CHAPTER V

THE GROTESQUE: SEXUAL-TEXTUAL PAIN

5.1.0 The availability of the objects of desire makes the artist-hero and the artist-heroine creative in the realm of pleasure and the beautiful. However, the causes of desire-frustration, and the artist's response to pain need also to be explored so as to see how the male and the female artist-protagonists remain artists under such circumstances. But, since the resistance to the possession of the objects of desire comes from the audience and audience-consciousness the reader's pleasure is immediately linked with the artist's desire-frustration. However, the frustration of desire leads the protagonist to a new artistic experience which is termed here as 'the grotesque' in order to view the situation from an aesthetic point of view.

5.2.0 Both the audience-pleasure and the creative aspect of the artist's pain are sexually disputed among the critics. The issue of audience-pleasure first views the audience as male and female separately and then allocates the pleasure to either of them in a gesture of exclusiveness. Though the audience, as a fictional
category, has to be perceived from the standpoint of its assimilation into the text through the hero's/heroine's sexual-textual desire, the critics sexually polarize the audience-pleasure into male and female, with the typical bias in polemical practice.

5.2.1 Growth-novel or Bildungsroman is originally a male-centered genre designed to educate the hero as well as the reader through a plot pleasurable to the male. This structure of author-text-reader relationship is in consonance with Edgar Allan Poe's Biblical analogy of God-creation-Adam affinity. This means that the creatures created by a male (God), which includes the woman too, are given to the male reader (Adam) free for naming and subduing. Thus the reader's textual pleasure is tuned by and for the male audience.

5.2.2 To resist this male aggression, Elizabeth Abel, Linda Huf and others show that the genre of Bildungsroman/ Künstlerroman revised by the female writers to suit a female plot is primarily addressed to the reading pleasure of the female. Susan Gubar maintains that the production as well as the reception of a female text are a partaking of jouissance by the community of women, from which the male is expelled as one confused and perplexed. Thus in the
feminist thought, the reader's pleasure of female text is assigned exclusively to the female.

5.3.0 Another issue related to the question of audience-pleasure is the question of art as purgation or 'pain'. The idea that art functions as 'catharsis' of pent-up emotions of the artist so as to prevent him from becoming mad or suicidal has been with the art-critics since Aristotle. However, in a male-centered polemic, what is considered a normal creation of a purging agent viz., the art-work, is interpreted to be a mark of perversion and abnormality when a female artist gains an access to it.

5.3.1 Though the creative purgation has been considered a normal function of a creative mind, the phenomenon is claimed to be a male preserve. The writers like Goethe, Dickens, Hemingway and Lawrence are acclaimed for exorcising their perversion (impulses of madness and suicide) through their artistic creations. However the male critics claim that only a male can choose to be artistically perverted, while the female, if attempting 'catharsis', has to be one born perverted. This is to say that a female has no access to creative purgation so as to create works of artistic values, in the situation of pain.

5.3.2 In response to this male bias, the gynocentric critics question the male artist's exclusiveness of
perversion and purgation in artistic field. Many feminists, like Barbara Hill Rigney, Phyllis Chesler and Tavernier-Courbin interpret the female artist's perversion (madness and suicide) as a normal process, a special strategy, a creative response and a search for identity, adopted in the context of oppression of woman in the patriarchal system. Thus the feminists too interpret the female perversion to be normal, willed, purgative and artistically productive.

5.4.0 This chapter therefore examines two important issues in the poetics of creativity - audience and purgation. Since Künstlerroman is taken here as the analytical boundary, the categories like gender, growth pleasure, etc., were studied primarily as fictional elements - so too are the audience-awareness and purgation. The concepts of audience and purgation have to be further illuminated in order to see the inter-relationship between these two.

5.4.1 A literary text assumes the existence of two kinds of audience. The authorial audience influences the construction of the text through the author's consciousness which assumes the beliefs of the external readers while shaping the text. On the other hand, the narrative or fictional audience refers to the characters within the text who are the witnesses of its own plot (Schriber 1987:18).
While the former one is "called for by the text", the latter is "a function of the text" (Maclean 1988:18-19). In this sense, if one takes the protagonist (artist-hero/-heroine) as the center-subject of the artist-novel, the other characters can be seen, along A.J. Greimas's schema, as "opponents" (Suleiman 1983:65,266) who too desire the same object which the protagonist longs to possess or attain. This "triangular nature of desire" or "the archetypal schema of adultery" as the outcome of the inscription of audience in "the structure of desire" was first pinpointed by Rene Girard in Deceit, Desire and the Novel (1965). Girard however acknowledges the fact that "Lacan expresses this idea in a more cryptic way when he says that our desire is always the desire for the other" (Maclean 1988:35). Thus, the presence of the fictional audience signifies an artistic site of resistance between the author-ial protagonist and the other characters in the name of his or her object of desire.

5.4.2 Death (madness and suicide by extension) is also an important element in the structure of desire. According to Michel Foucault, death is present in desire in the form of an anxiety or fear "around three focal points; the very form of the act, the cost it entailed and the death to which it was linked" (Foucault 1988:125). Regina Barreca who
draws her ideas from Foucault points out that "the sex/death dialectic" becomes functional through a sense of mortality, loss of self, depletion, physical involvement, lack of human control, ecstasy and crossing of one realm of experience to another - all, common to both the experiences (Barreca 1990:1-7). Therefore, Herbert Marcuse, in *Eros and Civilization* (1974), speaks of "'the erotic component in the death instinct and the fatal component in the sex instinct'" (cited in ibid.:5). As Freud himself posits in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, there is no end to desire except by death. This idea further expanded by Lacan, implies that "there is no final signifier or object that can be that which has been lost forever [viz., the mother] ..." (Moi 1985:101). In short, desire and death are mutually instrumental in creativity, and hence they provide an important matrix of artistic possibilities through creative purgation.

5.4.3 Further, this idea of purgation and the concept of fictional audience are inseparably interlinked. It is said "that literary works operate through a modality of question and answer, problem and solution" (Scriber 1987:1). The creator possesses fictionally the object of his/her desire, and the text (like a dream-work) defends the artist's act of creation. If writing (creative act) is done to defend or justify oneself with regard to his/her desire, the addressee
of the text is the potential adversary who works as an agent to prevent the hero/heroine from possessing the respective objects of desire. In this sense, the fictional audience is a powerful force that contributes to the making of the text. The fictional audience is therefore an indicator of the nature of the fears and constraints the artist conceives in the course of his/her creativity. Hence the themes of perversion (madness/suicide) and purgation can best be approached by analysing the artist-protagonist's confrontation with and response to the fictional audience who prevents the protagonist from possessing his/her object of desire.

