

**THE EVOCATIVE OF BALANCING MISERY AND BLISS IN
SELECTED NOVELS OF PIPER KERMAN AND
SUSANNAH CAHALAN**

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of
Master of Arts degree in English

by

**SRI JOTHI PRIYA R.T
39970008**



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES**

SATHYABAMA

**INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
Accredited with Grade "A" by NAAC**

JEPPIAAR NAGAR, RAJIV GANDHI SALAI, CHENNAI - 600 119

APRIL 2021



SATHYABAMA
INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
Accredited with “A” grade by NAAC
Jeppiaar Nagar, Rajiv Gandhi Salai, Chennai – 600 119
www.sathyabama.ac.in



DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

BONAFIDE CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this Project Report is the bonafide work of **SRI JOTHI PRIYA R.T(39970008)** who have done the Project work. She has carried out the project entitled “**THE EVOCATIVE OF BALANCING MISERY AND BLISS IN SELECTED NOVELS OF ‘PIPER KERMAN’ AND ‘SUSANNAH CAHALAN’**” under my supervision from June 2020 to April 2021.

[DR. J. AMUTHA MONICA]

Internal Guide

External Guide (If applicable)

Submitted for Viva voce Examination held on 16.04.2021

(Dr.LIZY)

Internal Examiner

(Dr.SOWMIYA)

External Examiner

DECLARATION

I **SRI JOTHI PRIYA R.T** hereby declare that the Project Report entitled **“THE EVOCATIVE OF BALANCING MISERY AND BLISS IN SELECTED NOVELS OF ‘PIPER KERMAN’ AND ‘SUSANNAH CAHALAN’**” done by me under the guidance of **Dr. J. Amutha Monica**, is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of Arts degree in Sathyabama Institute of Science and Technology.



DATE: 05.04.2021

PLACE: CHENNAI

SIGNATURE OF THE CANDIDATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am pleased to acknowledge my sincere thanks to the Board of Management of **SATHYABAMA** for their kind encouragement in doing this project and for completing it successfully. I am grateful to them.

I convey my thanks to the Department of English for providing me necessary support and details at the right time during the progressive reviews. I would like to express my sincere and deep sense of gratitude to my Project Guide **Dr. J. Amutha Monica** for his valuable guidance, suggestions and constant encouragement paved the way for the successful completion of my project work.

I wish to express my thanks to all Teaching and Non-teaching staff members of the Department of English who were helpful in many ways for the completion of the project.

ABSTRACT

Identity is one of the most important issue in the world. To know about her/ her gender, Gender identity plays the major role. Starting from gender identity to social identity there are lots of identity for people as individual and/or in groups. Piper Kerman's *Orange Is The New Black* is a memoir concern to women who was well educated with no clear idea seeks for adventure and falls into drug dealing and money laundering her reckless past catches up with her: convicted and sentenced to fifteen months at women's prison. The novel, *Orange Is The New Black* continues to develop the theme of identity, freedom and confinement, race, family and relationship. Susannah Cahalan's *Brain on Fire* is also a memoir, in a swift and breathtaking narrative Susannah tell the astonishing true story of her madness, her family's inspiring faith in her and the lifesaving diagnosis that drew her labelled violent, psychotic, a flight risk. *Brain on Fire* is an unforgettable exploration of memory and identity, faith and love.

KEYWORD: Identity, psychotic, family, memoir, prison, love.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER NO.	TOPIC	PAGE NO
	ABSTRACT	v
	LIST OF ABBREVIATION	vii
I.	INTRODUCTION	1
II.	THEMATICAL ANALYSIS	26
III.	CONCLUSION	55
	REFERENCE	57

LIST OF ABBREVIATION

Anti-NMDA	–	Anti-N-methyl-aspartate
OITNB	–	Orange Is The New Black
ER	–	Emergency Room
BOF	–	Brain on fire

CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION

American literature

In its earliest days, during the 1600s, American literature consisted mostly of practical nonfiction written by British settlers who populated the colonies that would become the United States. These histories, published in 1608 and 1624, are among the earliest works of American literature. The connection is that History, current events, and social events have influenced American Literature. Authors, their literary works, and the specific writing styles; are affected and influenced by the world around them. Writing styles are also affected by the current trends and opinions of the period they represent.

American Literature is predominantly written or produced in English in the United States of America and its preceding colonies. Before the founding of the United States, the Thirteen Colonies on the eastern coast of the present-day United States were heavily influence by British literature. The American literary tradition thus began as part of the broader tradition of English-language literature. However, a small amount of literature exists in other immigrant languages and Native American tribes have a rich tradition of oral storytelling.

In its earliest days, during the 1600s, American literature consisted mostly of practical nonfiction written by British settlers who populated the colonies that would become the United States.

John Smith wrote histories of Virginia based on his experiences as an English explorer and a president of the Jamestown Colony. These histories, published in 1608 and 1624, are among the earliest works of American literature. Nathaniel Ward and John Winthrop wrote books on religion, a topic of central concern in colonial America. Anne Bradstreet's *The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America* (1650) may be the earliest collection of poetry written in and about America, although it was published in England.

A new era began when the United States declared its independence in 1776, and much new writing addressed the country's future. American poetry and fiction were largely modeled on what was being published overseas in Great Britain, and much of what American readers consumed also came from Great Britain.

The Federalist Papers (1787–88), by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, shaped the political direction of the United States. Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography, which he wrote during the 1770s and '80s, told a quintessentially American life story. Phillis Wheatley, an African woman enslaved in Boston, wrote the first African American book, Poems on Various Subjects, Religious and Moral (1773). Philip Freneau was another notable poet of the era. The first American novel, The Power of Sympathy by William Hill Brown, was published in 1789.

Edgar Allan Poe most vividly depicted, and inhabited, the role of the Romantic individual a genius, often tormented and always struggling against convention—during the 1830s and up to his mysterious death in 1849.

Mark Twain

Mark Twain was an American humorist, novelist, and travel writer. Today he is best remembered as the author of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer in 1876. And Adventures of Huckleberry Finn in 1885. Twain is widely considered one of the greatest American of all time.

If the mot juste was always a priority – "I suppose we all have our foibles. I like the exact word, and clarity of statement, and here and there a touch of good grammar for picturesqueness" – structure was always a problem for Twain.

The American Revolutionary Period from 1775 to 1783 is notable for the political writings of Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson. An early novel is William Hill Brown's The Power of Sympathy published in 1791.

American literature, the body of written works produced in the English language in the United States. Like other national literatures, American literature was shaped by the history of the country that produced it. For almost a century and a half, America was merely a group of colonies scattered along the eastern seaboard of the North American continent colonies from which a few hardy souls tentatively ventured westward. After a successful rebellion against the motherland, America became the United States, a nation.

By the end of the 19th century this nation extended southward to the Gulf of Mexico, northward to the 49th parallel, and westward to the Pacific. By the end of the 19th century, too, it had taken its place among the powers of the world its fortunes so interrelated with those of other nations that inevitably it became involved in two world wars and, following these conflicts, with the problems of Europe and East Asia. Meanwhile, the rise of science and industry, as well as changes in ways of thinking and feeling, wrought many modifications in people's lives. All these factors in the development of the United States molded the literature of the country.

Famous Authors of American Literature:

There is a great and proud tradition of American writers, including some of the world's most famous authors. Novels, plays, and poems pour out of the United States, with increasing numbers of women, African American, Native American and Hispanic writers making a strong contribution. There have been twelve literature Nobel Prize laureates, beginning with Sinclair Lewis in 1930 to Bob Dylan, in 2016. Other American writers who were laureates include such household names as T.S. Eliot, Ernest Hemingway, and John Steinbeck. American writers' contribution to English literature is incalculable. The American literary tradition began when some of the early English colonists recounted their adventures in the New World for the benefit of readers in their mother country. Some of those early writings were quite accomplished, such as the account of his adventures by Captain John Smith in Virginia and the journalistic histories of John Winthrop and William Bradford in New England.

It is almost exactly forty-eight years ago that I made my first appearance on a public platform before a large audience. I was formed afterwards, by one of my teachers, that the poem itself was excellent, as such poems go, but that my delivery was very bad indeed. – T. S. Eliot.

The twentieth century witnessed the flowering of American literature. Confronted by the violence of the 20th century, a sense of despair was reflected in the literature, and the particular conditions of American society with all its diversity found its way into American writing. In the 1950s, major dramatists, notably Arthur Miller, Edward Albee, and Sam Shepard, developed the American theatre. African-American writers, such as Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin, dealt with racial inequality and violence in contemporary US society while Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison focused on the 20th-century history of African-American women. In the 1960s, novelists such as Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, and Joseph Heller examined the Jewish experience in American society.

Ernest Hemingway, Mark Twain, William Faulkner, Herman Melville, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Edgar Allan Poe, Toni Morrison, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Ralph Ellison Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Ellison and so on.

The Literary Period of American Literature:

- The Colonial and Early National period (17th century to 1830)
- The Romantic period (1830 to 1870)
- Realism and Naturalism (1870 to 1910)
- The Modernist period (1910 to 1945)
- The Contemporary period (1945 to present)

The connection is that History, current events, and social events have influenced American Literature. Authors, their literary works, and the specific writing styles; are affected and influenced by the world around them. Writing styles are also affected by the current trends and opinions of the period they represent. The Civil War saved the union and ended slavery. In the end, it appeared to

virtually all of the great writers who survived it, and to those who followed them, as a great national tragedy that had ended, like many another great tragedy, with its protagonist reborn better, deeper, wiser than before. The role of literature in American literature, Literature served as a portrayal of historical events or periods that occurred in the past, present, and sometimes future in America. This era focused mainly on scientific rationalism and the improvement of human society in America. In this age of reasoning, there was a strong political influence on the era.

Through American literature courses, students read and learn to analyze literary works. In addition, some courses address literature written in a certain time period, and students can study the short stories, novels, poems and dramas written in that era. In its earliest days, during the 1600s, American literature consisted mostly of practical nonfiction written by British settlers who populated the colonies that would become the United States. John Smith wrote histories of Virginia based on his experiences as an English explorer and a president of the Jamestown Colony.

Contemporary American Writers:

The Contemporary Period is from 1945 to present. Prior to the last decades of the 20th century, American literature was largely the story of dead white men who had created Art and of living white men doing the same. Contemporary American writers are Isabel Allende, Margaret Atwood, Jonathan Franzen, Ian McEwan, David Mitchell, Toni Morrison, Haruki Murakami, Philip Roth.

James Baldwin:

Though he spent most of his life living abroad to escape the racial prejudice in the United States, James Baldwin is the quintessential American writer. Best known for his reflections on his experience as an openly gay Black man in white America, his novels, essays and poetry make him a social critic who shared the pain and struggle of Black Americans.

Born in Harlem in 1924, Baldwin caught the attention of fellow writer Richard Wright who helped him secure a grant in order to support himself as a writer. He left to live in Paris at age 24 and went on to write *Go Tell it on the Mountain* which was published in 1953, a novel unlike anything written to date. Speaking with passion and depth about the Black struggle in America, it has become an American classic. Baldwin would continue to write novels, poetry and essays with a refreshingly unique perspective for the rest of his life. In 1956, *Giovanni's Room* raised the issues of race and homosexuality at a time when it was taboo. And during the Civil Rights Movement, he published three of his most important collections of essays, "Notes of a Native Son" (1955), "Nobody Knows My Name" (1961) and "*The Fire Next Time*" (1963). James Baldwin provided inspiration for later generations of artists to speak out about the gay experience in Black America like Staceyann Chin and Nick Burd.

