



An Analysis of Resisting Familial Trauma and Resilient Stimulation in the Select Novels of Kathleen Glasgow

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Abstract

The article focuses on family resilience, the bond among the family members and the attachment within the family as accentuated in the writings of Kathleen Glasgow. The concept of family resilience can be defined as the capacity of the family to empower and rebound from adversity and denotes the effective functioning of individuals after potential traumatic experiences including the care of its members. The effective communication, emotional support, time together and their strength make up a whole family. The key components of the theory are highlighted tenacity, attachment, grief, loss and self-discovery. The proposed study intends to investigate family attachment from the light of resilient stimulations, which teach individuals to trust others in general and to share both happy and terrible moments. The approach also expresses an individual's fight to overcome adversity and remain strong. Having in-depth knowledge and vast experience in familial settings, Kathleen Glasgow a well-known American writer, explicates familial bonds, attachments, the importance of relationships, grief, sorrow and the process of healing in her writing. The novels "How to Make Friends with the Dark" and "You'd Be Home Now" by Kathleen Glasgow discuss the value of human connection in the face of tragedy and explore not only the immediate aftermath of death but also how predicament may shape and modify a person's identity. Glasgow depicts a variety of feelings that come with sorrow, from rage and anguish to unexpected humour and hope. For instance, the protagonist in the novel overcomes and finds comfort in memories of her mother's past and starts to comprehend the complexities, she gets ready to begin a new chapter in her life so that she pays tribute to her mother while also letting her accept her unique identity and discover her place in the world. The present article attempts to decipher Glasgow's projection of attachment, love, pain, confusion and loneliness in the light of the resilience approach.

Keywords: Resilience, Attachment, Relationship, Predicament, Overcome, Self-discovery.

Introduction

An overview of the concept of family adaptability is provided in this work, which is based on a multilevel systems viewpoint. Family adaptability is the capacity of the family to function as a cohesive unit in the face of significant life challenges. Social situations and highly stressful events affect the entire family which processes help each person, their relationships, and the family as a whole adapt. A relational viewpoint on adaptability emphasizes the significance of supportive relationships in successful hardship adaptation. The ability to withstand and recover from disruptive life experiences is called resilience. Relational processes help people become more resilient by supporting their capacity to



surmount difficult situations and their best efforts to fully live their lives. By emphasizing the continuing reciprocity of impacts and locating potential resources within the immediate and extended family that can promote resilience. A focus on family systems broadens knowledge of relational network resilience.

A family that places a high priority on resilience looks for those in the family who are or may become invested in the safe growth and well-being of weak individuals if not children who are at risk. Siblings, stepparents, and other relatives who provide care and support even in dysfunctional households. It might be quite vital to have grandparents, uncles, relatives, cousins, nephews, nieces, and unofficial children.

Theoretical framework

Family resilience is the capacity of the family to endure adversity and come out of it stronger as a unit. The resiliency of families is to carry on or pick up where it left off following potentially traumatic occurrences, including providing for the needs of its members. Adaptation over time is necessary for family resilience. It primarily focuses on the behavioural interactions that occur between family members within a predetermined duration of engagement. The hypothesis holds that both problematic and non-problematic behaviours exist that are created, sustained, and perpetuated by patterns of interaction between family members. It is crucial to recognize that the family can mean many different things to various people and that what makes each family unique with their own distinct set of strengths.

Kathleen Glasgow's Novels - A Study

The works of Kathleen Glasgow are *Girl in Pieces* (2016), *How to Make Friends with the Dark* (2019), *You'd be Home Now* (2021), *The Agathas* (2022) and *The Night in Question* (2023). All of her novels deal with the protagonist trying to rebuild a life after a string of traumatic experiences, including self-harm and homelessness. These novels focus on young girls who struggle to handle their lives to overcome their past nightmares. The reality of life made them stronger and it turned them into a beautiful young woman who is no longer afraid to survive in this world. *How to Make Friends with the Dark* and *You'd be Home Now* have been selected for study.