5.5.0 The desire-frustration of the artist, as is seen in the artist-novels, contributes to two kinds of responses. In the mimetic or unconscious response, both the man and the woman become mad and suicidal. But as this experience of frustration is conceived by the protagonist aesthetically or artistically, it turns out to be a textual or self-conscious response. The consequent vision assumes the mode of the aesthetic category of the grotesque which is creative enough even to produce appropriate artistic works. As the grotesque situation is self-consciously accepted by the artist, the grotesque also becomes aesthetically valid, and 'beautiful' in a broad sense of the term.
5.5.1 The grotesque is not one simple category. In its artistic expression, the grotesque is conveniently discussed as having subsumed under it a variety of modes such as the absurd, the bizarre, the macabre, caricature, parody, satire, irony and the comic, and such affectations as abnormality, the terrifying and disharmony. If the beautiful is the vision of the harmonious, the grotesque as "disharmony, has been seen, not merely in the work of art as such, but also in the reaction it produces and (speculatively) in the creative temperament and psychological make-up of the artist" (Thomson 1972:20). In general, the grotesque is defined as "the unresolved clash of incompatibles in work and response" (ibid.:27). According to Robert A. Ferguson, the very definition of the grotesque implies an intrinsic inability of the artist to cope with a situation (Ferguson 1979:477). In its function, though the grotesque can be a purely ornamental and even a 'playful' activity, as a personal form, it is psychologically expressive of emotions such as aggressiveness to the society, alienation, tension and unresolvability (Thomson 1972:58-65). From the artist's point of view, the self-conscious vision of the grotesque is aesthetically valid and is, therefore, rightly termed by Louis D. Rubin, Jr. as "the aesthetic of pain" (Rubin, Jr. 1977:265). The term, 'grotesque' is adopted in the ensuing
analysis to explain the incompatibles in an artist-protagonist's life and his/her artistic response to these disharmonies caused by his/her desire-frustration in the hands of an adverse fictional audience.

5.6.0 In the artist-novels, the situation of the grotesque is caused differently for the male and the female. In the audience-awareness in the male text, the artist-hero is prevented, by the entire society, from possessing his object of desire, namely, woman. Another major impediment in desire-fulfilment is his own 'impotency' which is sometimes disguised in the inaccessibility of his woman: it is as if, because the male artist wants to achieve the fulfilment of an act-oriented desire, he is also afraid that he cannot act. In addition, money seems to be the partriarchal criterion of success in which, too, the artist-hero is pressed hard. However, it should be noted here that as much as he is rejected by the society, he too rejects its approval as unnecessary for the success of his artistic life. On the other hand, in the audience-awareness in the female text, the artist-heroine is not rejected of her desire-object by the entire society, but only by individual men and women (foils) who are phallocentric in conventions and expectations regarding the artist-heroine. Her criterion of success is the approval of the society in
general (and not money) as much as the possibility for her own personal and wholesome dedication to artistic life. In addition to a failure in these matters, she is also obstructed by an artistically maternal 'sterility' or 'barrenness' which appear as disguised in her desire for particular men and biological children: it is as if, because the female artist does not want to achieve the fulfilment of particularized desire, she is also afraid that she will succumb to it. Behind all these, one can see that the artist-heroine still desires an audience or a multitude, in contrast with the attitude of the artist-hero.

5.6.1.1 The causality of the desire-frustration of the artist-protagonist in male text lies primarily with the society or the audience as a whole by which he is rejected. The narrator-protagonist of The Sacred Fount is rejected by Ford Obert who is not interested in the hero's endeavor, by Mr. Briss who escapes with a good-bye, by Lady John who advises him to give up his venture and even by Mrs. Briss who discourages him, saying, "'... you're carried away - you're abused by a fine fancy ...'" (SF:203-204). Similarly the artist in Martin Eden is rejected of the object of his desire by the entire society. Martin suffers expulsion in the hands of his brother-in-law who sends disparaging letters against him to the publisher, Ruth's parents who refuse to give him their daughter in marriage,
Russ Brissenden who diverts him from loving a middle class girl and even Ruth Morse who thinks that the inconsequential position of Martin would be a disgrace to her. In Winesburg, Ohio, all of George Willard's women are robbed off from him by a hostile society. Helen White is taken away by Tom Foster, Kate Swift by Reverend Curtis, Belle Carpenter by Ed Handby, and his own mother by Doctor Reefy. Thus, George's "... greater enemy ... [is] the judgement of Winesburg" (WO:234). As Mia Klein remarks, George's frustration is caused from the "struggle, waged within the artist between the Collective Father (society's laws, its code, its standards, its truth) and the Spirit Father (the individual's private, independent truth, his personal God) (Klein 1977:40). Amory Blaine of The Side of Paradise is rejected of his girl-friends by the society in a similar manner. Moreover, he is greatly disappointed when his drama-acting is "not accepted ... among the elite of the class" (TSP:50). In Mosquitoes, the public retreats from the artist saying that they need protection from the artists who annoy them with their artistic stuff. Gordon is surrounded only by "mosquitoes", namely, the women, the "mosquito-like critics" (Bassett 1980:60-61) or "the silly lionising art-lover[s]" (Hughes 1964:9), in other words, the grotesque characters in the novel (Davidson 1975: 68-69). Similarly, the artist-hero of Pictures of Fidelman is
surrounded by an antagonistic society, greedy art-dealers, and other "conspirators" (PF:86). In short, the society bereaves the male artist of his woman and recognition of his status.

5.6.1.2 The society's rejection of the artist-hero implies in its turn, the artist-protagonist's own rejection of the audience. The artist in The Sacred Fount, for instance, is not interested in the pleasure of the audience. For, he insists on observing them while he knows fully that the participants of 'the sacred fount' can not bear being watched as they are engaged in their pleasure: they cannot tolerate "that you see" (SF:25). Martin Eden rejects "the multitude" (ME:263), realizing that it was "the awful intellectual chasm that yawned between him and his people" (SF:312). The "talking artists" in Winesburg are not particular about the availability of a listening audience, for, everyone of them is immersed in creativity, as "hypnotized by his own words" (WO:219). In the words of David Stouck, Winesburg is full of such "frustrated individuals who cannot communicate with each other ..." as they seek to take pleasure in the subjective, limited truths (Stouck 1977:529). In This Side of Paradise, Amory who feels "the need of healing his own voice" (TSP:42) is not in need of the society to function as his audience. As Madelyn
Hoffman remarks, Amory is "bereft of any audience but [at the same time] not eager to regain one" (Hoffman 1978:183). In Mosquitoes one of the characters makes this significant statement: "'People are far more tolerant of artists than artists are of people'" (M:270). The artist-hero of Pictures of Fidelman boldly declares: "'... I do not ... explain my sculptures to the public ...' ", for they are all "dull-witted and find it difficult to comprehend such things" (PF:156-157). This attitude of the male artist once again reiterates his aversion for the multitude or 'children'.

