

ISSN 2278-8158
AN INTERNATIONAL MULTIDISCIPLINARY
HALF YEARLY RESEARCH JOURNAL

ROYAL

Volume - X

Issue - II

December - May - 2021-22

English Part - I / II

Peer Reviewed Refereed
and UGC Listed Journal
Journal No. 47037



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

IMPACT FACTOR / INDEXING
2019 - 5.756
www.sjifactor.com

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Ajanta Prakashan
Aurangabad. (M.S.)

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15. Journey Inward: The Need of Young Adult Soul

Dr. Mrs. Patil Manik Shantinath

Associate Professor, Dept. of English, Sadashivarao Mandlik Mahavidyalay, Murgud.
Tal-Kagal Dist-Kolhapur, Maharashtra.

Abstract

Human life is the mixture of happiness and sorrow. It makes the young adult pass through the agonies which may disturb the life. Journey Inward helps the young adult to relieve from the psychological pains. It is the longest and most difficult journey. It is the journey which is beyond the worldly things. Though complicated and longest it is most useful journey. This journey clears the obscure picture about the self-image as well as of others. By making this journey we can understand ourselves and also all humanity. Journey inward is painstaking process. Each and every one has to do the journey inward which is not an easy one. But it doesn't mean that one should quit from the game. One can successfully achieve the destination with the help of proper decision with proper approach at proper time and with the selection of proper person to listen him/her. Be kind, truthful and try to understand, whenever you can if not always, just listen properly and patiently and make others to listen then the journey inward is easier.

Key words: Journey, Inward, young adult, destination, emotional load

Journey Inward: the Need of Young Adult Soul

Human life is the mixture of happiness and sorrow, success and loss, ups and downs. In such situation the man, especially a young adult unknowingly passes through mental agonies which may disturb the life; may give restlessness in life. This restlessness creates a chaos in his life. The journey inward helps him to relieve from the heavy emotional load he carries. Hence present research paper is an attempt to interpret the journey inward: the need of Young Adult Soul. Considering the limited scope of the present research article the attempt is done to evaluate the journey in the light of Sarah dessen's *Just Listen*.

Various researchers have done various interpretations of the term 'journey inward'. An academic writer and linguist Mary Munro Hill defines 'Journey Inward' as, "In order to know oneself one has, figuratively speaking, to go within, to go inside oneself, to make the journey into one's interior, into one's mind and heart..."(<https://www.quora.com/Can-you-briefly->

explain-the-longest-journey-is-the-journey-inwards) The mobile dictionary states 'Inward Journey' as, "... going or directed towards the middle of or into something" ([https://mobilesdictionary.rever so.net](https://mobilesdictionary.rever-so.net)) Another interpretation is that it is the journey, "...of, relating to, or existing in the mind or spirit inward meditation ." ([https://mobiles dictionary.rever so.net](https://mobilesdictionary.rever-so.net))

Young adults are the beings who are in search of self and identity. They constantly grow and change from the state of childhood to that of adulthood. That period of life is called young adulthood. It is a unique part of life. It distinguishes the unique needs that are physical, intellectual, emotional, and societal in nature. Young adulthood is, intrinsically, a period of tension. On the one hand young adults have an all-consuming need to belong. But on the other hand, they are also inherently solipsistic; regard themselves as being unique, which for them is not cause for celebration but, rather, for despair. Young adult literature offers the readers an opportunity to see them reflected in its pages. The protagonist, adolescent in these novels travels through the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. He/she suffers a lot due to the undesirable actions but later with the strong moral attitude and support either of friends or relatives comes out of the situation and gets the rebirth of his soul.

The select novelist Sarah Dessen, the most ingenious American novelist has shown immense contribution in the enrichment of American literature by writing young adult novels. Through her literature she has thrown light on various issues that relate with the young adults. The select novel *Just Listen* (2006) is seventh published novel of Sarah Dessen. It is honored with A Book sense Top Ten Pic, An ALA Best Book for Young Adults, A New York Times Best Seller, A YALSA Teen's Top Ten. *Just Listen* is a fine amalgamation of several aspects of adolescent life. An adolescent protagonist of the novel, Annabel Greene is a T. V. Commercial and model has everything –fame and prosperity but with it she receives the gift of loneliness. She lives forsaken from her friends and relatives as she faces sexual assault on her. She tries to hide her agony but it disturbs her soul. Dessen makes her to relieve from the disturbance with the help of her friend, Owen Armstrong.

Journey Inward in the soul is the longest and most difficult journey. It is the journey which is beyond the worldly things. Though complicated and longest it is most useful journey. This journey clears the obscure picture about the self-image as well as of others. By making this journey we begin to understand not only ourselves but all humanity. According to, Deniese Neal Middlebrooks, "The journey inward pertains to our inner self."

(<https://www.quora.com/profile/Deniese-Neal-Middlebrooks>) Sarah Dessen is quite skillful in presenting the inward journey of the soul. Everyone in the novel experiences the memorable journey. The protagonist Annabel Greene lives with her family in house with front side made of glass. The family is very proud for the house. Everyone who passes from the house unknowingly peeps through the glass walls and feel envious of the happy sight inside. But Annabel knows chaotic, confused and inconstant side of it. So she becomes aware of the fact that even inside of the glass house, it is easy to hide secrets. It is easy to hide the fact that her mother is become a different person since her grandmother's death. That her eldest sister has moved away from modeling, leaving a gaping hole in the family. It is easy to hide the fact that her other sister is suffering from an eating disorder. She often thinks about what people see when they look in. She knows appearances are deceiving. On the surface, they look like any other normal family. From the outside no one would ever realize how far from normal they really are. Everyone in the family has complicated issues.

