



PEOPLE' DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

MASTER IN
LITERATURE AND CIVILISATION

**The Crisis of Masculinity in Nick
Hornby's *About a Boy* (1998) and
Slam (2007)**

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Academic year: 2017-2018

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to all my family

Father: Djilali

Mother: Halima

Sisters: Khaldia, Chaimae, Hamida, Sounia,

Brothers: Habib, Nasser,

And without forgetting the little angels: Lina, Nouh

All the members of my family, and my friends.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the teachers who helped me to complete this modest thesis.

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mrs. Benmaati Fatima Zohra for her guidance throughout this work and I appreciate all her effort for the completion of this work.

I'm further grateful to Mrs. Ghernout Soumia who inspired me with the main ideas of this dissertation.

Abstract

This dissertation concerns itself with those issues that are related to men and masculinity, in fact the only loser after the battle of gender equality is Men. The study at hand seeks the reality of masculinity crisis through analysing the major works of the British writer Nick Hornby *About a Boy* (1998) and *Slam* (2007) by applying the psychoanalysis theory of the British psychotherapist Rogger Horrocks. Seemingly, male crisis affects men and their relationships in a negative way, and in their attempts to avoid this kind of trouble, men fell in another crisis; an existential crisis. Applying the Horrocks psychoanalysis on Hornby's selected works makes it evident that the main characters Marcus, Sam and Will are accused of being in masculinity crisis, bullying issue in Marcus, the issue of fatherhood and gynophobia in Sam, Will and his social immaturity, in fact weird personality, immaturity, bullying, lack of fatherhood and also gynophobia are the traits of masculinity crisis.

Key words: Gender equality, Crisis, Masculinity, Gynophobia.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

For a long time, women used to live under restrictive rules where they were obliged to leave their basic rights. The only place for a woman was her home. In fact she played the role of a housewife. She strived to cook and take care for her husband and the children. All over the world there were abusive laws against women in general and housewives in particular. At the same time, women were living under unfair law named oppression where men ruled everything in society, whereas women were unable to express their own opinions or even enjoy the same rights as men do.

Gender study released its emergence with the study of femininity and spread by developing new theories for women. During this time, men study raised its flag in the beginning of the 1980s just after the second wave of feminism. Since the emancipation of women study as an important part in the western society, the power of men decreased. That is why, masculinity crisis appeared.

When we compare the situation of men in the past to the present situation, a difference occurs in the sense that male troubles have relevance with the emancipation of women in all areas of life. In the past, family's power was based on men's power as an essential individual in society. Hitherto, the image of men is changed to the worst situation because of losing their vital roles as the only provider rather than breadwinner.

Several authors have contended that there are many reasons behind masculinity crisis. Sally Robinson noted that « dominant masculinity appears to have suffered one crisis after another. The men's liberationists have called for rethinking masculinity in the wake of the women's movement in the 1970s. Each of these moments comes clothed in the language of crisis » (5). This quotation unravels the issue of male crisis and the reason behind this problem, For Robinson, women liberation movement contributed for the demise of men under the unwanted name crisis. This new movement threatened the position of men where he lost his usual place as a provider. Taking the contrary view, Haywood and Mac an Ghail have argued that « men lived in a situation of disempowerment, feeling of shame and emasculation because they lost their role as the only provider of their families » (38). Both Haywood and Mac an Ghail talked about the economic reasons that led to the masculinity crisis. However,

economic reasons are not the only reasons, social and mainly psychological reasons play a vital role in giving rise to this crisis.

The purpose of this dissertation is to address and analyze the issue of masculinity from a psychological perspective as presented in Nick Hornby's *About a Boy* (1998) and *Slam* (2007) to see how this problem affects men and their relationships.

The study raises these questions. First, how does Hornby portray masculinity crisis in *About a Boy* and *Slam*? Second, how does this crisis affect the male characters and their relationships?

The hypotheses might be as follows: to ascertain that male crisis is not the result of economic reasons when women got access to the labor force causing unemployment of men, instead the second wave of feminism and the lack of father role led to the crisis of Hornby's characters in the novels *About a Boy* and *Slam* affecting them negatively.

To answer the above mentioned questions, the dissertation is divided into three chapters. The first chapter entitled Representation of the undiserable crisis under Gender Equality. It is allotted for the reasons behind male crisis in the West particularly in Britain. Then, backgrounding the term gender and how it evolved from the effort of feminist theorists and how feminism took part in the masculine crisis. In the second chapter which is entitled Hornby and his masterpieces *About a Boy* (1998) and *Slam* (2007), there is a summary and analysis of the selected works in relevance to the topic or the issue at hand. In the last chapter entitled Crisis of Masculinity in Hornby's *About a Boy* and *Slam*, light is shed on the negative impacts of masculinity crisis on men and their relationships.

CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One: Representation of the Undiscoverable Crisis under Gender Equality

Introduction

By now, it is clear that the image of masculinity lost its fundamental existence in the west. It is woman who draws a new path for the term gender, in fact searching for equality gives woman the ability to create a new world for herself away from the masculine world. Simply, man falls in trap when woman replaced his place in the western society. Leading different waves of feminism bring the equality to the feminine gender, put women on the track of liberation and led them to the light of freedom, Issues as masculine crisis are pertinent to men. The masculine crisis causes a trauma for men and expels them into many problems as depression, gynophobia, weak personality...etc. However, the women liberation movement is not the only reason behind male crisis. There are other reasons as the rise of lifestyle press, the lack of father role and so on.

1-Definition of Gender

The concept of Gender has come to its glory age with a great deals of theorists and scholars. It has expanded into major area of study when it appeared first by the psychologist Robert Stoller ¹ in 1970s. He differentiated between sex and gender. What is significant here, is the way gender study became visible in the eye of public. For many people the image of gender reflects the very definition of the two sexes masculine/ feminine, or man /woman, and the way society expect them to behave. To such extent, scholars as Ann Oakley followed the psychoanalyst Robert Stoller and adopted his definition of gender. According to Oakley ² gender is The term that has psychological, cultural rather than biological connotations...the corresponding terms for gender are `masculine` and `feminine` this latter may be quite independent of biological sex. Gender is the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person (qtd.in Oakley 159). This definition reveals that the origin of the term `Gender` refers to the psychological and cultural dimensions where the appropriate expressions for gender are `masculine` and `feminine`. However, in the trip of searching for gender equality women want to prove their existence as a feminine part in western

¹ Professeur of Psychiatry in the University of California at Los Angeles.

² American theorist, She is well known for her book: Sex, Gender and Society (1985).

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society. Gender equality represents a menace for men, because after women gain their rights, Men lost their position rather their crucial role in western society, they fall in an undisrable 'Crisis'. A number of writers have described this crisis and its impact on men. They wrote: 'A new man was the product of social changes that occurred during the 1970s and 1980s such as second wave feminism, the gay liberation, and the rise of lifestyle press'.(Flood etal, 455) here the writers suggested an explanation about the situation of men today. The crisis turned them to a new men in fact, they lost their position as a monopolizing in western society. Thanks to the efforts of the feminists movement women occupied a high position in all the fields.