5.6.1.3 Therefore the artist-hero does not rely on the acceptance by the audience for guaranteeing the success of his art. Success for him is rather measurable by money. However, a financial insecurity adds to his frustration. For, he thinks that a person with financial inadequacy cannot impress his woman. Even the 'ivory tower' artist of The Sacred Fount is conscious of money. That Mrs. Server has no money makes her specially desirable to the artist-hero. The hero in Martin Eden is so money-conscious that, in the words of George M. Spangler, "Martin's basic motive is the need for enough money to marry Ruth Morse ..." (Spangler 1979:514). But Martin falls into the days of severe starvation. Ruth Morse and her parents dismiss him as a person who has neither position nor money. Eugene
Witla of *The "Genius"* does not become rich enough to impress girls. Lack of money prevents him from deserting his wife for the sake of another woman. His ideal of success is to become one of the commercial artists because they are very successful ones. He is a thoroughly dejected person as he loses by the end of his story both his position and his love, Suzanne Dale. The only creditable factor, which George Willard of *Winesburg, Ohio* carries with him to the city, is the money handed over to him by his father. For, the father himself suffered failure in terms of money: he says, "'It is to make up to you for my failure as a father'" (WO:275). In *This Side of Paradise*, Amory's "philosophy of success ... troubled down upon him ..." as he realizes that he is financially in a very deplorable state (TSP:107). Money is so crucial a factor in the success of the artist-hero in *Mosquitoes* that he is particularly warned off in this matter: "'People suicide because of money and disease and not of love'" (M:189). In *Pictures of Fidelman*, too, money is a major cause of anxiety for the artist-hero.

5.6.1.4 However, one of the most important causes of the desire-frustration in artist-hero lies within himself. What is disguised as the inaccessibility of woman seems in fact to be his own 'impotency'. In *The Sacred Fount*, it is partly due to a lack of practicality of the observer-artist
and his system that he fails to win his woman fully. He has to admit, therefore, "I was disappointed ... with a bitterness not to be mistaken" (SF:204). Feeling himself depleted, he now envies the youth of his friends. The same is true of the hero in Martin Eden. Ruth is "inaccessible and impossible" primarily because he himself is "inarticulate", and "it was because of this reticence that he never alarmed her" (ME:157). Eugene Witla of The "Genius" is always "swayed helplessly by emotion and desire" while his love Angela has a great capacity to love (TG:64). He finds that his life is accursed with failure. But he has to blame none other than himself, for, "The dreams of man are one thing - his capacity to realize another" (TG:730). In Winesburg, Ohio, George Willard becomes one of the "inarticulate characters" (Stouck 1977:535) when he is perplexed at the rejection of love, and also when his hand trembles so that he is not able to hold the pen. Amory Blaine of This Side of Paradise fails to win any of the girls because of "his own inconsequence ... impotency and insufficiency" (TSP:60). He is afraid now that he will never be able to write anything but mediocre poetry. Apart from his failure to get a Princeton degree and the disillusionment with war, what Scott Fitzgerald transforms into Amory's story from his personal life is his own failure to win the love of Ginevra King and Zelda Sayre (Lehan
Similarly, a John Earl Bassett remarks, what is known from *Mosquitoes* "is that sexual failure and artistic failure are closely linked in the consciousness that shaped the book ..." (Bassett 1980:63). The despair is very deep for Mr. Talliaferro and Gordon when Jenny and Pat reject them for the sake of more practical men. The women who are "challenging and retreating ... with such a devastating practicality" (M:211) add to "the unpredictable and annoying aspects of reality" in the artist's life (Brooks 1977:217). The inability of the artist-hero in *Pictures of Fidelman* is revealed through his uncontrollable desire which is a "calamity" or "disaster" for him, for, it makes him always unhappy in love. It renders him almost "impotent" and his spirits into a depressed state. Thus, rejection of the society, deprivation of money and one's own 'impotency' or the inaccessibility to woman deprive the male artist of his object of desire. But at the same time, desiring woman, the artist-hero seems to place the society at variance.

5.6.2.1 Of the fictional audience, the first one to be antagonistic towards the artist-heroine is the man who is phallocentric and unimaginative of a woman's call in life. Avis Dobell of *The Story of Avis* suffers the greatest hindrance to her artistic life from her marriage-life which begins with a 'forced' proposal from Philip Ostrander. He
proves to be a capricious man as he has once betrayed a woman in love with him, before he proposes to Avis. He escapes to the spare room whenever their child gives trouble in the night, leaving Avis to be awake till the day-break. As the narrator complains, "Thus in the old, sad, subtle ways, Avis was exiled from the studio" (SA:206). In The Awakening, when Léonce Pontellier accuses Edna of neglecting her duties of a wife and mother, she suffers the "indescribable oppression" (TA:6). Thus the parrot-cage introduced at the beginning of her story "comes to symbolize Edna's incarcerated self ..." (Shaw 1990:62). Similarly, marriage to Olivia May in A woman of Genius is "an engulfing personal experience" (WG:123). For her husband's dearest interests are money and Miss Rathbone. But the artist-heroine does not conceive all the men as antagonistic to her though she does not want to address her story to anyone "who never knew me in any other character than the lady of romance" (WG:404). Thea Kronborg of The Song of the Lark is helped at the various stages of her development by Ray Kennedy, Doctor Archie, Andor Harsanyi, and Professor A. Wunsch. But her father Reverend Peter Kronborg never understands Thea since she is different from his other children. Fred Ottenberg's romance becomes almost a nuisance to Thea as one can see her always resisting his approaches. Marriage in Save Me the Waltz turns out to be
fatal for its artist-heroine as her husband looks for "emotional stimulus" from other women (SW:101). In The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter Mick Kelly misses an audience because Willie, Biff Brannon and Doctor Copeland are all 'dwarfed' and withdrawn to themselves. Even John Singer turns out to be, in the words of McCullers, a "'symbol of isolation'" (cited in Huf 1983:111). The boy-friend of Esther Greenwood of The Bell Jar is an intolerable hypocrite. Moreover, the artist-heroine is threatened of losing her vocation when she finds herself caught in a 'bell jar' surrounded by male doctors, by which the delivery-table "looked like some awful torture table" (BJ:71-72).

