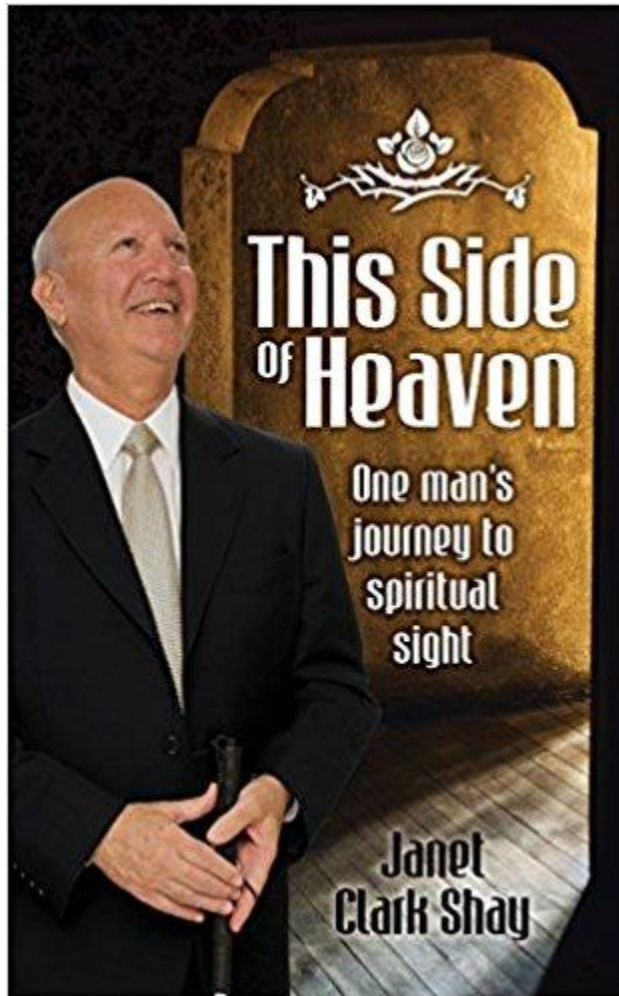


The Design of Love Sketches in Incense

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Courtesy: <https://www.amazon.com/This-Side-Heaven-Journey-Spiritual/dp/0999115707>

Abstract

In the twenty-first century, America became large enough to stir men into passionate ideological argument about the virtues and vices of family life. Writers found a way to include in literature the different experiences they faced in life. The city life plays a drastic role to affect the mindset of the people; time is another factor and yet they found it a means to recreate that which

has been lost. The generations of today look for expression. Novels became tools for expression and writers did well to bring out pleasure through their works. Anne Tyler is not an experimentalist. She uses wit and irony to please and delight her readers. Her very purpose is to interest her readers and indulge in writing something significant; by writing about domestic life she seeks her own way to recreate, to explore and understand the phenomenon of family life. Some writers seek to recapture and share in words a particular mood, scene, experience or idea. Others attempt to dramatize on a larger scale the impact of individual experiences for good or evil upon the lives of individual men and women.

The Design of Love Sketches in Incense

Relationships are constructed under parent, child, sibling and spousal attachment patterns. A man's ties start from childhood, end when he reaches the end of his journey. As Adenitre writes: "What a man is, he passes to his posterity; for in man was contained the life perpetrating cell of the race" (20), and familial relationships, friendships, romantic relationships symbolize the divine caricature of life and its many reflections in positive and negative pictures. The word 'ties' provides significant insight on tangible bonds. These bonds begin with the story of creation and with more than millions of years into existence, men and women have both found and formed their existence in the presence of parents, siblings, friends and spouse.

Every personification to a family of biological 'ties' validates the interpersonal and affections-oriented discourse. A superficial-rendering of love in the family negates the primary beauty scaped reality of a family. Love redesign and relates to God the biological affectionate caregiver of man.

DeVos avers:

The last sentence of the Declaration of Independence contains the words 'a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence'. The drafters of this document recognized God's ruling hand in human action. Their belief in this higher form of law is what carries the moral imperative for all of us as citizens to do what is right. This is the 'true' foundation of our God-given rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (28-29)

The need to evolve from these perspectives towards a better and less complex world is the stirring of peace, hope and happiness in the soul. These dimensions where god, man, spouse and child live in, is similar to the “Eden Garden” (Gen. 2.8). A unique picture scape of shady trees laden with fruit, blossoming and fame envisions the destined primary sketch of a loving family, where communication is a love feast or affectionate links.

Mental Health of Children

Experts on the mental health of children state that mother’s milk is best for babies. It gives nutrition and immunity to the body and brain. When babies are in the womb, they get nutrients from mother’s blood but from birth to atleast six months babies get nutrients from mother’s milk. It gives full nourishment to the brain. This is God’s design for human beings. In many countries many children do not develop in the areas of mental and physical growth. When women are in confinement they ought to be informed about the importance of breast feeding. Datta writes: “Breastfeeding is the most effective way to provide a baby with a caring environment and complete food. It meets the nutritional as well as emotional and psychological needs of the infant...UNICEF stated that every year over one million infants die and millions of others are impaired, because they are not adequately breastfed” (50). A kind of ‘fear’ prevents mothers from feeding their child. Mothers can be at ease and render suitable care when close relatives and friends lend a helping hand to the mother.