Maya Angelou

He was an American poet, author and activist Maya Angelou was born in St. Louis, Missouri in 1928. Often referred to as a spokesman for African Americans and women through her many works, her gift of words connected all people who were "committed to raising the moral standards of living in the United States."

"I want to write so that the reader ... can say, 'You know, that's the truth. I wasn't there, and I wasn't a six-foot black girl, but that's the truth.'"

Influenced by Black authors like Langston Hughes, W.E.B. Du Bois and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, her love of language developed at a young age. Her most famous work *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was published in 1969 and became the first in seven autobiographies of Angelou's life.

IDENTITY

"Identity" is known it derives mainly the work of psy- chologist Erik Erikson in the 1950s; dictionary definitions have not caught up, failing to capture the word's current meanings in everyday and social science contexts. Identity is

the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and/or expressions that make a person self-identity as emphasized in psychology or group that is collective identity as pre-eminent in sociology. A psychological identity relates to self-image (one's mental model of oneself), self-esteem, and individuality. Identity has two important features: continuity and contrast. Continuity means that people can count on you to be the same person tomorrow as you are today. Obviously, people change but many important aspects of social identity remain relatively stable such as gender, surname, language and ethnicity. In the latter sense, "identity" is modern formulation of dignity, pride, or honor that implicitly links these to social categories.

Identity is given and created. Because your given identity pre-existed any identity you create for yourself your created identities are usually initially structured upon your given identities. there are many issues with given identities. for one thing, you are given a new identity by every person you meet.

IDENTITY THEORY:

Identity theory is a family of views on the relationship between mind and body. Type Identity theories hold that at least some types of mental states are, as a matter of contingent fact, literally identical with some types or kinds, or classes of brain states. The earliest advocates of Type Identity, U.T. Place, Herbert Feigl, and J.J.C. Smart, respectively, each proposed their own version of the theory in the late 1950s to early 60s. But it was not until David Armstrong made the radical claim that all mental states including intentional ones are identical with physical states, that philosophers of mind divided themselves into camps over the issue.

Social identity theory developed from a series of studies, frequently called minimal-group studies, conducted by the British social psychologist Henri Tajfel and his colleagues in the early 1970s. The word Identity comes into English via Middle French *identité*, *ydemtité*, *ydemptité* "the quality of being the same, sameness," from Late Latin *identitās* (inflectional stem *identitāt*) "the quality of being the same, the condition or fact that an entity is itself and not another thing."

Stryker

In Stryker's work, the core idea was taken from Mead, was that “society shapes self shapes social behaviour.” This SSI idea gave causal priority to society on the grounds that individuals were enmeshed in networks in society from birth and could not survive outside of pre-existing organized social relationships.

Sonia Patel, author of Jaya and Rasa:

Identity formation should flourish in adolescence. Erik Erikson, a developmental psychologist, said that an adolescent must successfully resolve the stage of “identity versus role confusion” by experimenting with different roles, activities, goals, values, and behaviors before moving onto the next stage, the adult stage of “intimacy versus isolation.” Teens who get stuck in role confusion are less likely to form strong relationships. They are left lonely and isolated.

“Yet no one saw the other role I was forced to play—my father’s surrogate wife—or the role my mother was left with—my father’s servant. And so my identity became nothing more than an object to serve my father’s intimate needs. Shame and rationalization kept my lips sealed.”(web site).

Ismée Williams, author of “Water In May”:

She shares her experience with a short story filled with facts and truth.

“When people find out I’m half Cuban, the usual response is, “Oh. I can see that.” Meaning, they didn’t before. My *half-ness* never bothered me much, though. I felt comfortable in situations I otherwise might not have. And there’s fun to be had with the shock factor. Even if your family is all from the same town, speaks the same language, and prays to the same god, chances are you’ve been misjudged, too. Maybe you’re a girl who knows more about cars than the dealer or a tall person who doesn’t play—or even like—basketball. We should remember what that feels like. Because we need to try not to prejudge others.”(web site).

Writers Who Hid Their Identities, From Jonathan Swift to J.K. Rowling:

- Jonathan Swift's Gulliver's Travels
- Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanack

- Sir Walter Scott's Waverley
- Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre
- Sholem Aleichem's Tevye the Dairyman.
- Louisa May Alcott's Behind a Mask
- James Weldon Johnson's The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man
- Fernando Pessoa's The Book of Disquiet.
- Pauline Réage's Story of O.
- J.K. Rowling's The Cuckoo's Calling.

The above authors haven't lost their identity they just hid from the audience. And it doesn't mean they have no identity, because the above list of works who they are. their real Identity so one among them is that they are all "Writers."

All individuals claim particular identities given their roles in society, groups they belong to, and characteristics that describe themselves. Introduced almost thirty years ago, identity theory is a social psychological theory that attempts to understand identities, their sources in interaction and society, their processes of operation, and their consequences for interaction and society from a sociological perspective.

Authors Who Wrote About Identity :

The novels on the theme of Identity: Beloved by Toni Morrison; Days Without End by Sebastian Barry; Fugitive Pieces by Anne Michaels; Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie; Homegoing by Yaa Gyasi; Small Island by Andrea Levy; The Bell Jar by Sylvia Plath; The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy; Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe; White Teeth by Zadie Smith.

Toni Morrison:

In Beloved, why Morrison names her characters so carefully, as does this quote from The Toni Morrison:

“Morrison focuses upon how Africans lost their names through the institution of slavery, which in turn created a loss of connection with their ancestry” (Beaulieu, 2003, p. 171).

Her characters, especially those in *Beloved* and *Song of Solomon*, need to know their true names and past to reclaim, and in some cases recreate, their own identities. As Morrison herself says in an interview, that:

“Although history should not become a straitjacket, which overwhelms and binds, neither should it be forgotten. One must critique it, test it, confront it, and understand it to achieve true, adult agency” (Schappell, 1993, p. 20).

One of the issues African Americans face in trying to carve out an identity for themselves is that white people have defined their existence. According to Neal (2001) It is trying for any African American to derive satisfaction or pride from their name because Americans. The labels serve as reminders of the sting of slavery and diaspora.

“Designate people of African descent as Negro—the name that marked them as slaves—or black, which describes them physically but deprives them of cultural identity” (Neal, 2001).

Identity Theorist:

Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets Introduced almost thirty years ago, identity theory is a social psychological theory that attempts to understand identities, their sources in interaction and society, their processes of operation, and their consequences for interaction and society from a sociological perspective.

Feminist Theory:

Feminist theory often focuses on analyzing gender inequality. Themes often explored in feminist theory include discrimination, objectification especially sexual objectification, oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping, art history and contemporary art, and aesthetics. The term feminism can be used to describe a

political, cultural or economic movement aimed at establishing equal rights and legal protection for women. Feminism involves political and sociological theories and philosophies concerned with issues of gender difference, as well as a movement that advocates gender equality for women and campaigns for women's rights and interests. Although the terms "feminism" and "feminist" did not gain widespread use until the 1970s, they were already being used in the public parlance much earlier; for instance, Katherine Hepburn speaks of the "feminist movement" in the 1942 film *Woman of the Year*.

Feminism has altered predominant perspectives in a wide range of areas within Western society, ranging from culture to law. Feminist activists have campaigned for women's legal rights like rights of contract, property rights, voting rights; for women's right to bodily integrity and autonomy, for abortion rights, and for reproductive rights (including access to contraception and quality prenatal care); for protection of women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment and rape; for workplace rights, including maternity leave and equal pay; against misogyny; and against other forms of gender-specific discrimination against women.

Feminist Theorist:

- Mary Wollstonecraft. A feminist philosopher and English writer, Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) used her voice to fight for gender equality.
- Sojourner Truth
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton
- Susan Brownell Anthony
- Emmeline Pankhurst
- Simone de Beauvoir
- Betty Friedan
- Gloria Steinem

Mary Wollstonecraft:

A feminist philosopher and English writer, Mary Wollstonecraft, 1759-1797 used her voice to fight for gender equality. Mary's piece from 1792, 'A Vindication of the Rights of Women', challenged Rousseau's theories about how women were inferior and earned her a distinguished presence in the world of feminist literature. Fun fact: She happens to be the mother of the author of Frankenstein, Mary Shelley.

"I do not wish [women] to have power over men; but over themselves." "My dreams were all my own; I accounted for them to nobody; they were my refuge when annoyed—my dearest pleasure when free." "I earnestly wish to point out in what true dignity and human happiness consists.

Simone De Beauvoir:

French writer and philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) was a prominent feminist figure in her time, not least of all because she consistently called out the patriarchy system for all its flaws and well, bullshit. Her iconic 1949 work 'The Second Sex' provided the building blocks for second-wave feminism and whilst it naturally attracted a great deal of hate, the clarity of her work transcended the drama that ensued.

"Man is defined as a human being and woman as a female – whenever she behaves as a human being she is said to imitate the male." "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman."

Race

Race is defined as a category of humankind that shares certain distinctive physical traits. The term ethnicities is more broadly defined as "large groups of people classed according to common racial, national, tribal, religious, linguistic, or cultural origin or background." The women in Orange is the New Black still divide themselves along race lines, but there are many situations when they have no choice but to mix together. The results aren't as volatile as you might expect, however, and everyone seems to generally get along.

Prison is a microcosm of society, and when people divide themselves along racial lines, stereotypes of all kinds start to become more and more apparent. Piper isn't the only person trying to see beyond race and be friends with people outside of her own; the Black and Latina women who are friends with Piper are doing the exact same thing.

Family and Love:

Brain on Fire naturally focuses intensely on the roles Susannah's parents, friends, and extended family members played in her diagnosis and recovery. She positions the love and care her parents showed her as being the sole reason she even survived her illness. Though Stephen and Susannah's parents support her because they absolutely and unconditionally love her, her psychotic symptoms don't always make loving her easy and in the case of her dad, during her illness Susannah firmly expresses a desire to not see him at all or receive any kind of support from him. With this, *Brain on Fire* explores how love functions in families during terrifying circumstances, especially when showing love to someone else means going against their wishes or doing things for their own good.

"I had asked him many times why he stayed, and he always said the same thing: "Because I love you, and I wanted to, and I knew you were in there." No matter how damaged I had been, he had loved me enough to still see me somewhere inside." (BOF – Susannah Cahalan).

A family isn't necessarily the group of people you're born into. Sometimes you end up finding a family, whether it's a group of people you work with... or live with... or deal drugs all across Europe with. All of these groups can be considered family, and just like your blood family, some of them are more dysfunctional than others.

In addition to her own family, Piper ends up with a drug family and a prison family in *Orange is the New Black*, and while the drug family is just as screwed-up as you might expect, the prison family ends up being almost as nurturing and supportive as Piper's "real" family.

Freedom and Confinement:

The state motto of New Hampshire is "Live Free or Die." In prison in *Orange is the New Black*, the motto seems to be "Live Free and you die." Or at least get sent to solitary confinement. When people commit a crime, they go to prison. The major punishment of prison is the fact that most of your freedoms are taken away. You sleep where they tell you to, you eat when and where they tell you to—it's like a cruise except without any of the fun. Perhaps it's our freedoms that make us human. Trapped in prison and stripped of freedom, Piper often feels like an animal. Piper has to find little moments of freedom where she can, because when almost all your freedoms are taken away, the smallest choices feel like a big deal.

In a way, the confinement can be a comfort. Many of the women in prison don't have a home or job or way to get food outside of prison walls. For them, freedom is almost a punishment.

"The truth is, the prison and its residents fill your thoughts, and it's hard to remember what it's like to be free, even after a few short months." (OITNB – 8).

