

## Representation of Prudence and Maturity at The Teenage: A Thematic Study of Anne Frank's Autobiography

**Abhishesh Verma** Research Scholar, Department of English and Modern European Languages, University of Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.\*  
Email: [abhishesh1209@gmail.com](mailto:abhishesh1209@gmail.com)  
DOI:

### Abstract

*This research explores the maturity of a teenage girl during the horrible circumstances of the Second World War. Anne Frank's diary does not only present external conflicts but also figures out the inner psychological growth and resilience. At the age of thirteen, her writing reflects the everyday concerns about friendships, disputes, and existential challenges. She talks about the consequences of war, which confront the harsh realities of human identity, massacre, and the pathetic condition of women. Her relationships with the residents of the secret annex accelerate her maturity in complex surroundings, like the acceptance of flaws, adjustments, morality, and ethics. She dedicates herself to studying while hiding, which helps her to understand the surroundings, friendships, relationships and curiosity to know the world. She has nothing to prove, no hidden agendas to keep secret, and no propaganda to spread except for the revealing of truth with the help of writing, which poorly screams from the victims' side. She believes that only a diary can provide a great source of comfort and support because she expresses her thoughts with the great innocence and sincerity that only a child can possess. The diary still makes it real for those who read and for those who come after her; it is only by keeping the memory of the wound alive, by remembering and sharing, that people can find true emotions. It is a kind of testament to the indestructible human will to preserve and survive in the face of the most adverse circumstances. Her diary as many times as it is read, and its inspirational dialogue brings the catharsis closer. She has space to express herself in the most honest and candid of terms, which bears her soul on every page of the diary. So, this research deals with the results and consequences of war, which include social anxiety, social disorder, trauma, psychological dysfunctions, and disfunctions, and the suffering of the survivors*

**Keywords:** War, human identity, relationships, interpersonal thoughts, catharsis.

### Introduction

The word 'war' is a very complex term that only creates destruction either in a physical or psychological manner. It is not about only the first world war and second world war but also, we can see the war during the ancient times, like the period of four yugas—Sat yuga, Treta yuga, Dvapara yuga, and present Kali yuga. The question is what kind of result people have got from this word—only abolition of identities, torture, and psychological trauma. This research portrays the instances of war between the lord Rama and demon Ravana, Krishna and Kansa, Pandava Brothers and Kauravas and Akbar and Maharana Pratap. With these examples, there are only the records of massacres and the destruction of human identity of those who don't have any personal agenda or motive and must suffer because of false consciousness. The term 'false consciousness' is used by Friedrich Engels and Franz Mehring in 1893. Joseph McCarney notes in "Ideological and false consciousness" that Engels was referring to "a quite specific kind of cognitive failure on the part of an individual, a failure of self-awareness, a lack of insight into the 'motive forces' of their own thinking." McCarney, Joseph (2005). "Ideology and False Consciousness" – via Joe McCarney Archive.

---

**Article History** : Received: 03 Sep. 2025. Accepted: 15 Nov. 2025. Available online: 25 Nov. 2025. Published by SAFE. (Society for Academic Facilitation and Extension) **Copyright**: © 2025 The Author(s). **Licensing** : This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License **Conflict of Interest**: The Author(s) declare(s) no conflict of interest.

This research explains how false consciousness becomes the part of the cognitive failure and errors in taking the decisions while conducting the task, for example: Lord Rama sent 'Angad' to Lanka, to settle the disputes between Ravan and him, but unfortunately Ravan denied the settlement approach because of cognitive failure although he was a great scholar and Brahmin, further instance is Lord Krishna tried to convince Duryodhana that he should arrange only 5 villages for Pandav brothers but he denied the proposal because of cognitive failure although he was disciple of guru Drona, another example is King Akbar and Maharana Pratap both were the rival together because Akbar wanted to rule over the India but Maharana Pratap pushed him back at the field etc., with these three examples, this research tries to explain how much the impact of cognitive failure creates the difficulties for nation and human existence.

While discussing the facts of war, there is still suffering, trauma, torture, and psychological barriers among the countries, which leads to darkness for the upcoming generation. This research takes the example of 'Cathy Caruth, who is the pioneer of trauma literature, her work 'Unclaimed Experience' is the groundbreaking for trauma studies. She says trauma relates with the word "belatedness.". She writes, "What returns to haunt the victim, these stories tell us, is not only the reality of the violent event but also the reality of the way that its violence has not yet been fully known" (Caruth, 6). She says traumatic experiences change life in a bad way. This research explores the reality of war and how it creates an impact on rainfall patterns for the countries and human identity.