Froma Walsh is an American clinical psychologist and family therapist. Walsh's research on families of psychiatric patients was broadened to include a large sample of the population to better understand the diversity, difficulties, and strengths in family life. Regarding family communication, family structure and resources, and family belief systems. It is essential to recognise that cultural differences may have an impact on how these concepts are perceived in a given family when thinking about any of these keys to resilience. Froma Walsh's theory of family resilience suggests that families can cope with adversity by developing certain qualities and skills, such as maintaining a positive outlook, Flexibility and adaptability, strong bonds and support within the family and external resources.

In terms of family belief systems, resilient families find purpose in misfortune as opposed to the notion of the strong, hardy individual overcoming it. Relationships play a crucial role in these households. They think that by working together with family and other important people in the family, they can improve their capacity to overcome obstacles. Strong families are aware of their ability to rely on one another in difficult circumstances. Family members who appreciate one another's individual differences, separateness, and boundaries are more resilient as a unit. Resilient families can react to shifting circumstances within the family by striking a balance between connectedness and segregation among family members.

The protagonist in the novel deals with trying circumstances that could potentially split their families apart. They can be able to unite and get through their challenges thanks to their



resiliency and desire to support one another. These aspects demonstrate how the family resilience theory can be applied to actual circumstances and emphasize the value of having solid family ties during trying times. It also emphasizes how well families can adjust to and handle difficult circumstances. It also stresses the value of communication and mental support in fostering family resilience. Attachment theory was invented in the 1950s by British psychologist John Bowlby and refined in the 1960s and 1970s by Mary Ainsworth. Attachment theory is a psychological paradigm that examines how people build and maintain relationships, with a focus on early childhood development. It is an evolutionary, psychological, and ethological hypothesis regarding humanoid connections. The most crucial requirement is that young children must be supervised to have, you must have a relationship with at least one primary caregiver. appropriate social and emotional growth. Infants develop accessories to persons responsive between the ages of six months and two years, they must be aware of their needs and responsive to them in social interactions It is a close bond or connection between a person and a figure of attachment, according to this theory. The requirement for safety, security, and protection that a child has, which is especially important during infancy and childhood, makes these ties between two people more likely to form between a child and a caregiver. Although these characteristics might imply the existence of attachments, it is not the same as love and affection and it does not apply to both comprehensively because of how people interact with one another. The caregiving bond is the term used to describe the reciprocal connection between a kid and an adult in child-to-adult relationships.

A child's developmental stage makes having a supportive attachment figure very important. The potential negative consequences of a problem attachment to a mother who is the main attachment figure can also be lessened by a positive attachment to a parent as a secondary attachment figure. Relationships have an impact on the changes in attachment behaviours that come with age. The moment a youngster is reunited with a caregiver is a happy occasion. The behaviour of a child is influenced not only by how that caregiver has treated the child in the past but also by the efforts the child has historically had a caregiver. When it comes to raising children in society, the single bond to the mother is prioritized. The development of a safe and emotionally competent child is not limited to this particular dyadic attachment approach. Even though a mother is a child's only consistent, sensitive, and responsive caregiver which does not ensure the child's success in the long run. The theory was first developed by British psychologist John Bowlby. These attachment behaviours are reflexive reactions to the perceived threat of losing the survival advantages of having a primary caregiver to look after you. Because the infants who exhibited these behaviours had a better likelihood of surviving, the strong instincts were naturally chosen for and improved through generations. From the secure base of attachment, the child can investigate the world and grow in social and emotional competence. The child may create an uneasy attachment if the caregiver is unreliable or unresponsive which can manifest itself in different ways. Children who have an avoid and attachment style may grow emotionally detached and independent.

Throughout the novel, *How to Make Friends with the Dark* by Kathleen Glasgow several incidents showcase family resilience, such as Tiger and her grandmother's relationship Tiger's grandma moves with her after Tiger's mother passes away. Despite never having been especially close, they gradually start to connect over their shared loss. Despite their disagreements, they both make an effort to support one another and be there for each other during trying times. The unexpected death of Tiger's mother leaves the family in shock.



Ultimately, they manage to unite and help one another together their sorrow. Tiger's mother would say "we are we and us is us" braiding her hair, kissing the top of her head "we don't need anybody else." (*How to Make Friends with the Dark* 76) Tiger is taken in by her uncle and aunt, where she develops a relationship with her cousins. Tiger and her family show their fortitude and capacity to stick together under adversity throughout these events. Even though they may encounter difficulties, they eventually manage to support them. Tiger receives encouragement and consolation from her friends, the friends of her mother, and the therapist who helps her deal with her sorrow.