Annabel is a teenage girl having some problems in her life. In the beginning she is just a listener one who always considers the opinions of others. Just to satisfy her mother she accepts modeling though she dislikes it. She listens each and every one and just accepts their views whereas never considers about her own. She accepts the strange behaviors of her sisters. She accepts the friendship of Clarke and then later she accepts the friendship of Sophie. She can't deny Sophie's offers to go with boyfriends. Sophie causes great troubles in her life and in other people's lives. Sophie's one of the friends Willy Cash shows sexual assault on her which phie looks. But she misunderstands it as Annabel's fault and leading in it and the friendship turns into rivalry. Though Annabel suffers a lot she prefers to escape from the society. In the words of Annabel,

"...my self-imposed isolation during the summer had been more effective than I'd realized. Right after everything happened, I'd cut myself off entirely, figuring this was safer than risking people judging me. ...I didn't want to talk about what had happened, so it seemed safest not to talk about what had happened, so it seemed safest not to talk at all" (*Just Listen* 19).

It is our culture and surrounding that continuously teach us about what is accepted and what is rejected; what is loved and what is hated; what is liked and what is disliked by the society. Naturally he prefers the actions, feelings, speech which is liked and loved by the

society. If someone unfortunately goes through the experiences which causes the rejection from the society and friends he suppresses it in the mind, prefers to live isolated and live facing the discomfort in the life. But he can't do so for many days. One or other day he needs to open the inner mind as Annabel does. Annabel, the protagonist in the select novel goes through the similar burden in her life. But as it is all known reaction of the society that in such situation the society will not blame the bully but it will blame the victim. But she can't bare the heavy burden on her mind for many days. But she can't carry the load on her mind for long. Wendy Salazar says in an article *Inner Work: Reconnecting with the Soul's Purpose*,

"If the gap between their inner and outer state becomes too painful to bear, they may finally feel compelled to explore their inner world through some type of creative endeavor ... This type of inner work can lead to an inner transformation that creates a more balanced perspective." (<https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/inner-work-connecting-with-souls-purpose-121813>)

Annabel can't tolerate the similar behavior of Willy in future and decides to open the secret which she could do with the help of Owen Armstrong. Annabel is trying to fix everything that is wrong with her own life and problems within her family. She cannot do it all on her own and she needs help; she needs someone to Just Listen. She has shared in the joys and sorrows of all the family members and now the whole family is with her to listen her. Annabel has always listened to her sisters and mother when they had a problem and when it comes time for her to talk about her problem, her entire family and more than them, Armstrong is there for her. She gets disturbed very much by the evil incident she faces at that particular night. She thinks she can get full cooperation of Armstrong in solving the problems in the life but she is rather doubtful how she can forget the evil memories of that night when Willy destroyed her. She says,

"My 'best friend' (Sophie) is spreading rumors about me. My family is slowly falling apart. It's turning into a long, lonely summer, full of secrets and silence. But I've this guy who won't let me hide away. He's one of those intense types, obsessed with music. He's determined to make me listen. And he's determined to make me smile. But can he help me forget what happened the night everything changed?" (Dessen Sarah, P.309)

Owen teaches her the game of true speaking. Through this game she becomes fearless. He teaches her to know what is important, and to speak the truth. She opens her black secret before her family and also Owen Armstrong. He releases her from the burden and prepares her to overcome the fear and face the truth. He makes her aware that the music also helps to tackle the problems. Owen has his own radio show that airs early Sunday morning. He likes music that a lot of people hate. With music, he makes Annabel to talk more and give her opinion. Actually this is the inner journey of Annabel. She could meditate and introspect and learned to speak truth freely. That is the moment when she is most enlightened and her journey inward is completed successfully. Wendy Salazar says in an article *Inner Work: Reconnecting with the Soul's Purpose*,

"I believe that turning our attention inward and doing our own soul work is our true purpose in life, which can lead us to experience a greater sense of wholeness and unity."(<https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/inner-work-connecting-with-soulspurpose-121813>)

The present study shows the fact that journey inward is painstaking process. During the time one can be insane due to the frustration. He/she may wish to end the life or career as Annabel wishes to quit modeling. One must be cautious while leading on this path. Annabel once misses the path and rejects the friendship of Clarke and accepts the cruel Sophie as the best friend. She becomes the victim of the temptation and meets to the quite bitter incident. The study shows how once again she is going to miss the mark by not accepting friendship of Armstrong. But later she repairs the mistake and creates the mental bond with him as well as Clara who release her from the mental agony. Along with Annabel, all other characters in the select novel also experience the journey of the soul. Owen Armstrong, a music obsessed, broody boy, who is a lone, had anger problems in the past which caused him to go to Anger Management classes. The music provokes him to keep silence and listen the inner voice which gives him patience in life. In addition to it the study opens the inner journey of the parents of Annabel that make them realize to know the opinions of their children. They stop imposing their decisions on the children and begin to motivate them to do whatever they wish to do. As a result of inner journey Annabel's sister, Whitney who is said to be beautiful, and was also a model develops anorexia, weighing down the whole family. She becomes moody and distant,

but starts redeeming herself at the end of the novel as she explains her problem in time to her family. Thus the journey of the soul inward relieves all the characters from their problems.

The present research highlights the truth in human life that each and everyone has to do the journey inward which is not an easy one. But it doesn't mean that one should quit from the game. One can successfully achieve the destination with the help of proper decision with proper approach at proper time and with the selection of proper person to share. So one should be kind, truthful and understanding, whenever it is possible if not always. Just listen properly and patiently and make others to listen then the journey inward is easier.

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