2- Gender in Feminists Eyes

The very speed of the growth of research in the field of gender exceeds all the expectations, when it was adopted by a set of feminists. Those feminists attempted to seek a new definition for gender as well as new theories from their own perspective. Gender study was adopted by a significant number of feminists addressing issues related to this term as woman's oppression and man's patriarchy. As one of the most influential thinkers of this generation, the French existentialist Simoun *De Beauvoir* with her book *The Second Sex* published in 1949 by talking about the study of women as the second part of society after man. In a general sense, Beauvoir examined the formative years of any woman, while she started her paragraph by arguing that One is not born, but rather becomes, woman (333). The American philosopher, feminist and gender theorist Judith Butler commented on Beauvoir stand from gender. Butler point out that Beauvoir considers gender as 'Constructed', Beauvoir is obvious that one become a 'woman' but, if there is always a cultural servitude that force one to become one. However, Butler argued that if we take Beauvoir theory about gender there is no warranty or proof that one who become a 'Woman' need to be a female. Beauvoir hints that gender is rather an instrument, a recognition takes on in a way or another (11). In this context, Beauvoir questioned the fact of being woman in this society and how it affects our life. In fact, she stated that the word 'Happiness' has numerous meanings, and as a people we can not know whether women in seraglio are happy, or not compared to women who vote, moreover we can not know that a housewife is happier than a working woman (36-37). In other words, by presenting

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the idea of equality between men and women, she insisted the fact that woman should be dealt with like men (Beauvoir 24). Also, she suggested a set of antifeminist Jewish traditions about marriage. Those traditions as she claims were against women who were obliged to relinquish their rights, and were considered as a related part to men, or as a second part; for instance, Saint Paul said: "The man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man". Moreover, he argued: "for the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church" (133). Following on from Beauvoir's arguments, woman was not treated well. There were abusive rules against a woman in general and a housewife in particular, also Beauvoir supported her stand with another argument about the rules that were set against the unmarried French women. She commented on the servitude that restricted woman's freedom while French woman was not financially independent. In addition, As Roman women's liberation expanded, negativity went as long as their liberation stayed in a negative way (144). On the other hand, from demonstrating these examples of French women "Beauvoir" illustrated women's situation in the seventeenth century, she wrote :

women... will continue to distinguish themselves essentially in the intellectual spheres; social life and cultures are spreading; women play a considerable role in salons; by the very fact they are not involved in the construction of the world, they have the leisure to indulge in conversation, the art and literature; they are not formally educated, but through discussions, Reading, and instruction by private preceptors or public lectures they succeed in acquiring greater knowledge than their husband.(149)

Alongside the long history of women, Beauvoir discussed the nature of the two sexes man and woman from the very beginning of their life. She argued that from childhood the boy benefits from his existence in this world, in which he emulates other boys by using his power in stiffness, he shows his muscles by practising many activities as sport, fight, challenges, and exploits. Through these activities the boy learns numerous lessons about violence, in fact it became a habit to hide his tears, and to be strong in front of problems. The boy shows his capacity, as a result

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he succeeds to grant his position to be in one single movement, which is 'masculine movement'. On the other hand, the negative trait that characterized 'feminine', or woman is considered as a trait that developed from her childhood, however this trait is not biologically given, it is a destiny imposed on woman by society. As she is obliged to be an object, and by other parts, she was treated like a puppet when she was rejected by freedom (341-342). In addition to that, Beauvoir offered an explanation about adolescent conflict, i.e. the battle between girls and boys as different parts of society, especially girl when she makes her freedom the best way to understand the world around her. If the girl is motivated, she will exceed all the expectations. She can show the same inspiration, and the same creation as boys (342). It is simplistic to suggest that Beauvoir stated the different stages of women's life as childhood, the girl, the married woman, social life, starting from the earliest to the old ages. According to Beauvoir the adolescent girl will attempt to free herself from the masculine world. If she prefers some hobbies, as study, practice sport, training, or any other social and political activity, but she spends hard times comparing with man in proving herself as an independent individual. Nowadays, it is possible for the girl to manage her destiny, or even to take her future in her hand, instead of putting it in those of the man (438). Concerning social life, Beauvoir would rather talk about the situation of women in society. She discussed the world of feminine, where she offered a comparison between the two sexes. According to her, women have the ability to make friendships with other parts of the same sex than men do, for women, relationships are sacred. For men they are not. Men relations with each other depend much more on their ideas, and their own personal project. However, women are related to each other depending on their destiny as women, while they do not share their own ideas as men do. But, they let their recipes talk, as an example when women combined together they create a new world more than men do (663). However, when we talk about women's friendship and compare it with men's friendship. Beauvoir wrote :

It is nonetheless rare for feminine complicity to reach true friendship; women feel more spontaneous they do not transcend toward each other: together they are turned toward the masculine world, whose values each hopes to monopolize for

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herself. Their generality: and from there, the element of hostility comes into play.(666)

Here Beauvoir demonstrated women spontaneity when they make friendship with each other, they just do anything without any plan, as they feel unity with each other, however the situation is not the same for man. They are less united with each other, women hope is to gain control in a world whose only monopolizer is man. Clearly, further from these explanations Beauvoir provided the reader with an analysis of woman's situation and character. She thought that there is a dissimilarity between the feminine, and masculine world, in fact women never succeed to create an independent society, while this society is controlled by male power, where woman takes the inferior position in the masculine universe that subordinate her. This blurry image of segregation among man and woman makes her realize that this world is masculine. It is the man who rules, gain control and prove his existence over the world. As woman did not consider herself responsible for this world (724-725). However, this assumption about women's position in society had an important significance for the term 'gender'. Beauvoir wrote :

Woman's situation encourage her to seek salvation in literature and in art. living on the margin of the masculine world. She does not grasp it in its universal guise but through a particular vision ; for her it is not a group of implements and concepts but a source of feelings and emotions ; she is interested in the qualities of things in as much as they are gratuitous and secret ; taking on a negative attitude, one of refusal she does not lose herself in the real ; she protest against it, with words ; she looks for the image of her soul in nature, she abandons herself to her reversies, she wants to reach her being : she is doomed to failure ; she can only recover it in the realm of imagination...(836)

Here the French feminist Beauvoir concluded her book 'The Second Sex' with an examination of women situation in society, and trials to reach the peak of independence through the masculine world, in fact this male society should give the opportunity for woman to prove herself in fields such as literature and art. Woman always attempts to seek solution for her problems, she wants to look for the beautiful

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image of her soul in this world. As it reflects her success, she wants to reach into existence that is only monopolized by male's power. On the other hand, Beauvoir would rather talk about the independent woman in her final chapters, in which she related woman's work with independence. She proved that when woman is not able to do anything this consider a damn that follow her as a subordinate sex, therefore she tenaciously decided to search for all the possibilities. This later led woman to selfishness in an attempt to reach her being in society. That is to say, she is able to win her freedom as well as woman witnessed a breakdown throughout her battle to gain equality. Through work woman recaptures her sublimity, because she stops to be a deadhead in the male universe and prove herself as an important matter. It is interesting that working woman wants to perceive her purpose through the rights she wants to take (813). Following on from Beauvoir arguments, gender definition that Butler embodied in her famous book 'Gender Trouble' published in 1990. As an American philosopher and gender theorist, there were many saying about her book as 'Indispensable for feminist theory'. She introduced the term gender performativity while, it is considered as the core of feminist theory. It is important to bear in mind, that Butler manipulated gender in the eyes of feminists theorists, while she explained that gender can not be defined as a 'Connection', or as a group of relations, however it can not be defined as an individual feature or even a trait. In contrast, other feminist theorists would prefer to follow Beauvoir in her theory. They argued that the only remarkable gender is feminine, whereas the masculine gender are mixed together. Women can not be categorized by their sex, in which they are considered as 'The Other'. Men are categorized by their bodies and muscles (Beauvoir 13). Butler demonstrated the relationship between feminist theory and politics, in fact all the feminists talked about this relationship in their discourses. This concept is widespread. Woman as a subject of feminism is not understood in fixed expression (2). As an extension to Beauvoir sight of 'Gender Study' and its relation to women as subject of feminism. Butler challenged Beauvoir quotation about women. In this case, Butler refuted the idea that one is a 'Woman'. She thought that this term is failed to be comprehensive. That is to say, not everyone certainly become a 'woman'. Therefore, it is out of the question to split up gender from politics and culture because gender has intersection with race, class, ethnic forms of identities (4-5). Ac-

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According to Butler, Are there ever humans who are not as it were always gendered? the mark of gender appears to 'qualify' bodies as human bodies; the moment in which an infant becomes humanized is when the question 'is it a boy or a girl?' is answered. (151). Here Butler challenged the statement of Beauvoir which implied that 'One is not born a woman, but, rather becomes one', in which gender is knowable or obvious when it is categorized by human body. One can not know the gender before categorizing a boy or a girl.

