An Analysis of Mental Illness Representations in Contemporary American Literary Works

Bikash Roy[1] and Dr. Nikhat Saquib[2]
Research Scholar, Department of English[1]
Research Guide, Department of English[2]
Sunrise University, Alwar, Rajasthan, India

Abstract*: This study explores the portrayal of mental illness in contemporary American literature, focusing on how these representations reflect and shape societal perceptions of mental health. Through a critical analysis of selected literary works, the research examines the nuanced ways in which mental illness is depicted, addressing themes such as stigma, isolation, identity, and recovery. The study investigates how authors use narrative techniques to convey the complexity of mental health experiences, often challenging traditional stereotypes and offering more empathetic, multidimensional portrayals. By analyzing the intersection of mental illness with factors such as gender, race, and class, the research also highlights how literature contributes to broader discussions about mental health in contemporary society. This analysis aims to understand the evolving role of literature in destigmatizing mental illness and promoting a deeper understanding of the emotional and psychological challenges faced by individuals.*

Keywords: Mental illness, Stigma, Identity, Narrative techniques, Gender, Race, Class, Empathy, Destigmatization