CHAPTER III

EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Extrinsic Aspects

Extrinsic aspects in literature are the external factors that influence how a work is written and interpreted. These include the author's background, psychology, social environment, and the cultural, religious, moral, and societal values surrounding the work. According to Sarah (2022), extrinsic elements involve the external conditions that shape a novel, such as the religious, cultural, social, and economic context, as well as the values held by the community. They also reflect the author's personal attitudes, beliefs, and worldview, which contribute to the creation of the work (Sarah, 2022).

3.2 Jean-Paul Sartre's Existentialism (1946)

According to Sartre (1946), human beings are not born with a fixed identity or predetermined purpose. Instead, people first exist and then gradually define who they are through their choices, actions, and experiences. This idea is expressed in Sartre's famous statement, "*existence precedes essence*," which means that individuals are not limited by an inherent nature or destiny. Rather than discovering a pre-existing self, people continuously create themselves through the decisions they make throughout their lives. Therefore, identity is not something permanent, but something that develops over time as individuals interact with the world around them.

Another important aspect of Sartre's existentialism is freedom. Sartre argues that every individual has the freedom to choose how they respond to their circumstances.

Although people may face social, cultural, religious, or economic limitations, these factors do not completely determine who they become. Human beings still possess the ability to make choices and decide their own direction in life. For Sartre, freedom is an unavoidable condition of human existence because people are constantly required to choose, whether they are aware of it or not (Webber, 2009). As a result, individuals cannot escape responsibility for the decisions they make.

Sartre also emphasizes that personal identity is shaped through actions rather than intentions alone. A person becomes who they are through what they do, not simply through what they believe or desire. In this sense, identity is formed through a series of choices that reflect an individual's values, goals, and commitments. Sartre believes that people actively construct their character through the projects they choose to pursue in life. Consequently, human identity should be understood as a dynamic process that is continuously shaped and reshaped by experience and action rather than as a fixed characteristic determined from birth (Webber, 2009).

Furthermore, Sartre introduces the concept of authenticity, which refers to an individual's willingness to acknowledge their freedom and take responsibility for their choices. In contrast, he describes bad faith as a condition in which people deny their freedom by blaming external factors or treating their identity as something fixed and unchangeable. Living authentically requires individuals to recognize that they are responsible for creating meaning in their own lives (Webber, 2009). By accepting this responsibility, people can make choices that genuinely reflect their values and aspirations, allowing them to develop a more authentic sense of self.

3.3 Religion and Social Control

Religion is one of the most powerful and influential in individuals' lives, providing a framework for understanding existence, suffering, and meaning. It offers guidance and comfort by addressing fundamental questions such as suffering, existence, and the meaning of life, religion also often attempts to ease human suffering by explaining the afterlife and the purpose of human existence on earth. Furthermore, many cultures and societies attach extreme importance to religion, regarding it as an invaluable part of life and a core aspect of human existence. In the United States, for example, the dominant religion is Christianity, and the country's social and moral values are largely influenced by this religion. The country is diverse in terms of religion, but is still considered to be predominantly religious. With a large percentage of evangelical Christians in the country, about 23% of the total American population, their influence on public life is not insignificant (Conniry, 2008, p. 153). In the United States, as in many other countries, religion is often inherited from parents. Many individuals are exposed to and learn about their religion from a young age in their families and from their parents. As a result, the roots of their faith, morals, and identity are formed in their childhood home.

There are many people who have inherited their religion from their parents, and have been exposed to the religion from a very young age. However, this does not mean to say that they have a deep personal connection to the religion. Many people grow up in very religious families, but do not become deeply devout as adults. This can lead to a lot of conflict for some people, as they may struggle between following the teachings of their religion and the expectations of society, and their own personal desires and

understanding of who they are. This type of conflict can cause a lot of inner confusion for people, and can be very distressing. However, as Nahlbom (2018) stated, “Faith and rituals based on participants’ faith such as prayers or chanting sutras were also resources that they could use to prevent becoming distressed or when they had difficulties” (p. 158). The way in which a person’s religion can affect them during difficult times is a very complex issue, and there are many ways in which religion can affect a person’s identity and their overall personal growth.

Meanwhile, religious pressure can also be felt at a wider societal level. Communities as a whole may expect individuals to follow the values and traditions of a religion and discourage questioning of religious beliefs. In this sense, religion is considered a successful system of social regulation that influences behaviour collectively (Preston, 2020). However, not everyone is welcomed into religion in a positive way. In some instances, it's delivered through strict discipline or controlling, over-protective environments. Religious education can lead to stress rather than spiritual development. Consequently, some individuals may feel restricted and controlled, and doubt which beliefs to follow. The social environment may also contribute to this pressure by reinforcing the same expectations and making it seem as though there is no alternative but to conform. In societies where religion plays an important role in determining social norms and everyday life, people who offend against religious rules may feel guilty, suffer from social criticism and even be even be excluded.

