

University of Baghdad			
College Name	College of Education for Women		
Department	Department of English		
Full Name as written in Passport	Ruwayda Jassim Mohammad		
e-mail	adyawur@yahoo.com		
Career	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Assistant Lecturer	<input type="radio"/> Lecturer	<input type="radio"/> Assistant Professor
	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Master	<input type="radio"/> PhD	
Thesis Title	The concept of suicide in selected works from the English fiction of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: a socio-psychological study		
Year	2004		
Abstract	<p>Each human experience which is enigmatic in its nature provokes research. Thus, suicide, which is an extremely strange behaviour for its incompatibility with the natural drive of life, becomes a subject of interest for many professionals in different fields. Novelists' ultimate aim is to pursue ambiguous points of human nature. So, it is natural that the drastic tragedy of suicide captures their attention since it is very much puzzling. They try this aim through the display of the suicidal characters' feelings, reactions and motives. Yet, novelists are writing out of their insight and awareness of men's painful experiences. Hence, their record of human pains are truthful and their created suicidal characters are reflections of men in real life.</p> <p>The thesis aims at exploring and revealing the reality of suicide by analysing the suicides in the works under discussion by subjecting them to the findings of sociology, social psychology, psychology, so as to assimilate all the implications of the concept of suicide which are presented in these works. To select works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is not to claim that the impulse of suicidality is the invention of modern literature, but—first, it is to specify the study so as to achieve more concentration; second, to include the period of realistic fiction in which reality is expressed as it is; third to include the period of the emergence of the sociological as well as the psychological investigations of suicide, the fact that marks a distinguishable concern with the study of the deliberate termination of life. These investigations cannot be away from the novelists of the period through their knowledge of those investigations or of the philosophers' and thinkers' moral controversies concerning suicide.</p> <p>The study is divided into four chapters with a conclusion. Since the study handles the concept of suicide in the literary works depending on the social and</p>		

psychological bases, therefore Chapter One is specified to shed light on those bases simply yet comprehensively as the literary works are analysed according to them hand in hand with the literary criticism and the authors' views. This is done in the first section of the chapter. An overview of suicide in English literature in general is also necessary to link this chapter with the following ones; hence the second section of Chapter One is to include it.

The following chapters of the study utilize the socio-psychological views presented in Chapter One to study and classify the suicidal act through the tracing of what the authors display of the suicidal character's speeches, contemplations, reactions, relationships alongside with the whole context the authors set for the work. The study seeks to handle the possibilities the texts of the works selected, the literary criticism, the authors' biographies invite to think of. Each one of these chapters includes an introductory part which refers to remarks related to suicide in the author's life, attitudes, philosophy of life, and literary work.

Chapter Two is devoted to the study of the suicides in Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and "A Grave by the Handpost." Hardy's literary treatment of suicide in the novel concerned shows it a result of a universal death-wish enhanced clearly in Jude's son Father Time's suicide. Hardy shows this death-wish is the aftermath of iniquity in society and personal defects. Also, suicide appears an outcome of exaggerated egoism turned to anomie. Thus, *Jude the Obscure* includes four serious suicidal acts—three of them are made fatal, that is, Jude's mother's suicide, Jude's, and Jude's son's, while Sue's suicidal act is not so. Hardy's "A Grave by the Handpost" includes two suicides—the Sergeant and his son Luke. The suicide of the old age is illustrated in the first while the suicide out of a sense of guilt is shown in the second. War is taken into consideration in the study of both.

Chapter Three is devoted to two novelists in two sections. "Jack London and Suicide" is tackled in the first section while "Virginia Woolf and Suicide" is tackled in the second section. Both novelists are acknowledged to be suicides. Thus, self-expression is explicit in their presentation of suicide which is made inwardly and seems a genuine recording of the pre-suicide state of feeling, meditation, and conduct. The examination of Eden's suicide, in London's semi-autobiography *Martin Eden*, is the examination of the artist's deadly and consistent struggle to achieve his literary ambition. Thus, when his egoistic style is opposed by the capitalist prejudiced society, the matter ends this struggle in Eden's suicide as a final decision. Virginia Woolf reflects her suffering from severe depression in *Mrs. Dalloway* through her depiction of Septimus's transient stage from half-madness to madness which ends by a hallucinatory call from the dead to kill himself. The stressors of war, post-war life, and the hypocritical society have their destructive effects on him.

Chapter Four is to study Graham Greene's presentation of suicide in his work. *Dr. Fischer of Geneva or the Bomb Party* includes Greene's intelligent

illustration of a sadistic character, Dr. Fischer, the multi-millionaire, whose paramount contempt of humanity turns at the end to contempt of the self which he satisfies by suicide. In "Dream of a Strange Land," Greene presents a patient who suffers from leprosy and abandoned by his doctor who shows the capitalist's prejudice and deprives him of cure. To him death is the only home.

The conclusion sums up the findings of the study.