilde as she records it in her Journal. D.H. Lawrence was her intimate friend. She was a great admirer of Chekhov and she tried to manifest something of his quality in her tales. In her letters and private papers she mentions Chekhov as the hero, almost the literary god. Joyce is frequently mentioned both with enthusiasm and with distaste. Lawrence, Flaubert, Maupassant share attention with Proust and T.S. Eliot. Katherine Mansfield shared with Virginia Woolf in the depiction of the contemplative mind. We see that there are certain points of similarity in the stories of both these writers. For example, Woolf's 'The Mark on the Wall' and Katherine Mansfield's 'A Married Man's Story' which describe a similar mental movement.

The main objective of the present dissertation is to provide a comprehensive statement on the theme of man-woman relationship in Katherine Mansfield. It does not, therefore, seek to

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analyse the New Zealand aspect of Mansfield's creative work. Also, enough critical work has already been done in this area. Perhaps the best analysis comes from Ian Gordon who rightly places Katherine Mansfield in the tradition of those ~~who~~ writers who "placed in a foreign setting - turn their eyes resolutely home-wards." Gordon relates, the theme of exile with its elegiac undertones" in Katherine Mansfield directly to her relationship with the New Zealand landscape and concludes:

She came to recognize that a New Zealander can be as much of an exile in England as an Englishman on an island in the Pacific. From the moment of that discovery the note of elegy entered work, and she turned for her themes to her origins. All of her best work dates from this point.<sup>2</sup>



## II

In the total network of human relationships, the relationship between man and woman has always occupied a central place. Governed by variables such as culture and community, language and speech, Customs and mores, this relationship has provided a theme to which artists in all periods of literary history have addressed themselves. In ancient myths and epics, in medieval notions of courtly love and then in the later secular versions, the theme appears in many forms and in many contexts of meaning. The following description based mainly on the work of Carl Jung, Freud, Kate Millett, Simone De Beauvoir, and Gayle Yates, seeks to establish the several general contexts of man-woman relationship in mythical, psychological, socio-historical and ideological terms.

Mythical Context

On the level of myth one of the ancient embodiments of this relationship is the Mother-Goddess archetype. The Great Mother archetype belongs to the field of anthropology and comparative religion but it has, as Jung has pointed out, psychological implications as well. Jung compares archetype to 'the axial system of a crystal, which, as it were, performs the crystalline structure in the mother liquid, without having any material existence of its own'³ Jung then goes on to cite several examples of the archetype and shows how it is associated with the fertility and fruitfulness and with symbols such as

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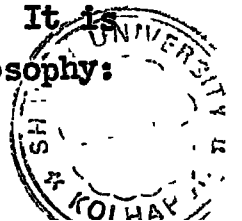
vessels, caves, gardens. The archetype evokes qualities of 'material sympathy the magic authority of the female, the wisdom and spiritual exaltations that transcend reason'<sup>4</sup>. Commenting on the general significance of this archetype in the context of man-woman relationship Jung writes, "Man would do well to heed the wise counsel of the mother and obey the inexorable law of nature which sets limits to every being. He ought never to forget that the world exists only because opposing forces are held in equilibrium. So, too, the rational is counterbalanced by the irrational, and what is planned and purposed by what is"<sup>5</sup> Jung further explains the man-woman relationship in psychological context :

The mother image in a man's psychology is entirely different in character from a woman's. For a woman the mother typifies her own conscious life as conditioned by her sex. But for a man the mother typifies something alien, which he has yet to experience and which is filled with the imagery latent in the unconscious.....

Whereas for a man the mother is ipso facto symbol, for a woman she becomes a symbol only in the course of her psychological development.<sup>6</sup>

The mother image ultimately leads to the paired opposites where the one is never separated from the other which is its antithesis :

In spite of or just because of their extreme opposition, neither can exist without the other. It is exactly as formulated in classical chinese philosophy:



Yang, the masculine principle contains within it the seed of Yin, the feminine principle.<sup>7</sup>

In Freudian psychology, a great deal of importance is attached to bisexuality. Klein points out that bisexuality of living organisms is one of the most recent discoveries of biological science. The theory of bisexuality says that :

Every individual has, at least potentially if not actually, the characteristics of both sexes, but normally develops the one set to a greater extent than the other. There is no clear-cut line between absolute masculinity and absolute femininity, but reality presents us with a mixture of both in different proportions which vary considerably with each individual. It is, in Freud's words, " as though the individual were neither man nor woman, but both at the same time, only rather more the one than the other " <sup>8</sup>

The Freudian theory of bisexuality which has an important bearing on man-woman relationship is further seen in the context of the theory of androgyny. Carolyn G. Heilbrun defines androgyny in the following terms :

" Androgyny suggests a spirit of reconciliation between the sexes; it suggests, further, a full range of experience open to individuals who may, as women, be aggressive, as men, tender; it suggests a spectrum upon which human beings choose their places without regard to propriety or custom " <sup>9</sup>.