As mentioned previously, social control is carried out not only formally through rules but also informally through internalized beliefs and expectations. This is especially important because religion is one of the earliest and most powerful forms of social

control. It universalises a group's values and presents them as absolutes that are deeply ingrained in the individual's consciousness (Ellwood, 1918). There can be a conflict between 'being religious' and 'being yourself'. Others may then wonder why their favourite behaviours are limited or even forbidden by the teachings they follow. This can lead to feelings of constraint and significant psychological pressure with regard to both the religion and one's own pursuits. These struggles demonstrate that, while religion can provide strength and guidance, it can also restrict the search for meaning, identity and freedom.

3.4 Blues in 1930s Mississippi Society

Blues is a musical genre that has evolved and influenced artists across different generations. Even in the modern age, it remains relevant and powerful, continuing to be enjoyed by popular artists such as Shemekia Copeland, Joe Bonamassa, and Gary Clark Jr. Blues first emerged in the Deep South of the United States among African Americans in the 1860s. The style of blues is very rhythmic, has strong vocals, and has simple but powerful lyrics, and slide guitar with harmonica was used to accompany vocals, it also developed its common AAB lyric pattern. With the growth of blues music, it spread a phenomenon known as the ‘Juke Joint' and it’s a social club featuring music, dancing, drinking, and gambling, historically operated by and for African Americans in the rural Southeastern United States, and with that, the blues developed and spread. Songs and lyrics were borrowed and adapted from musicians who traveled from joint to joint, and techniques and styles were copied and elaborated upon. Blues music was so popular, especially in the 1930s, because of the musician’s name, Eddie ‘Son’ House. In 1930 he recorded two songs for the Paramount label such as *“Preachin’ the Blues”* and *“Dry*

Spell Blues," about a farming crisis in the Delta. Son House is famous for his bottleneck slide technique, this is a characteristic of blues music.

The blues were conceived in the Mississippi Delta as a variation of work chants, the so-called sorrow songs of the slaves (Wilson, 2003). It happened during the period of segregation, where many Black communities faced poverty, racial violence, forced labor, and limited social mobility. This is why music, especially blues, became a way for the Black communities to express their pain, hope, faith, and even a personal struggle. Blues songs were centered around the pain of loss and injustice but also expressed the victory in outlasting these painful experiences (Chaudhuri, 2022). Blues music is not only a form of art, but also a means of cultural resistance, based on the experience and feelings of African American communities. Larrogue (2012) quotes that, "Blues music exhibits the same rhythmic patterns as ordinary English speech" (Larrogue, 2012, p. 123). In addition to its melody, blues lyrics tell the stories of the injustices and struggles of African Americans in a time of segregation and economic hardship. It produces the kind of music dialogue that is reminiscent of speech, showing suffering and resilience.

In blues songs, the singer's personal feelings and problems are often expressed. It may be about love lost, longing for another time and place, or the bitterness over social injustice (Wilson, 2003). Blues is a therapy and a tool for unity. In Blues, the silences of black voices are contested. It's not only entertainment; it's a message of agency and humanity. The blues allowed for the cross-cultural sharing of a shared pain, frustration, and resistance to the systems Black people lived within, and for the Black people to accept the truths and realities of the Black experience in places where they were not

allowed to do so (Greenberg, 2015). Blues “invited Black people to embrace the reality and truth of Black experience,” allowing artists to articulate collective pain, frustration, and resistance even within systems that denied them a public voice (Dale, 2017).

The blues provided an outlet for the oppressed community. The blues became a way to communicate in the segregated and racism. They were often played at juke joints, on corner benches, and at plantation meetings, but also provided an outlet for feeling and fellowship as well as a forum for sharing collective experiences. The Great Depression and Mississippi's Jim Crow system worsened the position of blacks during the 1930s. Music was their only way of expression and survival, as segregation was enforced and farm workers and sharecroppers were further affected by The Great Depression and the restrictions on their access to public places, school, and employment. During this time, blues in Mississippi represented the life of the people and helped to inspire future music styles and genres (Mazzari, 2011). They were also a way of life, a coping mechanism, and a subtle form of resistance, providing a means for the transformation of suffering and perseverance into a beautiful cultural expression.