Just like being immersed in a foreign country and learning to speak the language faster, being immersed in the confinement of prison means you learn the language of *prison* faster... and you forget your native language of freedom.

Identity

It seems to be human nature to try to label people when you meet them. It's a way of piecing together their identity, which is made up of tons of parts: gender, job, family role, etc. But do you ever meet someone and think, ex-con? Unless they're covered in prison tattoos, probably not. And even if they are inked from head to toe, maybe they just really like body art.

If you were to meet Piper Kerman author and main girl in *Orange is the New Black* on the street, you might think woman, wife, and mother, but you probably wouldn't add prisoner to that list. She wouldn't have either, until she ended up in prison, a place she never thought she'd be. Now that she's been behind bars, though, it's a part of her identity forever.

“Great institutions have leaders who are proud of what they do, and who engage with everyone who makes up those institutions, so each person understands their role. But our jailers are generally granted near-total anonymity, like the cartoon executioner who wears a hood to conceal his identity.” (Piper Kerman).

Piper's decision to define her identity by helping someone deal drugs lands her a new identity later in life: convicted felon. Orange is the New Black challenges stereotypes of people in prison. They don't have to be poor, or a minority all they have to be are people who commit crimes.

In *Brain on fire*, As Susannah changes over the course of the memoir, she and her family continually question who she is and whether she'll ever be the same as she once was. the memoir explores different modes of expressing and experiencing one's own identity or the identity of another person, as well as the ways in which questions of identity are entangled with health and the body.

Susannah echoes this sentiment when she describes watching the EEG monitoring videos for the first time, she says that she doesn't recognize the crazed, fearful, and skinny girl who spoke into the TV remote and insisted that her coworkers were talking about her on the news. Because Susannah knows that that girl is definitely her but doesn't remember being her, this suggests that one's public or social identity, who others see a person as isn't even always known to the person themselves. It's something that exists whether a person is aware of it or not, and it doesn't always necessarily match a person's intimate, personal identity that exists within their own mind.

“Someone once asked, “If you could take it all back, would you?” At the time I didn't know. Now I do. I wouldn't take that terrible experience back for anything in the world. Too much light has come out of my darkness.” (Susannah Cahalan).

Brain on Fire suggests that identity as a whole isn't something fixed or static, or something separate from a person's body. There is the social aspect of identity—who others see as Susannah, based on their memories and judgments

of her “self”—and then there is the personal aspect, which is most intimately explored over the course of Susannah’s disease. She doesn’t address questions of the soul or spirit apart from the body, perhaps because it is abundantly clear to her that one’s “self” is a very physical thing, which can be fundamentally changed by physical changes to the brain. Instead of holding up a “self” apart from the body, Susannah suggests that identity is formed chemically in the brain, and the brain can be a dangerously unreliable host.

PIPER KERMAN’S BIOGRAPHY:

Piper Eressea Kerman is an American author who was indicted in 1998, on charges of felonious money-laundering activities, and sentenced to 15 months’ detention in a federal correctional facility, of which she eventually served 13 months. She was born on September 28, 1969 Boston, Massachusetts, United States. She was well-educated lady with a thirst for bohemian counterculture and no clear plan. Piper wasn’t lazy. She had always worked hard through her college jobs in restaurants, bars, and nightclubs, winning the affection of her bosses and co-workers via sweat, humor, and willingness to work double. But still she had no idea what to do with all her pent-up longing for adventure.

EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION:

Kerman was born in Boston into a family with a number of attorneys, doctors and educators. She graduated from Swampscott High School in Swampscott, Massachusetts, in 1987, and Smith College in 1992. Kerman is a self-described WASP; however, she had a paternal grandfather who was Russian-Jewish.

HER WORKS:

Piper Kerman is the author of the memoir *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women’s Prison* from Spiegel & Grau. The book has been adapted by Jenji Kohan into an Emmy Award-winning original series for Netflix, which ran for seven seasons.

Piper collaborates with non-profits, philanthropies, and other organizations working in the public interest and serves on the board of directors of the Women's Prison Association and the advisory boards of the PEN America Writing For Justice Fellowship, Inside OUT Writers, Healing Broken Circles and Just Leadership USA.

Piper has spoken at the White House on re-entry and employment to help honour Champions of Change in the field, as well as the importance of arts in prisons and the unique conditions for women in the criminal justice system. She has been called as a witness by the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution, Civil Rights and Human Rights to testify on solitary confinement and women prisoners, and by the U.S. Senate Governmental Affairs and Homeland Security Committee to testify about the federal Bureau of Prisons. Piper has also testified for the U.S. House Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security about conditions for women and girls in the criminal justice system.

In 2014 she was awarded the Justice Trailblazer Award from John Jay College's Center on Media, Crime & Justice and the Constitutional Commentary Award from The Constitution Project; the Equal Justice Initiative recognized Piper as a Champion of Justice in 2015.

Piper is a frequent invited speaker to students of law, criminology, gender and women's studies, sociology, and creative writing, and also to groups that include the International Association of Women Judges, the National Association of Counties, the National Conference of State Legislatures, the National Criminal Justice Association, the American Probation and Parole Association, the American Correctional Association's Disproportionate Minority Confinement TaskForce, public defenders, justice reform advocates, and formerly and currently incarcerated people. Piper has taught writing in Ohio state prisons as an Affiliate Instructor with Otterbein University.

Piper works with Spitfire Strategies as a communications consultant with non-profits, philanthropies, and other organizations working in the public interest. She works on a range of issues including criminal justice reform. Her clients

include the Open Society Foundations, the Ford Foundation, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and many non-profits.

SUSANNAH CAHALAN'S BIOGRAPHY:

Susannah Cahalan was born on January 30, 1985. She is an American journalist and author, known for writing the memoir *Brain on Fire*, about her hospitalization with a rare auto-immune disease, anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis. She has worked for the New York Post.

Susannah Cahalan is the New York Times bestselling author of *Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness*. Her award-winning work has appeared in the New York Times, Psychology Today, Scientific American, BBC's Focus magazine, and Elle. She now is the New York Post's book editor and is working on a new book about the history of psychiatry, *Committed*, out 2019. Cahalan always knew she wanted to write, even when she was in elementary school, writing a "book" about familial dysfunction inspired by the afternoons she spent with her babysitter watching *The Bold and the Beautiful*. And for as long back as she can remember, she has had a deep love for newspapers. So when there was an internship opening at the New York Post when Cahalan was entering her senior year in high school, she jumped at the opportunity. Cahalan has now been at The Post for ten years, three of which she worked full-time after graduating from Washington University in St. Louis. Cahalan started as a "copy kid"—responsible for making coffee, handing out papers and sorting mail, dreaming that she would one day have a mailbox of her own. Now, she finally does. She has covered a wide variety of topics for the tabloid, from the quirky and the weird, to the dangerous and the criminal. These days she mainly covers books for the paper's Postscript section. Her work has also been featured in The New York Times and The Czech Business Weekly, where Cahalan worked when she studied abroad her junior year of college. In 2009, Cahalan was the proud recipient of the Silurian Award of Excellence for the article "My Mysterious Lost Month of Madness," on which *Brain on Fire* is based.

In *Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness* Cahalan recounts the one day that she woke up in a strange hospital room, strapped to a bed, under guard, and

unable to move or speak. Her medical records—from a month-long hospital stay of which she has no memory—showed psychosis, violence, and dangerous instability. Yet, only weeks earlier Cahalan had been a healthy twenty-four year old, six months into her first serious relationship and beginning a career as a cub reporter at the New York Post. Cahalan's memoir *Brain on Fire* chronicles the swift path of her illness and the lucky, last-minute intervention led by one of the few doctors capable of saving her life. As weeks ticked by Cahalan moved inexplicably from violence to catatonia, \$1 million worth of blood tests and brain scans revealed nothing. The exhausted doctors were ready to commit her to the psychiatric ward, in effect condemning me to a lifetime of institutions, or death, until Dr. Souhel Najjar nicknamed Dr. House joined Cahalan's team. He asked Cahalan to draw one simple sketch, which became key to diagnosing her with a newly discovered autoimmune disease in which her body was attacking her brain, an illness now thought to be the cause of "demonic possessions" throughout history. Cahalan is also a board member on the non-profit organization The Autoimmune Encephalitis Alliance and is an international ambassador for the UK's Encephalitis Society. Cahalan lives in Brooklyn with her husband and dog.

A feature film based on her memoir was released in June 2016 on Netflix. Chloë Grace Moretz played the role of Cahalan.^{[5][6]}

Her Other Work :

In 2019, Cahalan's second book was published, *The Great Pretender: The Undercover Mission That Changed Our Understanding of Madness*. In the work she accuses prominent psychologist David Rosenhan of fabricating the results of seminal research published in the journal "Science". Rosenhan's work demonstrated that staff working at psychiatric hospitals, including psychiatrists, could be easily misled to diagnose schizophrenia when individuals were perfectly sane and reported the mistreatment of patients in these facilities.

Rosenhan was, himself, a participant in the research which involved test subjects ceasing to present symptoms of mental illness after admission to the hospital and then observing the manner in which they were treated by staff at the institutions. Cahalan was drawn to this study due to her own experiences with

being improperly diagnosed with mental illness, but as she researched Rosenhan and his activity, she began to find contradictions in his work that made her question the validity of his experiment.

She wrote her first “novel” in elementary school about a family in the throes of divorce, years before her parents would finally get one. Middle school diaries are filled with various attempts to make sense of the sticky intricacies of female friendship. She joined the student newspaper in high school and began writing for an audience, but at the core she was always writing for herself as a way to try to figure out how she really felt.

Those blank pages were there for her when she was struck by autoimmune encephalitis in 2009. Though she was far too impaired to write during her month-long hospital stay, one of her earliest memories from her recovery was cracking open the spine of a leather-bound notebook and started to write. The early entries are simple and sometimes dull - She wrote about the weather, boredom, and her unfamiliar new body that had been altered by the steroid treatments. She wasn't yet capable of asking the hard questions – “How was I so easily able to so lose my grip on reality? Who am I after encephalitis? How have I changed? Is this change permanent? Will I ever be the same?”

Then came the chance to make sense of it all on a grand scale. she started writing *Brain on Fire* about a year after her diagnosis, still in the midst of her recovery (though she didn't want to accept this at the time). Suddenly she was face-to-face with those difficult questions. Cahalan learned about all the shocking ways that she had behaved when she was sick, interviewed friends and family about that lost time to recreate it, and gained a greater appreciation for the kind of hell my caregivers went through to get her a diagnosis. she felt gratitude, a little bit of embarrassment, and a touch of sympathy for herself. Writing about that time through the eyes of others allowed her to be kind to herself in ways she would never have allowed had she not put pen to paper.

Susannah Cahalan thought she was done writing about the time when *Brain on Fire* came out. But so many questions remained. she became obsessed with how easily she lost her grip on reality, her very self. And then there

were the stories of others, those who had similar experiences to her own, those who faced misdiagnosis, mistreatment, who were marginalised or ignored because their symptoms were emotional or psychiatric. she needed to ask other questions: “Why do we distinguish between the brain and the mind? Is there really a stark difference between the physical and the mental? What is mental illness anyway?”

Out of these questions came her second book, *The Great Pretender*, which follows modern medicine’s attempts to answer those questions through the story of one charismatic Stanford psychologist named David Rosenhan. He and seven other volunteers went undercover in psychiatric hospitals across the United States to ask the same question that she had been obsessed with: “If sanity and insanity exist, how shall we know them?”

