

# Insurgence Against Patriarchal Hegemony: A Psychological Study On Susanna's Character Portrayed By Ruskin Bond

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the paper is to search on the impact of patriarchy on women's life which tends to be organised based on gender and the construct embedded in the culture. This paper objective is to investigate the impact of patriarchy on women's life in general and Susanna's life in particular in the Indian context of life. The researcher adopts a qualitative research approach to improve their insights into the issues of patriarchy focusing on Ruskin Bond's novel *Susanna's Seven Husbands* (2011). The thematic analysis reveal the impact of patriarchy on women's life journey unfolds as compelling narratives of resistance against existing systems. Women's aspirations to achieve comfortable life are often frustrated by the patriarchal norms which are deeply ingrained in the culture. The findings of the paper uphold that male dominance of and excessive subordination of females, domestic and gender-based division of women proclivities among men is the ingredients of a patriarchal society. These issues make the tremendous exploration of psychological innovations to become very strong in their ideas and emotions which are difficult for a long time. The paper explores the psychological dimensions of Susanna's character in the context of multiple marriages. Her unconventional choice of marrying many times defies societal norms and represents her assertions of control and independence.

**Keywords:** Hegemony, Journey, marriage, Psychological dimensions, societal implications.

## Introduction:

A Strong and Independent women never agrees with the existing systems of customs and conventions as she wants to lead a comfortable life without making any disturbance to the long cherished customs and conventions. Human behaviour is significantly influenced by unconscious desires, conflicts and unresolved childhood experiences (Freud, S. 1894). In case of women, her birth, marriage and other stages of life are analyzed through the lens of such a psychological theory. They often act out unresolved issues from their past and unconsciously seek to resolve issues related to their relationships with men or authority right from their childhood. Under these circumstances, women try to protect her from anxiety and emotional distress through a kind of defence mechanism. Such mechanism avoids true intimacy and emotional vulnerability. By engaging themselves in various relationships, eventually creates dire situations, fearful circumstance and sometimes leading to rejecting life itself. It is a tendency that the critics examine how gender influences human behaviour and experiences particularly in the context of unequal power dynamics between men and women (De Beauvoir, S 1972). Hooks emphasizes the inter sectionalist of gender, race, class in the struggle against patriarchal hegemony. It underlines how various systems of oppression; intersect to reinforce the dominance of particular groups while marginalizing others. (Hooks, B, 2000). Woolf exploration of 'The Angel in the House' (1931) concept in her essay "Professions for women" sheds light on the societal expectation placed upon women, portraying them as passive, nurturing figures who prioritise family and domesticity over personal aspirations. This notion has been challenged by literary works that depict women

who resist conforming to the stereotypical, assertive their desires for independence and intellectual pursuits (Woolf, 1931)

To delve deeper into the psychological dimensions of the resurgence of patriarchal hegemony in literature, we can draw upon the insights of eminent psychologists, such as Carl Jung a Swiss Psychiatrist and Psychoanalyst and Erik Erikson, who have contributed significantly to the understanding of human behaviour, identity formation, and societal influences. Carl Jung's Analytical Psychology (1921) offers a profound lens through which to examine the psychological ramifications of patriarchal hegemony. Jung's concept of the "collective unconscious" posits that individuals inherit a shared reservoir of experiences, symbols, and archetypes that shape their thoughts and behaviours. In the context of literature, characters confronting patriarchal dominance may be seen as archetypal figures engaging in a collective struggle against deeply ingrained societal norms. Jung's exploration of individuation, the process of becoming one's true self, becomes particularly relevant as characters seek to break free from patriarchal constraints to discover their authentic identities.