3-Glamorizing Feminism Movement in the West

Nowadays, women could not have reached the highest position, or simply the peak of success in western society without the support and endeavor of feminism movement. In this process, the most significant challenge for feminism was to gain equality as men in all the fields, Particularly in the political field. In this context, when we talk about feminism as a term it is appeared as a response to male dominance. That is to say, feminists based on obtaining their rights as a second part of society. At the same time, male's oppression was the radical factor that contribute for the emergence of feminism movement. A number of writers have expressed concern that there have been several meanings for the term 'Feminism'. The British professor of History Jane Rendall focused on the longest history of the feminists movement in Britain, she argued that until 1894 the English word 'Feminism' derived from the French word 'Féminisme', in fact it was originated by the utopian socialist Charles Fourier and he is the only one who used this term. According to the 1933 supplement to the oxford English Dictionary (1). At this point, it is important to note that others as the American writer Ann Oakley who introduced her book 'Sex, Gender and Society' published in 1985 by summarizing the most important stages in the history of feminists. According to Oakley :

It seems to be revived at times when the existing roles and statuses of male and females are changing, and three periods in particular stand out: the century from 1540 to 1640, the victorian era, and the present time. In the last two, distinct 'women's movement' have arisen, and their existence sug-

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gests that since the seventeenth century and the growth of industrialization, basic issues to do with the role of women have never been solved. In the period from 1540 to 1640, women were certainly on the defensive over their rights in society but it was a matter of maintaining these rights rather than obtaining them. (9)

here the writer portrays the different stages in woman's life where the most factor is women's rights. However, it is unlikely that women will not be able to achieve their rights. As Ann Oakly argued, women want to protect their rights in western society. At this point, it is important to note that the term 'feminism' includes the act of speaking, writing, and defending for issues related to women. Indeed, some writers shaped the history of feminism by introducing their works. It is often examined issues related to woman as Margaret Cavendish who is considered as the most important feminist writers in the English language in the 17th century. The British writer Heloise Brown introduced the different views of the term 'feminism'. She claimed that some writers as Nancy Cott argued that the term 'feminism' should be applied for the people who contribute after its emergence in the English language (2). Moreover, the 19th century in the victorian era witnessed the rise of many feminists writers, particularly in the genre of fiction as Jane Austin who examined woman's life at that time, Charles Brontë and Goerge Eliote who portrayed women suffer and pain. Of course, those writers and others contributed in tackling women's issues with a little effort. They just help to expose the oppression that is imposed on woman at that time, in fact she was not able to express her opinion under male dominance. According to the historians, the history of feminism can be divided into three waves. The first wave indicates all what the feminists done in the trip of defending women's rights and equality during the period of the 19th century and early 20th century. Most importantly, when we talk about the British empire both Victorian and Edwardian eras named respectively after the mother Queen Victoria and her son Edward VII ruled respectively in different eras. Generally, in the mid of the victorian era the term of feminist started to appear in 1880s, where women sought for the equal rights as men. Many acts were stated as well as the number of men who want to vote is increased as a result, women became furious about these acts that support men in the

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political field. So, the reaction is to establish a new group of women suffrage movement led by Lydia Becker in 1867. This group held public meetings, wrote petitions and letters to sought the rights of woman to vote in parliament. Another leader woman named Millicent Fawcett want to continue constitutional meetings, so she formed another group called the Union of Women Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1897. One of the group became impatient about what her fellows did and especially (NUWSS). Her name was Emilie Bankhurst. She formed a new group with her daughter Christabyl and Sylvia in which, This group called 'WSPU'.

This later marked the beginning of the suffragettes movement under the motto of 'Deeds not Words'. Women did not take their rights in peaceful way. So, they move to violence in order to gain equality. After the 1914 women suffrage movement succeed to give woman the right to vote, and rise her flag in the political field. Writers have expressed a brief definition for the first wave of feminism. Elizabeth Evans³ wrote:

The first wave of feminism tends to refers to those movements that advocate for women's suffrage and for women's legal and constitutional rights across (primarily) North America and Europe in the Nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Issues such as access to higher education and married women's property rights were central to this 'Liberal' wave of feminism that sought to remove legal obstacles to women's equal opportunity. (qtd,in Evans 5)

As the quotation above noted that the first wave of feminism gain some right for woman. However, women did not stop at this point. They continued to change the picture of women from slavery to freedom. According to Evans: The second wave is usually a reference to the activities associated with the women's liberation movement that occurred between the 1960 and 1980s. Motivated by a desire to reawaken women and society to persistent sex inequalities, second wave of feminism sought to highlight the importance of the personal and private sphere as a site of inequality...(5). Here the writer attempted to tackle the second wave of feminism as a continuation to the first wave.

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She said that this movement concerned with other issues of equality as discrimination. It focused on social and cultural issues rather than the first wave which based on political issues. However, by the same movement men announced their crisis.

4- An Inevitable Crisis for Men

As a responding movement to the second wave of feminism men study release its emergence in the 1970s, at the time of women's liberation movement. When we talk about masculinity, one can not ignore the characteristics, behavior, and traditional rules that are typically associated with one gender, or another like the feminine traits, rationality, independence, dominance are all considered as masculine. One can not pinpoint exactly what is the traits of masculinity, for instance masculinity in UK is not like masculinity in United States. Many theorists and scholars talked about their stand from masculinity, Haywood and Mac an Ghail⁴ wrote : masculinities are not only differentiated, they stand against one another in relations of power. It is the internal relations of masculinities and femininities that are the significant dynamic of continued gender inequality (qtd,in Connell p9). As quoted above the writer portrayed the struggle between different masculinities and femininities which create the notion of inequality. Meanwhile, masculinities are differentiated from one person to another as the example of fashion,i.e everyone has his own style that represents his masculinity (Haywood and Mac an Ghail 10). Clearly, men studies trait many themes that are related to men as home, work, violence, health, and so on. Other writers as Pease would talk about men in relation to patriarchy: The concept of patriarchy has been used as an 'Umbrella' term for describing systemic dominance of women. (qtd,in Millet, 12). Concerning masculinity Raewan Connell⁵ is well known for her theory that influenced the field of man and masculinity. She argued that men's concern and their issues spread all over the world, in which some fields are related to men's gender as "Health". Many problems associated with man as diseases (4). She points that there are many writers who tackle the issues of men in their works as Robert Bly, and his book *Iron john*, Sam keen and his work *The Belly*.

⁴ Held academic position at the university of Sheffield.

⁵ Australian theorist of Masculinity.

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Those writers attempted to depict the reality of man's life as it is (5). John Beynon⁶ introduced the term 'Masculinity': There are numerous forms and expressions of gender, of 'being masculine' and 'being feminine'. Masculinity is always interpolated by cultural, historical and geographical location and in our time the combined influence of feminism and the gay movement has exploded the conception of a uniform masculinity (1). In the last sentence the writer unravels a big issue about masculinity which is 'Crisis'. 'At the beginning of the twenty-first century it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that men are in serious trouble' Anthony Clare 'on Men : Masculinity in Crisis.

Certainly, This quote describes the situation of men today. The term 'Crisis' when it emerged, it implies a disaster or trauma for men, traditionally man played his role as the only provider, or let us say 'Breadwinner' however, women stayed at home, But the second wave of feminism as well as the changing of labour market where women occupied many fields, makes men search for roles in western society. Beside that the gay liberation movement makes the image of traditional masculinity the worst ever. Men have changed as Haywood and Mac an Ghail wrote :

A major question raised by feminists—have men changed?—is answered in terms of yes, no and not really sure. In turn men's groups' projection of a crisis masculinity across western contemporary societies is marked by a bitter debates about the assumed changing social location of men. (125-126)

Here the quotation tackled the collapse of masculinity in western society in fact, the role that man inherited from gender is disrupted by women. Men find themselves in a catastrophic crisis. At the same time, Fintan Walsh⁷ defined the term 'Crisis' as a performance. He mentioned: to think of 'Crisis' as a performance is to imagine that the disruption it signifies is actively or even carefully produced (1). As Walsh related the concept of crisis with the idea of performance. It is clearly stated

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⁷ Lecturer in Theatre and Performance Studies at Birkbeck, University of London

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that men live this inevitable reality. They can not run out from this disaster. The only way to run is to find a solution for this problem.