Thus defined, the androgynous perspective refers to a relationship between man and woman in which both exist as equals on a rational basis, without getting circumscribed by the expected social roles. Indeed, the expected social roles into which the man-woman differentiation is cast, are rejected in the androgynous theory. Instead of the traditional myths of female weakness and female power which have only led to woman's unequal status, we have in the androgynous theory a form of freedom which goes beyond definitive sex barriers and posits an ideal selfhood. No wonder, then, that the androgynous ideal has been a major part of the recent feminist movement.

Psychological Context

With its institutional approval marriage is perhaps the most significant, and socially recognized form of man-woman relationship. Marriage is obviously a social institution supported by tradition, custom and social morality. It is based on a code of prescriptions and rituals related to the choice of one's life partner. Jung has discussed at length the psychological aspects implicit in the social institution of marriage. In his essay, 'Marriage as a Psychological Relationship' Jung says, 'Regarded as a psychological relationship, marriage is a highly complex structure made up of a whole series of subjective and objective factors'. As a psychologist Jung's focus is, of course, on the subjective factor. That is why Jung speaks about the importance of the unconscious psychic life in marital relationship.

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Unconscious motivations derive from parental influence. The relationship of the young man to his mother and other girl to her father is the determining factor. In this respect Jung says,

" So far as reason or calculation or the so called loving care of parents does not arrange the marriage... the marriage choice will normally follow the unconscious motivations of instinct. Unconsciousness results in non-differentiation, or unconscious identity. .... One person presupposes in the other a psychological structure similar to his own. .... It's a state of complete harmony ".<sup>10</sup>

According to Jung the psychological aspects of marriage reside in the fact that "every man carries within him the eternal image of woman". The image is fundamentally unconscious. The same is true of the woman. She, too, has her inborn image of man. Jung associates with these two anima and animus respectively. Man has anima, the woman animus. The anima has an erotic emotional character the animus has a rationalizing one. Anima and animus are thus key- psychological aspects behind the social institution of marriage.

Commenting on the limitations of this psychoanalytical view, Simone de Beauvoir says that while man- woman relationship cannot be studied purely in biological terms, it cannot also be studied purely in psycho-analytical terms. One must therefore examine man-woman relationship in its existential, economic, social context. In psychoanalysis the concept of choice is rejected in

the name of the unconscious and the libido. Choice is something which gives man a certain degree of transcendence into which he finds himself thrown. It is in this transcendence, says Beauvoir, that he or she finds "self-fulfilment in terms of the choice made".

### Socio-historical Context

Engels traces the history of the woman according to his socio-economic perspective. In the primitive societies. The division of labour between the two sexes constituted two classes with equality between them: Man hunted and fished and woman remained in the home doing her domestic duties. With the appearance of private property man became proprietor of several things including woman herself. The old division of labour which gave woman equal authority was upset. In the patriarchal family founded upon private property, woman is reduced to a slave while man becomes the master. This economic oppression gives rise to social oppression. It would be apt to quote Engels in this regard:

'The first class antagonism appearing in history coincides with the development of the antagonism of man and wife in monogamy, and the first class oppression with that of the female by the male sex. Monogamy was a great historical progress. But by the side of slavery and private property it marks at the same time that epoch which, reaching down to our days, takes with all progress also a step backwards, relatively speaking, and develops the welfare and advancement of one by the woe and submission of the other. It is the cellular form of

civilized society which enables us to study the nature of its now fully developed contrasts and contradictions.<sup>11</sup>

Engels is thus, fully aware of far-reaching, and significant social changes. Engels then turns his attention to the family in patriarchal system. According to him:

" Family's essential points are the assimilation of the unfree element and the paternal authority. It is founded on male supremacy for the pronounced purpose of breeding children of indisputable paternal lineage. The latter is required because these children shall later on inherit for fortune of their father."<sup>12</sup>