Erik Erikson published a book called *Childhood and Society* in 1950 that made his research well known for eight stages of development. Erik Erikson's psychological stages of development provide another valuable framework for analyzing characters' responses to patriarchal hegemony. Erikson's theory posits that individuals go through distinct stages of psychosocial development, each marked by a unique crisis or challenge. Within the context of literature, characters facing patriarchal dominance may undergo identity crises, struggling to reconcile societal expectations with their personal aspirations. Their responses to these crises can shed light on their psychological growth and adaptation in the face of oppressive forces. Moreover, the resurgence of patriarchal hegemony in literature often serves as a reflection of broader societal dynamics. It raises questions about power structures, gender roles, and the impact of societal norms on individual autonomy. By examining how characters navigate these challenges, we gain insight into the psychological toll of patriarchal oppression and the resilience of the human spirit. From classic novels to contemporary literature, the resurgence of patriarchal hegemony remains a compelling and enduring subject of examination. By applying the psychological perspectives of Jung and Erikson, we embark on a journey to unravel the intricate layers of character development and societal critique within these narratives. In the subsequent sections of this study, we will delve into specific literary examples, analyzing characters' psychological journeys as they confront and resist patriarchal hegemony. Through this exploration, we aim to deepen our understanding of the intricate relationship between literature, psychology, and the ongoing struggle for gender equality and individual autonomy.

### **Argument:**

*Susanna's Seven Husbands* is a novel by Ruskin Bond, which presents the story of a strong and independent woman named Susanna who marries seven times, each time leading to the mysterious death of her husband. To understand how Susanna's actions could be seen as a rebellion against patriarchal hegemony, we can explore psychological theories, including those of Sigmund Freud and others, to shed light on the character's motivations and behaviour.

"The Angel in the House" was a literary and cultural trope of the Victorian era, epitomized in Coventry Patmore's poem of the same name. It depicted the idealized woman as selfless, obedient, and devoted to her family, particularly her husband. This ideal presented women as paragons of virtue, self-sacrifice, and unwavering support for their husbands, often to the detriment of their own ambitions and desires. Woolf vehemently rejected the notion of "The Angel in the House" in her essay (1931: 23). She argued that this ideal perpetuated harmful stereotypes and hindered women's progress, particularly in the realm of literature and professional life. Woolf noted that to become a successful woman writer, she had to metaphorically kill this angel, symbolizing her need to break free from societal expectations and constraints. Woolf's rejection of the angelic image was a symbolic act of resistance against patriarchal hegemony. She recognized that for women to thrive and assert their individuality, they needed to challenge these deeply ingrained stereotypes. Woolf's critique highlights that this concept was not a mere abstraction but a pervasive force shaping women's lives and choices. The portrayal of women as "Angels in the House" reinforced societal expectations of passivity and self-effacement. It relegated women to the domestic sphere, emphasizing their roles as caregivers and maintainers of family harmony (59). This limited their agency and participation in public life, effectively subjugating them to patriarchal norms. Woolf's own experiences as a writer demonstrated the extent to which these expectations hindered women's creative expression. She discussed the inner conflicts she faced when trying to write in a space dominated by these traditional roles. The angelic ideal pressured women to suppress their own voices and desires, forcing them into narrow, predefined roles. Woolf's critique of "The Angel in the House" aligns with the broader struggle against patriarchal hegemony. Patriarchy, as a social system where men hold primary power, imposes rigid gender roles and norms that stifle women's autonomy and perpetuate inequality. The angelic ideal, with its emphasis on women's submissiveness and selflessness, served as a tool of patriarchal control, reinforcing traditional gender hierarchies. By rejecting this ideal and advocating for women's intellectual and creative liberation, Woolf contributed to the larger movement to

challenge patriarchal norms. Her writing, including "Professions for Women," encouraged women to assert themselves in professional and creative spheres, recognizing that true empowerment could only be achieved by breaking free from these societal constraints. Woolf's rejection of this ideal was a significant act of resistance, advocating for women's autonomy and agency. Her essay continues to resonate as a call to challenge and dismantle the deeply entrenched gender norms that limit women's potential and perpetuate gender inequality in society.