Marriage

There is another vital system required for an understanding of human perception; here is Holmes’ description of the ‘internal working model’:

Marriage is a remarkable institution, where the bond of love is tied by the ordination of a supreme authority over man and woman. Man and woman find themselves complete under the ties of marital bond and it is the “covenant” (Peter 2) of faithfulness that predestines them in their role of husband and wife. Family counselors Peter and Sally opine,

Commitment enables two people to get to know each other and to work through life’s difficulties when they face them. If you don’t have commitment, you are

going to find a way out of the marriage relationship. Today it is easier to get out of marriage than to get out of clubs, churches and jobs and addictions. One reason why we have lost romance in our relationships is we do not practice it in everyday life. (Peter 1)

As the counselor states, the reality of today's marital relationship is obvious: it is crumbling.

Love Is Symbolic

Love is symbolic. When couples walk hand in hand, they portray the picture of perfect happiness. Thomas writes, "Communication between partners prevents misunderstanding. It is a constructive habit to discuss problems in an attitude of love" (39). Hope presents itself when couples cherish their times of conversation and togetherness; "Charity (love) suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not ... seeketh not her own" (1 Cor. 13. 4-7). This reflects the state of endurance God has purposed in His heart for those who believe. The need of today is the abundance of unselfishness, where selfless tasks are performed with much vigor and wait patiently to fulfill the needs of their spouse. Kindsvatter writes,

Bowlby (1988), in discussing the therapeutic environment necessary for addressing attachment concerns, noted the importance of counselors providing a secure base from which clients can explore attachment issues. Specifically, he indicated that, in constructing the therapeutic environment, the counselor 'accepts and respects his patient, warts and all, as a fellow human being in trouble, [and]... the therapist strives to be reliable, attentive, empathic and sympathetically responsive' (p. 172). (3)

The marital connection helps the characters in Tyler and Kingsbury's novels to assume a new role. An identity where they 'can explore attachment issues' and create an "emotional connection with family members" (Kindsvatter 3). In the case of couples who need therapeutic treatment, psychiatrists and family counselors provide valuable support. The wedding vows stated by Prince William on his wedding day, "With this ring, I thee wed; with my body I thee honour;

and all my worldly goods with thee I share” (Hindu 1) presents a wonderful portrayal and there is a recommendation from a familiar line: true love keeps the needs of the spouse above one’s own. Tripp writes: “Love is willing self-sacrifice for the good of another that does not require reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving” (189). Bearing this in mind it is essential to add a few perspectives on togetherness.

Togetherness – Love is Tested

Togetherness as the Holy Bible describes is the holy union of man and woman. In the life of spouses, love is tested. However, Nagaswami avers: “when in love, we temporarily take leave of our senses. We suspend rational judgment, we are fearless, and we think only positive thoughts” (3).

Considering the view of love, it is essential to understand that when favor has been poured there is ample space for a healthy relationship between husband and wife. Love in the marital relationship extends to “physical” (Peter 8) union. Peter also observes: “we should note that physical sharing cannot reach its ultimate fullness unless it is experienced while conscious of God’s warm and tender mercies (Ephesians 5.25-33). Sexual union can happen because of lust, but God wants it to happen because of love. God loves purity in sex” (Peter 8). The need to understand this aspect stems from the abundant grace Jesus has promised for people who believe in him, without faith in God, love would be just another manipulation of one’s desires.

Self-love

John writes: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life” (John 3.16). Responding to the call of sacrifice on one’s part means to forsake the love of all things, whether it may be the love of worldly pleasures or the love of oneself as Tripp describes as “self-love” (171). He writes:

It is self-love that makes you more committed to what you understand than to understanding your spouse. It is self-love that causes you not to listen well. It is self-love that makes you unwilling to wait until you are sure that you have understood

your spouse. It is self-love that keeps you from viewing your spouse's words, perspectives, desires and opinions as valuable. It is self-love that fills your brain so full of what you think and know that you have little room for your spouse's thoughts. It is self-love that makes you value your own way more than you value real functional understanding existing between you and your mate. (171)

It is 'self-love' that prevents couples from fulfilling the ultimate purpose of marital commitment: to build relationships meant to last for a lifetime. Thomas recommends: "God's nearness always gives strength and patience" (39). Quite a bit of time continues itself to materialize into a relationship worth defining, but there is hope when a deeper and more satisfying love is established; it is the love for the Maker.

It is the realization of the following biblical reference in the life of a married person that brings together a fruitful, committed, marital relationship. The plight of the working woman is also the plight of the housewife. The working woman is expected to meet the needs of the family, and by taking the role of housewife she presents a dynamic role, where she "lives day after day between four walls, providing for her family, cooking, laundering, cleaning, mending, scrubbing, nursing, going from shop to shop to make the money spin out" (Johnson 25). The side effect is nothing that she cannot bear, for her work for her family is also in the kitchen; for the mother who cares and loves, it "will be a pleasure rather than drudgery" (Johnson 25). There is hope for those who believe in the peace and love God gives, for marriages when made in heaven are purposed to fulfill the plan sketched by the Maker. It is essential to understand that in this brief period there will be times of happiness, sadness, loneliness, abandonment, refreshment, hope, joy, grief and blessing. It is this understanding that helps people resolve their differences in trying circumstances.

