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**CHANGING THE MORAL VOICE IN AMERICAN CHILDREN’S
LITERATURE: E. B. WHITE AND THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY**

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Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “Changing The Moral Voice in American Children’s Literature: E. B. White and The Spirit of Community” adlı çalışmanın, tarafımdan, akademik kurallara ve etik değerlere uygun olarak yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım.

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ABSTRACT
Master's Thesis
Changing The Moral Voice in American Children's Literature:
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The core values that shape American culture is based on the ideology of individualism. The spirit of individualism not only shapes social life of individuals, but also shows itself in many areas from politics to literature, and even in the field of children's literature. So, in many American classical children's stories, we often come across the spirit of adventure and the concept of freedom, two issues which have shaped the American character, as well. The rapid social changes of the 1950s have been influential in bringing a critical perspective to individualism. American sociologists, who advocate that individual values alone are not sufficient for constructing a healthy American society, criticize the social, moral and institutional corruption that has dominated American society after the 1950s. Therefore, they suggest that the prevailing "me first" narcissistic value in American society should be balanced by a "we first" communal thinking. Similarly, in his children's fiction, E. B. White, without privileging either one at the expense of the other, also writes stories that maintain a healthy balance between individualism and community. In this respect, E. B. White's children stories differ from most of his counterparts.

This dissertation, by using the method of textual analysis, aims to scrutinize E.B. White's three children's books *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte's Web* and *The Trumpet of the Swan* in order to reflect on E. B. White's changing moral voice. Due to the uncontrollable rise of individualism, E. B. White is also

concerned with the gradual disintegration of communal values in American society and tries to find a resolution by integrating the spirit of the community into the life of the child. Believing that change begins with the child, E. B. White brings individual and communal values together in all three literary works, reminding his child readers the importance of community as well as individuality in the maintenance of a healthy American society. Consequently, for the protagonists of each of the three novels, the road to success lies in combining the spirit of friendship and solidarity with that of freedom and adventure.

Keywords: Social Construction of Childhood, Children's Literature, Ideology, Narcissistic Culture, Individualism, Communitarianism, Healing Narrative.



ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Amerikan Çocuk Edebiyatında Değişen Ahlaki Ses:

E. B. White ve Topluluk Ruhu

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Amerikan kültürünü oluşturan değerler bireysellik ideolojisi üzerine kurulmuştur. Bireysellik ruhu sadece bireylerin sosyal yaşantılarını şekillendirmemiş, aynı zamanda, politikadan edebiyata ve hatta çocuk edebiyatına kadar birçok alanda kendini göstermiştir. Öyle ki Amerikan klasikleri olarak adlandırılan birçok çocuk hikayesinde Amerikan karakterini de yansıtan macera ruhuna ve özgürlük anlayışına sıkça rastlanır. 1950’ler ve sonrasında yaşanan hızlı toplumsal değişimler ise bireyselliğe eleştirel bir bakış açısı getirmiştir. Sadece bireysel değerlerin sağlıklı bir Amerikan toplumu oluşturmak için tek başına yeterli olmadığını savunan Amerikalı sosyologlar, 1950’lerden sonra Amerikan toplumuna egemen olan sosyal, ahlaki ve kurumsal çöküşü eleştirmişlerdir. Bu nedenle, Amerikan toplumunda hakim olan “önce ben” narsistik anlayışının “önce biz” toplumsal anlayışı ile dengelenmesi gerektiğini söylemişlerdir. Benzer şekilde, E. B. White da çocuk edebiyatında, “ben” ve “biz” olgusunu birleştiren bir anlatım sergiler, ve bireysellik ile topluluk değerleri arasında sağlıklı bir denge kuran hikayeler yazar. Bu anlamda E. B. White’ın çocuk kitapları diğer çocuk kitaplarından farklılık gösterir.

Bu tez *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte’s Web* ve *The Trumpet of the Swan* adlı üç çocuk kitabının içerdiği konu ve temalar bakımından E.B.White’ın ahlaki sesini nasıl yansıttığını metin analizi yöntemini kullanarak incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Bireyselliğin kontrol edilemez yükselişi nedeniyle, E.B.