5.6.2.2 The female artist is also rejected by the male-centered women who are known as foils in generic discussions. In The Story of Avis, Coy Bishop "proves so immoderate a model of femininity that Avis must look at least sensible by contrast" (Huf 1983:54). Foils, according to Elizabeth Stuart Phelps, are "women who have no sense of character but such as they reflect from men" (Phelps 1985:269). In The Awakening Edna is disapproved by women like Adèle Ratignole, who are her foils (Justus 1978:109), for they are not "talking the same language" as the one spoken by Edna (TA:51). In A Woman of Genius, Olivia's foil is Pauline Mills who "represented all that stood opposed to
what ... [Olivia] was being coerced into ... " (WG:353). In *The Song of the Lark*, Lily Fisher, whom Thea considers to be her rival and as one of the most stuck-up dolls in the world, represents the antagonistic women in the story. Alabama Beggs of *Save Me the Waltz* finds it difficult to get along with the women of the sort of Joan, her sister, who "was so orderly that she made little difference in the house, anyway" (SW:9). In *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, Baby Wilson who is called "an ultrafeminine foil" (Huf 1983:112), and Mick's two sisters, Etta and Hazel, with their conventional feminine notions are unfavorable to the heroine. Esther Greenwood of *The Bell Jar* is distracted from her vocation by the women like Betsy and Doreen who are described by Linda Huf as Esther's foils (Huf 1983:142). For these women seduce the artist-heroine for the unproductive lesbian liaison. But Esther resists them: "I was disappointed .... I wondered if all women did with other women was lie and hug .... My head ached. Why did I attract these weird old women?" (BJ:247-248). Thus the artist-heroines are rejected by male-centered men and women.

5.6.2.3 At times, the artist-heroine is threatened by a weakness from within. Her desire for particular men and biological children renders her artistic motherhood 'sterile' to a great extent. In *The Story of Avis*, with the birth of the second child, Avis confronts yet another
hindrance to her artistic vocation, namely the biological "motherhood [which] gave [her] so much more anxiety than pleasure ..." (SA:170). In this regard Carol Farley Kessler comments that all the elements of the anarchist feminist critique of heterosexual marriage, except free love, appear in The Story of Avis (Kessler 1985:xvi). When Edna Pontellier of The Awakening attempts to make a compromise between the biological motherhood and artistic vocation, her children appear to be "antagonists" to her and she receives "a death wound" in herself (TA:121). Moreover the men towards whom she develops particularized desire turn out to be the "drowsy, muffled sounds lulling her senses" (TA:39). In The Song of the Lark, Thea Kronborg seems to be going to suffer in her marriage which "is an afterthought" of Willa Cather in "an awkward epilogue" (Wasserman 1982:352). When the heroine of Save Me the Waltz experiences an infatuation towards a man, the desire becomes "distorted in her vision .... she felt herself very small ..." (SW:38). She also feels that it is like embracing a lost religious rite. But she is deeply frustrated when she becomes physically disabled, unable to dance any more. Due to the heterosexual desire, Mick Kelly of The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter "could not stay in the inside room" (HLH:445). Marriage is critiqued in the novel through the unhappy family of Biff and Alice. It seems right therefore to agree with Linda
Huf when she states that "it is 'sexism' that deprives Mick of her birth right" to artistic call (Huf 1983:119). Throughout _The Bell Jar_, Esther resists the biological expectations of menstruation, heterosexuality and childbirth. Her fear of 'blood' is largely suggestive of this aspect.

5.6.2.4 The artist-heroine's fear of the phallocentric men, male-centered women and heterosexual love denote that her artistic pleasure is desirous of a large audience, the multitude. In other words, the artist-heroine measures the degree of her success by the crowd's acceptance of her art, and not by any money-earning capacity. It is this success she is deprived of by a hostile, male-centered audience and biological motherhood. This is because as the heroine of _The Story of Avis_ states, "'success - for a woman - means absolute surrender in whatever direction. Whether she paints a picture, or loves a man, there is no division of labor possible in her economy'" (SA:69). A failure in this regard renders the heroine of _The Awakening_ to be "A Solitary Soul" - the title of the novel originally decided by the author (Justus 1978:111). What frustrates the heroine of _A Woman of Genius_ is her inability to be a woman as well as a genius. The male-centered society and her biological motherhood prevent her from realizing her
womanhood in her call to be a female genius. Thea Kronborg of *The Song of the Lark* holds that, "Money and office and success are the consolations of impotence" (SL:522). On the other hand, she evaluates her success by the actuality of her performance. For, the applause of the audience fills her with a sense of true triumph. However her unwelcoming audience "wounded her and made her feel that the world was a pretty disgusting place" (SL:539). In *Save Me the Waltz*, Alabama, unlike a male artist, never feels "the necessity for material possessions" (SW:139). For, she assesses her success by artistic fulfilment though she would be disappointed in her artistic life owing to reasons external and personal. The greatest impediment for Mick Kelly of *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* to realize her ambition is her utter poverty. She is, therefore, not able to buy a piano or go to a music teacher. The heroine of *The Bell Jar* too is unable to reach a multitude of audience as she is — to borrow Phelps's expression — 'bottled' by men "to count, weigh, measure ... [and] label" (Phelps 1985:270). Esther seems to be suffocating inside a bell jar where she struggles helplessly to come out in order to touch and affect the world outside. In all these instances, the basic frustration of the artist-heroine appears to be the deprivation of 'children' or multitude from her artistic life.
5.7.0  The desire-frustration of the artist brings about two kinds of responses - unconscious and self-conscious. In the mimetic or unconscious response, both the male and the female suffer a division of mind (madness) as well as body (death/suicide). Psychologically, these function as strategies or mechanisms (though unconscious and uncontrolled) to cope up with the threats to desire-fulfilment. In the mimetic response, since the artist-hero's Oedipal guilt of sin, wrongdoing and fear of punishment are associated with his sense of doom as death suicide and depletion, one could say that his is a 'guilty' alternative. In contrast, as guilt is absent in female madness or suicide, it appears that the artist-heroine's response is to some extent almost a wilful or 'pleasurable' alternative.

