

**DREAM PSYCHOLOGY IN BANI BASU'S *DARK AFTERNOONS*.**

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**ABSTRACT :**

This paper examines the phenomenon of dreams, hallucinations, and real sensations in the novel "The Dark Afternoons" by Bani Basu, a prominent Bengali writer. The paper analyses the psychological, cultural, and historical aspects of the novel and how they relate to the main characters, especially Mallika. The paper also explores the connection between dream psychology and literary theory and how they can inform each other. The paper uses different psychological theories of dreams, such as Freudian, Jungian, cognitive, and neuroscientific to interpret Jina's dreams and their impact on her personality and behavior. The paper also compares and contrasts Jina's dreams with those of other characters in the novel and how they reflect their individual and collective psyches. The paper concludes that the novel is a powerful and poignant portrayal of the psychological turmoil and trauma that Jina faces as she tries to cope with her reality and escape into her fantasy. The paper also discusses the implications and contributions of the novel to the fields of dream psychology and literary theory.

**Key-words:** *Trauma, Hallucinations, Sexual abuse, Emotional Distress, Adversity , Self-Discovery & Resilience.*

**INTRODUCTION :**

Dreams have always been a part of literature and science. In the olden days, dreams were considered divine, and they guided people in the present world. But these theories have all been debunked in recent years. Literature has also evolved, and it has been greatly influenced from the psychology side. In fact, literary dreams are considered an allegorical stand. Even Freud, in his examination of dreams, considered fiction literary dreams that could be analysed. His first literary psychoanalysis dealt with the novel *Gradiva* by Wilhelm Jensen; this has certainly been used to draw the conclusion that even literary dreams are constructed according to Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Dreams in literature have always been seen to work from a prophetic point of view; they tend to reflect the characters' unconsciousness. Freud's work influenced the scientific discussion of dreams in literature. In contrast to other dreams, readers interpret literary dreams differently. The communication between the author and reader through literary dreams is largely conscious. The communication between author and reader through literary dreams is largely unconscious. Absorption in a book can lead to a hypnotic state, enhancing the reader's experience and allowing for a deeper connection to the symbolism and themes presented in the text. This heightened engagement with the material can result in a more profound understanding of the author's intended message and can evoke powerful emotional responses from the reader. Literature can be interpreted as a dream of the protagonist, blurring the lines between reality and fiction. By immersing oneself in literary dreams, readers can explore the depths of their own subconscious and gain new perspectives on life. The act of reading becomes a transformative experience that transcends the boundaries of time and space, opening up endless possibilities for self-discovery and personal growth. Understanding literary dreams involves decoding specific dream language within the context of the whole work. This process allows readers to uncover hidden meanings and symbolism that may not be immediately apparent, leading to a deeper appreciation of the text. By delving into the subconscious realms of literature, readers can unlock the secrets of their own psyche and connect with universal truths that resonate across cultures and time periods.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW :**

The review focuses on the theories of dreams and how they are prevalent in Bani Basu's novels. A review of theories of dreams provides a comprehensive overview of the main psychological theories of dreams, such as Freudian, Jungian, cognitive, and neuroscientific perspectives. It also discusses the significance, functions, and interpretations of dreams, as well as the limitations and ethical issues of dream research. Furthermore, the review delves into how Bani Basu incorporates these theories into her novels, exploring the impact of dreams on her characters' lives and the deeper meanings they reveal. By analyzing this intersection of literature and psychology, readers can gain a deeper understanding of both the human mind and the power of storytelling. The next review is a book review of Bani Basu's *A Plate of White Marble*. In this review, Basu's book is praised for showing how widows in India struggle and is treated unfairly in a powerful and moving way. Through Bandana's journey, Basu delves into the complexities of societal expectations and the resilience of the human spirit in the face of adversity. The novel challenges readers to reflect on their own preconceived notions about gender roles and cultural norms, making it a thought-provoking and impactful read. (Singh) Dreams, hallucinations, and real sensations are other important reviews. The research presented in this paper sheds light on the complex nature of consciousness and the ways in which our brains interpret and process sensory information. By exploring the connections between dreams, hallucinations, and real sensations, we gain a deeper understanding of the inner workings of the mind. (Faruk).

#### **Dream Psychology in *The Dark Afternoons***

The novel uses dreams to convey its ideas in a metaphorical manner. From the start of the novel, it is clear that dreams have a significant role to play in the novel. Mallika is haunted by dreams, and in these dreams she is always chased by a tiger who wants to claw her body. She tries to run away, but it is not always possible. There are days when she is able to do it, but the dreams seem to torment her.