She followed this thread for six years, which morphed from an interest to an obsession to an investigation, but along the way the page was there for her, giving her an opportunity to make sense of those questions that had haunted Cahalan after surviving encephalitis. Now she has an appreciation not only for what she went through, but also for her illnesses’ place in the modern history of medicine. She was doubly aware of how lucky she was and how far she has yet to go. And she was so grateful for this newfound insight.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness

It's hard to imagine a scenario more nightmarish, but for Cahalan the worst was yet to come. In 2009, the *New York Post* reporter, then 24, was hospitalized after — there's really no other way to put it — losing her mind. In addition to the violent seizures, she was wracked by terrifying hallucinations, intense mood swings, insomnia and fierce paranoia. Cahalan spent a month in the hospital, barely recognizable to her friends and family, before doctors diagnosed her with a rare autoimmune disorder. "Her brain is on fire," one doctor tells her family. "Her brain is under attack by her own body."

It's indisputable that Cahalan is a gifted reporter, and *Brain on Fire* is a stunningly brave book. But even more than that, she's a naturally talented prose stylist — whip-smart but always unpretentious — and it's nearly impossible to stop reading her, even in the book's most painful passages. Reflecting on finding a piece of jewelry she'd lost during her illness, she writes, "Sometimes, just when we need them, life wraps metaphors up in little bows for us. When you think all is lost, the things you need the most return unexpectedly." - "Brain on Fire' Details An Out-of-Mind Experience by Michael Schaub:

A physiological explanation is the pot of gold everyone is searching for, from health providers to drug companies; finding it makes everything easier, and frequently more lucrative. Why embark on the uncertain business of talking therapy, for example, when you can prescribe some pills? Stories like Cahalan's provide a wild hope – Najjar was engulfed with requests for help after she wrote about her case – and it is true that there is a growing group of autoimmune diseases being discovered that directly affect the brain, and must be chased as aggressively as possible.

It was not an easy road, and relapse is possible at any time, but Cahalan eventually recovered. Her boyfriend stood by her, her relationships with her parents (after a distinctly rocky period in her mother's case) deepened and matured, and her colleagues took her back with open arms. All this, too, was

extraordinary, unusual luck. Except that now she knows it for what it is. – (Aida Edemariam).

A page-turner, *Brain on Fire* is a true story that reads like fiction. Although the level of medical detail Cahalan provides is limited, she manages to bring this neurological disorder to life. The book walks the line between heart-warming personal story and medical thriller and will appeal to science and biography fans alike. – (Samantha Murphy).

Suppose you thought that you were losing your identity—changing almost overnight and doing things you could not explain? This inexplicable scenario helps launch *Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness*, in which Susannah Cahalan chronicles her experience with the rare disorder anti-NMDA-receptor encephalitis. The onset of this newly identified entity results from the production of antibodies against the N-methyl-D-aspartate (NMDA). The NMDA receptor regulates synaptic plasticity in the brain and is critical for learning and memory. The syndrome evolves over days to weeks and presents as a psychosis similar to that seen in schizophrenia. Cahalan, who suffered from seizures and other neurologic symptoms, creates a medical detective story from a patient's perspective as she captivantly describes her descent into madness. The result is entertaining reading that gets us to think about the biological origins of our own personalities. After reading Cahalan's riveting account, neuroscientists may wonder about the specific molecules that influence memory and personality, while physicians may contemplate where the next new disease will arise. To hell and Back, by (David Lynch).

Orange Is The New Black: My Time In A Women's Prison :

She is less successful at talking about herself. Occasionally, she opens up, and these moments are powerful. But, a public relations executive by trade, Kerman is often frustratingly careful, polite. She paints nearly everyone pretty rosily and without much nuance. Everyone, that is, except "The Fed." Interwoven with the women's stories are facts about the War on Drugs, with which Kerman makes no effort to hide her anger and bafflement. While acknowledging her privileged background, Kerman never fully dispels the reader's discomfort when

she more or less conflates her own case with those of the majority of the women around her. Drug use has wreaked havoc on so many of their lives, a fact that ultimately makes Kerman aware of “the people who suffered because of what people like me had done.” Though certain aspects of her own story never quite seem resolved, her sympathetic portraits of these people stay with you long after the book is through. – (J. Courtney Sullivan).

A bit of this moral ambiguity would have helped Kerman’s memoir a whole lot. In the final few chapters, she has a great opportunity to explore potential feelings of conflict as she finds herself stuck in a less-cushy prison with her ex-girlfriend Nora while she is awaiting trial. Kerman suspects that Nora ratted on her—and that’s why she’s been locked up. These chapters are rushed, though. There is a glimpse of realness when Kerman admits that she “had overwhelming flashes of hostility” toward Nora, but ultimately she concludes: “Regardless of whether she was honest with me, I wanted to forgive her. ... If I could forgive, it meant I was a strong, good person. ... And it gave me the simple but powerful satisfaction of extending a kindness to another person in a tough spot.” – (Jessica Grose).

Kerman begins to so highly value her fellow inmates that when any one of them is released, it becomes more a time of sorrow and regret than elation. This reminds this reviewer of another flaw with the editing of *Orange*. Each time that Kerman writes of the departure of another inmate, the reader is reminded that the departing inmate’s prison effects will be distributed to those left behind. This point is raised too many times, although we see that Kerman looks forward to giving away her own prison garb and possessions when she leaves.

In the end, a painful tale of incarceration winds up as a positive story of self-acceptance. Kerman cannot change what she did as a reckless youth—one without the best of judgment— seeking excitement. But in prison she comes to see that she can and will value her life from this point forward. Upon her release, she runs toward the future, “No one can stop me.” – (Joseph Arellano).

"Kerman's account radiates warmly from her skillful depiction of the personalities she befriended in prison Kerman's ordeal indeed proved life altering." - Publishers Weekly.

"I loved this book, to a depth and degree that caught me by surprise. Of course it's a compelling insider's account of life in a women's federal prison, and of course it's a behind-the-scenes look at America's war on drugs, and of course it's a story rich with humor, pathos and redemption: All of that was to be expected. What I did not expect from this memoir was the affection, compassion, and even reverence that Piper Kerman demonstrates for all the women she encountered while she was locked away in jail. That was the surprising twist: that behind the bars of women's prisons grow extraordinary friendships, ad hoc families, and delicate communities. In the end, this book is not just a tale of prisons, drugs, crime, or justice; it is, simply put, a beautifully told story about how incredible women can be, and I will never forget it." - Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *eat, pray and love*.

"I can't stop thinking about this marvelous book, about the generous and lovely women with whom Piper Kerman served her time. I never expected to pick up a memoir about prison and find myself immersed in a story of grace, of friendship, of loyalty and love. I have never read anything like this book, and I will read and reread it again and again." - Ayelet Waldman, author of *Bad Mother and Daughter's Keeper*.

CHAPTER – II

THEMATICAL ANALYSIS

Piper Kerman's Orange Is The New Black: My Time In A Women's Prison:

Piper Kerman's *Orange Is the New Black* was published in 2010. It is a memoir that chronicles her time in prison. The book starts with Piper committing a crime, then goes through the process of sentencing and her time in Danbury Prison. It also shows how she changed as a person while in prison.

Orange Is the New Black, a memoir by Piper Kerman, tells the story of her time spent in prison. It covers three parts: before she went to jail, when she was with Nora and Larry (fictional characters based on Cleary Wolters and Larry Smith), and after being released from prison. The structure of the book mirrors the themes of injustice within US prisons as well as racial divides between inmates. The book doesn't use flashbacks; instead it chronicles events without them. And true to memoir style, Kerman writes from her perspective about what happened during those times in prison. She provides detailed descriptions that are critical of how prisoners are treated while incarcerated but also offers an honest account of life behind bars for herself and other inmates at Danbury Federal Prison Camp.

The book is about the friendships that Kerman makes while in Danbury. She also reflects on her experience there, as well as other inmates' experiences. The author points out how different her imprisonment was from others'. For example, she had a good education and came from a supportive family; these things made it easier for her to read books to pass the time and have contact with people outside of prison. However, most prisoners come from poor families with little support outside of prison. They won't have homes or jobs when they leave Danbury. The author has empathy for these women because she knows what's going to happen after their release.

The memoir is about the author's experience in prison. She describes what it was like to be an inmate, including jobs they had, food they ate, and friendships they made. Additionally, she discusses how being in prison changed her character by making her more empathetic towards others. In the beginning of the story,

Kerman is a rebellious person who doesn't want to conform to traditional norms; however after going through some difficulties while incarcerated she becomes more open-minded and appreciative of other people's help.

Life before prison

Kerman opens the memoir by talking about a specific event that happened when she was 24. She was at an airport in Brussels retrieving money from baggage claim for her girlfriend, Nora. However, before this moment, Kerman recalls how she recently graduated from Smith College with a theatre degree and felt like the black sheep of her family because they were all doctors or lawyers or teachers.

"I was a well-educated young lady from Boston with a thirst for bohemian counterculture and no clear plan. But I had no idea what to do with all my pent-up longing for adventure, or how to make my eagerness to take risks productive. No scientific bent was evident in my thinking—what I valued was artistry and effort and emotion." (OITNB – 5).

She has a thirst for the bohemian lifestyle and no clear plan. This attracts her to Nora, an older woman with money who is adventurous and travels frequently because she runs money for Alaji, an African drug lord. She describes her life as dangerous but exciting. Kerman begins to want that kind of life after spending time with Nora and decides to move away from Northampton to San Francisco with Lisa, a friend of hers. Before she leaves however, Nora asks Kerman if she will go on business trip in Indonesia with her; since Kerman wants adventure, she agrees.

"Memoirs are often about difficult things in a person's life. In my situation, my story starts with about the stupidest, most immoral thing I've ever done, one with terrible consequences." (OITNB – Piper Kerman).

Nora Kerman, a drug mule for Alaji, explains that she's going to Paris for her new magazine job and then will go to Bali. While in Bali, Nora is supposed to wire money from her bank account into Kerman's account as payment for the drugs.

However, there are problems with this plan because of delays in the money transfers and an extra \$10k fee added by Nora's boss. In order to get around these issues and make sure she gets paid, Kerman spends time exploring Paris before flying out again; meanwhile Nora handles most of the business side of things. Occasionally though, when it comes time to collect on one of their deals together (i.e., pick up a cash transfer), Kerman does so but doesn't realize that what they're doing is illegal until later on down the road when she learns about all the other people involved in their operation who have been arrested or killed over it already.

"How important it is to stay true to yourself even in the midst of an adventure or experiment." "In my travels I had encountered all kinds of people whose dignity seemed to have a price -- widely variable -- and I thought that next time I had better set my price higher than anyone would pay." (web site)

When Nora and Kerman are on a high rock ledge, Nora dares her to jump into the water below. Kerman does so, and Nora admits that she never would have jumped. Later in the story, they travel together for business purposes but soon become bored with one another. After Nora had to leave Kerman in Germany, she tells her that she must help smuggle drugs. She agrees because it is too late for her and there isn't anything else for her to do.

It all changed in an instant

Kerman finds San Francisco to be a welcome refuge from her former life. She constantly thinks back to that old life and vows never to return again. She gets two jobs and dates around but doesn't commit. Kerman keeps this entire story a secret except for a close circle of friends.

"After spending months in the underworld, it took a while to get used to normal life. I had been living on room service, exoticism, and anxiety for a long time." (OITNB – 16).

Eventually, Kerman meets a man named Larry. They become best friends and she moves with him to New York. However, one day two officers appear at her door and say that she's been indicted for money laundering and drug

trafficking. She freaks out but goes to Larry's office for support. He says everything will be okay, which surprises her because he is usually so calm about things. The lawyer tells Kerman that she can plead guilty and receive a shorter sentence, or she can take her chances in court.