In primitive societies man-woman relationship had its own specific pattern. In his own attempts to be sovereign, man was supported by the complacency of the woman herself. When the Nomads settled down on the land and became agriculturists, institutions and the laws appeared. The sexual differentiation was reflected in the structure of the human grouping and that too, in a specific form. In agricultural communities woman was given an extraordinary prestige. Appearance of property in collectivised form required that its possessors provide a posterity. Maternity, therefore, became a great function. Engels points out that in place of the outlook of the Nomadic tribes living only for the moment, the agricultural community substituted the concept of a life rooted in the past and connected with the future. It was through a woman that the life of the class<sup>n</sup> was perpetuated and communal property was handed down by the women. Woman came to be

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identified with the Mother Earth and was involved in fertility rights. In fact, in these societies the male remained the incarnation of authority. The devaluation of woman with the rise of the patriarchal family is an undeniable fact.

In this context Kate Millett's analysis of patriarchy is illuminating. She points out how patriarchy has been regarded as a chief institution. The family is a kind of link between the individual and society. The family, therefore, enjoys the power to control and conduct where political authorities prove to be incapable. Kate Millett further explains :

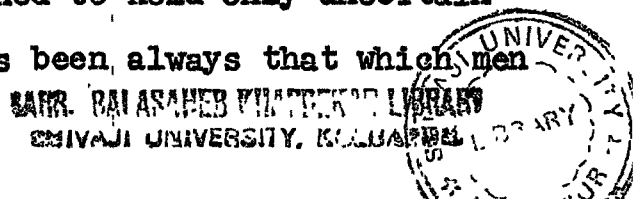
Serving as an agent of the larger society, the family not only encourages its own members to adjust and conform, but acts as a unit in the government of the patriarchal state which rules its citizens through its family heads. Even in patriarchal societies where they are granted legal citizenship, women tend to be ruled through the family alone and have little or no formal relation to the state.<sup>13</sup>

The three important patriarchal institutions, the family, the society and the state are invariably related to one another. Therefore, there must be conformity and co-operation among these three ingredients of patriarchal society. Without which it would not exist. In most forms of patriarchy men tend to take support of the religious statements such as " the father is the head of the family " to inculcate the dominance of male parent. As a result of this, female heads of the family are regarded as undesirable or a matter of some misfortune. One may neglect the balance of

authority between the personalities of 'various households, one must remember the fact that the entire culture is based on the belief of masculine superiority. Masculine power and its authority is 'always and everywhere held superior by common consent whereas nobody approves of the feminine authority.

The features of the patriarchy so far described have each an effect upon the psychology of both sexes. In patriarchystatus, temperament and role of each sex are supposed to be value systems with psychological bearing. In patriarchal marriage the status of the family and the division<sup>of</sup> labour are of intrinsic importance. When the male holds a superior economic position to that of the female, there is an obvious clear-cut distinction between the status of both the families.

The female always seeks the approval and favour of males who are in power for her survival and progress. Customarily the female is deprived of such status but she has very trivial sources of dignity of self respect. Males are given natural status right from their birth. With the rise of the patriarchal family woman was thus denied her right and status equal with that of man. Woman was, however, worshipped only to the extent that man made himself the slave of his own fears. It was in terror not in love he worshipped her. The Great Mother was dethroned and male gods appeared; patriarchy was triumphant. Condemned to play the part of the other woman was also condemned to hold only uncertain power. Woman's place in society has been, always that which men



have assigned to her. Woman was dethroned by the advent of the private property and her lot through centuries has been bound up with private property and her history in large part is bound up with the history of patrimony. At the time of patriarchal power man took away from woman all her rights to possess and to bequeath the property. Through marriage woman is now uprooted from the group into which she was born and attached, to a different group - her husband's; when she becomes a young girl, the father has all power over her; when she marries the same power is transferred to her husband. Since a wife is his property a man can naturally have as many wives as he pleases. Polygamy is limited only by economic considerations. On the other hand, woman is subjected to strict rules of chastity. When the family and the private patrimony are the basis of society woman is totally submerged. When Feudalism emerged from the convulsions of the early middle ages, woman's position seems to have been most uncertain. Saint Paul based the subordination of woman to man upon both the old and new Testaments; "

"For the man is not of the woman but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman but the woman for the man..... for the husband is the head of wife even as Christ is head of church. Therefore, as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything."<sup>14</sup>