5-Psychoanalysis study of male Crisis

‘Certainly in my work I am reminded daily that being male is not a comfortable or ‘natural’ position for some men’(Horrocks 2). This quote tackles a very difficult issue in men’s life which is ‘Crisis of Masculinity’. In his book *‘Masculinity in Crisis’ Myths, fantasies, and realities* published in 1994, The American therapist Roger Horrocks⁸ examined different concepts as gender and masculinity and a various issues as patriarchy and male crisis. He defined gender as a tissue of fantasies about how men and women should act, dress, move, speak, feel, and think (18). Here Horrocks would rather define gender as a set of rules determined by society, in fact man and woman as a part of society should follow these rules. That is to say, men for example should follow the traits and behaviours of his sex which is masculine. If he deviates from these norms, gender will be disrupted and the same thing for woman who should follow the feminine norms. In this context, when we talk about gender Horrocks himself presented the qualities that is associated with one gender or another. He noted that some women worried for a long times about masculine traits that is related to men as seriousness, self-care, compassion, and the way men are capable of receiving new ideas and concepts, while the majority of of women should also followed some traits and social behaviors associated with femininity such as flexibility, sensitiveness, and so on (143). It can be seen here how Horrocks defined the term masculinity. He wrote: Masculinity’ in this sense, is defined in opposition to ‘femininity’. The masculine is the negation of the feminine, and this opposition varies in content from culture to culture (33). Here Horrocks explained the two terms masculine and feminine, and asserted that the existence of one term related to the non existence of the other term. In the same sense, Horrocks would rather started his book by giving an excellent definition of gender, masculine, feminine as important concepts before examining the male trouble, or let us say the idea of ‘Masculinity Crisis’. As Horrocks illustrated and discussed in the first part of his book. Concern-

⁸ A psychotherapist well known for his book *Masculinity in Crisis Myths, Fantasies and realities* (1994).

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ing modern crisis that damaged male power, Horrocks gave an excellent description for the term crisis. He wrote: I shall suggest masculinity is a crisis for men today_ that the masculine gender is precarious and dangerous achievement and is highly damaging to men (1). Surprisingly, this quotation makes reader wondering about the dilemma of male today. In fact, this crisis caused a trauma for male in the western society.

At first glance, it seems weird to guess why the writer started with a definition of different terms related to masculinity, however in dealing with terms as 'Crisis' Roger Horrocks adopted the Freudian theory. He claimed that the role of fathers in the crisis of masculinity is considered as an important thing (77). That is to say, when fathers did not do their role we find a male crisis. From Horrocks's arguments about male crisis the reader can understand that parents play an essential role in the life of child and adult. Concerning the Freudian theory, Horrocks noted that the child is always expressing his longing toward his parents and consider them as a reflection on his future (71). At the same time, one can not ignore the role of mother in child rearing. As Freudian theory demonstrated the lack of father role and how it led to male crisis. The vivid role of mother in child rearing is less important than father where she take care for the child in early stages of his life and when he grow up he is in need and presence of his father who complete the role of mother. The father has only one role which is, resolving conflict between mother and child (84). This is not to say that father role is not important but the psychoanalysis moves from father's role to the inquiry of the relationship between mother and child. i.e mother gives her child a great support. Horrocks himself represented clear arguments about the importance of mothering or mother role where he adopted the example of Winnicott. Horrocks wrote: What is believed to be essential to mental health is that the infant and the young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with the mother (or permanent mother-substitute in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment (qtd, in Horrocks 70). As quoted above Horrocks offered an explanation about the relationship between mother and child in which, The role of mother is important in child's life.

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Conclusion:

The emancipation of Gender study refers to the efforts of feminists, theorists and scholars to bring equality for women in all the fields. It is gender which was shaped by feminists when they attempted to cristalise women issues, feminists imposed their existence through leading differents compaigns in successful waves. In the first wave, they attempted to manipulate the patriarchal discipline that supported men's right to vote and they succeeded to gain the political equality. The second wave wrote the name of women in the golden history when they enjoyed the same rights as man.

But over all this success women were not satisfied. They wanted to achieve total equality in all the fields. However, the second wave led to the demise of men history under the undesirable name 'Crisis' where men lost their important rule as provider. The only main concern for men is to recapture or simply to regain their position which is disrupted by feminists.

CHAPTER TWO

Introduction

Before turning to the core issue of this paper which is 'masculine crisis', it is important to bear in mind that writers as Nick Hornby did not talk about themselves but they let their novels, stories and poems work out to give a new sense of miracles. It is a bridge in literature as well as the British fiction. He should be classified with writers whom different love for music is the only motivation for writing famous books. Over all the exhaustive biography of Hornby which reveals his life and his career as an English writer. Once we turn to Hornby biographical information, a picture emerges from general exhaustive biography in which his love for music and pop style remains as the sacred key for his success. In order to satisfy his intellectual curiosity, Hornby read any book or any essay in a magazine.

1- Overview about Nick Hornby life and work

As an English novelist, essayist, and screenwriter Nick Hornby is well known for his unforgettable writings. He was born on April 17, 1957 in Redhill, Surrey. Also Known As Nicholas Peter John Hornby. His work and creativity is mostly inspired from pop culture, music and sports. He is a writer of many famous books that were later turned into famous movies like: *About a boy*, *High Fidelity* and *Fever Pitch*. Thanks to his father, Hornby became one of footballer fan and his first memoir *Fever Pitch* reflects his love for Arsenal as a football team. His father and mother divorced when Nick was only 11 years old. After that, he admired reading books as a hobby, this reason made the desire in Hornby to study at university. So, he studied at the Jesus College, Cambridge and took up English literature as his major. After graduating from Cambridge university Hornby did many jobs, first of all he occupied the job of English literature teacher at a grade school. Soon after this he became a paid journalist and started composing a column based on the pop culture in the *Independent*. He released his first book in 1992 under the name *Contemporary American Fiction* then his famous memoir *Fever pitch* which was adapted into UK movie and then later into an American movie in 2005. Hornby expressed his love for pop music during the publication of his novella *High Fidelity* that is why the book earned a great success. This book was later adapted into a movie in 2000. In 1998 Hornby published his masterpiece *About a Boy* which is considered as the core issue or, the matter of this dissertation. The story represents the odd

relationship between a rich and immature person named Will and a child named Marcus. After the publication of this novel which is considered as his international bestseller book which won the E.M. Forster Awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Hornby released his book *How to Be Good* in 2001. And this later won the W.H. Smith Award for Fiction in the year of 2002. In the purpose of raising the funds of a charity school for autistic children in London called TreeHouse. Hornby published his book *Speaking with the Angel* which includes a collection of short stories. This is not the only reason behind the publication of this book. In fact, Hornby's first son suffered from autism and went to the same school. In 2003 Hornby enhanced his love for music when he published a set of essays named '31 songs'. And then he published his bestseller book *A Long Way Down* in 2005. However, Hornby changed his path in writing and published something new which is his novel *Slam* in 2007 that is dedicated to the young adult readers. It was awarded with the ALA Best Books for Young Adults Award in 2008. After a year Hornby released a new book about a Rock star named *Juliet, Naked* in 2008. In the same year he wrote the best adapted screenplay for the film *An Education*. Concerning his personal life, Hornby married twice. His son from the first wife was an autism and went to the school that is found by his parents . Then he got married to a film producer named Amanda Posey and he has two sons.