"Every human being makes mistakes and does things they're not proud of. They can be every day, or they can be catastrophic. And the unfortunate truth of being human is that we all have moments of indifference to other people's suffering. To me, that's the central thing that allows crime to happen: indifference to other people's suffering. If you're stealing from someone, if you're hurting them physically, if you're selling them a product that you know will hurt them—the thing that allows a person to do that is that they somehow convince themselves that that's not relevant to them. We all do things that we're not proud of, even though they might not have as terrible consequences." -(Piper Kerman).

However, if she loses the trial and is found guilty, then she will be sentenced to the maximum amount of time allowed by law. She decides to plead guilty because it's safer than going through with a trial. After six years of waiting for a verdict on her case, Kerman gets 15 months in prison as punishment for smuggling drugs across international borders. Her fiancé vows to stay with her throughout this difficult time so they can get married when he gets out of college at Berkeley.

"Your Honor, more than a decade ago I made bad decisions, on both a practical and a moral level. I acted selfishly, without regard for others, I knowingly broke the law, I lied to my loving family, and I distanced myself from my true friends.

I'm prepared to face the consequences of my action, and accept whatever punishment the court decides upon. I am truly sorry for all the harm I have caused to others and I know the court will deal fairly with me." (OITNB – 32).

Number: #11187-424

Larry dropped Kerman off at the prison. "It had been more than a decade since I had committed my crime", she says. She decided to be brave and not

foolhardy or in love with risk and danger. It was time for her to prove that she wasn't terrified of going into the prison. A female guard brings Piper to a holding cell and makes her strip naked while she searches her. Afterwards, Piper receives an ID card with her prisoner identification number. She's then ushered in to see Mr. Butorsky, who will be the counselor for the prison camp where she'll live for the next year or so. He warns that she must watch out for other inmates because they can get violent if they don't like you and cause trouble for you when guards aren't looking.

"The ID card was red, with a bar code and the legend 'U.S. Department of Justice Federal Bureau of Prisons – INMATES.' In addition to the unflattering photo, it also bore my new registration number in large numerals: 11187-424. The last three numbers indicated my sentencing district – northern Illinois. The first five numbers were unique to me, MY NEW IDENTITY." (OITNB – 41)

Kerman is shown to her room, which she'll share with other inmates. She receives the basic necessities for living. Eventually, once she's more settled in and has made friends, she'll move into a dorm that houses two inmates only. A new inmate is allowed to make a phone call. While on the phone, she feels better about her situation and begins to understand the rules of prison life. She quickly learns that there are many unwritten rules that she must follow or risk being put in solitary confinement. In order to avoid breaking any of those rules, she tries not to get involved with anyone else in prison as much as possible. White women in prison try to help Piper Kerman feel more comfortable.

"Two hundred women, no phones, no washing machines, no hair dryers--it was like *Lord of the flies* on estrogen. - (Piper Kerman, *Orange Is the New Black*).

Orange is the New Black:

In the orientation meeting, a new inmate named Kerman meets Janet from Brooklyn. They get along well and like each other's company. The representatives from different departments in the prison also speak to them about their jobs and

how things work there. Warden Kuma Deboo reassures everyone that if anyone is harassing or hurting them, they should come to her directly. However, the inmates think this is just a joke because it would always be hard for an inmate to prove something against a guard without any witnesses present or evidence of wrongdoing.

“Prison is quite literally a ghetto in the most classic sense of the word, a place where the U.S. government now puts not only the dangerous but also the inconvenient—people who are mentally ill, people who are addicts, people who are poor and uneducated and unskilled. Meanwhile the ghetto in the outside world is a prison as well, and a much more difficult one to escape from than this correctional compound. In fact, there is basically a revolving door between our urban and rural ghettos and the formal ghetto of our prison system.” (web site)

Kerman is an inmate at a correctional facility. She can't have a job, go to GED classes, or eat with the other inmates until everyone else has had their meals. The first weekend, she gets a visit from Larry and her mom visits the next day. They talk for five hours each time. Afterwards, as is the rule after an inmate has a visit, Kerman must pull her pants down and squat to cough in order to make sure there's no contraband hidden in her body or clothes. Some women are so embarrassed by this that they avoid visits altogether. Kerman tries to adjust to her surroundings in prison, but the experience is difficult. She loves books and reads as much as she can. But because of this, people think that she's weird. However, when Kerman shares her books with other prisoners, they become friends and it helps them get through their time together in jail.

“Eyeing the bookshelf crammed with James Patterson, V. C. Andrews, and romance novels, I finally found an old paperback copy of *Pride and Prejudice* and retried to my bunk – on top of the covers, of course. I feel gratefully into the much more familiar world of Hanoverian England.” (OITNB – 57).

The food in prison is less than desirable, so Kerman mostly eats vegetables from the salad bar. She first meets Pop at the dining hall where she works. Pop is an older woman, nearing the end of her sentence and respected throughout the

prison. When they first meet, Kerman says something bad about the food which upsets Pop but they become friends anyway. The author quickly realized that racism was present in the camp. Different dormitories were named after racial stereotypes: Suburbs, Ghetto and Spanish Harlem.

Down the rabbit hole

After two weeks, Kerman has learned how to clean the prison well. She is getting good at it because she knows that if her room passes inspection, then she will be allowed to eat first. A new woman comes into their room and introduces herself as a Hispanic woman who came from New York City. However, another prisoner corrects her and says that they are Spanish women in prison; after all, they call themselves Spanish mamis.

Finally, Kerman receives an assigned cube in B Dorm. She will share it with Natalie who is a respected prisoner nearing the end of her sentence. Although Kerman is excited to have her own space, she notes that the dorms are large and confusing because they contain cubicles for prisoners. Each cubicle has two beds, two lockers, and a ladder.

“On the other hand, some people were way too comfortable in prison. They seemed to have forgotten the world that exists on the outside. You try to adjust and acclimate, yet remain ready to go home every single day. It’s not easy to do. The truth is, the prison and its residents fill your thoughts, and it’s hard to remember what it’s like to be free, even after a few short months.” (Piper Kerman – OITNB).

Valentine’s Day is a special day for couples. Inmates can buy items from the commissary to show their love and appreciation for each other. The author, Piper Kerman, really wants to buy a radio that costs \$42.90 but it’s out of stock so she doesn’t have anything to listen to while exercising in her cell or on the yard during recreation time.

There are two bathrooms at B Dorm, but one is much more disgusting than the other; Kerman calls this one “Hell-mouth” because of the maggots that would

appear in it during warm weather. As she spends time there, she tries to get into a routine: She reads all her books and stays out of the TV rooms. However, as soon as she gets bored with that routine, she applies for a job. While she wants to be part of Puppies Behind Bars program (which allows inmates to live with and train puppies), her sentence is too short for that program.

Job in electric shop

Kerman gets a job in the electric shop. She's disappointed not to be tutoring, but she's thankful to work with Little Janet. On her first day, she meets Mr. DeSimon and he quickly becomes an unlikable guy because of his rules about solitary confinement for anyone who breaks any rules. He tells Kerman that everyone should read an introductory packet and make sure the other women do too.

"I'm almost done here, Kerman. Almost twenty years I've been at this. Things have changed people at the top have different ideas about how to things. 'Course they have no idea what really goes on here with these people."(OITNB – 114).

After a week, the women were dropped off at a building and left in the care of Mr. DeSimon. They were worried that they would get into trouble because he had neglected to drop them off earlier. The women stood still until he returned an hour later, and then they worked on cleaning the pump house as well as the root cellar for another week:

"The root cellar contained equipment from all of the shops".

Another time, Kerman is working with the other inmates on a construction project. They are painting and building things for the prison guards. It was strange to go into their homes and see their families' photos and pets. Kerman accidentally takes something from one of the guard's home, which would be fitting punishment if she were caught: solitary confinement. She throws it in a dumpster, so nothing ever comes of it. However, she doesn't like Levy. Prison doesn't work that way, though. When Piper accidentally takes a screwdriver from the work site, she's

terrified that she's going to be caught in possessing a deadly weapon. She even makes thinly veiled threats to her fellow inmates who know she has the screwdriver, like when she says,

"I don't know what I'm going to do, but you don't know a thing about this, understand?" (6.52). Yup the stakes are high when it comes to this handy little tool.

Her fellow inmates don't take her theft as seriously as she does, mainly because *they're* not the ones holding the screwdriver. But Piper's prison mentality takes over. She does take this seriously, and she chucks the deadly weapon into a dumpster, where thankfully, no one finds it.

DeSimon leaves the inmates alone on many occasions to watch training videos, but they figure out how to rig the TV to watch Jerry Springer. Joyce will soon be released from prison and asks Kerman if she'll color her hair for her. To Kerman's surprise, there is a beauty salon in prison that's run-down. Prison is an odd place with strange dynamics:

Kerman is about to release her friend Nina from prison. She's also going to be released into a drug rehabilitation program, and she asks Kerman if she'll take her place as Pop's bunkmate. Kerman declines because she doesn't want to abandon Natalie, who has become like family. However, Kerman treads carefully so that the other inmates don't misinterpret her motives for staying in B Dorm: "I didn't want anyone to think I was racist—although nobody else in the Camp seemed to have any compunction about expressing broad generalizations."

Multicultural

Kerman doesn't consider herself religious, and she's annoyed by people who are too loud about their faith. She details the "multicultural" opportunities for religion at Danbury:

"I found the religious prostrations of my saber-rattling born-again neighbors tedious. Some of the faithful had a distinct aspect of roostering, loudly proclaiming that they were going to pay on any number of topics, how God was

walking beside them through their incarceration, how Jesus loved sinners, and so on.” (OITNB – 119, 120).

Pop, the chef in the prison, makes a delicious Easter dinner for everyone. Shortly after that, Nina leaves to go to rehab. Kerman misses her and gets closer with Pop (Nina’s former best friend). Pop is an intimidating woman who has had a crazy life on the outside. She came to America when she was 3 years old and married a Russian gangster at 18.

“The menu: baked chicken and cabbage with astonishing dumplings, so dense you could have used them as weapons; mustardy devilled eggs; and real vegetables on the salad bird’s nest confection – deep-fried tortilla cupping a mound of pudding, covered with lush green- dyed coconut ‘grass’ strewn with jelly bean ‘eggs’ and a gaily colored marshmallow Peep perched on top. I just stared at it, unable to believe my eyes, while everyone around me ate enthusiastically. I didn’t want to eat this incredible diorama. I wanted to shellac it and save it forever.” (OITNB – 121).

Although the prison forces the inmates to wear unflattering uniforms, they find ways to feel more feminine and beautiful. They do this by doing things like wearing makeup or dressing up in a nice outfit. The women often get together and help each other with their beauty routines, such as putting on makeup or fixing someone’s hair.

“Hair was at least as important as unis. This was not an issue for a blond, straight-haired gal like me, but for the black and Spanish women, it was the source of endless preoccupation and countless woman-hours.”

Kerman is surprised that she has regular visitors on the weekends. She figures that some of the other inmates are not as lucky because they have effectively cut themselves off from society. They don’t have children, parents or friends to visit them. Finn replaces Butorsky and Kerman worries he’ll forget about her visitor’s list, but Finn reassures her by saying he doesn’t care how many people she has on her list; he’ll add all of them for her if it will make her happy.