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory (1923) revolutionized the field of psychology by introducing the concept of the unconscious mind, unveiling the complexity of human desires, and proposing defence mechanisms to cope with inner conflicts. While Freud's theories have faced criticism, particularly from feminist psychology, they remain influential in understanding the depths of the human psyche and the role of gender in psychological development. Central to Freudian psychoanalytic theory is the notion of the unconscious mind. Freud believed that our mental processes were not limited to conscious awareness but were influenced by unconscious desires and conflicts. These unconscious elements shape our thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in profound ways. One key aspect of this theory is the division of the mind into three components: the id, ego, and superego. The id represents our primitive, instinctual desires, operating entirely in the unconscious. The ego mediates between the id's desires, external reality, and the moral constraints of the superego. The superego embodies societal and moral values, often leading to inner conflicts as it opposes the id's immediate gratification. Freud introduced the concept of defence mechanisms as strategies the ego employs to cope with the conflicts between the *id's* desires and the superego's constraints. These mechanisms serve to protect the individual from experiencing overwhelming anxiety. Some common defence mechanisms include repression (pushing painful thoughts or memories into the unconscious), projection (attributing one's undesirable thoughts or feelings to others), and displacement (redirecting emotions from an unacceptable target to a more acceptable one). Feminist critiques of Freud have questioned the implications of these defence mechanisms, particularly in relation to gender dynamics. (1905) Some argue that women's emotions and desires have historically been pathologized and repressed more than men's, leading to gendered differences in defence mechanisms. Feminist psychology emerged as a response to the limitations and biases within traditional psychological theories, including Freudian psychoanalysis. Freud's theory has been criticized for its male-centric perspective. Freud's focus on sexuality and his emphasis on women's development as primarily related to their relationships with men have been criticized for perpetuating stereotypes and objectification. Despite these critiques, it's worth noting that Freud's contributions to psychology, including his exploration of the unconscious mind and defence mechanisms, have had a lasting impact and continue to influence contemporary psychological thought. Freudian psychoanalytic theory has played a significant role in shaping our understanding of the human psyche, including the role of unconscious desires and conflicts, and the use of defence mechanisms to navigate inner tensions. However, it has faced substantial criticism from feminist psychology for its gender bias, sexualisation of women, mother-blaming tendencies, and hetero normatively. While Freud's theories have evolved and been adapted over time, they remain both a cornerstone of psychological history and a subject of ongoing debate and scrutiny within the field, particularly in terms of their implications for gender and sexuality (Freud, 342)

Simone de Beauvoir, "The Second Sex," (1949), remains a cornerstone of feminist literature. In this exploration, the readers will delve into de Beauvoir's insights regarding these unequal power dynamics. De Beauvoir argued that gender roles and expectations are not inherent or biological but are socially and culturally constructed. (Citation) She believed that society, from a very young age, imposes certain roles and norms on individuals based on their gender. This process, often referred to as "gender socialization," begins in childhood and continues throughout one's life. From an early age, girls are taught to be nurturing, passive, and oriented towards relationships, while boys are encouraged to be assertive, independent, and goal-oriented. These imposed roles create a power dynamic where women are often expected to fulfill domestic and care giving roles, while men are encouraged to pursue careers and positions of authority. De Beauvoir famously stated, "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." She argued that women are treated as the "Other" in society, defined in opposition to men. This "Othering" results in women being seen as objects for the male gaze, rather than as autonomous individuals with their own desires and agency. This objectification manifests in various ways, from the pervasive portrayal of women's bodies in the media to the unequal power dynamics within personal relationships. De Beauvoir asserted that women are often defined by their relationships to men, such as daughters, wives, or mothers, rather than as individuals with their own identities. De Beauvoir also highlighted the economic disparities between men and women as a fundamental aspect of unequal power dynamics. Women have historically been underpaid or excluded from certain professions, limiting their financial independence. This economic dependence can trap women in situations where they have less autonomy and decision-making power, particularly in abusive relationships. Moreover, the division of labor in households often falls along traditional gender lines, with women taking on the majority of domestic responsibilities. This imbalance in unpaid labor further perpetuates women's economic vulnerability. De Beauvoir recognized the significance of reproductive rights in the context of unequal power dynamics. She argued that women's bodies have been subjected to control by societal norms, institutions, and men. The limited access to contraception and safe abortion options, as well as the lack of comprehensive sex education, can restrict women's control over their reproductive choices.