5.7.1.1 Desire-frustration causes some of the artist-heroes to attempt suicide. The artist-hero in Martin Eden escapes through the porthole of the ship and drowns himself in the sea. The act is described to be an Oedipal "returning to the dark womb of the maternal sea" (Watson, Jr. 1983:160). Studying the various suicide-situations in Emile Durkheim's Suicide (1897), Theodore Dreiser's Sister Carrie (1900), Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth (1905) and Jack London's Martin Eden, George M. Spangler identifies the
cause of suicide in the disequilibrium of extremities between the individual and the society (Spangler 1979). Though Andrew Sinclair argues that Jack London's suicide was on "an impulse, not intended to be terminal" (Sinclair 1977:248), Martin's suicide, as Charles N. Watson, Jr. establishes, is something London planned from the very beginning of the conception of the plot of his work (Watson, Jr. 1981). When completely dejected in love and deprived of the object of desire, many of the artist-heroes seriously wish to end their life. In This Side of Paradise when Eleanor rejects him, Amory longs for death. At Rosalind's rejection, he even decides to commit suicide by opening a vein. In Mosquitoes, when Gordon disappears from the yacht, his friends seriously muse over the causes of his suicide. Gordon even joins the squad that searches for his dead body. In Pictures of Fidelman, when Annamaria denies him love, Fidelman considers jumping into the Tiber. When he is imprisoned by the hostile art-dealers, he attempts to jump from "the fifth floor ... into the dark street to see how far is death" (PF:73). At other times his impulse is to destroy his painting because it deserves death for not coming to life or to take the nearest bridge and jump off into the river, Arno.

5.7.1.2 In the unconscious and 'mimetic' response, as it is evident from the texts, some of the artist-heroes become
mad too. Eugene Witla of The "Genius" becomes a brooding sentimentalist, diseased in mind and body: he is for a long time to come "A gloomy Hamlet" (TG:286). His sexual over-indulgence drives him mad, crazy, wild and insane, and he suffers even from neurasthenia. The "Genius" is said to be reminding one of Dreiser's own neurasthenic years in which he suffered deep diffidence which in turn "led to his inability to write and, at the worst nearly to suicide" (Riggio 1977:125). But Eugene's mental breakdown and failure as an artist, according to Lawrence E. Hussman, can be "attributed to his inability to resolve his wife's role as lover-mother, playmate-sinner, and jailer-punisher" (Hussman, Jr. 1983:101). Analysing "The Grotesque in the Novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald", Robert A. Ferguson states that "madness is the climactic phase of estrangement from the world, and ... represents one of the basic grotesque experiences in life" (Ferguson 1979:468). When frustrated in love, Amory Blaine of This Side of Paradise "rolled over on his face with a deadly fear that he was going mad" (TSP:128). At the woman's dismissal, Amory resorts to alcoholism which reminds one of the psychiatrist's warning to Scott on his own alcoholism (Wasserström 1977:297). In Mosquitoes, the abnormality of the male takes the form of a sexual perversion. Mr. Talliaferro who represents Gordon's self (Bassett 1980:54) is seen withdrawn to "his rhythmic
mastication" (M:287). Thus desire-frustration makes the artist-hero prone to different kinds of perversions of mind.

5.7.1.3 Desire and fear are so closely linked with each other that, at times, the artist-hero conceives desire itself to be some kind of death. The theory of the 'sacred fount' deals with death and depletion as much as with rejuvenation. There is a constant fear in the narrator-protagonist of The Sacred Fount regarding his decline and death. As he expresses it in his own words, "Who knows if I shall be alive to-morrow?" (SF:169). Before the actual suicide, a 'literary' suicide takes place in the life of the hero in Martin Eden. A sense of "work performed" oppresses him and takes away the desire of life from the artist. Then "there was no cure for that except to get away to the South Seas" (ME:374). Eugene Witla of The "Genius" comes almost near "the abyss of death" and "death and nothingness" (TG:251), due to his overindulgence in sexual longing. A sense of resignation and failure is noticeable when he philosophizes that after "'a few years of surging with a fever of longing ... then we burn out and die'" (TG:127). In Winesburg, Ohio, when the desires for woman and art are combined in the mind of George Willard, he mutters "'Death ... night, the sea, fear, loveliness'" (WO:221-222). Because of the unfulfilled desire for Doctor Reefy,
George's mother spends the last few months of her life hungering for death, until, at last "her lovers Death and Reefy held her in their arms" (WO:284). Fear of death is closely linked with the desire of the male artists.

5.7.1.4 At times, the artist-hero links madness with the intensity of his desire which however displays his fear of frustration in love. The protagonist of The Sacred Fount is said to be crazy, insane, mad, and nonsensical in his endeavor. He is also called an "'intellectual ... maniac'" (SF:226). When Ruth Morse in Martin Eden moves farther and farther from Martin, his desire for her nears madness: "I was mad for love of you ... madder ... maddest ... I am almost a lunatic ... " (ME:164). Similarly in Winesburg, Ohio, Louise Bentley, Reverend Curtis Hartman and Elmer Cowley are all said to be mad, insane and crazy with desire for the opposite sex. Wing Biddlebaum is "forever frightened and beset by a ghostly band of doubts" and presents himself as a very grotesque figure (WO:8-9). In This Side of Paradise, whenever a woman rejects him, Amory becomes delirious and "acts like a maniac ..." (TSP:127). He even associates genius with an eccentric man, for he is often left with "a sick heart and a page of puzzled words to write" (TSP:283). In Mosquitoes, the male art is praised but to be of a creative "perversion" (M:265). And in Pictures of Fidelman, the artist-hero becomes "mad with
expectation and suspense" (PF:55). However, both in suicide and madness the artist-hero appears to be incapable of controlling his impulses for these perversions. In addition, he displays, to a great extent, fear and guilt in his unconscious response to desire-frustration.

5.7.2.1 As in the case of the artist-heroes, desire-frustration transforms the artist-heroines to be suicidal. Avis Dobell of The Story of Avis projects her death-wish to the homeless bird that is tossed and torn to death by the reflector of the harbor-light. When Philip Ostrander comes to save her from falling from the edge of a reef she allows him to do so only on the condition that he should let her go if she really falls. Edna Pontellier of The Awakening is transformed from her dread of water into a daringness to swim through it. But she wants to destroy something about her when an alien world becomes antagonistic towards her. Her suicide in the sea is thus for her a happy, close embrace of the sea. In The Song of the Lark, Thea Kronborg experiences during an attack of pneumonia a separation between her ailing body and the free soul. Later, she learns that to be an artist one has to die first and then to be born new again. In fact, it is as though as Alabama Beggs of Save me the Waltz believes, "'Death is the only real elegance ...'" (SW:203). Her daughter predicts that
there would be a devastating fire which would be too bad for the people. Zelda herself who died in a fire, is said to have once attempted to kill herself (Tavernier-Courbin 1979:28). There are numerous suicide attempts by the heroine of The Bell Jar - using razor, drowning, hanging and taking sleeping pills. The heroine of The Story of Avis perceives heterosexual relationship to be "'like-death'" (SA:106). When Philip apologizes for his disloyalty in love, Avis wishes "that they had died that night" (SA:168). In The Song of the Lark the heroine as well as the hero in the story told by Thea, dance themselves to death falling "hundreds of feet and ... [are] smashed to pieces" (SL:534). However, in her alternative of death and suicide to desire-frustration, the artist-heroine unlike the male artist, seems to be free from guilt and fear.