Mother and daughter

Mother's Day is a special occasion in Danbury because "about eighty percent of the women in US prisons have children." Many of these inmates have formed mother-daughter relationships with other prisoners. They provide advice, attention, food, commissary loans and discipline to each other. Kerman's prison family centers around Pop and Nina who are like sisters to her.

"If one of the young ones was misbehaving, she might get directed by another irritated prisoner, 'Go talk to your mama and work your shit out!' Or if the kid was really out of control with her mouth or her radio or whatever, the mama might get the request, 'You need to talk to your daughter, 'cause is she don't get some act-right, I'ma knock her out!'" (OITNB – 149).

When Piper looks around at the inmates, it's hard to believe that they've done something bad enough to land them in prison. One inmate is pregnant and goes into labor. While she delivers the baby in the prison hospital, the guards immediately return her to Danbury without her baby. Piper sees her mother on Mother's Day, which is usually a very busy day for visiting hours because so many children visit their mothers. A prisoner named Kerman fixes a fellow inmate's fan, and the word spreads. Soon, women are coming to him with broken radios and fans so that he can fix them.

"Even with this disaster I had dragged us all into, she was still proud to be my mother. It occurred to me that I had never seen my mother defeated, even when life presented difficulties and disappointments. I hoped that our resemblance extended beyond our blue eyes." — (Piper Kerman, *Orange Is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison*).

Kerman finally gets her headset radio. She listens to a mix of '90s music while she runs and relives the songs that were popular when she was young, which helps pass the time more quickly. At work, DeSimon brings the women to practice using the lift. Most of them are too scared to go all the way up, but Kerman volunteers. The other women call her crazy and joke around about it, but she enjoys being able to see more from up high. In the book *Orange is the New Black*,

Piper Kerman describes how she learned new skills in prison. She takes yoga classes with Camila and Sister Platte, who are both Colombian and Lebanese Muslim women.

“In the federal system alone there were 90,000 prisoners locked up for drug offenses, compared with about 40,000 for violent crimes. A federal prisoner costs at least \$30,000 a year to incarcerate, and females actually cost more.” — (Piper Kerman, *Orange Is the New Black*).

During this time, authorities arrest Martha Stewart. Many women hoped that she would be imprisoned in their facility because they admired her work ethic and thought she could teach them how to live a better life. However, Danbury has closed its doors to new prisoners; the rumor is that it doesn't want Stewart there because of potential public scrutiny into the prison's operations. Before Danbury stops admitting new inmates, three political activists join the prison: pacifists who were arrested for protesting against wars and other military actions. One of them gets sent to solitary confinement after arguing with an officer about unfair treatment by officers at the facility and all the inmates are outraged by this decision.

Ralph Kramden and the Marlboro Man

Kerman adjusted to life in Danbury and found comfort in her routines. Kerman was waiting for Mr. DeSimon but he never showed up, so a truck pulled up beside her with Mr. Thomas driving it and Alicia sitting beside him. He asked Kerman if she wanted work, and she said yes and got into the truck. They drove deep into the woods where Kerman marveled at nature's beauty:

Kerman loves water, swimming, and sunbathing. She paints picnic tables along with the other women and is grateful to Mr. Thomas for bringing her here. In prison, she daydreams about getting back to the lake.

"I could almost feel the water swirling in currents around my body, and my hair rising like a halo around my head." (OITNB – 191).

In the prison, Piper Kerman is still trying to figure out where she stands with her boss. He makes sexual comments about her and harasses her. Eventually, she complains to his boss and gets a new job in construction. She's now working alongside Allie B., who has become one of her best friends, as well as Pennsatucky, another friend of hers. A new inmate named Pompom also comes into their dormitory and turns out to be lazy.

"Mr DeSimon referred to these materials, which I had to grease to pull through pipes, as horse genitalia, which I found very offensive. He did not use the word 'genitalia,' but rather a vulgarity." (OITNB – 196).

Being naked

Kerman likes her coworker Allie B., who is a drug addict. Kerman worries about what will happen to addicts like Allie after they leave prison. She fears that they'll return to the same things that led them there in the first place. A new inmate named Vanessa Robinson arrives at their camp, and she's different from all of the other inmates because she is transsexual (a man-to-woman). Although she's a diva, Vanessa also has an intelligent side, and Kerman quickly develops a friendship with her.

“A lengthy term of community service working with addicts on the outside would probably have driven the same truth home and been a hell of a lot more productive for the community. But our current criminal justice system has no provision for restorative justice, in which an offender confronts the damage they have done and tries to make it right to the people they have harmed.” (OITNB – 205).

Children’s Day is important to the women at Danbury because it allows them to spend time with their children. The prison allowed many activities for this day, including face painting and piñatas. It was a fun day that resembled a family outing in the park. Kerman volunteered to do the face painting, and she enjoyed watching mothers and children reunite. However, when Children’s Day ended, she felt sad as they were separated again. Kerman decides to get a gynaecological exam, even though most women don’t. She thinks that it’s important for her health and that of other women, but the experience is traumatic for her: she has to undress in front of a cold doctor who makes her cover herself with a paper sheet.

“I was left clutching that paper sheet around me, feeling just like this prison system wanted me to – utterly powerless, vulnerable, alone.” (OITNB – 218).

Luckily for Kerman, the work in the electrical shop is more appealing than working with prisoners. Furthermore, she finds her boss pleasant and feels physically stronger after years spent doing physical labor. Another day at work she goes to the bathroom when it’s empty to get a moment of privacy for herself by getting nude so that she can look at herself in the mirror:

After being in jail for five years, the author could see that prison had changed her. She looked more like her younger self than she did before.

Thirty-five and still alive

The author explains how she copes with the stress of imprisonment by focusing on small pleasures, such as listening to other inmate’s stories and eating homemade food. She also uses this time to change her worldview for the better. The prison is banning cigarettes, which has created an atmosphere of chaos.

However, many inmates have left because of this ban. She goes to a job fair at the prison that seems like it's going well but isn't really helping anyone get back into society after they're released from prison.

"According to CDC, cigarettes kill over 435,000 people a year in United States. Most of us in annual Danbury were locked away for trading in illegal drugs." (OITNB – 221).

The inmates gather at the prison for a session on how to dress professionally. Dress for Success, a nonprofit organization, is providing clothes and helps women find business-appropriate outfits. The main speaker shows four different outfits that are appropriate for jobs and explains why each outfit is best suited for the job. During a Q&A session, women ask about finding jobs and receiving job training. One panelist suggests they look on the computer to find jobs, which flabbergasts them because they don't have computers in prison. This makes Kerman realize that those at the top are out of touch with what's going on in prisons.

Danbury is mentioned in the news. Martha Stewart's time at a different female prison, Camp, has caused people to be interested in Danbury. A local journalist interviews Piper about her experience there and she lies about it, saying that it was like a vacation. The inmates are upset with Piper because they thought this could have been an opportunity for change but now think that nothing will happen. However, Kerman understood why she lied; she didn't want to admit that she was placed in a ghetto just like the one from Poland.

She is going to be free woman:

The author of Orange is the New Black describes her friendship with another inmate, Janet. She says that she had many friends in prison and people were always offering to feed her because they felt sorry for her. However, she remained fit by working hard and doing yoga. Yoga Janet left soon after Kerman arrived at Litchfield Penitentiary, but Kerman was still thankful for their time together and did yoga to a Rodney Lee VHS tape Yoga Janet's favorite.

“I was going to lose Yoga Janet very soon. She was going to be a free woman, so I’d do Yoga with her every chance I got, trying to listen carefully and follow her guidance on my postures.” (OITNB – 238).

Pennsatucky asks Kerman to write a letter for her so she can give it to the judge. She wants to convince the judge that she is not a bad person, and that she really wants another chance at life. Kerman agrees and writes a heartfelt letter about how Pennsatucky longs to be a good mother and turn her life around, and about how “cocaine had taken away all the things that were most important to her, had hurt her health, her judgment, her most important relationships, and wiped out years of her youth”. Pennsatucky is thankful for this opportunity because everything in the letter is true.

Some kind of way

Kerman’s father calls to say that her grandmother isn’t doing well. She wants to get a furlough so she can go to the funeral, but it’s unlikely because there aren’t many opportunities for prisoners to get furloughs. Halloween comes around and Kerman’s friends are all in the mood for some fun. However, she is feeling down because her grandma isn’t doing well. She doesn’t join them because it would be an admission that the government has succeeded in bringing her ‘lower than my knees on flat on my face’.

“I pleaded with my father on the pay phone – she would be fine, she would get better, she would be there when I came home. He didn’t argue back, just said, ‘Write her’.” (OITNB – 256).

While most people are put off by religious discussions, Kerman is not. She has a friend named Gisela who’s very calm and peaceful, which she attributes to God.

To deal with the pain of missing her grandma, Kerman begins doing yoga more frequently. To add to this pain, her good friend Little Janet receives immediate release from her lengthy sentence; Kerman is happy for her but sad to lose a friend. She realizes that while she grew up believing she is an Episcopalian,

prison has changed who she is: “I wasn’t so good with chickenshit rules,” but at least now I know I’m capable of helping other people.

Good time:

The author’s release date is coming up soon, and she realizes that she will only have to serve thirteen months of her fifteen-month sentence. She also learns that the government wants to transfer her to Chicago for a job as a witness against someone else in the case. The author is upset because she doesn’t want to leave Danbury, where she has grown accustomed to life after prison. To make things worse, the author receives a letter from another prisoner who tells how hard it was for her on the outside after being released from prison; now homeless with no food and no family support are just some of her problems.

Larry visits Kerman frequently and they talk about her upcoming release. However, he is unsure whether or not she will be transferred to Chicago. Christmas comes around and the Camp wins a Christmas decorating competition because of Larry’s article in the New York Times that describes their unconventional relationship.

Diesel Therapy:

The plane is filled with prisoners. The author, Piper Kerman, feels uneasy being handcuffed next to them but then thankful that everyone else on the plane is locked up too. She lands in Oklahoma City at a maximum security facility and realizes Danbury was like a spa compared to this place; she’s grateful for her friend Jae who helps pass the time.

One day at lunch, Piper sees Nora. She’s afraid of what she might feel seeing her old friend again. Along with these feelings, Kerman also feels bored because there isn’t much to do in Oklahoma City except for smoking cigarettes and taking other people’s prescription medicine.

Kerman is left alone in her cell. She does yoga to keep herself calm and tries to look outside the small window of her cell. A few days later, she’s shipped out to Chicago with a couple other inmates, who are also unhappy about being

forced together on the plane ride there. The facility they're sent to resembles a psychiatric hospital:

Kerman is in the prison cafeteria, sitting next to Nora and Hester. She realizes that she has a lot in common with them and feels connected to them. Kerman thinks about how they're all there for different reasons but are treated the same way by the justice system.

The prison is nothing like Danbury, where there was a sense of solidarity among the inmates. There wasn't any camaraderie or respect for each other's sanity-saving routines and order. The women were on medication to keep them from killing themselves (or their neighbors).

It Can Always Get Worse:

The author notes how women in prison are treated and how they're given no opportunities to get out of the situation. They have little food, long lines for breakfast, and most look depressed. The author also thinks about her past:

In the Chicago MCC, Piper Kerman is miserable because it's like a prison in all of the worst ways. She misses her friends from Danbury and she has a love/hate relationship with Nora. They still remain civil to each other so they can survive their new surroundings: The only time that Kerman gets relief from the MCC is when she goes to court as a witness for the prosecution. She explains that she'll be going back to jail after lunch, but then everything seems better when Larry comes to visit her. Finally, there's also roof time where women can get fresh air at least once every day.