Singles Who Look for Values

In a world where materialism has had a huge impact and dramatic influence on selecting the right life partner, it is a wonder to find singles who look for values. The right to vote is similar to the stance that most people take in selecting the right life partner. People who prioritize ethics and values derive inspiration from their faith in God, and it is their faith that helps them to stand

strong. The rising incidents of flood, famine, landslides and other natural phenomena give glimpses of environmental phenomena; life in the family would also reciprocate a similar reality. The never-ending news of wars also portray not only the physical challenges but also the ‘emotional’ difficulties like losing a family member. Gumbel avers, “Behind God’s law is the desire of a loving God to create a society in which it would be a joy to live” (85). Researchers and family counselors prioritize the need to awaken families who are in need of help; there is an assurance for such families who are desperate to survive catastrophies, like the death of a family member and news of a missing spouse.

Hope and Forgiveness as Foundation of Love

In marriage, where hope and forgiveness is the foundation of lasting relationships, everything is considered forgiven and forgotten in the light of God’s love; the love of a loving Father who had given his life to redeem the life of his sons and daughters. Girls have hopes and dreams of a ‘Cinderella’ story; of a prince charming coming on a horse and being everything to her that love portrays; in the cartoons and images, in the world of illusions. It is when trouble strikes at home that young people seek ‘Love’ elsewhere, ‘Love’ as in the love presented on Television. ‘Dreams come True’ (Walt Disney) is the hope of every girl, and when Laura’s dreams of the ideal marriage of a life of purity is challenged, she seeks the help of her parents and friends.

Experts state that men are valued by their physical strength and women for their mental strength. Man’s physical strength and woman’s mental strength when united in marriage and ordained by the Creator brings together a home established according to these verses taken from biblical scripture; where a woman’s wisdom is brought to the light, “a wise woman buildeth her house” (Prov. 14.1), and a man’s strength is represented through the following line, “the strength of an ox has much gain” (Prov. 14.4). It is this realistic portraiture of man and woman that provides insight on the differences between the two of them. It is recorded God took Eve, the woman from Adams’ rib. The idea of the equal is God’s plan for His children and man’s strength is made whole when he is joined with his wife. Her mental strength perfects him, and together as Biblical scripture explains, their weakness is made complete with God’s help.

The Amateur Marriage

Considerably great is the plan Tyler concocts for her characters. Iannone writes, “Miss Tyler often settles for cartoon sketches...” (2). Tyler loves her characters and understands the fact that they live because of her; because of the plans she conspires for them. The motivation she thrusts her characters into is awe inspiring; for they are driven in a particular way. They do not resist the plan Tyler has made for them but they voice out their motivations in particular situations. The end to these arguments results in tragedy. In certain cases however, Tyler drives them to find their roots and get on the path that Tyler paves as an inevitable pathway. The character Macon in Tyler’s novel *The Amateur Marriage* is motivated to move on after enduring the loss of his son silently, but his wife Sarah is not motivated. She reminisces on the past. In an attempt to flee from drifting into the breakdown of their marriage, he suggests that they have another child. Unable to bear the tragedy of the thought, Sarah drifts away from the marriage and Macon is stirred by the refusal of his wife to be with him. In due course of time he feels motivated to entertain another woman. The tragedy of the marital relationship is caused by wrong motivations from Macon’s part.

Another example can be found in the character sketch of Muriel Pritchett in the same novel *The Amateur Marriage*. Muriel, after the analysis of Macon’s marital relationship, is motivated to drive her feelings into a wrong relationship. Her constant need for deriving attention pushes her to find herself with Macon. In the devices she has planned, her motivation has brought herself to the throes of an illegal relationship. She brings herself to him most of the time. It may have given her chances to feel blessed. The feeling of a man by her side is a comfort to her but evidently she sows the seed for an illegal relationship. Apart from finding the nearness of discovering true love, Tyler’s people are driven by their ideas of life, without discovering the possibility of God’s intervening hand, for instance, Ian in *Saint Maybe*, who is inspired to redefine his life because of his desire for change. Due to his impulse for swiftness, he confides to his brother about his sister-in-law’s disproved actions and dressing style. After his brother’s death, he silently ruminates and goes to the church to seek penance for his actions. He becomes the good man. Like Tyler’s characters, Kingsbury’s characters too are driven by their actions and desires. However, at a certain point Kingsbury’s characters sense a deeper need for God. They love God and understand their

problems. They do good deeds and desire restitution like Ian. Some of the characters who fall under this category are: Josh, Connor and Mike in the novels *This Side of Heaven*, *Oceans Apart*, and *Where Yesterday Lives*.

This Side of Heaven

Josh in Kingsbury's novel *This Side of Heaven*, fervently seeks a reunion but his options having been exhausted have been put to the test. He wants to meet his daughter but there is a hindrance; his physical impairment threatens him and he is on the throes of finding mercy from the judge. The judge as a person and member of the judicial system is less than sympathetic. It is only after Josh's death that the compensatory money is cleared. As a person Josh suffers intense, 'physical', 'psychological' and 'emotional' pain.