In her work, particularly in *"Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism,"* Bell Hooks underscores the critical importance of intersectionality in the struggle against patriarchal hegemony. Intersectionality is a framework that recognizes how various dimensions of identity, including gender, race, and class, intersect and compound to shape an individual's experiences and vulnerabilities. This approach not only enriches feminist discourse but also provides a more nuanced and inclusive perspective on the multifaceted nature of oppression and resistance. Bell hooks recognizes that gender is a pivotal point around which other forms of identity, such as race and class, revolve. She contends that the experiences and challenges faced by individuals are profoundly influenced by their gender, and this influence is often intensified when intersecting with other dimensions of identity. For example, Black women, as articulated by hooks, face a unique set of challenges due to their dual identity as both women and people of colour. In her work, hooks emphasizes that race is not just an isolated category of identity but one that intersects with gender and class. For Black women, their experiences of racism are intimately tied to their experiences as women. They may encounter radicalized sexism, where stereotypes and prejudices related to their race and gender intersect, creating complex and often degrading stereotypes. Moreover, hooks highlights that within feminist movements, the experiences and perspectives of women of color, particularly Black women, have often been marginalized or silenced. By advocating for intersectionality, hooks calls for a more inclusive feminist movement that recognizes and values the contributions and experiences of women of color. Class is another dimension that intersects with gender and race, shaping one's access to resources, opportunities, and power. Hooks argues that women from marginalized racial backgrounds often face economic disparities that further compound their experiences of oppression. Working-class women, for instance, may face economic hardship that affects their ability to access education, healthcare, and other essential resources. Furthermore, Hooks points out that the feminist movement, at times, has been criticized for being dominated by middle and upper-class white women, which can alienate working-class women and women of color. This critique underscores the need for a more inclusive feminism that acknowledges the intersection of class with other forms of identity. The concept of intersectionality, as championed by hooks, is not just a theoretical framework but a call to action. It highlights that the struggle against patriarchal hegemony must address the interconnectedness of oppression. To effectively challenge patriarchal systems, one must acknowledge and confront the ways in which gender, race, and class intersect to create unique forms of subjugation. By recognizing the experiences of those at the intersections, feminist movements can become more inclusive and effective in dismantling patriarchal hegemony. Hooks argues that it's not enough to focus solely on gender-based issues without considering how they intersect with racial and economic factors. To achieve true gender equity, we must address the root causes of oppression that exist within these intersections. In her work, bell hooks eloquently articulates the significance of intersectionality in the struggle against patriarchal hegemony. Gender, race, and class are not isolated categories of identity but interconnected dimensions that shape individuals' experiences of oppression and privilege. By adopting an intersectional approach, feminists can create a more inclusive and effective movement that recognizes and addresses the unique challenges faced by women at the intersections of these identities. This multifaceted perspective enriches our understanding of patriarchy and paves the way for a more comprehensive and equitable vision of social change.

### **Analysis:**

Ruskin Bond's female characters are two distinctly different features as he portrays marginalised traditional female characters in the short stories and dominant challenging female characters in the novels. Bania (The Bule UMBERLLA), Susheela (The Night Train in Doeli) and a few others in his short stories, Susanna (Susanna's Seven Husband), Mulia, Samyukata, Shankini and a few others (The Sensualist). (SSH, 2011: 27)

"A few years were to pass before Susanna took up the challenge of another husband. She didn't seem to age. Although thirty, she could have passed for twenty five. Being childless might have had something to do with it."

In this passage from "Susanna's Seven Husbands," the excerpt mentions that a few years passed before Susanna considered marrying again. Despite being thirty years old, she looked younger, perhaps around twenty-five. The passage hints that her decision to delay remarriage might be related to her childlessness. This passage reveals several elements: Susanna is described as being thirty years old, but her youthful appearance makes her look five years younger. This detail could suggest that she takes good care of herself or that she has a youthful spirit. The text notes that Susanna took some time before considering another marriage. This delay implies that she might have reservations about remarriage or that she is in no hurry to enter another matrimonial commitment. The passage hints that Susanna's childlessness might be a factor in her approach to marriage. It suggests that her inability to have children could be influencing her decisions regarding her relationships or her perception of her age. Overall, these lines provide a glimpse into Susanna's character and hints at the complexities of her personal life, including her decisions regarding marriage and her feelings about her childlessness. It raises questions about her motivations and experiences, which may be explored further in the story.