### **Material And Methods**

As possible, this research argues with the reality of psychological trauma and victims of war like Primo Levi's "If This Is a Man," Anne Frank's The Diary of a Young Girl," Elie Wiesel's "Night," and Viktor Frankl's "Man's Search for Meaning," etc. The writers who were mentioned previously in this research all faced the problems of concentration camps and separate identity formation during the Second World War. 'Hitler' had a problem of cognitive failure because he didn't think in a rational way that genocide was not a solution for the gratification of personal agendas. Genocidal error was the most vulgar action towards humanity and the growth of a nation, deeply flawed by the fact that the survivors had never met with their natives and families during the concentration camps. Women faced the problems of hygiene, and newly born children had no identities.

Anne Frank's diary is clearly one of the most monumental things that portrays and reveals horror; it reveals horror that comes from the victims' side and still becomes a symbolic text of the Holocaust. Her maturity comes not from natural disposition but from the complex surroundings in which she lives and grows quickly. Her diary remains the statue of her inner strength and remarkable for her cognitive thinking in which we have several aspects of her maturity like- Empathy and Understanding, Intellectual Growth, and Resilience and Optimism. She writes "no one has ever become poor by giving" (Frank, 89). She maintained hope throughout her hiding, believing in the inherent goodness of humanity despite the atrocities occurring around her. "I can shake off everything as I write, my sorrows disappear, my courage is reborn." (Frank, 222). Further she tells various kinds of situations which she felt in secret annex like, "Parents can only give good advice or put them on the right paths, but the final forming of a person's character lies in their own hands." (Frank, 144). She felt her days in number; she didn't know how many days were left for her but all she could do only wait and wait until the war was over. Anne's family and other members were about to

explode, and they couldn't even laugh loudly as far as they knew crying would help but they couldn't cry, as she mentioned:

Talks whispers, fears, stench, farting and people continually going to the bathroom and try sleeping through that, I wander from room to room, climb up and down the stairs and feel like a songbird whose wings have been ripped off and who keeps hurting itself against the bars of its dark cage. Let me out, where there's fresh air and laughter, a voice within me cries. All I want to do is scream, let me be, leave me alone. I've to force myself to act normally and I'm in a state of utter confusion, don't know what to do and act. I know I'm from being what I should, will I ever be? (Frank, 249)

She is concerned about the problems which she has faced and expresses her views about psychological freedom and peace. This research presents the example of Primo Levi's "If This Is a Man", where it can relate this problem of the moral ambiguities faced by those who were trying to survive and what were the effects of concentration camps in their psychological approach. The poem expresses the exceptional ability to bear witness with clarity and restraint, avoiding sensationalism and he says, "You who live safe In your warm houses, You who find, returning in the evening, Hot food and friendly faces: Consider if this is a man Who works in the mud, Who does not know peace, Who fights for a scrap of bread, Who dies because of a yes or a no. Consider if this is a woman, Without hair and without name, With no more strength to remember, Her eyes empty and her womb cold Like a frog in winter." (Levi, 9).

He says that the Nazi camps and the attempted murder of the Jews were a horrible act which was unique in history because the aim was the overall destruction of a race by one that saw itself as superior, "We are slaves, deprived of every right, exposed to every insult, condemned to certain death, but we still possess one power, and we must defend it with all our strength for it is the last — the power to refuse our consent." (Levi, 41). Those who denied the Nazi's authority and resist also had to face the imprisonment, torture and forced execution. Existence of Jews and their identity were totally lost.

The term 'Logotherapy' was developed by 'Viktor Frankl' which is a form of existential therapy. Its primary motivational force of individuals is to find meaning in life. Viktor Frankl's 'Man's search for meaning'. He has shared the experience as a prisoner in concentration camps. He has shared his experience in three ways, The completion of the task, caring for another person and the last finding meaning by facing suffering with dignity. He remarks, "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves" (Frankl, 112).

The book intends to answer the question, how was everyday life in a concentration camp reflected in the mind of the average prisoner. He observed that fellow mates of concentration camp, those who survived were able to connect with a purpose in life to feel positive about and who then immersed themselves in imagining that purpose in their own way, He writes, "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space it is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom" (Frankl, 132). He further talks about women, who helped their group member and gave consolation although the situation was very tough and rough.