There is a character resemblance to Connor in Kingsbury's novel *Oceans Apart*. The choice of profession over family leaves him troubled resulting in an affair. His feelings of remorse, guides him to urgently seek out his son. As a person he is humane. Reverting to the past, Connor's profession however had pushed him to the extent of infidelity. Lack of closeness with his wife, children and father had excluded him from enjoying the joys of family life. The choice of profession over family leaves him troubled and thus, the illegal affair. Apart from establishing a profession, Connor after his wrongdoing and convicted by his guilt, feels the urgent need to reconcile with his wife. He loves his wife. However, the impact of the trouble he has somehow acquired results in his inquiring about Kiahna. He inquires about her at the airport and finds her name in the list of casualties. He invites tension into his married life, and his mind polluted by thoughts and memories of Kiahna leads him to enquire about her. However, after understanding the need to move on, he progresses from the setback of memories. The problem rears its head when information of legal processes involving custody of Max is informed to Connor. Connor, affected by the news, pursues a new idea, the need for a boy child. As a husband Connor had failed, he had failed to recognize the needs of his wife and he sought out a new need, the need for a boy child.

The absence of a boy child in his family affected Connor and spurred by the thought of possessing the child, he tries to win their affections to secure Max as his son. Connor is an excellent character, representative of a man faced by a conflict in real life. Connor acknowledged the affair to his wife. The honest answer he had committed to her had affected their marital relationship for

a brief time. Connor understands the devastation he had unintentionally caused to his family. He realizes his foolishness and surrenders to the possibility of losing the boy. Once more he feels lost.

The sacrifices of a man who desperately wanted a boy child is reminiscent in the character sketch of Connor. He decides to let go of the child. He does not want to risk the affections, love and attachments of his marital life. This is a universal phenomenon; not contrary to people belonging to different nationalities.

As a character Connor can be used as a character sketch for discussing marital relationships. There is another character worth for analysis and observation. Kiahna in the same novel *Oceans Apart* provides the readers with the example of sacrifice; by resisting the urge to start over a new life she relentlessly suffers herself to the duties of a single mother. With responsibilities, she seeks the guidance of Ramey and her friend's father in matters relating to the custody of her son. She loves the child she had given birth to and considering the seriousness of her role as stewardess in the airline industry, she strives to ensure her child's safety. She is a mother depending on God to solve her problem.

Another significant character portrait is Kiahna. Kiahna's devotion to the roles she carries, first as a single mother, and second as a full time worker at the work force is representative of working women and the scenario of the twenty-first century. Kingsbury pens her character with wonderful colors. Her readers love the character roles she invents for her fictional characters and produces tremendous insights on writing creatively about people and about choosing life filled with options, where there is joy and hope for her characters. In her novel *Where Yesterday Lives*, Kingsbury seeks to explore the characters' proximity with each other. This is unlike her other novels, for it provides remarkable insight on attachments with 'caregivers'. John Barrett is a remarkable character portrait. Though the novelist commits this character to a short life span, she gives him a voice. John lives in the memories of his children and wife.

In the descriptions given by his daughter Ellen, John is the ideal father. Her memories of him as a teacher in the area of sports, has enriched her experience in the workplace and has established her career. Prior to understanding John's influence on his daughter's career, it is essential to draw attention to his characteristics. As a father, he has supported his family financially and has loved them; by spending quality time with them and being a wonderful role model. The Barrett siblings have learned from their father the need to show charity to the poor and needy. John

Barrett is a man who lives in close proximity with his family. When he is financially stable he is able to live happily with his family. He does not want to dash the hope of his family. However, when he has been laid from his job back he is disturbed and is unable to face his family. He leaves the family to recuperate from the blow. However, he returns to his family and finds another job. As a father he feels and as a father, he loves by understanding the need to return to his family he is examined to be a man of integrity.

Tyler's novel *The Amateur Marriage* also presents a unique father figure. Michael is a wonderful father. He loves his children, but he is not presented in the same wave length as John Barrett in Kingsbury's novel *Where Yesterday Lives*. Kingsbury presents another character worth describing about; it is Kiahna in the novel *Oceans Apart*. Kiahna loves her child to the extent that she teaches him a song that reminds him of her when he is alone and in the custody of her friend Ramey. Kiahna too is an exemplary character. Another important aspect that requires inspiration to draw from is her firm decision to be a mother first and foremost. She loves her son and both of them spend time playing games during their spare time. This shows her heartfelt desire to be a mother first and then a flight attendant. She also teaches her son about God and gives him a Bible. Her inspiration having been taken from her love for God is divine. She allows this impact to touch her son's heart. With the ever present need to draw inspiration from God it is necessary to understand the scenario from which characters like Kiahna and John Barrett derive inspiration. Kiahna, for instance, is deeply rooted in hope. She had let down her guard when in her early twenties. Her hope of becoming a doctor had been crushed and with a baby to take care of, she decidedly lets go of her ambition and takes on the responsibility of a mother. With little or no experience she has successfully mothered her child. Her responsibility reaches the utmost of defeated expectations when she is confronted with death. With the risks of her job as stewardess stirring her soul, she suffers herself to take the risk of writing her desires for the welfare of her son.

Kiahna's letters offer readers with keen insights on responsibility. Kiahna had insights on Max's supposed future in the event of her death and she knew that foster care would not give her child true love. In her will, Kiahna made it a point to mention her intentions clearly; that the

biological father Connor, would be given the chance to know about his son before any decision could be made about his custody.