5.7.2.2 Madness is another kind of response the artist-heroine assumes against her desire-frustration and oppression in heterosexual love. In The Story of Avis, the heroine wants to be like the Sphinx and Cassandra, silent, rebellious and "mad" (SA:112). When Edna of The Awakening rebels against marital duties, her husband interprets her as a woman mentally unbalanced. An equally male-centered doctor advises him: "'It would require an inspired psychologist to deal successfully with ... [her]'" (TA:71). Similarly the husband in A Woman of Genius often finds "the
house badly kept, the meals irregular and his wife hysterical" (WG:133). Olivia compares her heterosexual desires to "wild thoughts such as men have in the grip of an unjustifiable passion" (WG: 219). In The Bell Jar, Buddy Willard calls Esther a neurotic just because she wants to live in the country and in the city both. Finding it hard to stand the (lustful) gaze of the people, Esther often grows suspicious, and resorts to hysterical tears. There is, beyond doubt, a close resemblance between Esther's madness and suicide-attempts and those of her author (Alvarez 1972:3-41).

5.7.2.3 Sometimes the artist-heroine attributes her impulses for madness and suicide to other characters in the text. Olivia May of A Woman of Genius witnesses the funerals of her mother, husband and child, and also suffers a disastrous termination of yet another expectancy. In The Song of the Lark, Tellamantez's fateful resignation, and suicidal disposition, and Spanish Johnny's madness "seemed to be within her [Thea] instead of without, as if they had come from her in the first place" (SL:495). Alabama Beggs of Save Me the Waltz views her husband's wasteful dinner-parties to be a "grotesquerie" enjoyed by "a mad, mediaeval monarch" (SW:109). In The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter, Antonapoulos, Jake Blount, Doctor Copeland, John Singer and
Lancy Davis are, for a time, insane, mad or paranoic. After his wife's death, Biff Brannon wonders why a real lover does not follow his beloved in her death through suicide. But John Singer virtually commits suicide. Margaret B. McDowell informs that McCullers herself "once was ... so completely depressed as to attempt suicide" (McDowell 1980:25). In *The Bell Jar*, it is the rebellion against the mother-in-law and the husband that causes one of the 'mad' women to be admitted in the mental asylum. The artist-heroine responds to desire-frustration by resorting to madness and suicide which are presented through various disguises. However, in contrast with the artist-hero, the suicide and madness of the artist-heroine denote more or less her self-assertion rather than an unhappy surrender (Kessler 1985:xviii).

5.8.0 The second kind of response to desire-frustration is viewed as 'textual' or self-conscious. When the experience of desire-frustration is self-consciously conceived by the artist-protagonist, a new vision emerges which is artistic or textual. This textualization of sexual frustration gives rise to an aesthetic vision that can generally be termed as the grotesque. In this, the desire can be said to be adopting the attitude of a nostalgia in the artist-hero for sexual act with woman and, in the artist-heroine for possessing and nurturing
children/multitude. However it is clearly discernible that the artist—whether hero or heroine—survives as artist as he or she purges the desire-frustration and the unconscious response (madness/suicide) through artistic formulations of the grotesque situation into a vision and/or corresponding works.

5.8.1.1 When the artist-hero views the situation of the desire-frustration self-consciously, he seems first to be formulating a (corresponding) vision of life-in-general. To Martin Eden life appears to be "grotesque ... absurd, unreal and impossible" (M:141). To Eugene Witla of *The Genius* "Life seemed very dark and ugly" (TG:261). Between man's dreams and his actual capacity, one confronts "the accidents of supreme failure and supreme success" (TG:730). Reflecting Dreiser's own vision of naturalistic realism, Eugene Witla realizes that human life is only a part of the animal life, simply born to be the prey of another form of animal life. Each of the life-forms is chemically and physically attracted to each other to its own disaster. Death or disaster appears to be a persistent motif in *Winesburg, Ohio*. According to David Stouck, Anderson was preoccupied in his fiction with the medieval concept of life as a Dance of Death by which Death is seen and experienced through the living (Stouck 1977:529). The initial pages of *Winesburg, Ohio* state its view of life that, when a man
takes one of the truths to himself, calls it his truth, and tries to live his life by it, he becomes a grotesque. This is not to mean that the grotesques are all "horrible". Some are "amusing some almost beautiful" (WO:3). Amory Blaine of This Side of Paradise views life as "a grotesque blending of desires, worries, exterior impressions and physical reactions" (TSP:278). In the artist's conception even the grotesque part of life assumes a human value.

5.8.1.2 The artist-hero also tries to perceive the nature of his own position in this grotesque world. The narrator-protagonist of The Sacred Fount is afraid of losing his youth and becoming depleted in physical and mental faculties. Martin Eden perceives the tendency of his own body towards a "trick of threatening destruction to furniture or ornaments" (ME:215). Eugene Witla of The "Genius" identifies his situation with that of Shakespeare's Hamlet. In Winesburg, Ohio, it is again the fear of depletion. For, though Jesse Bentley was "only fifty-five years old he looked seventy" while "the woman's body was changing ... she was becoming younger ..." (WO:78,276). All the artist-heroes view themselves to be occupying rather a threatened position in the world around them.

5.8.1.3 The women are also viewed by the artist-heroes as grotesque mainly because they are too elusive for their
genius. In *The Sacred Fount*, woman is "infinitely touching and tragic in her loneliness - possibly in her torment, in her terror" (SF:76). She appears "as blurred as a bit of brushwork in the water-colour, spoiled by the upsetting of the artist's glass" (SF:104). To the hero in *Martin Eden*, Ruth becomes a trick and one of the "grotesque and impossible marvels" (ME:89). For, beauty and wonder have departed from him in her rejection. Similarly, in *The Genius*, when Eugene "was in danger of losing Charlotta, her beauty took a special significance for Eugene" (TG:350). His "unattainable desire" takes the shape of "the holy grail of beauty" (TG:284). In *This Side of Paradise*, whenever Amory Blaine approaches the beauty of woman with profound longing, it has always "leered out at him with the grotesque force of evil". This is true of the "Beauty of great art, beauty of all joy, most of all the beauty of women" (TSP:302). Whenever the woman is too distant for male reach, she attains a special significance in the artist-hero's vision of the grotesque.

