



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

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2.1 Theoretical Framework

This provides the background for a discussion of themes and social problems in *Sold* by Patricia McCormick. In this work, critical literacy theory is used in the analysis of how literature both mirrors and critiques power and oppression. Through Hilary Janks' interdependent essential model of literacy based on domination, access, diversity, and design, and Paulo Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed, the novel is read beyond the confines of a work of literature. It is transformed into a place for revealing how language can both perpetuate and resist exploitation. These theories explain how the protagonist's lack of knowledge and literacy is transformed into an instrument of oppression (literacy oppression), where her inability to read, write, and understand the world around her traps her in cycles of exploitation. In contrast, the process of gaining knowledge and critical awareness represents literacy empowerment, where literacy becomes a tool that allows her to make decisions, reclaim her agency, and envision a better future. The analysis also views literacy not just as a set of individual skills but as a social practice, where reading and writing are shaped by and contribute to the norms, values, and power structures in her community. From its inception, in Paulo Freire's work (1972b, p. 61), critical literacy was a path to liberation. If he could get his adult students to see how their world had been created, and if he could get them to observe where such naming was oppressive, then they could free themselves by renaming their world. For him, reading the word involved reading the world to transform it. So, social change that seeks to bring about equity and equality is at the centre of critical literacy (Janks, 2014:14). Finally, literacy liberation emerges when literacy fosters critical consciousness and collective action, enabling individuals not only to change their own lives but also to challenge broader systems of injustice. The framework thus guides this research in examining how literature may be utilized as an instrument of social critique and consciousness raising.

2.1.1 Literature

Literature is a special form of human communication that condenses experience, emotion, and knowledge through linguistic techniques. This extensive and active domain encompasses a multitude of genres, including poetry, prose, fiction, and drama, with specialized varieties and engaging means to captivate readers. Literature, apart from its aesthetic structures, imparts profound meaning, often mirroring social, philosophical, and cultural reality. This reflective function is supported by Abrams (1999:294): “Traditional mimetic critics said that literature imitates reality by using words to show the location, activities, speech, and relationships of people.” Literature is a broad and intricate field encompassing various genres, including prose, poetry, and drama, each with varying structures, stylistic concerns, and methods of addressing the audience. Through beautifully written stories, rhythmic poems, and gripping stage performances, literature does more than entertain; it is a very effective tool in the transmission of messages, the examination of multiple perspectives, and the building of a better comprehension of the world. As underlined even further (Abrams,1999:294), “A book is an imitation of a type of written speech, such as a biography, autobiography, or even a scholar's annotated edition of a poem.” What this implies is that literary forms, whether narrative or lyrical, are stylized expressions of the manner in which human beings communicate emotions and intelligence. In this regard, literature goes beyond the primitive level of storytelling; it is a medium of cultural memory and continuity of history. All civilizations have ever relied on written and verbal literature to document their traditions, ideologies, and values through which knowledge and understanding are transferred from one generation to the next. This deeper purpose of literature is echoed in (Abrams, 1999:124) “In the broad sense, literature is mimetic, that is, it bears references to the world of human experience outside of the

book.” Through this imitative nature, literature is a point of convergence of the past, present, and future where readers can understand the values of the past while interpreting the realities of their era.

Moreover, literature is instrumental in provoking critical thinking and scholarly discussion. By addressing complex problems, ethical dilemmas, and multidimensional characterizations, literary texts compel readers to analyze situations through varied perspectives and reflect more intensely. This capacity to instigate thought and spark discussion renders literature a priceless instrument in the context of educational institutions, as it promotes imagination, empathy, and global comprehension among students and scholars alike. This is also quoted by (Ravipati, 2023) “Literary fiction invites readers to participate in mental simulation, so helping them to deduce the ideas and feelings of sophisticated characters, thus improving empathy, theory of mind, and critical thinking.” This comment emphasizes how literary works capture the core of human civilization by showing social changes and safeguarding the original stories that distinguish many countries.