Kingsbury's insight gives readers glances to understanding maternal responsibility. Kiahna Siefert is a remarkable character portrait. She expounds her thoughts and concern for her child at a very young age. Despite the fact that there were very few chances of air crashes, she materialized her feelings into writing, and decided to take no risks concerning her child. It is her plan that helped her son find his father and increased his chances of getting a permanent home. She knew the need to grow up under biological parents. Her understanding of love, care and affection let her devise a plan which is directed by her faith in God. Her love for her son is based on her love for God. With her love for God increasing day by day and enriching her insights on life, she lived out her faith. This is evidently steered by their decision to live with integrity. This is true in the character's portraiture of Ezra in Tyler's novel *Dinner at the Homesick Restaurant*. Ezra is presented in the light of people presented in innocent and pure portraiture. In better words, with no intention of wrong doing, he is kind, gentle and lovable.

Ezra's physique attracts women and Ezra in his innocence does not find the attraction, the least bit tempting. When his brother's girlfriends visit their home, he does not give way to temptation, for in his heart is the pureness of love. Ezra falls in love with a country girl, and both of them are very much in love with each other. The innocent Ezra is oblivious of the crush his brother has for his girlfriend. His ignorance and choice of permitting his brother's advances towards his fiancé Ruth ends in a break up. Ezra's fiancé too in disbelief falls into the trap laid by Ezra's brother. Ezra does not realize his fault but is stupefied when the duo leaves for New York.

Ezra's mother could have enlightened him about Cody's plan, but she does not do so. Soon enough the mother and son become the pair who look at the couple living a married life. It is clearly visible that the family suffers due to the miscalculated plans. However, the feeling of being at home is etched in Ezra's mind and after the truth sinks into his heart, he feels accustomed to the plans sought out for the character by the novelist. The reason for the trouble is the journey of rivalry Ezra is faced with since childhood. The incident of the misfiring of the arrow at the park,

the splattering of adult magazines on the floor in Ezra's room and the disappearance of Ezra's friend's whistle which was later found in his friend's coat. Ezra never married. He had never found the ideal girl he had found in Ruth.

After marriage, Cody Tull visits his family home with his wife and son at Baltimore. The only time Cody has shown visible extent of his love and affections for his brother goes back to childhood when the three siblings were old enough to go shopping for Christmas. The beautiful memory of Cody pulling his brother's sleeve in protective gesture gives readers in depth analysis of the brother's feelings towards each other. Cody is the brother who is externally in conflict with Ezra. Ezra has feelings of brotherly affection and this is what permits Ezra to move on without harboring 'threatening' feelings like jealousy, anger, bitterness, remorse, and guilt towards his brother Cody; whenever he drops in with his family at Baltimore.

Another insight that stupefies readers is Cody's audacity and self-imposing nature. He is also successful in his career. With this success he disregards the need to set aside negative emotions and feelings. He requires attention, and in regard to finding himself he is a disqualified man; for he does not reach out to his brother to seek reconciliation. In other words, he does not know how to do so. He justifies his actions every time he comes across his brother and seeks less comfort and guidance. At the time of understanding, he refuses correction, and steers towards unsuccessful methods of recuperation; by harboring strife and discontentment, Cody hurts himself when his son steadfastly exposes his weakness. He resigns in silence. Gornick avers "Pearl has always been angry: now she'll be in a rage until she dies. Her children traumatized by their need for her love, will flinch before that rage for the rest of their lives, but not one of them will walk away. Tyler makes this inability to leave seem moving and inevitable..." (433). There are positive traits, and Tyler does well in exploiting the characters to the greatest extent; by analyzing the need to remain steadfast, Tyler has allowed Luke, the son of Cody to resist the urge to take sides. He is not disappointed but sad; frustrated by the constant battle raging between his parents. Their wars leave him devastated, and at a particular instance he is compelled to leave home. The mental and 'emotional' devastation helps him to realize the need for change.

At Baltimore, Luke's friendship with his uncle Ezra is heartwarming. Luke understands quite easily that his father and uncle were at poles with each other. Luke possesses a strong personality, capable of understanding the need to love and let love and also trust wholeheartedly. He is a wonderful son, misunderstood by his parents. His casual friendship with his uncle gives readers insight on the bond of friendship between close relatives; by considering the distressful events occurring in his home especially due to the conflict between his parents, it is evident that his mother and father never understood the true meaning of quality time.

Where Yesterday Lives

Mike, in Kingsbury's novel, *Where Yesterday Lives*, is an epitome of a man challenged by lifestyle. The present day calls him to be a man after his own heart, but values and godly principles have moulded Mike to seek after that which is right. He could have married a girl who is after materialistic values, but his focus was on Ellen Barrett, a girl who chooses to live her life with values. His preference for Ellen is also marked by his love for godly principles taught in the Holy Bible. It is his decision to stand by his preference and ardent love for God that is truly inspiring. With the news of his father-in-law's death, he is sad and he comforts his wife. His happiness is visited by his wife's desperate plea to be with him, and with an aversion towards death taking him personally he is compelled to live alone. He is 'emotionally' stable. He recalls the wonderful times he had with his wife and when in solitude, he realizes his mistake and leaves to reconcile with his wife. He is a happy man, able to understand his wife's 'emotional' needs and mends the relationship by booking a room to confess his feelings to his wife and to ensure that his wife's confidence in him is regained.