Woman thus came to be regarded as a temptress, the devil companion. From the time of George VI celibacy was imposed on the priesthood

and woman was seen as a dangerous temptation. All the church fathers proclaimed her evil nature. St. Thomas wrote, 'Man is above woman as Christ is above man'. It is unchangeable that woman is destined to live under man's influence and has no authority from her lord. Woman was forbidden to make depositions in court. Masculine occupation remains close to her. In feudal period the concept of courtly love elevated the concept of the cult of the Mother. Knightly love has platonic associations but the truth is that the knightly love was a compensation for official morality. On the whole, men in the middle ages held rather a unfavourable opinion of woman. In the 18th century man-woman relationship changed slightly as woman's freedom continue to increase. The rising middle-class imposed a strict moral code but still women distinguish themselves in many areas of action. But on the whole the middle-class woman clung to her chains because she clung to the privileges of her class. It was with the coming of the Industrial Revolution that an important change in man-woman relationship took place. Woman rejoined the economic importance, she had lost since pre-historic days. The machine to a very large extent obliterated the difference in physical strength between male and female. The growing industrialism demanded a large labour force which men alone could not furnish. As a result, the collaboration of women became necessary. In this important process of social change when she found herself in mills, factories and other offices, female labour was, of course, exploited. Woman's social and political status improved. With the change in status



of woman the forms of an implication of man-woman relationship changed. As Simone de Beauvoir says the most important historical aspect of man-woman relationship is that the whole of feminine history has been man made. She brilliantly summarizes the man-woman relationship in historical terms:

When they revered the Goddess Mother, it was because they feared Nature; when the bronze tool allowed them to face Nature boldly, they instituted the patriarchy; then it became the conflict between family and state that defined woman's status; the Christian's attitude toward God, the world, and his own flesh was reflected in the situation to which he consigned her; what was called in the Middle Ages "the quarrel of women" was a quarrel between clerics and laymen over marriage and celibacy; it was the social regime founded on private property that entailed the guardianship of the married woman, and it is the technological evolution accomplished by men that has emancipated the women of today. It was a transformation in masculine ethics that brought about a reduction in family size through birth control and partially freed woman from bondage to maternity. Feminism itself was never an autonomous movement; it was in part an instrument in the hands of politicians, in part an epiphenomenon reflecting a deeper social drama. Never have women constituted a separate caste, nor in truth have they ever as a sex sought to play a historic role. The doctrines that object to the advent of woman considered as flesh, life, immanence, the Other, are masculine ideologies in no way expressing feminine aspirations.<sup>15</sup>

### The Context of Class

Kate Millet describes how it has now become possible for women to rise to a certain height in a society where status is dependent upon the economic, social and educational circumstances. In such circumstances they can compete with men and stand higher than some men. Many times the ethic of masculine supremacy is overtly shown which makes the function of class complex. Here one is confronted by what appears to be a paradox. In the lower class of society the male claims authority and power only on the basis of his strength of superior sex rank alone. Overtly he shows to be authoritative but actually he is often obliged to share power with the women of his class who work themselves and earn money. It is not similar with the situation of middle-class and Higher-class women. The women of middle and upper classes of society are hardly economically productive. Consequently the men belonging these classes enjoy more power and status as compared to women.

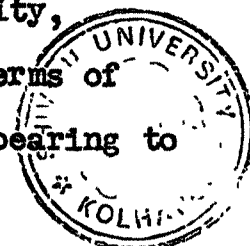
Another interesting factor that Kate Millet notes is that one of the chief effects of class within patriarchy is to set one woman against another. In olden days an antagonism was common between a whore and a matron. At present, it is between a career woman and a housewife. One envies the other for her security and prestige. While the envied longs for freedom, adventure and contact with the great world. Within these levels of class distinction there is another subsidiary layer of distinction in status categories among women: that is a class of virtue and the

other of beauty and age. One thing is important here to be observed that whatever family, economic condition, educational status she may belong to, the female has fewer permanent class association than does male. Her economic dependency is perpetual and therefore it renders her affiliations with any class a temporary matter. Aristotle observed that 'the only slave to whom a commoner might lay claim was his woman'. With their own strength, intellect and resources, very few women rise above working class in personal prestige and economic status. Kate Millett thus concludes :

"Women have, therefore, less of an investment in the class system. But it is important to understand that as with any group whose existence is parasitic to its rulers, women are a dependency class who live on surplus." 16