That spider on my wall was getting restless. It was sometime since she'd dined off, a fat, juicy male. Now she is thinking of moving her web elsewhere. ( SSH 2011, SSH: 27).

In this passage, the spider on the wall is described as getting restless because it has not had a meal in a while, specifically, a "fat, juicy male." Now, it's considering relocating its web elsewhere to find food. This situation can be metaphorically applied to Susanna's pattern of multiple marriages in the following way: Just like the spider becomes restless when it hasn't had a meal, Susanna might have felt restless or unsatisfied in her previous marriages. She may have sought something more, whether it is emotional fulfilment, companionship, or other needs that her previous marriages didn't provide. Just as the spider contemplates moving its web elsewhere to find sustenance, Susanna may have seen each new marriage as an opportunity for a fresh start, hoping to find what she desires in a different partner or relationship. Both the spider and Susanna exhibit adaptability in their actions. The spider adjusts its web location to improve its chances of survival and finding food. Similarly, Susanna adapts by entering into multiple marriages as a way to navigate her life and fulfil her needs within the confines of societal norms. This passage metaphorically underscores the idea that Susanna's decisions to marry multiple times may stem from a sense of restlessness, dissatisfaction, or a quest for something she hasn't found in her previous marriages. It highlights her adaptability and willingness to seek new opportunities as she navigates her life and relationships.

Susanna was kind to children and animals. And kind even to odd creatures. Her cruelty was reserved for another species of human. (SSH, 2011:05).

Susanna's kindness towards children and animals, as well as her cruelty towards certain humans, reflects a complex facet of her character: Susanna's kindness towards children and animals suggests a deep empathy for the vulnerable and voiceless in society. She may see them as innocent beings deserving of compassion. Her cruelty towards certain individuals could stem from personal experiences or perceived threats. It might be a way to assert control or protect her in relationships. Susanna's cruelty towards this particular group of humans could be rooted in resentment or a reaction to past injustices or betrayals. Her behaviour underscores the psychological complexity of her character, demonstrating that people can exhibit both kindness and cruelty in different contexts. Her cruelty might be a form of self-preservation, as she may have learned to be wary of certain individuals due to past negative experiences. Societal norms and pressures might also contribute to her behaviour, as some cultures may condone or even encourage the mistreatment of certain groups. Her kindness towards children and animals might represent a protective instinct, while her cruelty towards others could be a defensive response to perceived threats. In the context of storytelling, this duality in Susanna's behaviour adds depth and intrigue to her character, making her more compelling and multifaceted. Her contrasting behaviour towards different groups of people could symbolize larger themes within the story, such as power dynamics or the impact of societal norms on individuals. Exploring this paradoxical behaviour may reveal character development throughout the narrative, shedding light on the factors that influence Susanna's actions and decisions.

Susanna's mother had died when she was an infant, and had been brought up by her father, who had taught her to ride, look after the horses, and run the estate. (SSH, 2011:05)

Growing up motherless may have impacted Susanna's life in several ways: The absence of her mother from infancy may have left a void in terms of maternal nurturing and emotional bonding. Being raised by her father likely fostered a strong father-daughter relationship, where she learned practical skills typically associated with male roles. The early responsibility of managing the estate and caring for horses could have contributed to her independence and self-reliance, shaping her character. Susanna may have developed emotional resilience from an early age, adapting to the loss of her mother and taking on significant responsibilities. The absence of a mother figure may have given Susanna a unique perspective on gender roles and relationships, influencing her unconventional choices later in life.