The character sketch of Ian Bedloe in Tyler's novel *Saint Maybe* is reputed due to the portraiture of the character reminiscing on change; by its various facets, Tyler seeks to restore a sense of balance in the hearts of her readers. Inculcating the need to derive inspiration from personalities who love restoration and purity of life, Ian Bedloe loves his brother and in his realization of purity he absolves himself from the need to realize his own need for it. His sensuality is characteristic in one aspect. It helps him to realize that in marriage it is essential to build a foundation that is strong and pure. When he senses a disparity in his view of the ideal marriage he

pulls down his brother's sense of integrity; by remodeling his views, after the fashion of his whim and fancies, he refutes his brother's opinion, leaving behind a scar. Ian suffers after his brother's suicide. He begins to thirst for restoration.

Ian feels sad after his brother's death and he decides to seek restoration by taking care of his brother's children. The children grow up very well and he is a happy 'caretaker'. After his life with the youngsters passes on from guided responsibility to supervision he dissolves from the place of secondary 'care giver' to a responsible family man. This is a wonderful portraiture, providing ample insight on the need to adhere to values and godly inspiration.

The Clock Winder

In Tyler's novel *The Clock Winder*, there is a wonderful presentation. It is the character sketch of Matthew. Matthew has a flaw but it becomes his greatest strength. In the path of finding a soul mate, Matthew is firm in his decision. He wants to marry Elizabeth. Though he rushes into the unstable relationship he has with her, he patiently bears the shame of rejection when the woman leaves him during her departure to her home. He does not want to bring havoc in his family and so he waits patiently for a time, where the problems are sorted. Matthew loves his family and is willing to sacrifice his desires for their sake. When a time comes, his own family supports him and he is willing to accept Elizabeth into their circle. The necessity of finding a helper brings together a wonderful gift where Matthew and Elizabeth reconcile and live in the family home.

John Barrett, in Kingsbury's novel *Where Yesterday Lives*, loves his children very much. He is hardworking, sincere, devoted and affectionate. In a memory recounted by one of his daughters, it is portrayed that John is desperate to win the affection of his family and in the process of winning their love by allowing them to buy things on credit he is faced with the dilemma of losing a job. He is unable to procure a job immediately. The money his family members had spent in purchasing goods after their heart's desires is in the position of being returned and he is perplexed. His wife's determination and strength prevents him from deciding right choices, and at the end of his life he realizes that the attachments with his family members were the only threads that kept him alive.

Jane is a loving mother, as devoted to her family as her husband. It is her courage that strengthens her and inspires her to hold her family together in times of adversity, especially during her husband's death. The distress of losing a father troubles her five children and by recuperating privately, she finds the courage to be brave in the presence of her children. The sudden release of emotions in her personal room does not affect her injuriously but it does help her to love her children and embrace the knowledge that she can handle any difficult situation. The strength she derives is supernatural and it is this element that holds the children together. As characters in the novel of Kingsbury both John and Jane are excellent portrayals of parents. Jane is presented as a mother involved with the preparation of meals and being inspired to raise her children with ethics, she takes care of them. The reason behind the happy turn-around of events, for example, the children holding hands and feeling happy at the end of the novel is marked by the family's confessions of feelings about their closest family member. The spirit of togetherness, hope, joy and love is instigated in the church and by allowing themselves to leave opposing thoughts they are tied down by love.

A Time to Dance

In the novel *A Time to Dance*, the couple John and Abby find themselves on the journey of discovering what it means to live in a marital relationship. As young adults, John and Abby find the tie of marriage as an excellent God -instituted organization. Their love for each other is tested in the "furnace of affliction" (Isaiah 48:10) and as their love for each other and their family is examined they realize the need to help others who are in distress. John, the husband of Abby is an instrument in the hands of the writer. As Kingsbury writes about John in the pages of her novel she focuses on John and his feelings. John is sentimental and his affections for his wife is profound. However his love for her dwindles when he entertains the friendship of a co-worker. His wife finds the attachment an unnecessary relationship and as he ignores the warning, he falls into the trap, and when he is pulled to his senses, it becomes difficult to leave the tie. The relationship had budded to the extent that he suffers 'emotionally'. Healing happens when both the husband and wife realize the distance they have created between themselves.

John is a father of two children and as he sorts the relationship and the ongoing battle, he impresses his children by being a role model to his son. Though the battle is recognized by the children he understands the complexity of the situation and answers their questions with wisdom. His wife Abby is a wonderful mother, an example to her daughter. Both mother and father inspire their children. These two characters are wonderful representations of parenthood and the husband and wife relationship. In regard to the marital relationship, they inspire and impress their children and instill a positive picture of married life. Their daughter is impressed to the extent that she fixes her wedding date on the wedding day of her parents. This inspiration awakes John and Abby from the present decayed state of the marital relationship; this has been a secret to the children. John's incessant pleas to his wife is not responded to and as days go by, his wife's harsh words distances him from the truth that he has to reject the "strange woman's" (Prov. 2.16) pleas to him. This is a battle raging against his soul, as, he is unable to fight the stress in his relationship with his wife.

At the end of the novel *A Time to Dance*, John is the happy father of his daughter. The satisfaction the parents derive from their daughter's happy wedding is a beautiful reminder of their own wedding. It reminded them that they were happy and closely knit as friends. John is happy at the fact that he is willing to define himself clearly. He understands that his wife is in the wrong, and he lashes out his feelings towards another woman. He tries to convince himself that he is in the right. However, as he observes and thinks about his life, he understands the true meaning of a committed relationship. In close proximity of a marital and committed relationship state the need for dedication and faithfulness from spouses. Abby is a wonderful mother, full of hopes and expectations. In her mid life she falls back in her love and commitment to her husband. Due to this, her husband stumbles. As discussed above, she does not respond to her husband's pleas. She can think of words that can hurt him. Abby loves her husband, but as her anger and bitterness aggravates, she finds less solace in the comforts of her home. She vents out her feelings verbally. The character, Abby, reflects the modern woman, who as she progresses in life, finds herself on the brink of divorcing her husband.