5.8.1.4 But most significantly, the artist-hero envisions creativity itself freshly from the perspective of his grotesque experience. The system which the narrator-protagonist of *The Sacred Fount* develops states that the relationship between the artist and his muse inevitably brings in death, wrinkle, shrivel and the ugly to either of
them. In the words of Leon Edel, the experience of the beautiful, the blooming, the pretty and the charming will be replaced by a sense of the "dreadful, awful and awful grimace" (Edel 1953:xx). This experience, as he goes on to say, cannot belong to "the subterranean unconscious part" but to "the [self-] conscious part of his work" (ibid.:xxiv). As far as the hero in *This Side of Paradise* is concerned, sex and beauty can also be linked through the grotesqueness of evil: "The problem of evil had solidified for Amory into the problem of sex .... Inseparably linked with evil was beauty ... " (TSP:302). Robert A. Ferguson remarks that the grotesque is "an important variable for tracing artistic development" in Fitzgerald's fiction (Ferguson 1979:460). The male artist in *Mosquitoes* confronts a sterile race of men being too feminine to be creative. Nevertheless, he believes that "'... you don't commit suicide because you are disappointed in love. You write a book ... and so take revenge ... [for the] thwarted desires and interference with ... man's world' " (M:190-191). Similarly, Fidelman of Malamud's novel, is "choked by remembered lust for all the women he had desired" (PF:88) and is convinced of the fact that he can transform his frustrated desire into art by painting and thereby possessing the woman on his canvas.
Therefore, the artist-hero survives as an artist as he is able to convert his desire-frustration and the vision of the grotesque into appropriate art-works. In *The Sacred Fount*, "the Mask of Death" or "the Man with the Mask" reveals slowly to the onlooker a lovely lady behind the mask. What one gets through this phenomenon, according to Kathryn Humphreys is, as in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, "a focus for the uncanny resemblances and exchanges [youth vs. ageing] that elide distinctions between life and death, nature and artifice" (Humphreys 1990:530). Similarly in *Martin Eden*, the protagonist comes across "A trick picture" in Ruth's house, in which the beauty seems to fade out of the canvas as one comes closer to it. Later Martin Eden himself attempts to achieve "the grotesque and ... a skillful trick" through his short story, "Adventure" (ME:212). Martin also attempts many horror stories, a tragedy in blank verse and a treatise on the theme of illusion. He even views his suicide self-consciously through Longfellow's lines:

'The sea is still and deep;
All things within its bosom sleep;
A single step and all is o'er,
A plunge, a bubble, and no more'  
(cited in ME:249).
In *Winesburg, Ohio*, George Willard perceives even in the most "grotesque kind of monkey" a kind of "completeness of ... ugliness" and "perverted beauty" (WO:135). Amory Blaine of *This Side of Paradise* writes a cynical story, a satire, and a poem by name, "Summer Storm" to get over the depression caused by Eleanor's rejection. He now firmly believes that "All tragedy has that strain of the grotesque and squalid ... [in it]" (TSP:96). In *Mosquitoes*, Gordon's lead plaque displays Mrs. Maurier and a Child looking like an old man. He believes that the "only one possible subject to write ... [is] love and death ..." (M:206). Among the 'pictures of Fidelman' are the "Portrait of the Artist as a Priest", "Figure of a Jew Fleeing", figures of hollows, 'dirty' pictures and drawings of girls who will not grow. Enraged at Fidelman's 'impotency', Annamaria represents him through the painting of "A gigantic funeral phallus that resembled a broken backed snake ... his unhappy phallus" (PF:63-64). Through the art-works as well as aesthetic vision in the order of the grotesque, the artist-hero pictures fundamentally the woman that eludes his possession. He then believes that she is caught at least in his art-works.

5.8.2.1 In the self-conscious acceptance of the desire-frustration, the artist-heroine views the grotesque situation as a part of her (frustrated) development or a
feature of the sick world around her. In *The Story of Avis*, the heroine compares her life to the fate of the sparrow at the reflector of the lighthouse. She realizes that a life divided between marriage and artistic vocation will be a failure in both. As she conceives this situation of desire-frustration aesthetically,

> She saw the quiver of the deer under the teeth of the hound, the heart-throb of the pursued hare, the pathetic brow of a dying lioness, the reproach in the eye of a shot bird, a dog under vivisection licking the hand that tore him (SA:83).

When the desire is thwarted, the heroine of *The Awakening* sees grotesque shadows and mirror-reflections. However, this situation provides her with an awakening from the smug, commonplace realities into "a dream, a delicious, grotesque, impossible dream" (TA:34). In her vision, "life appeared to her like a grotesque pandemonium and humanity like worms struggling toward inevitable annihilation" (TA:62). In *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, Mick Kelly finds around her nothing but incompatible characters. Doctor Copeland suffers a warring conflict of love and hatred, Jake Blount sees grotesque nightmares, and Biff Brannon is suspended between radiance and darkness. However, Mick's "final words, 'O.K. Some Good!' show that she is still above despair and that she will battle the society that demands of
her so unfair a sacrifice" (McDowell 1980:39-40). Mick's painful loneliness which has no philosophical redemption but only an artistic purgation, can be called, in the words of Louis D. Rubin, Jr., "the aesthetic of pain" (Rubin, Jr. 1977:270).

5.8.2.2 The artist-heroine asserts her self even in the crises she is forced into. At times suicide and madness are occasions for her to magnify her individuality to the outside world. Suicide of Edna Pontellier in The Awakening is interpreted by critics as signifying a failure (Mahlendorf 1985:149), the absence of an alternative (Skaggs 1985:111), "her doom" (Delbanco 1988:103), "a regressive illusion" (Franklin 1984:103), and a poor substitute for heterosexual pleasure (Ewell 1986:153). But those who look at Edna's "sensuous ... close embrace" (TA:124) positively, believe that through her suicide she realizes, in a self-assertive manner, "her own nature and the possibilities of her life" (Seyersted 1969: 150), purges herself from her doubts and guilts (Shaw 1990:66), attains "a resurrection ... into the imaginative openness of her childhood" (Gilbert and Gubar 1989:10) and rejects only the Victorian notion of heterosexual love and motherhood (Wheeler 1975:118,123). In this sense, "Death for the female protagonist ... is the negative print of
marriage ..." (Du Plessis 1985:15). Similarly, the suicide-attempt of the heroine of The Bell Jar has been variously explained. Mahlendorf finds it a "Regression into the Engulfing Symbiosis" (Mahlendorf 1985:173). But it is also viewed as her self-identification "with the garden ... the totality of Nature" (Scheerer 1976:475), "an initiation rite qualifying her for a life of her own" (Alvarez 1972:19) and "a total withdrawal to the 'pure' and 'sweet' condition of infancy" (Bernard 1978:29). Neither Edna nor Esther seems to be linking suicide with any fearful association. If the act is sensuous for Edna, in the case of Esther "the world was sparkling all about me like blue and green and yellow semi-precious stones" (BJ:181). The artist-heroines seem to be free of fear and guilt in suicide or death-wish in contrast with the artist-heroes.