Her father had been an unsociable, grumpy old man whose life had revolved around the racecourse. He has discouraged visitors, and Susanna had grown up in the company of dogs, horses and domestic servants. (SSH, 2011:06)

The upbringing described for Susanna, characterized by her father's unsociable and grumpy nature, and her isolation from society in the company of dogs, horses, and domestic servants, has several notable impacts on challenging gender roles, power dynamics, asserting independence, and defying male dominance: Susanna's upbringing challenges traditional gender roles by exposing her to activities typically associated with men, such as managing horses and an estate. This early exposure has influenced her later rejection of stereotypical female roles. Growing up with minimal social interaction and self-reliance in managing the estate likely fostered a strong sense of independence in Susanna. She learned to make decisions and take charge, which would be essential in challenging male dominance. Her father's grumpy and unsociable disposition has fuelled Susanna's resistance to male dominance and authority figures in her life. Her early experiences have contributed to her determination to live life on her own terms, as seen in her multiple marriages. Susanna's isolation from the broader society and her father's discouragement of visitors highlight power dynamics within her family. Her father's control over their environment has instilled a desire in Susanna to break free from such constraints and assert her own autonomy. In summary, Susanna's unique upbringing, marked by isolation from society and exposure to non-traditional gender roles, likely played a significant role in shaping her character. It equipped her with the independence, resilience, and determination needed to challenge gender norms, power dynamics, and male dominance in her later life, as portrayed in the novel.

Susanna unaccustomed to male company, was soon bowled over by handsome Major Mehta, who took her to parties and dances and shopping sprees to Delhi. He was a good ten years older than Susanna, but he had a

charming manner and his good looks were enhanced by Jackie Shroff type moustache and the long legs of an Amitabh Bachchan. (et.al)

This paragraph from "Susanna's Seven Husbands" provides insights into Susanna's psychological implications in her relationship with Major Mehta: Susanna's lack of experience with male companionship suggests a certain degree of social isolation or unfamiliarity with romantic involvement with men. This could have psychological implications, such as naivety or vulnerability when encountering such relationship. Her quick infatuation with Major Mehta, despite the age gap, points to a potential longing for companionship, attention, or affection that she may not have experienced before. This could be indicative of emotional needs and desires. Major Mehta's introduction of Susanna to parties, dances, and shopping sprees in Delhi might reflect her desire for social validation and a sense of belonging. This could indicate a longing for experiences outside her previously isolated life. The description of Major Mehta as "handsome" with a "charming manner" and resembling popular actors suggests that Susanna might idealize him, possibly projecting her desires and fantasies onto him. This idealization can have psychological implications, such as vulnerability to manipulation or disappointment. Susanna's quick attraction to Major Mehta may also be influenced by external factors, such as societal expectations or pressures to conform to traditional norms regarding relationships. This can create psychological tension between her desires and societal influences. This paragraph hints at Susanna's psychological complexities, including her yearning for male companionship, potential vulnerability, and the impact of external influences on her romantic choices. It foreshadows the intricate psychological journey she embarks upon as she navigates her relationships throughout the novel.

"Susanna, too, was soon regretting her alliance with this boring and egotistic man. There is no more tiresome a creature than a jealous husband, suspicious of everyone who tries to be friendly". (SSH, 2011:08)

This passage from "Susanna's Seven Husbands" illustrates the impact of Major's jealousy and suspicion on Susanna's psychological state. Susanna's regret about her alliance with Major is indicative of her dissatisfaction in the relationship. Major's jealousy and egotism have likely created tension and unhappiness in their marriage. Major's jealousy implies a lack of trust in Susanna, which can have significant psychological implications. Susanna may experience emotional distress, anxiety, and frustration as a result of constantly being suspected and monitored. Major's suspicious nature can isolate Susanna from her social circle. Friends and acquaintances might be deterred from interacting with her due to Major's overbearing presence, furthering her sense of loneliness. Susanna's autonomy and independence may be undermined by Major's jealousy. She may feel restricted and controlled, which can lead to feelings of powerlessness and resentment. Major's behaviour can strain their relationship and create a hostile environment. Frequent conflicts, lack of open communication, and emotional turmoil can deteriorate their marital bond. Susanna might start doubting her self-worth and attractiveness due to Major's constant suspicion. Over time, this can erode her self-esteem and self-confidence. Living under the constant scrutiny of a jealous partner can be mentally exhausting. Susanna may experience heightened stress levels, affecting her overall psychological well-being. Major's jealousy and suspicion have significant psychological implications for Susanna. Her regret in the relationship suggests that the emotional toll of dealing with a jealous husband is taking a toll on her happiness and well-being. This situation highlights the complex dynamics of their marriage and foreshadows potential psychological challenges that Susanna may face throughout the story.