Abby realizes her folly, and commits herself to understand and help her husband in many ways and soon after her daughter's wedding, she dances with her husband as she had done in the

early years of her marriage. Abby, as a character is a wonderful character portraiture and Kingsbury as a writer excels in her talent for depicting characters who define themselves after a time of testing.

On Every Side

Faith is a remarkable character portraiture in the novel *On Every Side*. As she progresses in her career as an anchor for a news channel, and with the need to stand in her faith and do good, pressing upon her heart, she faces a crisis. Faith wants to place a particular child up in adoption. The handicapped child is a loving girl with a deformed hand and she wants to help that child get a loving home. Her sense of humanity dawns upon his soul, but the affluent who support the news channel and her boss do not think so. In her determination to ensure that the child gets a loving family she puts her career in jeopardy. Still urged by the need to help the child, she takes a drastic step, and towards the end of the novel, as Kingsbury narrates, she adopts the child.

Kingsbury's sense for characterization is unique. In her attempt to help her characters assume a unique portrayal, she lets them face dangerous situations and even allows them to confront them. It is presented in light of reality; where the situations themselves are probable and challenging in real life.

In the novel *On Every Side*, Kingsbury stands on the side of rights and justice. She presents the viewpoint in a wonderful light. Faith, as an anchor, is a well known personality in the town she lives in; from childhood her familiarity to the things around her helps her fight for justice. When her town is in need of a person to help them win a legal battle involving a Jesus statue, she helps them win the case by purchasing the statue. Kingsbury's adaptation of the story is from real life and it secures the attention of the readers in many ways. As Faith reminisces on the past, she finds herself meeting face to face with her childhood friend Jordan. In her wonder and astonishment, she is surprised by the changes the years have brought upon him and she is bewildered when she learns that the boy who had loved the Jesus statue has changed into a man who hates it and seeks to remove it from its historical landmark. Faith is a character who inspires the other characters in the novel. The very name Kingsbury gives to the character is reminiscent

of it. Faith acts as a person who with faith in God dispels darkness and sheds light into the life of the viewers on television and into hardhearted Jordan.

Jordan's life has been a distasteful one. Death having separated his mother from him, sought to separate him from experiencing joy in life. Prior to this is an eventful episode. Jordan loved his mother very much and when he learnt that she was going to die, he was heart -broken. As a sensitive boy he was depressed, and his frequent visits to the Jesus statue, shows his desire to see his mom well. His faith having been broken and rent to pieces by her death takes an ultimate turn where he is compelled to leave his faith in God. Another situation crops up in his life. When he believes that his sister and Faith's family are there for him, a neighbor reports the situation to the social services. As he is separated from his sister, he runs after her, crying and in sadness of heart feels dejected. Jordan, as portrayed by Kingsbury, is a loving boy but as the situation becomes distressful and moves on from bad to worse, he is grieved. The boy becomes troublesome in the camp he is admitted in and in a desperate attempt to seek out his loving sister he runs away. Kingsbury's portrayal of the boy Jordan is an untiring and remarkable rendering of a young boy who seeks a loving home and a loving family for himself. As he moves on, Jordan progresses in his academic career; as a lawyer, he is successful but the loss and pain has inflicted internal wounds.

Kingsbury's portrayal of Jordan is wonderful; the character sketch is representative of qualities that depicts the love and longing of a sibling brother for his sibling sister. On the surface Jordan is happy but he longs to meet his sister. As he meets his sister for the first time, he is unsure of himself. Unsure about the feelings of his long-lost sister, who is married and has a baby, Jordan's sadness is replaced with happiness. As he moves from one happy event to the next, it is the satisfaction that he derives from a long-lost relationship being bridged again that stirs him to believe in happy times. On the way to Jordan's happiness is the path of life that helps him feel motivated. It is Faith's inspiration and attitude that ushers him to seek hope, forgiveness and love. As a lawyer on the wrong side of justice, he is taught about doing good deeds and being wise enough to stop being angry at God. When a good sign, i.e., the reconciliation with his sister becomes a reality, he lets go of his grudge against God. He is restored and happy. Jordan's joy

becomes limitless when Faith inspires him to become a better man. He changes for the better and with Faith by his side, he is happy.

A Thousand Tomorrows

Kingsbury's novel *A Thousand Tomorrows* describes, in detail, Cody's life. The protagonist, star, and central attraction of the novel investigates the domain of love in his family and personal life. As he grows from childhood to teenage and adulthood, he harbors anger and resentment against his father and mother. The prime reason for the super hero to detest his father is his lack of love towards him and his sibling brother. He is a bull rider and with the anger harbored against his father taking full control of his life, he discovers the truth and beauty of love. It is his relationship with Ali Daniels that stirs in him, love, a feeling he had never recognized in his life. The beauty of the portraiture of Cody is that he delves with force to discover what love means, and as his relationship with Ali is strengthened he is forced to discover the unforgiving nature behind his body, mind and soul. He does not want any relationship or tie with his father but as Ali teaches him about love he is ignited within and discovers that forgiveness is essential in life. He changes for the better.