Did the tiger stray into the city while load-shedding was on? Stealthily he approaches, through the narrow, crowded lanes, weaving through all the people, trams, buses, rickshaws, and pushcarts. With his terrifying, silent, swinging pace, he moves in closer. His eyes, searchlights, and scanning dilapidated houses. She folds her limbs into her lap, becomes a small bundle, buries her head, and crouches. Next to a loaded truck, moving deeper and deeper into dark nooks and crannies, through the narrow, dirty lanes paved with stones, stepping on heaps of garbage... Revolted and terrified, she runs between the old houses, repeatedly colliding against their raised entrances. (DA 7) The quote describes a tense and suspenseful scene where a character is being pursued through a crowded and chaotic urban setting. The imagery of the narrow, crowded lanes, dilapidated houses, and heaps of garbage creates a sense of danger and urgency. The character's fear is palpable as they try to escape their pursuer, emphasizing the feeling of being trapped and overwhelmed. Her sister-in-law, Jina, too, asks her about the dream, but Mallika is silent, and she does not want to talk about it with anyone then it becomes clear that dreams occur from time to time, but Jina is more of a practical character. Jina suggests seeking help from a therapist to understand the recurring dreams, but Mallika brushes off the idea, insisting she can handle it on her own. Despite Jina's concern, Mallika remains determined to keep her inner turmoil hidden. Another time dreams are shown is when Mallika is completely upset after having a dream. The Ngo girl Mukut confronts her and tells her not to worry and she ask her to confront the demon or tiger, even though it is still tormenting her. If it was in the past, it would be left, but if it is in the present, that means she has to fight it without a doubt. Mallika's reluctance to seek help and confront her inner turmoil mirrors the resistance individuals often face in dream psychology when trying to address their subconscious issues. The dream where she is tormented by a demon or tiger could symbolize her unresolved fears and anxieties manifesting in her dreams. By encouraging Mallika to confront this symbolic representation of her inner struggles, Mukut is essentially advocating for dream analysis as a means of understanding and

overcoming one's psychological barriers. In this way, dreams serve as a powerful tool for uncovering and addressing hidden emotional conflicts that may be impacting one's waking life.

Mallika listens to Mukut's advice, but she knows that her trauma runs deeper than just a past experience. The memories of her childhood abuse resurface in her dreams, haunting her every night. She tries to forget it during the day, but the trauma still lingers in the corners of her mind. She feels trapped, unable to confront her husband about his behavior for fear of further endangering her mental health and the stability of their family. Mallika understands that she needs professional help to heal from her deep-rooted trauma and start rebuilding her life. But she is a simple village girl, and so she is not able to do anything. Mallika's situation exemplifies the complexity of dealing with past trauma, as it affects not only her mental health but also her relationships and daily life. Despite her desire to seek help, societal barriers prevent her from accessing the support she needs to overcome her struggles and move forward. Sexual abuse is a major social and public health issue. Women are likely to be sexually abused at some point in their lives, according to decades of study. Most of the time, people think of rape when they hear the word "sexual violence." However, sexual violence is much wider and includes more than just rape. There are many kinds of sexual abuse, some of which involve touching and some of which do not. For example, a woman who was sexually abused as a child may struggle with intimacy and trust in her adult relationships. Despite her desire to seek therapy and heal from her trauma, she may face financial barriers or a lack of access to mental health services in her community. Jina worries that Mallika's recurring dreams may be a sign of deeper emotional distress, but Mallika remains adamant about handling it alone. The NGO girl encourages Mallika to confront her inner demons head-on, emphasizing the importance of facing them in the present moment. The reorganization process commences with a resurgence of emotional upheaval. Occurrences such as encountering the perpetrator once more, receiving a court summons, experiencing a distressing dream, or being reminded by a specific sensory stimulus can initiate this subsequent stage. Experiencing emotional distress once more can be very terrifying for individuals at this phase. It is crucial for Mallika to seek support from a therapist or counselor to navigate through this difficult period. Professional guidance can provide her with coping mechanisms and tools to help her process and heal from the trauma effectively. Fear seems to be the predominant emotion when an unfamiliar person is committing the assault. However, it happens more frequently for someone the victim knows to assault them. During this type of attack, individuals often have heightened emotions of self-reproach and culpability, which can be overpowering. It is important for Mallika to understand that the blame lies solely with the perpetrator, not with her. Seeking therapy can help her work through these feelings of guilt and shame, allowing her to heal and move forward from the trauma. But in the end, however, Mallika certainly fights her tiger, and in fact, she kills the tiger. She is finally free, and she saves many people as well.

The beast has gripped her throat with his teeth and his two paws on her chest. Gathering all her physical and mental strength, she pushes the tiger. He stumbles and falls. On the first step, another mighty push with the speed of lightning, with her hands and feet, with everything she has. The tiger rolls and keeps rolling all the way down. tarrying thud. (DA266).

Mallika's battle with the tiger symbolizes her struggle to overcome the trauma that has gripped her. Despite the intense fear and danger she faces, she finds the strength within herself to push forward and ultimately defeat the beast. This victory not only sets her free from the grasp of her past experiences but also allows her to help others who may be in similar situations. Mallika's story shows that with determination and courage, it is possible to move past even the most challenging obstacles. In this novel, it is clear that dreams show reality. Dreams are the reflections of the traumas that people faced by people. The protagonist's dreams serve as a window into her subconscious mind, revealing the deep-seated fears and emotions that she must confront in order to heal. Through analyzing and understanding her dreams, she is able to navigate through her trauma and ultimately find peace within herself.

**CONCLUSION :**

In conclusion, Mallika's journey in the novel demonstrates the power of perseverance and self-reflection in overcoming adversity. By delving into her dreams and confronting her innermost fears, she is able to heal and find inner peace. Mallika's story serves as an inspiration to others facing similar challenges, showing that with determination and courage, it is possible to move past even the most difficult obstacles. The novel reinforces the idea that dreams can serve as a mirror to our subconscious minds, reflecting our deepest traumas and emotions that must be addressed in order to heal and grow. Ultimately, Mallika's story highlights the importance of self-discovery and resilience in navigating through life's struggles.

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