Another writer and work of holocaust is 'Elie Wiesel's Night', in which he has given the instances of Gestapo-the secret police, who transferred the Jews into trucks and forced to dig the pits, when they had finished each prisoner had to approach the hole, present his neck and

was shot, babies were thrown into the air and used as targets by machine gunners. Wiesel wrote about his loss of faith and increasing disgust with humanity, recounting his experiences from multiple concentration camps. There he saw how the people were treated and tortured, and they did not find solace and peace of any kind if we were talking about humanity. He says, "For God's sake, where is God?" And from within me, I heard a voice answer: "Where is He? This is where—hanging here from these gallows." (Wiesel, 65).

There are several ongoing conflicts between the various countries – Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Palestine, and India and Pakistan conflicts of “Pok- Kashmir”, various robust disputes among the various countries because of cognitive failure. George Orwell’s ‘Animal Farm’ is a satirical allegorical novel in the form of a beast fable, in which we can see the events were leading up to the ‘Russian Revolution’ of 1917 and then on into the ‘Stalinist era’ of the Soviet Union, a period when Russia lived under the Marxist ‘Leninist ideology’ of Joseph Stalin. Orwell used the word ‘Anthropomorphism’ to give his animal characters into human characteristics and each character in this novel symbolizes a person, group and concept, it primarily as a satire on the Russian revolution that is kind of revolution- violent conspiratorial revolution, led by unconsciously power-hungry people.

This research deals with the situations during or after the effects of war which are figured out in the form of ‘Catharsis’, which means the purification of soul and purgation of thoughts by way of expressing them. Anne’s diary primarily deals with the hope and the plenty of dreams and sentiments of people. Franks uses the word ‘catharsis’ as a form of dairy, and with the help of dairy she purifies her thoughts and emotions via expressing them. Aristotle has used the word ‘Catharsis’ in his work ‘Poetics’ in which he said, "Pity is aroused by unmerited misfortune, fear by the misfortune of a man like ourselves" (Aristotle, Poetics XIII.1453a). Catharsis is the elimination of dark thoughts which clearly leads to distinction in the form of virtues and ethical terms.

‘Breuer and Freud’ has released the book “Studies on Hysteria” in 1895, which figure out the cathartic method to the world, and was the first work about ‘Psychoanalysis’, there they both mentioned: “ "We found, at first to our greatest surprise, that the individual hysterical symptoms disappeared immediately and did not recur if we succeeded in bringing to light the memory of the event by which it was provoked and in arousing the accompanying affect, and if the patient then described the event in the greatest possible detail and put the affect into words" (Breuer and Freud, 6). Catharsis has remained an important part of talking therapies ever since. It is an act of experiencing emotions with the relatable specific incidents of past which had supposedly been repressed or ignored and experienced.

This research often deals with qualitative research methodology. Anne’s dairy is a component of cathartic formation, via using dairy she deals with the manner of ‘Expressive writing’. Expressive writing is a kind of meta-analysis, which is a disclosure of information, feelings, thoughts and about mental health. She has mentioned in her diary that how she has gone through and the fact basis she was the eyewitness of that trauma, she writes, “Terrible things are happening outside at any time of night and day, poor helpless people are being dragged out of their homes. Children come home from school to find that their parents have disappeared. I could spend hours telling you about the suffering the war has brought, but I’d only make myself more miserable. All we can do is wait, as calmly as possible, for it to end. Jews and Christians alike are waiting, the whole world is waiting, and many are waiting for deaths”. (Frank, 84-85).

In each and every page, she has expressed the daily matters and news with the help of radio regarding the war and writes about her personal feelings and adjustments with the secret annex members. The way she has expressed her thoughts on every page, it affirms the manner of 'Collective Consciousness'.

The term 'Collective Consciousness' was given by the 'Emile Durkheim' the French writer, in his work 'The Division of Labor in Society' in 1893. The word collective consciousness means the set of shared beliefs, ideas and experiencing the things which are happening around the world. It is a kind of individual experience, largely shared with all other members of society. Durkheim mentions, "The division of labor varies in direct proportion to the volume and density of societies and if it progresses in a continuous manner over the course of social development it is because societies become regularly more dense and generally more voluminous" (Durkheim, 233). Another of his significant works, *Suicide*, introduced the idea of anomie, a condition marked by the erosion or disruption of moral expectations, social norms, and guiding values. He argues that anomie results from a mismatch between individual needs and societal regulations rather than a simple absence of norms. Even an overly rigid society that restricts personal freedom can generate this sense of normlessness. Such a condition may emerge from clashing belief systems and can weaken the social ties that connect individuals to their communities.