In addition, literature is a tool for emotional expression and human connection. Authors draw on their own lives, feelings, and observations to create stories that powerfully resonate with the readers. Whether through the passionate language of poetry, the gripping plots of novels, or the actual drama of plays, literature offers individuals a chance to seek comfort, inspiration, and a sense of common humanity. It has the power to evoke empathy, enabling readers to step into the shoes of characters with every type of background and situation, culminating in a more empathetic and accepting society. “This is all I ever wanted to make students and artists view myth as a mirror of the one great adventure of life, and then to give new life to it” (Campbell, 2004:16). This point of view is in line with the belief that literature, like myth, reflects human experiences and gives

people the power to find deeper meaning and connection in the stories that form their lives.

Furthermore, contemporary literacy enables participatory storytelling, where readers or spectators become engaged participants in a story, as a hero would on a quest. Online environments such as fan fiction sites, interactive story software, and virtual reality environments dissolve the boundary between reader and author, echoing the process of transformation of the protagonist. Similarly, as literary heroes are crafted through adversity, audiences today interact with the story in ways that challenge and reconfigure their conception of narrative. “a text is not an independent unit but a stimulus or a blueprint which sets off a reader's reactions, and the meaning of the work is the experience the reader has during the process of reading” (Abrams, 1999:268-270). In this case, the text becomes a place where readers are not just passive recipients but active co-creators of meaning. This is similar to how modern literacy methods enable readers to enter the story space and change along with it.

The hero's journey, as explained by Joseph Campbell in his book *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*, is a common narrative pattern that is followed across the mythologies of a number of cultures. It starts with *The Call to Adventure*, in which the hero is invited to move out of the ordinary world and cross into a world filled with challenges (Campbell, 2004:8). Then, the hero encounters a succession of trials in *The Road of Trials*, designed to prove his courage and wisdom (Campbell, 2004:69). In this, the hero undergoes *The Vision Quest*, through which he receives enhanced wisdom or abilities (Campbell, 2004:116), and *The Meeting with the Goddess*, which comes in the guise of a fateful meeting with some important individual (Campbell, 2004:152). At the last stages, the hero receives a tremendous boon or insight in *The Boon* and has to cross *The Return Threshold*, the threshold where he goes back to the ordinary world with the changes or the

knowledge that he has acquired (Campbell, 2004:284). Here, the hero reaches a phase of *The Master of Two Worlds*, where he can master the duality of life between the ordinary and the special worlds. Campbell notes that this quest is not merely a physical journey, but rather an individual's inner transformation when confronted with the challenges of life (Campbell, 2004:310).

In this study, the Hero's Journey pattern is used in the analysis section to map Lakshmi's transformation from a helpless village girl to a more conscious and empowered individual. The structure of the stages of the hero's journey helps explain how Lakshmi's experiences, including the call to "go to the city," a series of trials in the brothel, to the moment of realization, and her decision to run away, reflect an inner journey that leads to self-change. Thus, this theory supports a narrative analysis of how the experience of exploitation and literacy learning shapes Lakshmi's empowerment process.

2.1.2 Literacy as a Tool

According to Janks's theory, literacy is a social, cultural, and political talent that is still needed (Janks, 2010:21-34). It can also be a tool that allows people to participate in creating their worlds and acquire and share power, as literacy has a lot to do with concerns of power and the rules that govern society (Janks, 2010:35-60). Janks asserts that literacy is more than just reading and writing; it also includes the critical capacity to recognize and comprehend how texts are employed to establish and preserve power structures. By recognizing and challenging these power structures, individuals can use literacy as a transformative tool for social justice and equity (Janks, 2010:181-20). Janks promotes a critical literacy framework that enables learners to interrogate prevailing discourses and participate actively in societal change (Janks, 2010:181-20). Furthermore, literacy functions as an empowerment tool across multiple dimensions: educationally, it provides individuals with the knowledge and

critical thinking skills necessary for lifelong learning; economically, it enables people to access better employment opportunities and navigate complex systems; communicatively, it allows individuals to express themselves, share their narratives, and engage in dialogue across different contexts; and civically, it equips people with the ability to participate in democratic processes and advocate for their rights (Janks, 2010:127-154). Through these dimensions, literacy is a transformative tool that not only allows individuals to engage with the world but also to reshape it towards greater justice and equity (Janks, 2010:181-20).