"But not only did Jimmy lack sex appeal, he also lacked any sort of acting ability. Nobody wanted him. "What on earth did I see in him in the first place?" Susanna asked herself. ' And what do I do with him now?'"(SSH, 2011:16)

The passage suggests an emotional complexity in Susanna's character and her evolving attitude toward relationships. While it doesn't explicitly indicate sexual liberation, it does reveal certain elements in her emotional journey: Susanna's realization that Jimmy lacks sex appeal and acting ability underscores her evolving understanding of her own desires and preferences. It suggests that she is becoming more discerning in her choice of partners. Susanna's introspective question, "What on earth did I see in him in the first place?" reflects her introspection and the reconsideration of her past choices. This indicates that she is actively reflecting on her relationships and seeking to understand herself better. Susanna's contemplation of what to do with Jimmy now implies a sense of agency and independence. She is no longer willing to remain in a relationship that doesn't fulfil her needs, which aligns with notions of personal empowerment. While Susanna's previous marriages and relationships may have been challenging or unfulfilling, her newfound assertiveness suggests she is taking control of her life. She has been victimized in the past, but her current stance indicates a shift towards greater autonomy. Susanna's emotional complexity is evident in her inner dialogue. Her questions about her past choices and the future of her relationship with Jimmy reflect a deeper exploration of her own emotions and desires. The passage portrays Susanna as a character in transition, reassessing her relationships and seeking to understand her own desires and needs. While her past experiences may have involved victimization or dissatisfaction, her current questioning and agency suggest a growing sense of empowerment and emotional complexity as she navigates her romantic journey.

"Sharukh khan told me that Susanna had met the Prince on of her trips to the Delhi Races. The attraction was mutual. And they were married a month later". (SSH, 2011:23)

The information about Susanna meeting the Prince during one of her trips to the Delhi Races and marrying him a month later suggests several things regarding her choices of multiple marriages and her defiance of

traditional Indian marriage customs: The rapid marriage after a brief encounter implies that Susanna might be inclined towards impulsive decision-making in her relationships. This could indicate her desire for immediate emotional fulfillment or a willingness to take unconventional paths. Marrying someone after a short period, especially someone of royal status goes against traditional Indian marriage customs that often involve extended courtship and familial involvement. Susanna's choices challenge these norms. Susanna's actions, such as marrying quickly and marrying a Prince, can be seen as a form of rebellion against societal expectations. She appears to prioritize her own desires and independence over conforming to established norms. Her decisions reflect her willingness to embrace unconventional paths in life and relationships. This suggests a certain level of non-conformity and a desire to live life on her own terms. Susanna's choices may also signify her exploration of personal identity and fulfilment. Her willingness to marry multiple times, especially under unique circumstances, might indicate her search for happiness and self-discovery. Susanna's swift marriage to the Prince following their mutual attraction signifies her inclination towards non-traditional relationships and her defiance of societal expectations. It reflects her determination to break free from established norms and prioritize her own desires and independence, contributing to the complexities of her character in the novel.

"Susanna took the syringe from Maggie, but instead of drawing the insulin into it, she drew in an a syringe full of air. Gently as ever, she pushed the needle into his flesh and injected a bubble of air".( SSH, 2011:33)

This scenario suggests a deliberate and potentially harmful action. Injecting a bubble of air into someone's bloodstream can be dangerous and even fatal, as it can lead to an air embolism, which can block blood flow and cause serious health complications. The motives behind Susanna's actions appears to be an intentional act with harmful intent toward the person receiving the injection, as injecting air is not a standard medical procedure.