Families with high levels of resilience share clear, consistent messages when it comes to family communication "say what they mean and mean what they say." (*How to Make Friends with the Dark* 44). The parents always guide their children in the right manner so that they do not commit any mistakes in their life which is compared to the novel *How to Make Friends with the Dark*, Tiger's mother is always against her. Sarifia Larasati Putri and Desvalini Anwar writes:

In undergoing the problem-focused coping, the character does rational approach to change the situation by changing the way she interacts with the environment, she seeks for social support. As before, she refuses to interact with others. The setting also shows the situation where the protagonist has no one after her mother left. The protagonist aware that she should have someone's help to facing her life to keep going on. In addition, through emotion-focused coping the character tries to regulate her emotion while facing the grief, so that she feels a bit better even the grief threatening herself.

The idea of rationality makes the protagonist to realize life in every situation.

The Family Resilience theory states that belief systems play a significant role in assisting families in overcoming hardship. Tiger confronts her views about death and the afterlife in the book, Tiger wrestles with her ideas about the afterlife and mortality. The loss of her mother throws her perception of the world and her position in it into doubt. As she deals with her sorrow, she starts to form a new set of beliefs that will help her mother's passing and move on. Even though Tiger's mother might be a lot of things, she is not a liar. The only thing her mother told her over and over for years is "I will never leave you. I will always be right here." (*How to Make Friends with the Dark* 135) After losing her mother, Tiger is lost mentally and experiences feelings of hopelessness and sadness. Tiger also discovers purpose and hope in her relationships with other people and in her resiliency. Tiger can find a path forward and create a new life for herself by keeping a positive outlook. Tiger uses writing, music, and other creative mediums to express herself and work through her feelings. Tiger starts to find some sense of meaning and purpose in her grief. She recognizes how her experience has changed her, and how she can use her pain to connect with others and give support. Tiger is disconnected and unwilling to engage in a conversation when she first gets to foster care. Shayna is persistent in her attempts to get to know Tiger and ultimately succeeds in doing so. Tiger is made to understand that not everyone is out to get her and that there are people who truly care about her. "Things get away from you sometimes, and you can't get them back." (*How to Make Friends with the Dark* 358). Shayna is there to reassure Tiger when she suffers from a panic episode in the middle of the night. Shayna comforts her with the soothing conversation, assists with breathing during the assault, and remains by her side until Tiger nods off. Shayna attempts to uplift Tiger when she is depressed and misses her mother by taking a walk and exposing the wonders of nature. "You are carrying so many heavy feelings. There just isn't enough room for them all." (*How to Make Friends with the*



Dark 286). She encourages Tiger to enjoy the little things in life. Shayna was a supportive friend who also wished to support Tiger's development. After losing her mother, Tiger's only remaining connection to a family is Shayna, who might even be able to save Tiger. She does get close to Shayna and starts being more open about her flaws. "You cannot move on or get over that, but you can learn how to wake up each day and go about your business." (*How to Make Friends with the Dark* 336)