⁹ Finally, he published his brilliant new novel *Funny girl* in 2014. This novel was described as 'a sparky, funny, charming book, with lively characterization, an artful structure and plenty of Hornby's fluid, sprightly dialogue'. In this sense, Hornby wrote:

I am not particularly interested in language. Or rather, I am interested in what language can do for me, and I spend many hours each day trying to ensure my prose is as simple as it can possibly be. But I do not wish to produce prose that draws attention to itself, rather than the world it describes.(Hornby)

At first glance, it seems that Hornby did not get interested in the language when he wrote any book. However, his narrative technique reflects his vivid language, particularly his bestseller books which combine between humour and embarrassed situation. Hornby's daily life is an ordinary life like any writer he described his average day when he said:

⁹ for more information, see <https://www.thefamouspeople.com/profiles/nick-hornby-4027.php>

I have an office round the corner from my home. I arrive there between 9:30 and 10 a.m., smoke a lot, write in horrible little two-and-three sentence bursts, with five-minute breaks in between. Check for emails during each break, and get irritated if there aren't any. Go home for lunch. If I'm picking up my son I leave at 3:30. If not, I stay till six. It's all pretty grim! And so dull! (Hornby)

In other words, by presenting the imaginative world, literature is the window for everyone to express his thoughts, ideas, and opinions. Before writing there is always a turning point that made a famous writer. Hornby wrote:

I started by writing plays. They were sort of screen-cum-radio-cum-TV plays, and they weren't very good ... When I left university and I tried to write, everything came out sounding like bad essays, so I thought I should stick to dialogue. I hadn't done enough reading – not of the things I wanted to emulate – so it took me a while, a long while, to grapple with voice ... everything changed for me when I read Anne Tyler, Raymond Carver, Richard Ford, and Lorrie Moore, all in about '86-'87 ... voice, tone, simplicity, humour, soul ... all of these things seemed to be missing from the contemporary English fiction I'd looked at, and I knew then what I wanted to do'.(Hornby)

In this view, Writers like Hornby walked in a long path to prove their existence in British literature. As Hornby chose to highlight his writing in different way by presenting British fiction in a kind of novels. That is why he earned popularity over the world . For Steinert, Hornby is a 'popular writer with a fresh and straightforward language' who is ambitious 'to hit the bestseller lists also as an accomplished stylistician'(Hubble, Tew, and Wilson 229).

2-Analysis Hornby's masterpieces *About a Boy* (1998)

According to Arminta Wallace (*Irish Times*), *About a Boy* is really about the awful, hilarious, embarrassing places where children and adults meet, and Hornby has captured it with delightful precision. This statement described the bestseller and better-crafted novel in the career of the British writer Nick Hornby. This novel took place in London, where it is literally about two males characters Marcus and Will and their improbable friendship. Will is different from Marcus in his behavior and the way of thinking. The novel narrates the story of Will a young immature in

his thirties. He lived from the heritage of his father while, his father was a famous writer. Will is a jobless man who did not work anything except listens only to music, watches television, and wastes his time for nothing. Definitely, he did not have any purpose in his life. In contrast, Marcus is a twelve-year old boy living with a divorced as well as depressed mother. He is always bullied in school, because he wears the wrong shoes, sings a weird music and knows nothing about fashion, the two characters met when Will was interested in dating single mother and want to join a group of single parents. Those members pretend that they have children. So, in this meeting both Will and Marcus took a bad sight for each other. In fact, Will thought that Marcus is a weird person and the same for Marcus who did not like the personality of Will. By the time, the two of them became friends and helped each other to overcome the problems. Moreover, Will is determined to stay 'single' and leave his own depths unexplored'. While, Marcus is a friendless misfit and bullied boy whose mother who suffered from depression and did not care about the life of her son She did not give him enough support and guidance especially, about his new school and how he can overcome the problems.

Hornby is an obvious example of modern British writers who reflects the very popularity of the British fiction and its widespread over all the world. As many people reviewed his glamorous novel *About a Boy* Ashley Kannan argued that Hornby used a professional technique throughout his work. He wrote: I think that one of the most important techniques in creating Hornby's novel is the idea of parallel characterizations Both Will and Marcus are created as parallels of one another, representing opposite realities, but embodying a sense of hollowness and emptiness that seems to pervade the modern setting that Hornby constructs (Kannan).¹⁰ From Kannan's analyses of the most important techniques used in *About a Boy* the reader can guess that Hornby referred to 'Parallel Characterizations' as a technique to describe the main characters Will and Marcus and the relationship between them. The reader can notice that there is a contradiction in the description of characters where, Hornby portrayed one character as the opposite to the other character's life. Meanwhile, one can not analyze the whole work of Hornby without dealing with the major themes. Themes as depression and suicide are central and its influential continues throughout the novel. In which, Fiona, Marcus's mother, often cries and led herself to a suicidal situation¹¹. That is

¹⁰ for more information, see <https://www.enotes.com/people/akannan>

¹¹ for more information, see <http://www.bookrags.com/studyguide-about-a-boy/themes.html#gsc.tab=0>

why Marcus became anxious about the situation of his mother. The novel is told in the third-person and omniscient point of view. The narration moves from Marcus to Will in alternating chapters, Marcus beginning and Will coming second. Through the eyes of the two different narrator Will and Marcus, the reader can see the novel from different views.

3- Analysis Hornby's masterpiece *Slam* (2007)

Sam Jones the main character of Nick Hornby's *Slam*, lived with his divorced mother in small apartment in London. Sam's life is not quite so great, he is always worried about his life and his future. while the other teenagers love football, Sam preferred skating as his most favourable sport and idolized the professional skater Tony Hawk. whenever he has a problem he is always talking to the poster of Tony Hawk in his room. Sam always wants to do something better in his life and to break the roles of his family by earning good marks and going to college, however his life is not good. As Hornby wrote:

someone's dad was a coal miner, or whatever, but his son goes on to play for a Premiership team, or wins Pop Idol, or invents the Internet. Those stories make you feel as though the whole world is on its way up. But in our family, people always slip up on the first step. In fact, most of the time they don't even find the stairs. (14)

The history of Sam's family horrified him a lot, it is a blunder by his mother to give birth for Sam at the age of sixteen, that is why he is unable to develop his intellectual ability and to succeed in his study also the absence of Sam's father affects him in a negative way. However, sam's life took a drastic change when he met a new girlfriend named Alicia in a party. they spent much time together suddenly he repeated the same mistake of his mother when he got his girlfriend pregnant. His life became the worst ever when her parents knew about this bad news.

One day, something strange happened when Sam found himself in a room with Alicia and a baby called Roof and Alicia obliged him to change a baby, he could not believe this situation, however he realized that he flied into the future and the only responsible for this situation is Tony Hawk. Later, in the morning Sam wake up and hope he went to his home and met his mother, but he found himself again with Alicia saying that he must go to college in the morning and take care for the baby in the afternoon. He did not know what to do but

he realized one truth which is Alicia is pregnant and he never dreamed for a life like this, so he ran away for the beach in a hope to forget everything happened, after that he threw his cell phone into the ocean and looked for a job. Later, he met an old man who accepted to help him¹²(enote). Throughout the novel Hornby allowed the reader to understand the characters. In fact, every character has his own personality. Sam for example was portrayed as a smart boy who did not know what awaits him in the future. He fell in a terrible situation when he got his girlfriend pregnant and later became a father. That is why Sam behaves in a different manner and has a strange personality. Other characters as Alicia who is considered as beautiful young mother who knows how to face every situation. Moreover, his mother Annie is described as a lovely mother who supports her son in every situation but her fault makes the life of Sam very complicated. In contrast, Sam's father is a strange personality where he is always absent throughout the novel and he did not support his son or even help him to cope with struggles. That is why the reader noticed some themes as depression and failing fatherhood in Sam character. In fact he refused to be a father as a result, he felt in depression ¹³ (hausaufgaben)

Conclusion

It is interesting to see how the writing of Nick Hornby is special and glamorous in its core. He wrote both novels in a sense of sociological and a psychological mixture. This paper took the summary and analyses of Hornby's novels *About a Boy* and *Slam* where Hornby's narrative mode reflects the aesthetic of language in British fiction.

From reading these works the reader navigates in a new world full of conflict where the male characters expressed their thoughts and ideas. The author moved smoothly from event to another and whenever the reader explored something, it guides him through another. Hornby's novels are like a puzzle in its content in fact, one novel tackled an odd relationship bearing all meanings of immaturity and weird behavior, and the other novel examined the problems of teenagers and how they failed to overcome all the struggles.