I feel the need of a husband, but the more I see if him, the more I hate him. It's the sudden hatred which practically every wife sometimes feels for her husband just because he is her husband. It's real hatred. It grows upon you. And I can't help what I am doing.( 2011:35)

Susanna is expressing a complex and conflicted emotional experience. Susanna begins by acknowledging her desire for a husband. This indicates that she initially sought companionship and partnership in her marriage, which is a common reason for people to get married. She then describes a sudden and intense feeling of hatred towards her husband. This feeling is not based on any specific actions or reasons but seems to be directed at him simply because he is her husband. This is a complex emotional response, and it can be perplexing and distressing for individuals experiencing it. Susanna emphasizes that this is "real hatred" and that it grows over time. This suggests that the negative emotions she is experiencing are not fleeting or superficial but rather deeply rooted and intensifying. She expresses a sense of helplessness in the situation, indicating that she can't help what she's feeling. This suggests that these emotions are beyond her control and might be causing her distress. Sharing this conversation with her neighbour Arun might be an attempt to seek understanding, empathy, or advice on how to navigate these challenging emotions. It's important to note that such feelings can be complex and may be related to a variety of factors, including personal dynamics, relationship issues, or even individual emotional struggles.

The men who succumbed to her charms were very much like insects - no match for the spider who, though often mistaken for an insect, is actually a different and far superior creature. (2011:16)

Susanna's behaviour, as described in the passage, suggests that she is using her charm and manipulation to exploit the vulnerability of men, potentially for her own benefit. This behaviour is characterized by a sense of superiority and a willingness to deceive those who are drawn to her, much like a spider ensnaring its prey in a web.

Only when I wasn't looking for happiness. All those men I married... Imperfect beings, all of them. (2011:60)

These words uttered by Susanna are a reflection of her past experiences with marriage and happiness. She appears to be saying that she found happiness in unexpected moments or when she wasn't actively seeking it. She mentions marrying multiple imperfect men, which could imply that her pursuit of happiness through marriage didn't always lead to the desired outcome. The reference to "Susanna's last words" might suggest that this insight came to her later in life or in a moment of reflection. Overall, it's a reflection on how happiness can sometimes be found when we least expect it and how the pursuit of perfection in relationships may not always lead to contentment.

### Conclusion:

In conclusion, Susanna's character in "Susanna's Seven Husbands" offers a rich canvas for analyzing the impact of patriarchy and intersectionality on women's lives. Her story underscores the challenges women face in resisting patriarchal norms, especially when their identities intersect with other dimensions of privilege and oppression. By exploring the psychological dimensions of her character, we gain a deeper understanding of her motivations and the complexities of her resistance against the prevailing hegemonic forces in her society. Susanna's rebellion against patriarchal hegemony is a complex interplay of psychological theories, societal influences, trauma, and coping mechanisms. Her character is shaped by unconscious desires, unresolved conflicts, neurotic needs, attachment patterns, and the fear of societal

judgment. By delving into these psychological intricacies and societal dynamics, we gain a deeper understanding of Susanna's motivations and the defiance she embodies throughout the narrative. By considering these additional details and incorporating a broader range of psychological theories and societal influences, we gain a more comprehensive understanding of Susanna's rebellion against patriarchal hegemony in the novel. Her character becomes multidimensional, driven by both individual psychological processes and larger societal forces that shape her choices and actions throughout the narrative. Susanna's Seven Husbands can be analyzed through the lens of psychological theories to understand her rebellion against patriarchal hegemony. Her actions and behaviors, including her serial marriages and the deaths of her husbands, may be manifestations of unconscious desires, unresolved conflicts, and defense mechanisms. Furthermore, feminist psychology highlights how Susanna's choices challenge gender norms and power dynamics. Lastly, attachment theory offers insights into her ability to form stable and intimate relationships based on her early attachment experiences. By considering these psychological theories, we gain a deeper understanding of Susanna's character and the underlying motivations behind her actions.

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