The other novel by Kathleen *You'd Be Home Now* describes the protagonist Emory Ward, who is sixteen and is preparing to return home. Everyone in Mill Haven knows her as a wealthy young lady, and her busy parents regard her as their good child. Then Emory and her seventeen-year-old brother, Joey, are engaged in a car accident that kills a little girl. Joey wasn't driving, but he was high on narcotics and had almost died. When Joey returns from treatment, his parents appoint Emory as his caretaker and attempt to control his addictions through a strict set of rules. Emory rebels quietly, stealing small stuff and hooking up with her neighbour Gauge, but her acting class and the friends with whom she gradually begins to be honest assist her in discovering her truth. A journey of one sister, one brother, and one family to eventually recognize and respect each other for who they are rather than who they should be. This novel *You'd Be Home Now* shows how the story examines the idea that our past experiences can impact our present and future and that it can be impossible to escape the ghosts of our past at times. This is accomplished through Emory's thoughts and actions. Emory makes an effort to move on, but her horrific experiences continue to influence her decisions. The premise of *You'd Be Home by Now* is that, no matter how hard we try, our prior experiences and traumas can still have an impact on us. "How glorious it is to drown." (*You'd Be Home Now* 46) Emory suffers from anxiety and despair as a result of her broken family. She exhibits strength by seeking help from a therapist and fighting to overcome her mental health issues. She also receives encouragement from her friends and a sense of community in a creative writing class, which helps her deal with familial concerns. Emory is swamped and unnoticed most of the time. Emory only feels completely alive and noteworthy when she is with her lover Gauge. "I love you... Please let me help you." (*You'd Be Home Now* 136) Joey lacks his sister's strength. He struggles with addiction and is unable to cope with the hardships in his life. Joey's addiction has affected the entire family, and it appears that he has little prospect of healing. Joey, although not as strong as his sister, shows some perseverance. He makes many attempts to stop using drugs or alcohol, indicating his determination to overcome addiction. Furthermore, he admits his mistakes and makes an effort for peace with his family, displaying his willingness to accept responsibility for his actions. "The young should not die before the old," she says. "How dare you waste a life you haven't even lived yet." (*You'd Be Home Now* 187)

The potential of art to heal and connect people. Emory is a creative artist who utilises her paintings to connect with others and work through her emotions. Her painting class also serves as a support structure for her and her classmates as they work through their trauma and loss. Emory's relationship with her mother and sister is both strained and strengthened by their shared loss. It delves into the complexity of friendship, how friends can affect our lives, and how we deal with the loss of a close buddy. To be secure, you must be aware of what you can and cannot do, as well as what you will and will not do. Joey is in a condition of uncertainty in treatment at the end, unsure of what will happen. He was doubtful of his ability to survive in the world. Joey has been substance-dependent since he was twelve years old. If he is not euphoric, I have a deep affection for Joey; he has a long journey ahead of him. Young Emory is under a lot of pressure from her perfect parents, including pressure to do well in school and



keep good grades, as well as care for her brother Joey, who has returned home after treatment for drug and alcohol addiction. “They cannot assist someone unless they first make peace with themselves.” (*You’d Be Home Now* 234)

Attachment theory can be utilized to analyze the novel by analyzing Emory's attachment type. Emory struggles to form personal relationships at first and generally pushes people away. This behaviour might be characterized by an insecure attachment style, which is typically the result of inconsistent or careless care giving during childhood. Emory builds stronger relationships with the individuals in her life as the novel progresses, including her therapist and lover, indicating that she is capable of forming more dependable bonds with others. “Tell me, what is it you plan to do With your one wild and precious life?.” (*You’d Be Home Now* 290) As Emory faces her history and seeks recovery, the novel emphasizes the importance of healthy attachments and the impact early interactions may have on a person's life. The story stresses the possibility of growth and transformation while also highlighting how difficult it can be to break free from harmful attachment patterns and build healthy relationships. Emory struggles with attachment and desertion issues as a result of the absence of her father at work. Emory has feelings of grief and abandonment, but she also has feelings of sorrow and responsibility. This is linked with an avoidant attachment style, which is characterized by a desire for autonomy and self-reliance. Emory has a strained connection with her mother, and while she seeks knowledge about her brother's addiction to better understand him, she must confront her feelings of detachment and avoidance. “it is what it is – Joey.” (*You’d Be Home Now* 318)

This novel explores the mental health and personal development of the main character who is dealing with grief and its healing. It is a powerful study of resiliency and the power of people to find hope even in the worst circumstances. Tiger makes sense of her life and deals with the difficulties of adjusting to her mother's absence throughout the entire book. Likewise, a tragic event that happened to Emory when she was younger is the reason she suffers from anxiety and panic attacks. Both of them have had difficult lives; perhaps the love and support of their families would enable them to overcome any obstacles.

Conclusion

The novels written by Kathleen Glasgow portray the wide range of psychological trauma and resilience in the characters. The role of attachment and detachment in life are visible in the prime characters. Psychological trauma is one of the main problems of many important characters. The protagonists like Tiger, Shayna and Emory endure pain and long for harmony in their lives. Even though, they have ultimate hope to overcome them.

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