White, Amerikan toplumunda toplumsal deęerlerin yavař yavař yok olduęunu grmüş ve topluluk ruhunun ocuęun hayatında yerini almasını saęlayarak bu duruma zm bulmaya alıřmıřtır. Deęiřimin ocuktan bařlayacaęı inancıyla E. B. White, bireysel deęerlerle toplumsal deęerleri ocuk kitaplarında buluřturmuř ve Amerikan toplumu iin vazgeilmez olan bireysel deęerler kadar toplumsal deęerlerin de saęlıklı bir Amerikan toplumu iinnemi olduęunu ocuk okurlarına hatırlatmıřtır. Bu anlamda, her  romanın bař kahramanları iin bařarıya giden yolzgrlk ve macera ruhu ile birleřen arkadaşlık ve dayanıřma ruhudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: ocukluęun Sosyal İnřası, ocuk Edebiyatı, Narsistik Kltr, Bireyselcilik, Toplulukuluk, E.B.White, Saęaltıcı Anlatı.

**CHANGING THE MORAL VOICE IN AMERICAN CHILDREN'S
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ABBREVIATIONS

SL *Stuart Little*

CW *Charlotte's Web*

TS *The Trumpet of the Swan*



INTRODUCTION

Just like adult books, children's books are vital literary resources that shed light to the era they are written in. Each of them has a different purpose. While some of them aim to amuse children, others attempt to give ideological and cultural messages; however, basically, all of them more or less reflect the values, beliefs and customs of the society that they have emerged from. Hence, it is essential to consider children's literature as a means for instilling social, moral and cultural values in children. In this sense, the narrative of children's books is comprised of social, cultural and ideological codes, and these codes have a crucial role in molding the personal and social identities of children. As Tony Watkins states in his article:

"The stories we tell our children, the narratives we give them to make sense of cultural experience, constitute a kind of mapping, maps of meaning that enable our children to make sense of the world. They contribute to children's sense of identity, an identity that is simultaneously personal and social: narratives we might say, shape the way children find a 'home' in the world" (qtd in Hunt, 2003: 183).

At this point, E. B. White's narrative gains importance as it has brought a different perspective to American literature for children. Especially, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Golden Age of American children's literature, the themes and values of the children's books basically depend on the traditional American values which are highly exalted throughout the stories so as to teach the basic values of America to the children audience. However, in time, the social and cultural changes in American society has also altered and varied in accordance to the diversity of the themes and the genres of children's literature. In this sense, E. B. White's three children's books have left a mark on the era they were written in, as they reflect the American character and the need for the spirit of community in American society.

This study, in the light of E. B. White's children's books, will first deal with the significant social and cultural changes in American society from its foundation to the present, focusing on the core values of American culture which have shaped not only the social life of the American individual but also American children's literature. Consequently, the first chapter of my study, will deal with the social values of childhood and the role of society in the emergence of childhood. It will

explore the concept of childhood from a sociologist perspective, putting emphasis on the social value of childhood.

The second chapter will focus on the social construction of American childhood. It is crucial to know how childhood is constructed socially and culturally in American society since children are the transmitters of cultural values to the next generations. While molding the child according to American values, family and society act together; therefore, in this section, I will also reveal the historical, economical and social changes of American family and the state of contemporary American childhood. Furthermore, the second chapter will also deal with the historical background of American children's literature, its themes and values since American classical children's books are the best literary works which can be regarded as the mirror of American society. As Anne Scott MacLeod states: "*These works [children classics] reflected the era's fascination with the figure of the Child and subject of childhood . . . how these children's books functioned not only as a mirror but also as a lamp; how they not only reflected American culture but also were force in creating that culture*" (MacLeod, 1994: 24-25). Hence, the themes and values in American children's literature, particularly, to borrow MacLeod's phrases, "*America-as-Child*" and "*Child-as-America*" (MacLeod, 14) will be dealt with. MacLeod argues that journey, adventure and freedom are the most common themes found in American children's literature which are also the most popular motifs of initiation stories. In children's stories, the protagonists embark on a journey in search of adventure and freedom. They leave their previous life behind and pursue for new hopes and new adventures in a new place. For the child protagonists, the journey is the beginning of self-awareness and maturation. American culture, which values individual achievement and competency above all, sees strong family ties and social networks as a handicap to individualism and personal well-being. Because any kind of dependence is seen as a sign of weakness, child protagonists are always depicted as lonely but self-reliant crusaders who embark on perilous journeys. In the end, self-reliance, determination and the spirit of freedom help them overcome the hardships of the journey and become self-made individuals that they seek to be.