Anne Frank's diary offers a powerful sense of hope, resilience, and faith in humanity through deeply personal, expressive writing. Her entries document the realities and hardships of life during wartime. The text highlights how social inequality can trigger ecological disruption, how excessive individualism can foster self-centred complacency, and how unchecked accumulation of wealth can contribute to global crises. The diary conveys enduring messages—such as the right to freedom and the need to reject discrimination based on religion or race. It emphasizes that love, trust, and sacrifice can prevail over hatred, brutality, and selfishness. Ultimately, Anne's diary affirms fundamental human dignity and reminds us that understanding war, genocide, and persistent racial hierarchies requires looking beyond statistics to the lived experiences, decisions, and values of real people.

## **Result And Discussion**

Trauma increases the harmonious imbalance in body. The writers and their works whom this research discussed before all have gone through the post-traumatic stress disorder which led them to nightmares, social disorder, flashbacks and moral injury. This research is basically against the theology of war, and it figures out the result of war is not well for the country and its people. War forces millions to change their place, relations and emotions with economic instability. There are plenty of examples like the news of article 370 which happened with Kashmir people, and their argument was that there has been violence in the Indian-administered side the state of Jammu and Kashmir for 30 years due to a separatist insurgency against Indian rule. India and Pakistan subsequently went to war over it, and each came to control different parts of the territory with a ceasefire line agreed, another example of the Kargil war which happened during 1999 and the results of casualties.

So, this research discusses the side of expressive writing and its effect because expressive writing has the power to control cognitive failure and stop the wrong decision. People should read good books and learn about cognitive behavioral therapy which helps them to negotiate with positive vibes in their life. The existence of human beings has been present from long



time, they have faced various consequences of war like- Korean war, Vietnam war and two nuclear bomb blast, one thing is common in every result that trauma creates the imprint on human's mind and leave them for suffering. This research is taking the example of Roger Luckhurst's work "Mixing Memory and Desire", in which he talks about the trauma is a response of highly shattered emotions and evokes the images of frightening and devastation.

He says, "Something that enters the psyche that is so unprecedented or overwhelming that it cannot be processed or assimilated by usual mental processes. so, have, as it were nowhere to put it, and so, it falls out of our conscious memory, yet is still present in our mind like an intruder or a ghost" (Luckhurst, 499). Trauma is the main cause of hallucinations and nightmares. It can solve with the theory of therapy and involve oneself in the lap of nature because nature has also the characteristics and ability to remove the symptoms of trauma. Nature has also the same features of therapy like chirping birds, feeling the flow and sound of water, to ruminate about the existence of oneself. This research is taking another example of the writer Joe Allen's "Coping with trauma", in which he explains that traumatic experience has two components - Objective and subjective. He says, "It is the subjective experience of the objective events that constitutes the trauma...The more you believe you are endangered, the more traumatized you will be... Psychologically, the bottom line of trauma is overwhelming emotion and a feeling of utter helplessness. There may or may not be bodily injury, but psychological trauma is coupled with physiological upheaval that plays a leading role in the long-range effects". (Allen, 14).

Nonetheless trauma survivors have strong urges to tell stories of suffering and how they fail to face social communication and meeting with people. It is a kind mental distance where people are afraid to socialize and cope with the situations. Further this research is taking the example of Shahnaz Bashir's, "The Half Mothers", Shahnaz in an interview with 'The Dispatch' remarked, "In this strife-torn valley, I have always been tormented by feelings of indefinite and eternal uncertainty" ([https://www.thedispatch.in/author-interview-shahnaz-bashir-the-newvoice-of-kashmir/#google\\_vignette](https://www.thedispatch.in/author-interview-shahnaz-bashir-the-newvoice-of-kashmir/#google_vignette)). Bashir crafts the narrative around the harrowing realities faced by the people of Kashmir. At its center is the story of Haleema, a mother desperately searching for her son Imran. Her character represents countless women who endure grief and anguish after losing loved ones to ongoing violence. The novel also brings attention to the problem of enforced disappearances and the profound emotional and social toll these losses take on families.