¹² for insightful analysis, see <https://www.enotes.com/topics/slam-hornby>

¹³ for more information, see <https://e-hausaufgaben.de/Facharbeiten/D11547-Slam-von-Nick-Hornby.php>

CHAPTER THREE

Introduction:

About a boy published in 1998, is Nick Hornby's second novel after *High Fidelity* and is thus far his most prominent and lustrous novel. The essence in the novel is very clear. Over the path of thirty-six chapters, Hornby portrayed the childish behavior of Will, a young man in his thirties who notarizes the law of singlehood as a symbol of his immaturity, and a fingerprint of his weak personality. The novel has classified men like Will among the class of males who did not have any purpose. It has been read as a story of fun, however, the manipulation of Hornby to the characters let the reader guess that it is not just a tale, it is like a puzzle. Whenever the reader discovers something, it guides through another thing. On the other hand, the second novel *Slam* has also captured the same matter of maleness crisis. It portrayed a crisis in the main character Sam, where he broke the law of fatherhood. For Sam parenthood represents a mere symbol. Because he dreamed for a better life as an adult and to become a famous skater like Tony Hawk. This life is full of achievements and success. He never dreamed to reach such a terrible situation. The common thing between Sam in the novel *Slam* and Marcus is that they share the same situation. Both Sam and Marcus lived with a divorced mother. They did not enjoy an ordinary life like other children, in fact they suffered from emotional deprivation that is why they fell in undesirable crisis. And the same for Will. Then, the blackness spirit and weird personality of Will Marcus and Sam seems to be a negative impact of masculinity crisis. They wanted to prove their existence and show their masculinity without seeing that they added a crisis to theirs (Will and his adoption of child, Marcus and his trials to help his depressed mother, Sam and his effort to help his depressed mother). What they did is but a camouflage to take themselves as being safe, right, or even alive. Males in the battle of crisis they just survive in the hope to end this trouble.

1- Immaturity in the male character Will and Marcus :

In his famous novel *About a Boy* the British writer Nick Hornby attempted to reveal social life of adults in London. That is to say, how society expects them to behave, of course there are rules and social values that were determined by society. In this sense, this novel combined between funny characters and their embarrassing situation. Both characters reflect the image of immaturity through their behaviors and thinking. They do not behave like people

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in their age, for instance Hornby portrays the immaturity in Marcus character by showing that he is unable to adequate with hard situations, or even to interact with people surrounding him. For several reasons, immaturity shown by Marcus is not simple to understand, or even to define. It informs everyone about the complexity of terrible situation which faces Marcus in his life. He is unaware of his status. His unconsciousness prevents him from improving his personality. Marcus is not the only character in this novel who behaves in an immature way, Will is the other character who is unable to move from single life to the life of family and marriage. These behaviours can be considered as a kind of social immaturity. Moreover, significant differences of immaturity existed among Hornby's characters. It sheds light on the aura of complacency which was shared by both characters. In fact, they are not satisfied with their life. Ross Posnock ¹⁴ himself points out to immaturity in his book *Philip Rude Truth The art of immaturity: As a fertile home grown resistance of the mid-nineteenth century as part of romanticism's celebration of the child and of spontaneity* (4). Moreover, immaturity that Hornby attempts to define in his novel inspired the reader with new thinking about men's situation and their immaturity. Gary Cross wrote: everywhere I turn today I see men who refuse to grow up — husbands of Thirty five who enjoy playing the same video games that obses twelve years old; boy friends who will not commit to marriage or family; and others who fight with umpires or coaches at their son's little leagues games (1).

Here the quotation expresses the situation of the character Will in the novel *About a Boy* who is unable to find a life for himself, or even move to the life of family. Hornby described the situation of the character Will when he wrote : The twenty year-old Will would have been surprised and perhaps dissappointed to learn that he would reach the age of Thirty-six-year-old Will wasn't particularly unhappy about it; there was less clutter this way (3-4).

The reader of these words may wonder why the writer did not expose the state of Marcus, first, Hornby gave more details about Will character than Marcus. Also, Will represents masculine crisis with his immaturity. This situation is so complicated. Gary Cross named this kind of men like Will who refute the idea of marriage, and family life as Boy-men. In this sense, Hornby compares Will's situation with his friend John who is considered as the peer to Will. Hornby indicates that John enjoys an ordinary life with his wife Christine and his children. In contrast ,Will preferred to be a single man. Ironically, the writer describes the status of Will and the question he asked : How could people live like this ? When he was invited to the

¹⁴ is a critic and scholar specializing in literature and history of the 19th and 20th century United States

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house of his friend John after the birth of his second child. Will's question comes after he saw "a piece of brightly coloured plastic were strewn all over the floor, videotaps layout of their cases near the TV set, the white throw over the sofa looked as if it had been used as a piece of gigantic toilet paper, although Will preferred to think that the stains were chocolate" (Hornby 4). Here Will described the situation of his friend's home as a 'Disgrace'. The most notable thing is that he considers all what happened here as a 'Clutter', or simply a 'Chaos'. Immaturity is simply illustrated in Will character when John asked him several times about his life. Hornby wrote :

'What about you, anyway, Will ?

'I'm fine, thanks.

I would rather eat one of Braney's dirty nappies, he thought. 'Not yet,' he said.

'you are a worry to us' said Christine.

'I'm OK, as I am, thanks.' (4)

At first glance, it would be difficult to summarize the situation of Will. However men like that won't grow up, or even make a family. Will reflects this image, even his friend felt sorry about his situation, especially his friend Jessica. Hornby demonstrated: He still saw her, sometimes...and she would show him pictures of her children, and tell him he was wasting his life''(4-5). from this sentence the reader understand that Will put himself in a hard situation in fact, he refused the life of marriage and family, because he is afraid of responsibility. He is not responsible for himself, what if he had a family. Other character named Marcus who is definitely suffered from immaturity. Of course there are reasons behind his immaturity in fact, the author provided the reader with decisive arguments that indicate Marcus's immaturity. He lived with a divorced working mother who suffered from 'Depression' and always gets herself to suicide. This suggestion, however, takes the suicidal mother "Fiona" as the main reason behind her son's immaturity. The author stated: "he had been two films with his mum. and his mum had said that modern films were too commercial...(Hornby p2). Here this example tackles the life of Marcus and his mother, where she tried to control the life of her son, and obliged him to live a life determined by traditional rules. She did not know that her behavior is the only factor that makes Marcus

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immature. Throughout the novel, he seems Immature in the eyes of his classmates and other people. Hornby wrote :

She was always telling him that only shallow people made judgment on the basis of clothes or hair; she did not want him to watch rubbish television, or listen to rubbish music, or play rubbish computer games...which means that if he wanted to do anything that any of the other kids spent their time doing, which meant that...he had to argue with his mother for hours. he usually lost, and she was so good at arguing that he felt good about losing.(7)

Hornby linked Marcus immaturity with his mother's depression. Furthermore, she also affects her son negatively with her behaviour, in which he does not seem like other children, or even live an ordinary life like his peers. His immaturity prevents him from moving to the life of adults. Marcus is still living the life of children. Hornby wrote :“He already knew he wasn't right for parties, because he was too shy, or for baggy trousers, because his legs were too short”(p6). here, Hornby exposes Marcus's shyness and his weak personality that reveal his immaturity. *About a Boy* serves the goal of Hornby to present immaturity as one of the main negative impacts of masculinity crisis. He exemplified Marcus and his physical appearance as a sign of immaturity and weak personality :“As he was usually wearing the wrong shoes or the wrong trousers, and his haircut was wrong all the time, everyday of the week, he didn't have to do very much to send them all demented”(p7). The author used the word `Weird` to express Marcus's personality. He mentioned in his novel :“if that is what Marcus was—it was hard to tell. He had a strange frizzy bush of hair, and he dressed like a twenty-five-year-old chartered accountant on his day off : he was wearing brand jeans and a Microsoft T-shirt”(p24). Here, Hornby displayed Marcus and his physical appearances, and its relationship with his immaturity, where he does not care about his clothes, shoes, or even haircut. As Hornby suggests, personal behaviour was the bedrock of immaturity. In the conversation between Marcus and Will he understood the personality of Marcus as well as his traditional thinking from the words he said, Hornby wrote : she's going nuts, said Marcus matter-of-factly."cries all the time. Doesn't go to work (25).