The personal experiences of child protagonists are quite similar to the historical experiences of America itself. The immigrants took a long journey to the

new land in hopes of freedom and new opportunities. In spite of the hard conditions of the new land and the repression of English monarchy, the newcomers had to be courageous and self-reliant enough in order to survive and establish unity in their communities. After all, they rebelled against English authority and declared their independence. Apparently, American children's literature tries to impose the children a peculiar American character which is inherited by their American ancestors.

Children's literature aims to transfer the social, cultural and ideological codes of society to its child readers, so the second chapter will also deal with the interaction of children's literature and ideology so as to reveal "*the impossibility of innocence*" (MacLeod, 39) of children's books. Ideology cannot be excluded from children's literature as it is in every facet of life ranging from art and literature to economics and politics. John Stephens argues that "*the discourses of children's fiction are pervaded by ideological presuppositions, sometimes obtrusively and sometimes invisibly*" (Stephens, 1992: 1-2). In other words, ideology is carried by language and transferred to the child reader by the signifying codes and discourses in the language. Thus language, discourse and ideology are inseparable and intertwined concepts: "*Language as a system of signification - what is commonly referred to as discourse - is endemically and pervasively imbued with ideology*" (Barthes, qtd in Stephens, 1). Encoding the language with ideological messages can be available in the social and cultural context wherein the signifying codes of the language are determined by the society itself: "*A major aspect of intellectual thought . . . has been the recognition of the importance of the critical study of language for any understanding of social life*" (1). In other words, language has some signifying codes which enable the child readers to infer the ideological, cultural and social messages from the texts.

In the third chapter, I will deal with the significant changes in the social and historical heritage of America. Firstly, I will focus on the meaning of frontier for Americans since the traditional basic values of America are rooted in the frontier. For Americans, individualism and the spirit of freedom are two indispensable basic values, thus, in American society public policy, economic and social life is based on the ideology of individualism. However, the idolization of individualism also has severe drawbacks which have been criticized by prominent American sociologists and scholars such as Christopher Lasch, David Riesman, Robert Bellah and Paula

Gunn Allen. Therefore, in the second section of this chapter, I will deal with the drawbacks of American individualism and, in parallel with this, the rise of communitarianism in contemporary America. I will also reveal the viewpoints of important sociologists who are experts in their fields like Ferdinand Tönnies and Amitai Etzioni by analyzing their views and referring to their books. First of all, I will describe the terms “community and society” from Tönnies’ perspective as it will be easier to compare the communal values which are adopted by community and the individual values which are dominant in the society. Although America has established its founding values on individualism, its negative impacts on American culture are profoundly criticized in contemporary America. The social and cultural changes after the 1950s, the loss of the credibility of government, the diminishing importance of moral values, the destruction of family structure and the excessive stress on individualism gave way to the emergence of communitarianism in the 1990s. The forerunner of the communal thinking, Amitai Etzioni, aimed to emphasize the significance of communal values in American culture in order to restore trust to the institutions like government and family. In this sense, the prominence of education, family and morality is recognized while establishing the moral, social and public order without depending on any religious authoritarian concepts. And this social order can be achieved by creating the awareness of “we” in the society. Unless there is a common sense and common good which hold society together, society cannot exist. In order to revive American society, it is essential to heal the social, moral and public policy by reconciling communal values with individual ones. Shortly, America should foster a “reconciliation” (Etzioni, 1998: xxxi) where mutual morality and tolerance are highlighted and valued.

In the last chapter, firstly, I will deal with E. B. White and his writing style in order to illustrate the resemblances of his personal experiences with the theme and the protagonists of his children’s stories. White’s writing style will give some clues for understanding his writing technique and his literary point of view better. Then, I aim to scrutinize how E. B. White becomes the moral voice of American children’s literature by reflecting the spirit of community through a healing narrative in his children’s books *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte’s Web* and *The Trumpet of the Swan*. Although E. B. White highly acknowledges the importance of individual values like

freedom, his writing also lends a critical perspective to the drawbacks of individualism, especially in its account of creating isolated and lonely individuals. So his animal protagonists are not isolated and lonely characters as they overcome the perils of life with the help of their true friends. In White's first book *Stuart Little*, Stuart finds the meaning of true friendship in the little bird, Margalo. In the second children's book *Charlotte's Web*, Wilbur is saved from death and becomes a famous pig on the farm by the help of his spider friend, Charlotte. And lastly, in *The Trumpeter of the Swan*, Louis, the mute cob overcomes his speech problem with the help of his human friend named Sam. In this sense, White chooses "friendship" as the main theme of his three children's stories. By putting the value of friendship in the center of the stories, E. B. White aimed to provide healing through friendship. And as well as friendship, he highlights the importance of family and the spirit of American character so as to establish healing and balance in American society.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF CHILDHOOD