PEDAGOGY of the OPPRESSED (Freire: 20015:11), Freire talks about education as a means of liberation from oppression, emphasizing the necessity of critical consciousness and dialogue in education. It stresses that authentic education must be concerned with the formation of critical consciousness (conscientização), in which students do not merely learn facts but also question, reflect on, and act upon their world to transform it. Freire critiques the conventional education system, referred to as the "banking concept," in which the learner is a passive receptacle "In the banking perspective of education, knowledge is a gift given by people who regard themselves as informed upon others they regard as ignorant" (Freire, 2005:72) and instead introduces a dialogical pedagogy in which teachers and learners become co-participants in learning "Education starts with the solution of the teacher-student conflict by balancing the poles of the contradiction such that both are concurrently teachers and students" (Freire, 2005:72). He contends that by limiting the learner's voice and suppressing their ability for critical thinking, this approach reinforces the current power structures. He believes that the oppressed can only achieve freedom through their own reflection and action and not through the benevolence of the oppressor "The fundamental humanistic and historical challenge of the oppressed, then, is to free themselves and their oppressors as well" (Freire, 2005:44). In

addition, the text stresses the conflict between the dehumanizing effects of oppression and the real goal of education as a humanizing process “Although both humanization and dehumanization are genuine choices, only the former is the people's calling” (Freire, 2005:44) to advance human consciousness, freedom, and the capacity for the generation of just change in the world. For Freire, education cannot be separated from politics and must be directed towards the transformation of society. This means not only understanding the world but also transforming it what he refers to as "reading the word and the world." (Freire, 2005:47) “People have to first acknowledge the reasons of oppression if they are to overcome it; only then can they change the circumstances and enable the quest of a more complete humanity”. From this vantage point, education is no longer a matter of depositing knowledge but one of freedom, a way of enlivening people and making them agents of change. Pedagogy of the Oppressed is not merely a theoretical critique it is a call to action. It remains a vital text for educators, activists, and scholars committed to challenging oppressive structures and creating more democratic and just societies. Its influence persists in modern movements for justice, especially where the context is characterized by inequality, marginalization, and state violence. Pedagogy of the Oppressed is a compulsory read for educators, activists, and anyone interested in social transformation through liberatory education.

(Janks, 2014:10) Janks said that Critical Literacy is the theory that deals with the concept of critical literacy as an approach to understanding, analyzing, and challenging the prevailing mechanisms of a social, political, and cultural nature. The book in focus has outlined the connection between language and power by noting that texts can never be neutral and instead carry within themselves the values, beliefs, and social positions of their creators. Based on Hilary Janks' theory, this book explains how literacy can be used to support social transformation toward justice and equality. (Janks, 2014:9-11)

Janks discusses how language impacts social connections by discussing how texts are not neutral but rather reflect the viewpoints of their creators. Furthermore, (Janks, 2014:13-15) Janks explores the use of language to maintain or challenge existing power dynamics, while pages (Janks 2014:17-14) delve into Janks' theoretical framework, integrating concepts of power, access, diversity, and redesign for societal change. Finally, (Janks 2014:30-31) Janks highlights how critical literacy may be used to rethink texts and procedures to create a more just and inclusive world. This all-encompassing strategy presents literacy as a crucial instrument for advancing justice and change.

This theoretical framework is in line with the developing conception of new literacy, which goes beyond fundamental reading and writing. It encompasses being able to read the world critically, decode social signs, and deal with sophisticated interactions. It is also said by (Campbell, 2004:29) "The monomyth is thus a metamyth, a philosophical interpretation of the unity of the spiritual history of mankind, the Story behind the story. To paraphrase the old Japanese koan, it is the sound of one myth clapping: the universal quest for self-transformation. The hero's journey encompasses the bravery required to explore the profound; it embodies the concept of imaginative renewal." From this point of view, literature and literacy are both powerful tools for bringing about change in individuals and society. They combine conventional story forms with modern critical thinking.