5.8.2.3 Some of the artist-heroines attempt to survive desire-frustration by self-consciously bequeathing their artistic ambition to their daughters. Avis Dobell of The Story of Avis transfers her artistic vocation to her daughter, Wait. On its significance Linda Huf states, "The New Woman will have to 'wait' until some future day when the world will be ready for her" (Huf 1983:49). Similarly, the artist-heroine in Save Me the Waltz, survives through her daughter, Bonnie. Alabama wants to give her daughter enough freedom so as to enable her to reject her father's choices
for the sake of her mother's art. Alabama wishes then that her daughter "will feel herself less cheated .... It will lead her to believe that her restlessness will pass" (SW:206). In this manner, the female art continues 'for ever' from mothers to daughters.

5.8.2.4 The artist-heroines also make artistic survival by linking the grotesque experience with creativity itself. In *A Woman of Genius*, Olivia May has to face a "thousand inharmonies that chafed against the budding instinct of beauty" (WG:47). She comes to know the kind of horror of the destiny of woman who has no room of her own. However, Olivia attempts to transcend this situation through the "pages of my book", namely her story (WG:504), which is written through the "unexplored territory of the artistic consciousness ... [so that the readers] couldn't get it plain in any case" (WG:471). Thea Kronborg of *The Song of the Lark* who experiences a separation of her artistic soul from her sick body, thinks that it is the frustrations that keep up one's artistic spirit. Thea is subject to jealousies, disappointments and "creative hate" (SL:680). She perceives a tramp's "body grotesquely attired" (SL:414) and Mr. Landry dressed in "his grotesqueness" (SL:656). She proclaims her artistic vision, thus: "'... it's always that way, the good and the bad all mingled up .... That's why my
interest keeps up'" (SL:688). Alabama Beggs in *Save Me the Waltz* learns from an English traveler that one way to cope with neurosis is to publish books. At the end of her story, she declares purgation to be the mode of her creation: "'It's very expressive of myself. I just lump everything in a great heap which I have labelled 'the past', and having thus emptied this deep reservoir that was once myself, I am ready to continue'" (SW:212). In *The Bell Jar*, every time Esther attempts suicide and is treated in mental asylum, she seems to be starting her life afresh like a pure baby. Though she is afraid of the "grotesque, protruding stomach" (BJ:129), she kisses a strange man just because she "felt sorry for him, he was so ugly" (BJ:164). Thus, many a time, grotesqueness provides the heroine with sexual/artistic fulfilment. Plath herself is an example in this regard. Steven Gould Axelrod who reads Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath in the light of Harold Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* maintains "that for Woolf and Plath alike suicide represented a release from intolerable pain and a termination of the signifying process" (Axelrod 1990:124). Plath herself has suggested that by writing on such taboo subjects like madness and suicide, she could enjoy a peculiar freedom (Alvarez 1972:23). In her words, an artist "'should be able to control and manipulate [such] experiences'" (cited in Schwartz and Bollas 1976:153). As
for *The Bell Jar*, Plath admits: "... an autobiographical apprentice work which I had to write in order to free myself from the past" (cited in Ames 1971:292). To the female artist, as to the male, art is a powerful means of artistic purgation.

5.8.2.5 Through their artistic transformation of the grotesque situation into corresponding works of art, the artist-heroines also give artistic shape to their self-consciousness. As if to give an artistic rendering of her "still-born aspirations" (SA:149), Avis Dobell of *The Story of Avis* paints "The Easel" and "The Blender". Her masterpiece "Sphinx" is left incomplete, mutilated by cares and contingencies in her life. But it is the artistic activity rather than the art-work itself that is going to sustain the woman-artist. *In A Woman of Genius* Olivia's friend Sara Croyden declares this fact to the artist-heroine: "'It is the fact of your telling ... that is going to help them .... At any rate it will help other women to speak out what they think, unashamed'" (WG:503; emphasis added). In this sense, the art of Alabama Beggs in *Save Me the Waltz* seems to have done its purpose though she is now crippled, not to dance any more. The disappointed heroine of *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* converts her frustrations into musical compositions such as "A Big Fight" and "The Snow-Storm". Her own room is decorated with the paintings like, "Sea Gull
with Back Broken in Storm" and "Boiler Busts in Factory". In fact, Mick represents McCullers's own purged self that could not become a pianist (Perry 1986:37-38). In The Bell Jar, "blood" becomes the symbol of the heroine's desire-frustration, and Esther wants to create "the stories of blood-stained bridal sheets" (BJ:258). Through the aesthetic vision and the art-works of the grotesque experience, the artist-heroine expresses, in fact, her desire-frustration with regard to artistic Motherhood, asserts her individuality as a 'woman', and attempts to prove her identity as an artist, against the conventional roles of being a wife and a biological mother.

5.9.0 Grotesque, in general, refers to the situation of incompatibles and frustrations of desire, which is self-consciously conceived. One identifies the causes of the desire-frustration of the artist-hero in the inaccessibility of his desire-object, fear of 'impotency', opposition of the society/audience and lack of money. But the artist-heroine confronts the impediments to her desire-fulfilment in the form of her particularized desire, fear of 'barrenness' and opposition from the male-centered men and women. Unlike the male, she regards a larger audience (and not money) to be the essential part of her artistic success. Desire-frustration gives rise to two sorts of responses. In the
mimetic or unconscious kind, both the male and the female resort to madness and suicide/death-wish. But in the textual or self-conscious response, the artist—whether male or female—survives as artist through his/her aesthetic vision of the grotesque and/or corresponding artistic creations. However, even in the state of frustration, the artist-protagonist asserts the longing for his/her respective objects of desire. Hence, because the male as well as the female suffer incompatibles and at the same time achieve subsequent creative purgation, a mere polemic with regard to who is born mad and who is creatively perverse is misleading to an objective appreciation of the male and the female artistic realizations as represented in Künstlerromane by both the male and the female writers.