Cody is a remarkable character sketch, and, as Kingsbury portrays in the novel, he is a reminder for people who through distress in family life, reorganize their life and submit to the confines of anger, regret and unforgiveness. The accumulation of these feelings like in Cody's life provide in detail the destructive path one is liable to take and as the character portrayal escapes from the past, there is an unknown feeling that helps them progress from the feeling of sadness to the feeling of happiness. Contemporary writers would examine the desires that engage the character to behave in a particular manner. They would engulf the characters in a particular situation and change them completely.

The characters in Tyler's novels are persuaded to reflect their qualities at opportune times. It can almost be presumed by the reader that the author desires to inject a flaw into the character so that the character can incorporate it in family life.

Unlocked

The researcher exploits certain aspects in Kingsbury's novel *Unlocked* for the reason of securing insights on the writer's preference for writing about morality and right choices. In Chapter Two of the dissertation, the topic of suicide has been discussed. The novelist explores the character's alternatives; "as the second passed" (U 239), Michael is faced with the only alternative suicide promotes – death. Kingsbury teaches her readers the peace God offers. She writes about cowardice and gives her readers fresh insight that life has, with its abundance and beauty, wonderful things to offer.

Kingsbury also writes using human emotions as themes in her novels. An illustration depicting human feelings is the feeling of 'fear', it distracts people from the path of joy and happiness. Here are a few lines which anticipate destruction: "... Fear gripped at him, tighter than the rope digging through his skin, cutting off air, and life and circulation. 'Fear' bigger than the 'fear' from earlier: "Help..." (U 239). Another few lines teach Michael the beauty of living life: "The last thing he saw – the very last thing was his flute; the flute he should have spent a lifetime playing... for audiences all over the world. His flute... because he wanted to live! Living would always be better than this... than... than... than –" (U 239 -240). Kingsbury secures the attention of her readers by writing in the letter to her readers the need for dealing with the theme she chose for her novels.

In the novel *Unlocked*, Kingsbury writes: "Life is God's. It is His to give and His to take away. If you or someone you love is struggling with meaning in life, or especially if you know someone being bullied, please report the situation immediately... In the end the only way to deal with Michael's suicide was to show his last minute change of mind" (U 317). As Kingsbury avers there is nothing that can change the mind of a person desperate for escape from the complexities of life. Unless the dire need of change impacts him, he would never understand that there is a purpose behind his existence. Rarely would a man sway under pressure but if he does, it means something has caused him to deter from the path of truth.

Another human emotion used as a theme, is the feeling of ‘peace’. As Kingsbury presents in the letter to the reader, she states the importance of enjoying life with peace. Without peace it would be difficult to contemplate living life happily, and in Kingsbury’s perspective it is Jesus Christ who gives peace. In the same novel *Unlocked*, Kingsbury presents the story of Holden’s mother Tracy. She patiently endures her son’s disability. Her faith in Jesus Christ helps her to refuse the consideration of her son’s disability as a curse. She loves God, and the bountiful overflow of peace she carries in her heart and mind, assists her to help her son Holden without harboring any trace of murmuring and frustration. Here is an excerpt from the novel:

The schedule was exhausting. She looked out the kitchen window. Never mind that her view was taken up almost entirely by the apartment next door. If she looked up she could see a slice of blue, like God reminding her, *I’m still here, daughter. Still watching over you.*

But, God...I’m so tired. I don’t see progress, Father. Sometimes I don’t know how to get through the days. My child, you don’t have to fight this battle...Stand firm and see the deliverance I will give you. The battle is mine, not yours.

Tracy closed her eyes and lifted her chin. The response washed over her like an autumn breeze and she inhaled slowly, deeply. The battle belonged to the Lord. The verse was from 2 Chronicles, something Tracy had read last week in her Bible. She loved when God responded to her this way. She sat a little straighter and a new sense of strength filled her soul. (U 66)

Another prayer taken from the novel is inspiring; it presents her loving nature “ ‘Dear God, thank you for this food. Please bless it to our bodies. Thank you that Kate can be with us for the next few months, and thank you for Holden. Let him know how much we love him. In Jesus’ name, amen’ ” (U 59). The peace and strength which is derived from her faith in God guides her towards securing healing for her son. Though her son’s healing is progressive it presents the truth that recovery from any terminal disease is possible. As Kingsbury portrays in the novel, Tracy’s son is on the road of recovery. This outline is a resemblance to a real-life incident, Kingsbury had met a mother challenged by her son’s disability, and as incorporated by the novelist the boy recovers and Kingsbury has meticulously presented it in her novel *Unlocked*.

Inherent Differences Between Man and Woman

In an event organized for couples at Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, India, family counselors Peter and Sally from FACT (Family Assistance thro' Counseling & Training) enlightened the crowd about the inherent differences between man and woman. They commented that a man's brain is compared to the traditional South Indian food 'Idlies; they added that men can perform duties one by one, unlike women whose brains are tuned to function multi -purpose tasks. Their brain is compared to 'Noodles', and in the words of Farrel, it is called "Spaghetti" (13). The couples understood the significant differences. These concepts provide significant insights on the inherent duties imposed upon men and women by the Creator and the requirements they are indebted to fulfill in their everyday life.

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