Literacy and Power (Janks, 2010:24), Janks discusses the relationship between literacy, or the ability to read and write, and power in society. Janks sees literacy as a communication tool and a tool to strengthen or challenge systems of power. Janks said that access to literacy can influence a person's social position and give them control over the narratives that shape social reality. This is said by (Janks, 2010:2) "The literacy practice refers to the regular and normal utilization of written language that is institutionally controlled and culturally determined. Different groups of individuals perform literacy in different ways." Apart

from that, Janks emphasized that literacy education is not always neutral by saying, "Language, literacy, and power dynamics are all intertwined in critical literacy. It highlights the fact that education in general and literacy education in particular cannot be characterized as an impartial endeavor. It is necessary to consider the curriculum as representing a certain, inherently biased "choice" from cultural circumstances." (Janks, 2010:22). Therefore, literacy is very necessary in social and cultural terms to avoid social inequality, such as differences in social, economic, and cultural classes. By integrating new literacy into education, Janks underscores the importance of empowering individuals to challenge oppressive systems and contribute to the creation of more equitable and inclusive societies. This is also related to other research from Matilda's Literacy Practices in Roald Dahl's "Matilda," (Retnaningdyah, 2018) which discusses that literacy practices can provide pleasure, escape, and strength in the social situations faced. Even so, in Literacy as Self-Improvement as Experienced by Louisa Clark` in Jojo Moyes's *Me Before You* (2013) (Marshanda, 2023) discusses that literacy plays an important role in personal transformation, leading to improvements in Louisa's knowledge, language skills, and financial condition.

2.1.3 Traditional Literacy

Traditional literacy entails the fundamental reading and writing skills that have been the cornerstone of education for numerous centuries. This is where phonetic skills come in, with individuals knowing the correlation between characters and the corresponding sounds, and the capacity to read with the aim of deciphering the meaning of written content. Traditional literacy also encompasses writing skills through which individuals can articulate themselves effectively in written form. In traditional education systems, literacy is usually learned from books, newspapers, and other written texts. The central concern of

traditional literacy is to make sure that people are capable of comprehending and generating texts that adhere to the language conventions that hold in a society. It encompasses the proficiency needed to decipher written text, along with the expertise in knowledge that defines the social and cultural identity of a particular community (Pau, 2024).

2.1.4 Literacy as Social Practices

In contemporary developments, the theory of literacy has developed into what is referred to as new literacy, emphasizing that literacy is more than the technical skill of reading and writing; it is also at the center of social practice. Contemporary literacy encompasses being able to interpret information presented in diverse digital formats, including social media, blogs, and email. Moreover, contemporary literacy is more influenced by cultural and social contexts, and communication style varies according to the provided context and participating community. Interactivity and co-engagement are also critical features of new literacy that enable individuals to share and discuss information via electronic media. Thus, literacy now extends beyond the simple comprehension of written texts to encompass competence in traversing the continuously changing world of electronics. This is also said by (Janks, 2010:205) “Being able to engage with emerging technologies is now included in the 21st-century literacy notion. A study carried out by Marsh describes how children acquire digital literacy skills at an early age (Marsh & Hallett, 1999; Marsh, 2005). To be able to read multimodal texts competently, readers need to have literacy in various modes of semiosis. Video texts tend to integrate visual semiotics with motion and sound elements, thereby rendering their analytical processes intricate. In multimodal texts, the knowledge of not only the functioning of separate message channels but also their combined functioning in the construction of meaning is crucial.”

Literacy happens both inside and outside, serving as a powerful tool for interacting with others and driving social change. Janks highlights how literacy can empower individuals, such as women trapped in economic hardship or prostitution, by helping them build supportive social networks, broaden their horizons about life choices, and access resources that can transform their lives. In the context of literacy as social practice, literacy is not limited to reading, writing, and numeracy. It also involves understanding cultural and social aspects. Literacy plays a significant role in influencing the social context, allowing individuals to participate in social interactions and driving efforts toward creating positive social change. (Zenger, 2007) explains further, "Barton and Hamilton believed that literacy practices encompass 'values, attitudes, sentiments, and social relationships' in addition to visible units of conduct" (p. 6). To describe literacy as a collection of social practices that may be deduced from events that are mediated by written texts, a social theory of literacy integrates events, texts, and practices.