1.1. THE ROLE OF SOCIETY IN THE EMERGENCE OF CHILDHOOD

1.1.1. The Social Value of Childhood

While there are a lot of psychological theories that depict childhood in terms of biological development, cognitive capacity or language skills, there are also significant others that emphasize the importance of the “socializing process” in childhood development. When looked from the lens of these social constructionist theories, the role of “society” becomes very prominent in the construction of childhood. For example, Postman notes that *“unlike infancy, childhood is a social artifact, not a biological category”* (qtd in Jenks, 1996: 117) while Cunningham posits that *“childhood cannot be studied in isolation from society as a whole”* (qtd in Waller and Davis, 2005: 31). Because social constructionists believe that the individual is shaped by the society, and they explain the development of childhood in a social context: *“Social constructionism has played an important political role in the study of childhood in that it was well-situated to prise the child free of biological determinism and thus claim the phenomenon, epistemologically within the realm of the social”* (Kehily, 2009: 106).

Socio-cultural elements such as class, gender, race and ethnic origins have crucial effects on the experiences of children, and these social factors and expectations significantly influence the children to develop their own sense of self. In addition, the social identity of children is strongly affected by the concept of family because family practices form the deterministic traits in children’s lives. The French historian Philippe Aries has observed that ideas about *“(family) relations may be dissimilar at moments separated by lengthy periods of time,”* nevertheless, *“[i]t is the history of the idea of family which concerns us here, not the description of manners or the nature of law”* (qtd in Hunt, 1999: 17). He articulates that since the “family” carries the *“changeable social, moral, and ethical values and motives”* to the next generations (Hunt, 17) it plays an influential role in constructing and shaping the ideas of childhood.

Peter Hunt claims that the social and cultural characteristics of societies construct the idea of childhood, and he reinforces this idea by giving place to the Japanese critic Tadashi Matsui's point of view concerning the concept of childhood. Matsui notes that *"in 1920's Japan, the growth of large cities with dense populations generated the birth of a middle class among (whom) the ideas of European liberalism, the urban mode of living, free mass of education and a modern concept of the child were being fostered"*

(qtd in Hunt, 20).

The roles of children depend on the social norms and rules of the societies where they live in. For instance, in non-industrial countries, children get responsibilities at earlier ages and obey the adult authority, whereas the role of children is distinctly different in modern western countries. The children need to be nurtured and cared for as childhood is seen as a private period of life which is different from adulthood.

As a result, childhood is not only considered as a natural category of development, but also a social category which is constituted by the social norms and values of the societies. Analyzing the idea of childhood, social scientists believe that "childhood" is created by the society; moreover, the social attitudes, beliefs and values largely influence the social construction of childhood.

1.2. THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN CHILDHOOD

The social construction of childhood has varied not only among different societies, but it also has undergone changes throughout history even in the same society. Instead of an ideal and universal concept of childhood, it is possible to talk about distinctive childhood concepts particular to a period, place and culture. In this respect, the idea of childhood in America has been transformed prominently from past to the present due to the profound economic and cultural changes in American history. So the social structures of the society like family life and child rearing have all been influenced by the differing understandings of children in each economic period like the colonial era, the industrial era and the post-industrial era.

1.2.1. Childhood in Colonial America

The colonial era began in 1607 with the immigration of masses from England to New England in search of religious freedom and cultural unity in the new land. The colonial period lasted until the Declaration of Independence from English sovereignty in 1776, and then it became the United States of America. Puritans were one of the first settlers of the new land who founded Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630 with a small group of colonists, but their population reached more than 20,000 inhabitants in 1640s, and grew to almost 100,000 by 1700s. As an extended and divinely ordered community, Puritans played an important role in the inheritance of America with their family ties, industry and education. Family was the fundamental unit for forming strong community and protecting their cultural integrity. So, child rearing was a significant issue in order to provide order and discipline in the family.