This research further explores the work of Sashi Deshpande's work "That long Silence", in which she portrays the character of 'Jaya', a girl born in middle class family. This novel figures out how the girl should explore that she should be civilized and become a cultured girl, it means there is approach to become a quite girl when she disagrees. She says, "The truth is, I had not thought of the need to tell him. It had seemed so natural, so right, that he should know without being told" (Deshpande, 33). Further she talks about marriage and its hidden hurdle for women, how they should be and do the work according to her husband and society. She says, "A man is his work. A woman is a woman. The mistake we have all made is in trying to be men" (Deshpande, 147). The novel figures out the fear and trauma of women in this patriarchal society.

The character of 'Jaya' is pure and innocent in this novel, although she is courageous girl and smart in studies but in the novel, she clearly says about her fear which she feels, "The fear had always been there. It lay coiled inside me; it had begun with the first slap I had received

as a child for saying something unacceptable” (Deshpande, 16). Jaya learns to play role of obedient women, while she has sense of individuality, and she is failed to become successful writer in her life.

Trauma has strong roots which can only chop off with the theory of therapy. This research further takes the example of trauma in ‘Mahasweta Devi’s work “bitter soil”, the collection of four stories, “Little One”, “Salt”, “Witch”, and “Seeds”. Devi in her introduction of “Bitter Soil”, she says cast and class are rooted in India’s land system which emerge as form of trauma for those people who are unable fit in the economic conditions. The representation of greedy mindset of landlords who exploits the labor and their behavior with labor’s wives which creates the form of trauma in the lives of poor people.

There are various kinds of novels and stories in which the representation of trauma, but this research assures that trauma and exploitation can only be tackled with the process of therapy. This research ruminates that therapy is a kind of umbrella which brings people together in a positive way.

The proposed study makes a point that the word ‘War’ is not a benefactor for the people. As possible as this research is taking the example of the work of Cathy Caruth’s ‘Unclaimed Experience’ in which she describes in a proper way how the word trauma relates with the word ‘Belatedness’, which means it comes into existence only after the event is over. Trauma relates with subconscious mind where the drastic images of the situation, torture and panic situations recall at point and situation. This research presents the manner of expressive writing and learning of cognitive behavioral therapy which can help people to heal up that traumatic event.

Cognitive-behavioral Behavioral Therapy is a kind of mode that accepts relations, emotions, behavior and personal thinking. It has the power to modify thinking in a positive way and live life peacefully. So, Anne Frank’s diary and other writers’ work which we have read, they all talking about how trauma can affect the life and how it can be worse for the people and their families. Frank’s diary provides some kind of hope and freedom for the readers that life is not easy as they think, it’s only a perception of how you can look at the world with your inner conscious glasses. Literature theories are parts of lives experience, with help of these anyone can put glasses and understand the life process that ‘Change’ is only truth which exists in this world.

#### **Works Cited:**

- Allen, Jon G. *Coping with Trauma: A Guide to Self-understanding*. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Press, 1995
- Aristotle. *Poetics*. Translated by S. H. Butcher, Dover Publications, 1997.
- Bashir, Shahnaz. *The Half Mother*. Hachette India, 2014  
[https://www.thedispatch.in/author-interview-shahnaz-bashir-the-new-voiceofkashmir/#google\\_vignette](https://www.thedispatch.in/author-interview-shahnaz-bashir-the-new-voiceofkashmir/#google_vignette)

- Breuer, Josef, and Sigmund Freud. *Studies on Hysteria*. Translated by James Strachey, Basic Books, 2000
- Caruth, Cathy. *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. 20th anniversary ed., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016
- Devi, Mahasweta. *Bitter Soil*. Translated by Ipsita Chanda, Seagull Books, 1998
- Deshpande, Shashi. *That Long Silence*. Penguin Books India, 1998
- Durkheim, Émile. *The Division of Labor in Society*. Translated by W. D. Halls, Introduction by Lewis A. Coser, Free Press, 1997
- ~~~. *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*. Translated by John A. Spaulding and George Simpson, Edited by George Simpson, The Free Press, 1951.
- Frank, Anne. *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Fingerprint Publishing, 2016.
- Frankl, Viktor E. *Man's Search for Meaning*. Translated by Ilse Lasch, Beacon Press, 2006.
- Luckhurst, Roger. "Mixing Memory and Desire: Psychoanalysis, Psychology and Trauma Theory." *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*, edited by Patricia Waugh, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 497-507
- McCarney, Joseph. "Ideology and False Consciousness." *Marx Myths and Legends*, April 2005.
- Orwell, George. *Animal Farm*. Signet Classics, 1996
- Wiesel, Elie. *Night*. Translated by Marion Wiesel, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006