"Everyone wants to go back in time sometimes. To go back to the moment when everything was still possible, before they made a wrong turn, so that they could go on the right path. But it's not possible. All we can do is make the most of right now". – (Healy)

The trial for Jonathan Bibby begins. He's the "guy who taught Nora how to smuggle drugs way back when," but Piper has never met him before and isn't

much help during the trial. The court finds him guilty, and he's sent back to his cell at Litchfield.

Kerman recalls her last week in prison as the hardest. She reminisces about Danbury and all of the friends that she made there. If she had been released while at Danbury, her friends would have thrown a party for her and let her say goodbye to everyone before leaving. When Kerman is finally released from MCC (Maryland Correctional Center), there's no fanfare; she simply walks out of the building with Larry Bloom, who was waiting outside for her. The memoir ends with: "No one could stop me".

SUSANNAH CAHALAN'S BRAIN ON FIRE: MY MONTH OF MADNESS:

Brain on Fire is about the dramatic turn of events surrounding Susannah Cahalan and her unusual medical diagnosis. Cahalan was on the verge of great happiness and success in her life. She was establishing a serious relationship with a nice guy. Also, she began a rewarding career at a well-regarded newspaper publication in New York.

Yet at the young age of twenty-four, her life got flipped upside down when she learned she has a rare autoimmune disorder affecting her brain functioning. It started when she woke up in a hospital bed with no memory of how she got there. She was strapped to the bed without the ability to move or say anything. This was the result of problems with anti-NMDA receptor encephalitis, which caused her to have violent, psychotic episodes the previous month.

Before being correctly diagnosed, Cahalan was evaluated by multiple doctors who developed unhelpful theories about her failing health. Her autoimmune disease caused part of her brain to become inflamed, which inspired the title of this book. She eventually got the medical help she needed to recover and manage her disease, serving as an inspiration for many people.

All Began with a Bug Bite:

The book begins with Susannah relating a hallucination from the hospital. She wakes up to find that she's restrained. A "purple lady" tries to soothe Susannah, but Susannah becomes angry and paranoid. She begins to pull wires off of her head and notices an orange band on her wrist that says, "FLIGHT RISK."

"One morning, I'd woken up to find red dots on the main purplish-blue vein running down my left arm. It was early 2009, and New York City was awash in bedbug scares: they infested offices, clothing stores, movie theaters, and park benches. Through I wasn't naturally a worrier, my dreams had been occupied for two night straight by finger-long bedbugs." (BOF – 3).

Susannah then goes back to when her illness began. She wakes one morning to find bites on her arm, which she attributes to bedbugs. The next day at work, she tries to talk to her friend Angela about her bites, but is interrupted when her phone rings.

The Migraine, The Pitch Meeting:

Susannah is horrified when she hears Steve, the Sunday editor, on the phone—she forgot about her weekly meeting to pitch stories. Later, Susannah throws away all her saved articles that she wrote to prepare for the exterminator.

"There are times when you feel like the best in the business, and other times when you're certain that you're a complete and total hack and should start looking for an office job. But in the end, the ups and downs even out. So why was everything in such upheaval for me? It had been weeks since I felt comfortable in my own journalist skin, and that frightened me." (BOF – 24).

Several days later, Susannah is suddenly gripped with overwhelming jealousy and decides to read her boyfriend Stephen's emails.

"I was suddenly, unexpectedly, hit with one overpowering thought:

Read his e-mail.

This irrational jealousy was wholly like me; I had never even been tempted to intellectually trespass like this. But without really considering what I was doing, I opened up his MacBook and began to scroll down his inbox.” (BOF – 11).

She spends two hours going through emails and his dresser, but thinks that something is wrong with her if she's doing this. Then her left hand goes numb, which she finds just as distressing as her paranoia.

Mono in My Twenties :

A coworker suggests that Susannah see a doctor. When she calls her gynecologist, Dr. Rothstein, he refers her to Dr. Bailey, an esteemed neurologist. Dr. Bailey's neurological exam yields normal results, but he orders blood work and an MRI. At the lab, a male technician guides Susannah through the MRI process. She feels he's too flirtatious and leaves quickly, forgetting her lucky ring in the process. A few days later, Dr. Rothstein calls Susannah and says she likely has mono.

“The only thing that the MRI showed was a small amount of enlargement of a few lymph nodes in my neck, which leads me to believe that it's some kind of virus. Possibly mononucleosis, though we don't have the blood tests back to prove it yet.” (BOF – 19).

She decided to finally share her diagnosis with her mother, who was distressed when she told her about the numbness, particularly because it was only one side of the body. She assured her mother it was only because of mono.

When Susannah is feeling better a few days later, Stephen takes her to a concert. Susannah cannot eat any of her food, is nauseous and dizzy at the concert, and admits afterwards that she can't even remember it. When Susannah finally informs her parents that she's feeling sick, her parents are worried. A few days later, Susannah is feeling better and convinces Stephen to go with her to Vermont. When she tries to ski, she has a panic attack at the top of the mountain.

“The mountain suddenly seemed far steeper than ever before. It loomed out below me, long, narrow, and threatening. I felt instantly helpless, and panicked, a kind of deep-seated fight-or-flight fear that I had read about but never experienced.” (BOF – 25).

America’s most wanted:

A week later, Steve asks Susannah to interview John Walsh, the host of the show America’s Most Wanted. On the day of the interview, Susannah walks down the hallway at the New York Post and notices that the walls are breathing and the ceiling is expanding. Susannah can barely follow Mr. Walsh as she interviews him, and doesn’t remember walking home that night.

“Thank you, thank you. I’m a huge fan, huge fan. HUGE fan” I gushed, as we waited at the elevators.” (BOF – 29).

The following morning, Susannah notices that the billboards in Times Square are bright and vibrating. She wants to vomit and barely makes it to work. When she finally arrives, Susannah experiences mood swings at her desk—she goes from angry and frustrated to intense happiness in the span of minutes, and sobs through it all. That night, Susannah cannot fathom eating any of Stephen’s carefully prepared dinner. When he turns on the TV and falls asleep, Susannah has a seizure.

Susannah regains consciousness in the ER and believes she’s dying of melanoma, which she had several years ago. The ER doctor insists that they cannot keep Susannah, and Stephen calls Susannah’s mom.

They’re Taking Over My Body:

The next day, Susannah’s mom and her husband, Allen, arrive in Manhattan to convince Susannah to move home to Summit, New Jersey. Susannah experiences more seizures there, and her mom takes her back to see Dr. Bailey. He prescribes Susannah anti-seizure medication and refers to her a psychiatrist.

“Even during this time when I hardly recognize myself, there are still shadows of the real Susannah, a person who cares what her family and friends think, who doesn't want to cause them pain.” (BOF -C11).

The psychiatrist prescribes anti-psychotic medications. A few days later, Susannah has another horrifying seizure. Susannah's mom makes an emergency appointment with Dr. Bailey, where a nurse tests Susannah's brain's electrical activity with an EEG test. Though Susannah is obviously unwell—she attempted to jump out of a moving car on the way to the appointment—the results are normal. Susannah accuses her mom of trying to trick her.

“Though my behavior was worsening day by day, it was still difficult for her to reconcile the old image that she had of her daughter as trustworthy, hard working, and independent with the new, unpredictable, and dangerous one.” (BOF – c13).

Susannah's mom arranges for Susannah to spend the night with her dad in Brooklyn. Her dad and his wife, Giselle, accompany Susannah to her apartment before they go to their house. Susannah accuses her dad of kidnapping her. When they finally reach Brooklyn, Susannah is exhausted and hears Giselle call her a spoiled brat. She spends the night vacillating between asking Dad to sit with her and banishing him from the room. She tells him horrible things and hallucinates that he's killing Giselle.

“Unlike before, there are now no glimmers of the reliable “I,” the Susannah I had been for the previous twenty-four years. Though I had been gradually losing more and more of myself over the past few weeks, the break between my consciousness and my physical body was now finally fully complete. In essence, I was gone.” (BOF – 14).

The Capgras Delusion:

In the morning, Susannah's parents speak and decide that Susannah needs to be admitted to the hospital. They take her back to Dr. Bailey, who insists that she's suffering from alcohol withdrawal but finally arranges a bed for her at

NYU. In the lobby, Susannah leaves to buy a coffee. She suffers a seizure and doesn't remember any of the next month.

The hospital staff connects Susannah to a 24-hour EEG machine. Her room on the epilepsy floor also has cameras to record seizures. She insists that her dad and Allen not be allowed into her room, and hallucinates that the nurses watch her use the bathroom. She panics and tries to escape. Dr. Russo and Dr. Siegel examine Susannah in the next day, and Susannah's mom takes an instant liking to Dr. Siegel.

"Her EEG was completely normal," Bailey protested, looking through my file. "MRI normal, exam normal, blood work normal. It's all normal."

"Well, she's not normal," my mom snapped as I sat there, quiet and polite with my hands folded in my lap. She and Allen had made a pact that they would not leave Dr. Bailey's office without getting me admitted to a hospital." (BOF – c14).

Multiple Personality :

Over the next few days, more doctors join Susannah's team and suggest diagnoses such as unspecified mood disorders, unspecified psychotic disorder, or bipolar disorder. She continues to hallucinate that people on TV are talking about her, which leads to another escape attempt. When the nurses imply to her dad that she'll be moved to a psych ward if the escape attempts continue, her dad begins reading outside her room every day.

"I have a gift. I can age people with my mind, this is who I am. And they cannot take this away from me. I am powerful. Stronger than I have ever been in my life."

After a week, Susannah's psychosis recedes, and the hospital staff schedules a spinal tap. As the second week begins, Susannah begins slurring her words and allows her tongue to hang out of her mouth. Dr. Siegel explains to her parents that the spinal tap shows elevated white blood cell levels, which indicates an infection.

“He turned to my parents and said, “Her brain is on fire.” He took my small into his large ones and leaned down to my eye level. “ I’m going to do everything I can for you. I promise I will always be there for you.” For a moment I seemed to come alive. He would later recall to me. I’ll always regret that I remember nothing of this pivotal scene, one of the most important moments of my life.

Dr.Najjar saw tears gather at the corners of my eyes. I sat up and threw my arms around him. For him, it was another crucial moment in my case: he could sense some were. But it was just a blip. After that outpouring, I lay back but he knew I was there, exhausted by the belief display of emotions. Motioned for my parents to follow him outside the room.

“Her brain on fire,” he repeated. They nodded, eyes wide.

“Her brain is under attack by her own body.” (BOF – 134)

Several friends come to visit Susannah over the next few days and are shocked by her appearance, and Susannah's mom is similarly shocked when she learns that Dr. Siegel is no longer working on Susannah's case. Dr. Russo explains that a doctor named Dr.Najjar has taken over and would like another spinal tap. The test reveals white blood cell levels that are much higher than the first test, which indicates that Susannah has a form of encephalitis (brain swelling).

A few days later, Dr.Najjar finally arrives to introduce himself to Susannah. He asks her to draw a clock face from memory. Painstakingly, Susannah draws a clock with all the numbers on the right side, which indicates that the right side of her brain is inflamed. Dr.Najjar arranges to perform a brain biopsy and sends samples of Susannah's blood and cerebrospinal fluid to Dr.Dalmau, who discovered anti-NMDA receptor autoimmune encephalitis in 2007.

The hospital conducts tests to measure Susannah's cognitive function and ability to speak, and she scores poorly on all of them. She's diagnosed officially with anti-NMDA receptor autoimmune encephalitis that afternoon and is informed that she'll need to undergo an ultrasound to check her ovaries for teratomas, a type of tumor. Susannah hallucinates during the ultrasound, which reveals no

tumors. Dr. Najjar explains his treatment plan to Susannah and her parents, which he believes should return to Susannah to 90% of her former self.