### Ideological Context

Hannah Arendt has observed that government is upheld by power supported either through consent or imposed through violence. Conditioning to an ideology amounts to the former. There must be "socialization" of both sexes to basic patriarchal polities with regard to temperament, role and status. As to status the pervasive prejudice of male superiority confirms the superior status in the male and inferior in the female. In considering the temperament the sex categories are stereotyped and embody aggression, intelligence, force efficacy in male and passivity, ignorance, tenderness and docility in the female. In terms of activity, sex role assigns domestic service and child bearing to



the female and the achievement, interest and ambition to the male. Hannah Arendt summarises her discussion in the following words:

Were one to analyse the three categories one might designate status as the political component role as the sociological and temperament as the psychological and temperament as the psychological- yet their interdependence is unquestionable and they form a chain. Those awarded higher status tend to adopt roles of mastery, largely because they are first encouraged to develop temperaments of dominance. That is true of caste and class as well is self-evident.<sup>17</sup>

#### The Context of Feminine Self

An important aspect of the general contexts of man-woman relationship, we have examined so far is the nature of the feminine self. The feminine self emerged when women started thinking about their subordination, inferiority and inability. By the end of the first quarter of this century the women started thinking of rebelling against their traditional existence. They thought that they were leading totally meaningless life for they were born to serve their husbands like the slaves. They also realised that their ability, intellect and skill were entirely neglected. Their own ambitions, interests and likings were completely shadowed by the domination of their husbands. The woman was the negligible creature which had to make all adjustments with her husband. She had to adapt with the ambitions and interests of her husband though they may be of a mean level.



The woman, therefore, thoughtfully convinced herself that it was an injustice to down rate the woman who had the same qualities of intellect and ability as man. She became aware of her own self. She became conscious of her interests and ambitions. The woman realised that she was no more inferior and subordinate to man.

## III

The foregoing description of the various general contexts of man-woman relationships in terms of myth, archetype, psychology, sociology, class, ideology and feminine self emphasizes the scope and complexity of the theme. It also provides a general frame of reference within which man-woman relationship in Katherine Mansfield's stories can be explored. Thus, an analysis of man-woman relationship in the context of patriarchy is particularly relevant to the fictional world of Katherine Mansfield. Biographical evidence shows the influence of her father, Harold Beauchamp, on Katherine Mansfield. He appears again and again in her stories in male characters such as Stanley Burnell, John Hammond, Andreas Binzer- who are all different examples of the selfish, authoritative male, the insensitive Philistine and the overbearing family tyrant. The presence of the patriarchal family which is greatly concerned with the problematic of feminine selfhood, is thus pervasive in the stories of Katherine Mansfield.

In Katherine Mansfield's stories the male character is shown to be dominant. The woman in her stories seems to be confined to the family only. She has to provide the necessities to the members of her family. She should satisfy her husband by serving him dutifully. She should give birth to children and rear them. In the role of housewife and mother she is forced to stick to her family. She consequently remains isolated from the outside world. She has to sacrifice her freedom, aspirations and career. In this

situation it is impossible to give any scope to her selfhood. By the economic insufficiency she is often hurt and exploited. She realises her utter helplessness in the male-dominated society. Regarding this male Chauvinism, male supremacy, she cannot preserve her feminist self. The problem of feminine self is sufficiently focused by Katherine Mansfield in most of her stories. The people around a woman in her stories are always under impression that she is a dutiful worshipping housewife but Mansfield implicitly tried to show how she is aware of her own self, feminine self. Her helplessness produces a tendency to small-mindedness, petty jealousy, irrational emotionality and random violence. Katherine Mansfield creates the consciousness of feminine self in many stories as 'Prelude', 'At The Bay', 'Bliss', 'The Tiredness of Rosabela', 'Revelations', 'A Married Man's Story' etc.

The present dissertation seeks to explore the theme of man-woman relationship in Mansfield's stories by analysing existential categories such as self-hood, freedom, and authenticity. It does so without, however, ignoring the sociological framework definable in relation to social institutions such as marriage, ~~class~~, family, social class and patriarchy. While the existential categories define one pole, that of the subjective consciousness, the social categories define the other pole of social conformity. It is in this bipolar context that the present dissertation seeks to make a critical statement on the man-woman relationship theme in Katherine Mansfield. Of course, wherever necessary relevant evidence from biographical and psychological studies of Mansfield

such as her own relationship with her father and with Middleton Murray are aptly used. The main focus, however, is a thematic one definable in terms of existential and social categories. Wherever necessary, analysis of symbols and images is also undertaken in support of this thematic approach.