Here, the reader could easily sum up Marcus's personality in one word `Immature`, because he used the slang word `Nuts` which is used only by old people and not the children of his generation. While Will as a young man used the appropriate or formal word

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'Off colour' which describes the situation of Fiona, as a result Will became cynical about Marcus's using of language. Hornby mentioned : "Will had previously heard that note of amused belligerence in the voice of old people...his father had been like that in the last few years of his life "(25). Anyone who read *About a Boy* will realize that weak personality and immaturity that is related to Marcus is not coming from nothingness. Clearly, there are reasons behind that, as his mother depression Fiona where she did not understand the psychology of her son. Hornby wrote : "This was great. he was trying to save his mum from watching a man committing suicide for hours and she was calling him an idiot"(35). As the quotation showed, parents play a crucial role for improve their child personality. however Fiona broke the roles with her curious behaviours. Instead of understanding Marcus's personality, she contributed in indirect way for the failure of her son.

About a Boy then, can be understood as a negative portrait of children and adults immaturity. After all, throughout the work, hornby described immaturity in the western society as a negative impact of masculinity crisis, in which the male characters Marcus and Will are accused of not being mature, or even behave like all the males in their generation.

2. Addressing School Issues 'Bullying' as a negative phenomenon

Recently, many children were victimized by their classmates where they abused them either physically or mentally. And the most damaging way for children is to abuse them mentally by saying words that weaken the personality of child and disrupt his self-confidence.

Hornby's *About a Boy* is an authentic example of British works that indicate several issues in children and adults as bullying. The main character Marcus committed the problem of bullying in his school. For Marcus bullying became as a symbol of shame, particularly when he was bullied by girls. It affected his life and his behaviours in a negative way. He represented a picture of negative impacts of bullying and its passivity spreads in all his continual career. According to Hornby, Marcus was bullied by other boys and girls when he went to school. The conversation between Marcus and Will portrays bullying in its worse face. Hornby wrote :

'Who were they, then ?

'Who ?'

'Who ? those kids who were just trying to embed sweets into your skull.'

'Oh; them, said Marcus...I don't know their names. They are in year nine.' (5)

Here the quotation above reveals bullying as a difficult issue in schools, where children want to impose their existence and power, so it is the only way for children to say 'I'm the strongest one'. However, the main character Marcus is always expresses his fears from the world outside, particularly girls from his school. Hornby wrote: "they just started following me home after school. so I thought I'd come round here"(57). fear's that children expressed in their life, or they simply prefer to keep silent when they are bullied. According to Smith and Sharp¹⁵: 'It has become clear that bullying in most, if not all, school in Britain; and probably to a greater extent than most teachers and parents realise, since so many children who are bullied keep quiet about it. It can be quite frequent, and can have severe and occasionally tragic consequence'(3). here this saying that 'Bullying issue' has increasingly been examined, since its emergence in British schools. Bullying in its core has a negative impact of child personality, in fact it weakens the personality of the child who is bullied by his classmates, where the bullied child fears of express his ideas, or to complain about his problems, and this issue follow him even if in his older age. This later can be a menace for his masculinity.

Authors like Crochick wrote: "Specialist consider bullying to be caused by both the absence of authority ,with respect to affect and to the limits to be given, and its violent presence, expressed physical abuse and aggressive emotional outbursts."(qtd.in Crochick 11) as noted above both authors related bullying issue with the absence of authority and control in schools. But, what about bullying outside schools ? children as Marcus were always bullied by others, especially in the psychological side. In this case, Hornby wrote: "Hey, Marcus, who's your favourite rapper ? Tupac ? Warren G ? 'Marcus knew these names, but he didn't know what they mean, or any of their songs, he'd be sunk"(15). here Hornby outlines the impact of bullying on Marcus personality as well as his behaviours. Rigby and Thomas wrote: "A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time to negative actions on the part of one or more stu-

¹⁵ A director of children's services at Rotherham Borough Council UK

dent.”(qtd.in 13) on the other hand,the life of the boy who are bullied is difficult. He is always in conflict with himself, he did not understand what happened around him. As Hornby expressed Marcus reaction to the other kids: His mind had gone blank, but then this was part of the point of the game...but this kids giving him a hard time, it was almost impossible. Hornby added: He didn't know how to react so he said `Oh`, and then, `why not` (15). One may agree that bullying affects children physically, however it is harmful for the psychology of the boy in the future, where the victims are not able to build their personality. It shows how one enslaves another person both physically and psychologically just to show his masculinity, in fact this issue prevents the victim from building his personality.

3- Weak personality in children and adults

Study of children and adults personality have a long history in the western world. It is common between males and throughout the world. Most children know that their personality go to the worst, and their behaviors may even seem silly, yet they continue to escape from this reality. Whatever the kind of personality, most children and adults are often dominated by weakness. they avoid many things as social contact with other people, in fact frustration became their major interest as well as depression. Some children grow up with shyness, in which they are not able to cope with problems. Segal¹⁶ introduced the definition of personality, he wrote: the term personality can be defined as an individual's pattern of psychological processes, including his or her motives, feelings, thoughts, behavioral patterns...personality is expressed through its influence on the body, in conscious experience, and through social behavioral (qtd,in Segal, Coolidge and Rosowsky 5). As noted above, the author related the concept `Personality` with the psychology of people where they express their behaviour through their bodies.Throughout Hornby's characters, the author described weak personality in children where the main character Marcus was portrayed as a weak boy whether in school, or the world outside. As Hornby mentioned, Will described himself as a stupid man which makes Rachel replies: `you're not stupid. so why don't you ever put your head in the oven ?` (121). Here the reader understands that the main character Will has no self-confidence, where he showed the weakness in his personality, even the other people noticed this from his way of speaking and behaviours. Will always feels depression, as a result it became an obsession for Will to prove his existence as

¹⁶ A psychologist well known for his book *Personality Disorders and Older Adults*

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well as his masculinity. Hornby wrote : 'I'm a single father. I have a two-year-old boy' (16). Will keeps repeating the same sentence, because he reached the age of Thirty six without doing anything beneficial in his life. Whether, it is work or even marriage and family. so he fell in an obsession that he has a family and a child. These behaviours set behind weak personality. Clearly, researchers addressed that personality based on a set of rules as stability, attachment and interaction. A child should depend on these basic rules to build up his personality as well as keep up with modern life. According to Kernberg ¹⁷: A normal child or adolescent can be described as one who is functioning according to developmental norms with regard to gender expectation...such a child can establish relationship with others, anticipate events, perform and complete academic and non academic tasks, and use humor and sublimation(16). From the quotation above, the writer noticed that all children must bear these traits to build a strong personality, however some children were not, as the case of the male character Marcus in the novel *About a Boy*. Throughout the novel, Hornby gave the reader a complete description of Marcus's weak personality. He wrote : "It was true, of course : Marcus was enough to convince Will that the boy was merely curious" (85). Obviously, Hornby criticized the way Marcus behaves by showing him as a depressed child who lost himself, and did not know what he want from life, in fact he did not own any purpose. Hornby noted : "he was miserable. He just nodded" (6). As the novel goes, the situation of Marcus became worse. His pessimistic sight towards the world prevents him from developing his personality.

Hornby explanation of weak personality served a complex purpose with an exhaustive look to the child and adult's right behaviours. Hornby portrayed Marcus as a 'weird person'. Not only this, but Marcus has an odd behaviour, he is unable to cope with problems that faced him in school as 'bullying'. Marcus is not the only one who suffered from 'Weirdness', Will also has a conflict in his life, in which he is unable to grow up and live an ordinary life like his peers.