Although there were different cultures and different religious groups in Colonial America, the values and the principles of Puritan colonies and their child-rearing practices are mostly known to this day. This is because it was only the Puritans who had historical and literary documents about their colonial lives. As James Marten emphasizes, *“The Puritans were the first Westerners to think seriously about the place of children in society because their sons and daughters -and their sons and daughters- would bear the burden of preserving their ‘city on a hill’”* (Marten, 2007: 1). Marten also indicates the high concern of the Puritans for family and child-rearing:

“The close family relationships, and at least during the first generation or two of the typical New England town, tight community bonds, ensured that parents and children were rarely out of one another’s sight and never out of one another’s thoughts. The entire Puritan enterprise depended on their successful childrearing” (1).

In Colonial America, child-rearing values and norms depended on the economic needs of the period. The economy was based on agriculture, so the children were expected to work on farming by the age of seven. The parents had at least eight or more children, but mostly half of them died in infancy or in childhood due to malnutrition, illnesses or accidents; so the families were generally concerned with “child-bearing” instead of “child-rearing.” In addition, the parents did not pay much attention to the

happiness or the needs of their children; conversely, they regarded children as laborers supporting their families economically.

The children were supposed to be the mini-models of their parents with their clothing and daily practices. Until the age of seven, the clothes of the girls and the boys were almost the same. They were wearing long gowns and a cap on their heads. It was hard to understand the gender of the children; so the little boys were using a square collar attached on their gowns to distinguish themselves from the little girls. When the boys became seven, they started to wear breeches, a waistcoat and a hat like their fathers; however the little girls were dressed in the same childish clothes until twelve years old, or mostly they did not change their clothing styles after that, and they seemed like their mothers with their clothing: *“The young boy appeared as a miniature of his father, and the young girl as a miniature of her mother”* (Demos, 1970: 139).

Furthermore, the daily practices of the children were similar with their parents. The boys started to work with their fathers on the plantations and in the fields at the age of seven; and the girls helped their mothers with the household chores such as cleaning, cooking, sewing, carding cotton or shelling corns. They had several toys but nearly no time to play as they shared the family responsibilities with their parents. When they had time to be kids, they played with dolls and spinning tops. They also played marbles, Blind Man’s Buff, sack races, and flying kites. The parents also did their domestic duties for their children. The father was the breadwinner and the authority in the family. He was responsible for running the parental duties such as religious practices, work and education of their children. The mother was the homemaker of the family who took care of her children and ran the household chores with her daughters. As African-American writer Shirley Hill points out:

“Colonial American parents, with the support of the broader community, were expected to train and socialize their children. Much of the training consisted of children learning the occupations of their parents, as geographic and social mobility were limited and children were typically expected to assume the occupational roles of their own parents” (Hill, 1999: 2).

Not only the daily but also the religious activities were extremely strict due to the Puritan way of life in Colonial America. The parents placed much importance on hard work, religion and discipline as they believed these values would be the key steps

for the salvation of their children. According to Puritan beliefs, the child was born sinful, so they had to be taught religious doctrines so that they could reach spiritual salvation. And in Puritan families, the father was responsible for teaching the Bible and disciplining their children; and the children were to learn religious principles and obey the patriarchal authority. Physical punishment was also a way of disciplining the child. As Shirley A. Hill notes:

“As early as the 1600s, some colonies had begun to require that parents teach their children to read, as reading the Bible was seen as essential to Christian salvation. Overall, children were to work hard, be deferential, respectful and obedient to those in authority, and conform to the values and rules of their families and community” (Hill, 2).

The colonial parents had strong religious beliefs and they thought their children were the reflection of themselves, so religion and discipline were the fundamental ways of child-rearing to shape the children with religious convictions. Demos explains that the children had to be disciplined at early ages even when they were one or two years old in order to repress their stubbornness and break their will, so that they would be virtuous and well-behaved. He writes:

“Surely there is in all children . . . a stubbornness and stoutness of mind arising from natural pride which must first be in the first place broken and beaten down so that the foundation of their education being laid in humility and tractableness and other virtues may in their time be built thereon” (Demos, 1970: 134-135).

Discipline was strict in education as well as in religion. In the first years of colonial times, there was not a formal school system. Instead of the school, the parents took the responsibility for teaching reading and writing to their children in their homes. In addition, a widow or a housewife in the community would bring the children together in their kitchens and teach them to read for a little amount of money and this type of schooling was named as a “dame school.” The aim of education was to read and learn the Scripture:

“In New England households, when there was no one equipped to teach reading, there was often a literate wife in the neighborhood who would teach reading on regular basis for a small fee, in her kitchen, which became a “dame school.” Young boys and girls attended these dame schools. In the first half of the seventeenth century, preaching and catechizing were the primary forms of education practiced in the colonies” (Lascarides and Hinitz, 2000: 177)