The novel *Sold* portrays literacy as a social practice that has the power to change people's lives. The main character, Lakshmi, defines herself and gives her life purpose via reading. This supports Janks' theory that literacy has the power to shape social structures as well as personal identities. Lakshmi's story demonstrates how literacy can enable victims of exploitation to take charge of their lives, escape the constraints of exploitation, and achieve independence.

The form of human expression that represents several aspects of life, either directly or indirectly, is referred to as literature. Literature is often considered a reflection of life because it can be observed, read, or heard through observation, experience, and contemplation of reality. For instance, in historical contexts, literature has served as a mirror of the real world, enriched by social issues such as injustice.

2.2 Previous Research

This research is also related to the research *Oppression on Woman As Reflection In Lakshmi's Character of Sold Novel by Patricia (Oktarny Kristami, 2022)* which, which discusses the forms of oppression experienced by a female character named Lakshmi in the novel "Sold" by Patricia McCormick. The five faces of oppression theory by Irish Marion Young is used to analyze this oppression, which includes exploitation, marginalization, power, cultural imperialism, and violence, and in this research also discusses about oppression *Toward The Marginal Society In Patricia McCormick's Novel "Sold"* (Merry Julia Pardede, 2020) examines oppression of marginal society in Patricia McCormick's novel *Sold* through Spivak's subaltern theory. It concludes that the reasons behind the oppression of the protagonist, Lakshmi, are patriarchy, rural poverty, capitalism, and her age. Lakshmi is oppressed by her stepfather, who sells her, and the mucikari, who turns her into a sex worker. In spite of the suffering she goes through, Lakshmi exhibits resilience by obeying, endurance of suffering, hoping for liberation, learning secretly, and pursuing love. The outcome of this analysis reveals that the oppression of women in this novel is the product of a particular form of patriarchy and capitalism that worsens the condition of poor and marginalized women.

On the other hand, *Need for Relief against Objectifying Women with Reference to Patricia McCormick's Sold* (Sunil, 2022) discusses child sex trafficking as a form of human cruelty, where every year many children are sold by those closest to them to become sex workers. This research aims to highlight the plight of sex workers and its impact on writers and readers. This paper critically examines the practice of child sex trafficking and its impacts on the victims and deliberates economic and socio-cultural factors affecting child sex trafficking, especially in Nepal and India. The novel "Sold" was used as the main data source, supported by systematic reviews and community-based studies. This research also discusses the social and

family status of sex workers as well as related legal aspects as depicted in the novel.

Even so, *Revealing The Gender Inequality in Patricia McCormick's Sold Critical Discourse Analysis* (Fatmawati, 2017) discusses gender inequality and shows that men tend to dominate women and act irresponsibly towards their families. Additionally, women have limited decision-making power, are often abandoned by their husbands, and are not allowed to make their own choices due to cultural or religious instructions. Meanwhile, in *Inside the Dark World: Women's Trade and Prostitution*, Patricia McCormick's *Sold* and Awaiz Khan's *No Honour* (Khan, 2023) discuss gender inequality and show that men tend to dominate women and act irresponsibly towards their families. Additionally, women have limited decision-making power, are often abandoned by their husbands, and are not allowed to make their own choices due to cultural or religious instructions, where women are seen as commodities and objects that can be traded and sold for domestic purposes. Masculine privilege plays a strong role through doctrines designed by men in this patriarchal culture.

Nevertheless, in *Human Trafficking and Its Impact as Portrayed in the Novel Patricia McCormick's Sold and Tassaró Gk's Galaksi Kinanthi: a Comparative Literature* (Rambe, 2017) is discussed here through the demonstration of two literary works from different countries, namely, the novel *Sold* by Patricia McCormick and "The Kinanthi Galaxy" by Tassaró GK. Upsurgence in these two novels signifies the aspect of human trafficking in forms such as forced labor, bonded labor, involuntary domestic servitude, and sex trafficking. Including human trafficking of the characters in the story has psychological, physical, and social impacts, among others.

Based on previous research regarding the novel *Sold* by Patricia McCormick, most of the research focuses on the scope of oppression, human trafficking, and gender equality. However, I have not found any research that discusses how to get out of exploitation situations by learning literacy skills to become independent from the brothel.