4- The issue of fatherhood in Sam character

The mainstream masculinity in the western society ignored such rules, in fact there are many adolescent who refused to challenge the legitimacy of family. That is to say, to play the role of 'Fathers'. Research exposes the situation of male today particularly, young fathers who stayed

¹⁷ Chilean American child psychiatrist, an authority on personality disorder, and a professor at Cornell University.

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unable in front of family life. Because of variant problems, males adolescents may fail to provide a good life for their children. They bear the name of 'Fathers' as a symbol, however the reality of becoming fathers causes a trauma for adults.

In his novel *Slam* Nick Hornby attempted to expose social life of adults in London where the adolescents as Sam Jones lived his life as a lover of sport especially skate. He is one of the fan of Tony Hawk and he is often dreams about good future for himself. Suddenly, his life changed drastically when he got his girlfriend Alicia pregnant. When the two families knew about these news they obliged Sam to marry Alicia and finally he was forced to become a father at the age of sixteen. Hornby portrayed the situation of Sam character. He wrote: 'I had a son. This is what I got for not turning my mobile on. I felt shock, and I couldn't speak for a little while'(91). here the writer described the bad status of Sam when he was told that he has a baby. In fact, he could not believe this news and how his life changed to the worst. The one thing that the main character Sam wanted to understand is how he reached this situation. Hornby mentioned: and there wasn't much point in trying to explain that I wasn't the Sam she thought I was, that some-body may be Tony Hawk the skater, had put me in some sort of time machine'(93). on the other hand, the writer revealed the reaction of Sam after hearing that he has a child. Hornby wrote: This baby—my baby, Alicia's baby, our baby—was called Roof. Whose idea was that? What did it mean? Maybe I hadn't heard right. Maybe it was a boy called Ruth(93). In this context, Hornby presented Sam depressed words. In this situation, Sam said: 'It felt like I was playing some sort of game that everyone else knew the rules for except me.'(96) At the same time, Sam's frustration continued overall the novel and he repeated saying: 'I've got a baby...or I'm going to have a baby...(see, I didn't know whether I already had one or whether I was going to have one'(98). Of course there are argument and evidences which show that this kind of male refused to be a father, words as 'I don't want a baby yet! '(98). or 'I didn't want to get the whole Roof nightmare'(108). and 'I didn't want to be a father'(115). reflect the denial of Sam to the state of fatherhood. He was not planning to a life like this, as he is considered as one of the fan of Tony Hawk. Hornby narrated the conversation between Sam and someone called "Rabbit" where Sam told this man about his terrible situation. He said: 'I didn't even know I had a kid, so I'm kind of freaking out. I need help'(101).

It is possible to discern that males as Sam refused to be fathers or simply to face the fact of fatherhood. However, in the case of Sam there are of course many reasons behind his failure. One can not ignore the theory of Horrocks which confirmed the role of father in the life of children, and by the same theory the lack of father leading to the male crisis. It is applicable to Sam's life in fact, Hornby wrote: 'My mum split from Dad when she was twenty-five, which means they were together for ten years or so'(181). Here the writer showed the situation of Sam where he lived with a divorced mother, as a result his life became a nightmarish and he fell in the trap of fatherhood where he is a teenage and consequently felt under crisis.

5- The issue of Gynophobia in Sam character

'Fear is a vital evolutionary legacy that leads an organism to avoid threat, and has obvious survival value' (Marks 3)¹⁸. The reader of this statement may wonder why one may choose to speak about the types of fear in the medical sense. Certainly, it is important to tackle this issue in a psychological way, in fact many people today suffered from a traumatic experience with a woman. This latter cause a psychological problem for men.

The analyse here encompasses a kind of fear called Gynophobia or let's say 'Fear of woman' and the case is an adult in the novel *Slam* named Sam. This character fell in a trouble with a woman called Alicia. Throughout the novel he expressed his fears toward this woman where she controlled everything in his life and the author described this situation when he wrote: 'I was scared of her. If she wanted a fight, she didn't care where we were, so I found it was safer to sit on a bench and watch her pushing Roof on a swing than it was to stand next to her'(295). The character revealed his fears from his wife Alicia where she scared him and he avoided any discussion with her just not to fall in a fight. On the other hand, talking in the medical sense can also give the reader more details about the Symptoms of this disaster as rapid heartbeat, feeling of dread, panic and so on. The character Alicia benefits from Sam's fear where she is always hurts him emotionally by saying words which made him weak. Hornby wrote : 'Turn that off before I kill you'(237). 'GO AWAY! ...you fool'(265). and 'you little shit...you liar. Get out'(285). Throughout the novel, Sam described Alicia as 'cocky'. This word came as a reaction to his fear and his inability to face this woman. Because of Sam's weak personality Alicia could prevented him from doing anything. Hornby wrote : 'She wouldn't let me speak. She just started

¹⁸ An African psychiatrist worked at the university of London

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pushing me out of the door'(286). In contrast, the fear that Sam and other males expressed is caused by many reasons as his weak personality. In case, males after second feminism movement, expressed their fears especially, after women gained all their political and social rights. For man, this movement gave rise to the issue of Gynophobia as one feature of male crisis, and the work of Hornby tackled this issue in its psychological side where the male characters as Sam runs out from this situation because he did not find any solution. Hornby mentioned: I didn't want to live it. I wanted my old life back, I wanted someone else's life. But I didn't want that one (113). Here the issue of Gynophobia passed all the expectation when the male character expressed his fears in a high voice as he wanted to run out from this terrible situation which overestimates the role of women and their existence.

Conclusion:

The discussion and analyses of Hornby's *About a Boy* and *Slam* on the basis of Beauvoir theory of woman role and Horrocks psychoanalysis theory about crisis implied a several ideas. First, they reveals the idea of the impact of feminism movement on men and how it led to the male crisis and finished all the history of man as a first part in western society. Also, it decreased the role of men where women occupied many fields. Throughout the novel *About a Boy* the male characters failed to reach their purposes and impose their existence in the presence of feminine power. On the other hand, the psychoanalysis theory tackled very clearly the role of father in the child life and whenever there is a lack of fatherhood there is a crisis. Definitely, this theory can be applicable to both novels where the male characters fell in the trap of the absence of their fathers. As a result, they have weird personalities that led them to crisis.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

The dissertation has explored the trauma of masculinity crisis in the western society particularly Britain. and unravels the reasons behind this issue. Through analyzing the works of Hornby, the reasons behind male crisis were uncovered as well as the negative impacts of this crisis on males.

Men after the second wave of feminism lost their place or rather their important role and became in state of crisis. What is significant here, is that the different ways male characters react to this problem throughout the novels *About a Boy* and *Slam*, each of these characters struggle in the battle of this crisis. It affects their relationships in a negative way.

One of the best examples of male crisis is the characters Will and Marcus in the novel *About a Boy* when they attempted to face every problem in their lives but they failed in the first step. The immaturity that Hornby wants to show in his characters reflects the negative impact of masculinity crisis. As an immature person Will lived under the obsession of having children in his life because he did not accept the law of family and marriage, he preferred to stay under the law of singlehood and to bear the shame of immaturity in his thirties. Both Will and Marcus reflect the image of weak personality in its worst face when they stay unable in front of problems. The way they expressed their weird behavior and show their weakness give the impression of male crisis to be inevitable.

On the other hand, Sam the other character in the novel *Slam* reflects the image of fatherhood issue throughout the story. It is a slam for Sam to get scandalized by the news that he became a father in his early age. Beside that, Sam expressed a medical issue which is Gynophobia when he lived with a woman named Alicia, in fact she controlled every point in his life. Sam in front of this woman was not allowed to express his opinion or make any personal choice. It is his fears which control his life and his relationship with her.

Lastly, Hornby creative style in the novel *About a Boy* and *Slam* pinpoints the negative impact of masculinity crisis on the male characters and their relationships. Marcus and bullying problem which he faced in school, Sam and his inability to be a

father or rather to face a woman because of gynophobia, Will and his failure to adequate with family life. These instances show how Hornby portrayed masculinity crisis his characters endured.

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