“In the spring of 2009, I was the 217th person ever to be diagnosed with anti-NMDA-receptor autoimmune encephalitis. Just a year later, that figure had doubled. Now the number is in the thousands. Yet Dr. Bailey, considered one of the best neurologists in the country, had never heard of it. When we live in a time when the rate of misdiagnoses has shown no improvement since the 1930s, the lesson here is that it’s important to always get a second opinion.

While he may be an excellent doctor in many respects, Dr. Bailey is also, in some ways, a perfect example of what is wrong with medicine. I was just a number to him (and if he saw thirty-five patients a day, as he told me, that means I was one of a very large number). He is a by-product of a defective system that forces neurologists to spend five minutes with X number of patients a day to maintain their bottom line. It’s a bad system. Dr. Bailey is not the exception to the rule. He is the rule.” (Susannah Cahalan’s *Brain On Fire*).

Susannah’s parents and a friend from college help move Susannah home the next day. Susannah becomes paranoid that Stephen will leave her for her friend, but this is part of the normal recovery process—patients go through the same symptoms in reverse as they recover.

“I had lost confidence and a sense of self. Who am I? Am I a person who cowers in fear at the back of a spin class, avoiding everyone’s gaze? This uncertainty about who I am, this confusion over where I truly was in the time line of my illness and recovery, was ultimately the deeper source of the shame. A part of my soul believed that I would never be myself, the carefree, confident Susannah, again.”

Susannah says that it’s impossible to talk about what it was like to be crazy, as she doesn’t remember it and didn’t have any self-awareness during that time. A few weeks after Susannah’s release, one of Stephen’s nephews is scared of her, and she begins to understand that she’s different than she used to be. As Susannah attends family weddings and parties over the summer, she struggles

with shame about her appearance (the steroids make her face puffy and caused her to gain weight) and the fact that she has a hard time holding conversations.

“The girl in the video is a reminder about how fragile our hold on sanity and health is and how much we are at the utter whim of our Brutus bodies, which will inevitably, on day, turn on us for good. I am a prisoner, as we all are. And with that realization comes an aching sense of vulnerability.”

The Videotape :

People speak slowly to her because they don't realize she understands them perfectly—she just can't speak well. She has to take medications six times per day and resents her mom when she hounds her to take them. Her mom also insists that Susannah be evaluated at a rehab center. Though Susannah scores abysmally on some tests, she aces those that measure her analytical thinking. This indicates that Susannah is fighting her body; her mind is as sharp as ever.

“The video begins. I see myself at center of the screen, peering into the camera's lens. The hospital gown slip off my left shoulder and my hair is stringy and dirty.” (BOF – 175)

“That petrified person is as foreign to me as a stranger, and it's impossible for me to tronic evidence, I could never have imagined myself capable of such madness and misery.

The video hides her face under the covers, clutching the blanket so hard her knuckles turn white.

“Please,” I see myself plead on video again

Maybe I can help her.” (BOF -175).

During her third hospital stay for treatment, Susannah begins keeping a diary and becomes curious about what happened to her. Her dad helps her with her journal and is alarmed to discover that Susannah remembers nothing after her seizure in the hospital lobby. He finally gives her his personal journal from her time in the hospital because he finds the experience too difficult to talk about.

Susannah's relationship with her mom improves when her mom finally admits how she scared she was that Susannah would die.

“I began keeping a diary, started reading again, and first expressed the desire to understand what had happened to me. Perhaps because the diary provides physical evidence of my budding self (I can literally read the thoughts of that wounded Susannah.)” (BOF – 197).

Though Susannah continues to improve, she moves in permanently with her mom and Allen. For her, this represents giving up her freedom. To combat this, Susannah begins keeping lists and reading. She also begins exercising to lose weight, though she admits that her fixation on her body only covered up her fears that she'd never be the same again.

In the fall, Susannah finally returns to work. She writes several articles from home before returning in full capacity. After attending one of Dr. Najjar's lectures on Susannah's disease, Steve asks Susannah to write an article about her experience. As she researches, she's shocked to discover that though the disease was only recently discovered, doctors believe it's been around forever—and is likely to blame for the symptoms that prompted exorcisms, especially in children. She also contacts Dr. Bailey and discovers that he'd never heard of the disease. After the article runs, Susannah's inbox floods with emails from people with the disease themselves, or with afflicted family members.

Purple Lady :

Susannah admits that she only remembers her hallucinations from the hospital, which doctors attribute to the fact that hallucinations are created by the brain and are therefore flagged as more important. As Susannah continues to recover, however, she finds that some things trigger faint memories of her time in the hospital. Two years after her release, Susannah returns to the hospital. She runs into the “purple lady” at the nurse's station, and the nurse embraces her. Though Susannah's opening hallucination wasn't real, the nurse was. A year later, Susannah visits a patient at NYU who had been referred by Dr. Bailey.

“No great mind has ever existed without a touch of madness,” Aristotle said.” (web site).

“The formal relationship, enforced by the institution, is that one person’s word mean everything and the other’s means nothing; one person can command the other to do just about anything, and refusal can result in total physical restraint. That fact is a slap in the face” (Kerman, 2010, 146f.)

CHAPTER - III

CONCLUSION

Susannah Cahalan's *Brain On Fire*; my Month of Madness, she writes with an incredible sense of toughness and a dogged refusal to stop digging into her past, even when it profoundly hurts. One of the most moving moments in *Brain on Fire* comes when Cahalan, preparing a New York Post article about her illness, watches videos of herself in the hospital. She's horrified, but finds that she can't look away. "I was outrageously skinny, Crazy, Angry," she writes. "I had the intense urge to grab the videos and burn them or at least hide them away, safe from view.

But she doesn't, instead she barely flinches when her loved ones tell her about the paranoid delusions that held her firmly in their grasp for several weeks. There's no vanity in *Brain on Fire*. Cahalan recounts obsessively searching her boyfriend's email for signs that he was cheating on her, he wasn't and loudly insisting to hospital workers that her father had killed his wife but she was alive. Cahalan is nothing if not tenacious, and she perfectly tempers her brutal honesty with compassion and something like vulnerability. Reflecting on finding a piece of jewelry she'd lost during her illness, she writes,

"Sometimes, just when we need them, life wraps metaphors up in little bows for us. When you think all is lost, the things you need the most return unexpectedly."

Brain on Fire comes from a place of intense pain and unthinkable isolation, but finds redemption in Cahalan's unflagging, defiant toughness.

Far more than simply a riveting read and a crackling medical mystery, *Brain on Fire* is the powerful account of one woman's struggle to recapture her identity and to rediscover herself among the fragments left behind. Using all her considerable journalistic skills, and building from hospital records and surveillance video, interviews with family and friends, and excerpts from the deeply moving journal her father kept during her illness, Susannah pieces together the story of

her "lost month" to write an unforgettable memoir about memory and identity, faith and love. It is an important, profoundly compelling tale of survival and perseverance that is destined to become a classic.

Piper Kerman's *Orange Is The New Black* is a painful tale of incarceration winds up as a positive story of self-acceptance. Kerman cannot change what she did as a reckless youth but one without the best of judgment was seeking excitement. But in prison she comes to see that she can and will value her life from this point forward. Upon her release, she runs toward the future, "No one can stop me."

Piper Kerman and Susannah Cahalan struggled equally to regain their identity. The hardest part was recovery and to write as well. At that point they both lost their identity who they were. Everything about their personality was just vanished over a night. They have rebuilt that from scratch. They know that they couldn't be the same person who they were but still they managed to be. And they think it has given them such purpose in their lives.

This scenario had given them strength to help others and ability to help other people who is suffering like them. In both novel author's suffering and struggles has been handled and they regain their reality by their serious attempts. Each and everyone have their own identity. When it is lost, we should know how to grab our identity. Especially for women. The most important task any woman can undergo is the process of identity formation. Female identity formation is critical to the female individual because the way in which she defines herself and what she bases her sense of self upon will ultimately serve as the foundation for her life. It is very much important to built or rebuilt their own identity, with the role that they wanted to lead in the society than being suppressed with their past or by norms.

REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCE:

1. Piper Kerman, *Orange is the new black: my time In a women's prison*, paperback
2. Susannah Cahalan, *Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness*, paperback.

SECONDARY SOURCE:

1. Allen Cheng, *Orange Is the New Black*, summary by Piper Kerman,
2. Black Culture Connection, *Black authors everyone should read*, 2019
3. *Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness*, by Susannah Cahalan, paperback.
4. CarolinMuellar, *Raising Awareness: Piper Kerman's orange is the new black and the oppression of women in U. S. Prison*, Article, July 2014.
5. Fearon JD, 'What is Identity', 1999, web.stanford.edu.
6. Ferguson KE, *Feminist Theory Today*, Annual Review Of Political Science, 2017.
7. Francis, B. (1998) 'Oppositional positions: children's construction of gender in talk and role plays based on adult occupation', *Educational Research*, vol. 40, no.1, pp. 31–43.
8. Goodman, A., Johnson, P. and Webb, S. (1997) *Inequality in the UK*, Oxford, Oxford University Press.
9. Grosy E, *The untimeliness of feminist theory*, 2010.
10. Hemmings C, *Feminist Theory :Center Of Research On Women And Social*, 2005.
11. Lapid, Yosef and Friedrich Kratochwil, eds. 1996. *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienne.
12. Leary MR, *Self and identity – US Dornsife*, 2012.

13. Loud life, '11 inspiring quotes from orange is the new black you need to read if you want to know what prison is like', 2017/08/11, loudlife35.com
14. Lorraine Radtke H, *Feminist Theory in Feminism and Psychology*, 2017.
15. McCord Joan, Ensminger Margaret. Multiple Risks and Comorbidity in an African American Population. *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*. 1997.
16. McCord Joan, Ensminger Margaret. Racial Discrimination and Violence: A Longitudinal Perspective. In: Hawkins D, editor. *Violent Crime: Assessing Race and Ethnic Differences*. Cambridge University Press; New York: 2003.
17. Nausicaa Renner, How social media shapes our Identity, *The New Yorker*, 2019
18. Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets, *Identity Theory*, 2009.
19. Sampson Robert J., Bean Lydia. Cultural Mechanisms and Killing Fields: A Revised Theory of Community-Level Racial Inequality. In: Peterson R, Krivo L, Hagan J, editors. *The Many Colors of Crime: Inequalities of Race, Ethnicity and Crime in America*. New York University Press; New York: 2006. pp. 8–36.
20. Tong, R. (2009). *Feminist thought: A more comprehensive introduction*. Philadelphia, PA: Westview Press.
21. Verplanken B, *Habits and Identity: Behavioral, cognitive, affective – frontiers*, 2019
22. Vidal, M. (1997). New voice of La Raza: Chicanas speak out. In A. M. García (ed.), *Chicana feminist thought: The basic historical writings* (pp. 21-24). New York, NY: Routledge.
23. Wheeler, E. (2002). Black feminism and womanism. In A. M. Martinez Aleman, & K. A. Renn (eds.) *Women in higher education: An encyclopedia* (p. 118–120). Santa Barbara, CA: ABC Clio.

24. Whelehan, I. (2000). Feminism, postmodernism, and theoretical developments. In J. Glazer-Raymo, B. K. Townsend, & B. Ropers-Huilman (eds.) *Women in higher education: A feminist perspective* (2nd ed; pp. 72–84). Boston, MA: Pearson.