The Puritans attached much more importance to schooling because they felt a well-ordered community could be established by industrious, pious and literate

colonists. Therefore, they started to educate their children at their early ages so as to improve their intellect and moral values. Puritan children were encouraged to attend schools by the end of the 17th century; however, the girls were expected to attend school in the mornings or in the afternoons when there were no household duties; and they did not require much knowledge. There was a harsh discipline at schools and the authority of teachers was never questioned. In addition, as Lascarides and Hinitz points out, Puritan education was especially based on religious doctrines:

“The colonists created a new society that was dominated by religion. The church played an important role in society during the seventeenth century and influenced all aspects of colonial life. The children’s education, manners and morals were permeated by religion. The goal of education was to instill the habits of obedience, reverence, and industry. The methods and materials of this education, but not the content, was influenced by the European practices that the colonists had brought with them” (188).

Schooling became much more crucial and available in the 18th century. There were different types of schools that the children could attend in this era like church schools, public schools, private academies, and grammar schools to teach Latin. Education was no more conducted by family organizations, but handled by formal schools. Furthermore, the purpose of education was not only to teach religious instructions, but also to teach history, geography, natural sciences, mathematics, music and art. As Lascarides and Hinitz indicate, education became a significant agency for the colonies: *“As the communities achieved greater stability and self-confidence, schooling became more important because it was viewed by the colonists as the most important defense, after religion, in their struggle against wilderness” (177).*

The colonial life began to change in all aspects during the 18th century. The unceasing immigration to the new land and the decline in mortality rates resulted in a rapid expansion of population. Despite the increased population, there was an economic prosperity and social stability in the communities. Moreover, the idea of childhood changed dramatically in this period. In addition, the ideas of John Locke caused a change in the perception of childhood in this era. He believed that children’s minds were like a “blank sheet” and the children could be nurtured affectionately according to their natural talents and interests. So, the parents began to care for the psychological,

emotional and social needs of their children. Childhood was seen as a special and valuable state as the parents initiated to realize the emotional values of their children.

The profound analysis of childhood in Colonial America put forth the fact that, the idea of childhood had a great shift during the colonial period. Parenting, disciplining, education and the daily experiences of children shed light to the social construction of childhood through the process of colonization. Even though there were diverse communities in Colonial America, their child rearing practices were almost alike. Order, discipline, harmony and religion were the prominent concerns in colonial families; and they regulated their colonial lives according to the priorities of their communities. Moreover, they raised their children within the communal context, so the communal values surpassed the individual values in their families. Compared to the other communities, Puritans gave much more importance to strict family ties and family cooperation, so that they could achieve to establish a successful and divine community “on the hill”. Therefore, the order and the harmony in the family could be managed by improving the moral development of children. Discipline, religion, hard work and education contributed to form the Puritan character of the children.

1.2.2. Childhood in the Industrial Era

Industrialization, the growth of the cities, social and economic changes in the society inevitably affected the status of children as well. On the one hand, there were child laborers working for twelve hours a day in the factories, and on the other hand, there were middle-class and wealthy children who placed emphasis on their self-improvement and education. However, child labor eventually abolished through the century, and the idealization of childhood became widespread among the society. Ultimately, by the twentieth century, economic, social and political reforms reshaped the idea of childhood and focused on the individuality of child.

Consequently, a new concept of childhood peaked in the nineteenth century. Children became the center of the families and their social worth was understood by the society. Due to modernization, the traditional family structure was abandoned which depended on patriarchal authority and child labor. As children were no more seen as economic needs of their families, the parents did not give birth to many

children to support the family incomes: “. . . *neither the industrial economy nor the family needed the labor of children to survive. This led to a greater emphasis on elevating the quality of childhood. . . . Parents were to have fewer children but to invest more economically and psychologically in their offspring*” (Hill, 5). As was in the case of Colonial America, patriarchal authority did not exist in modern American society. Alexis de Tocqueville sheds light to the structure of modern American family nearly two centuries ago when he infers that the relationship between the father and the child is not based on fear or authority. And instead of a formal relationship, there was less respect but more affection towards the fathers:

“Alexis de Tocqueville saw the connection clearly in the 1830s. He said that in aristocratic societies inequality extends into the family, particularly to the father’s relationship to his children. The father is accepted as ruler and master. The children’s relations with him are very formal, and love for him is always combined with fear. In the United States, however, the democratic idea of equality destroys much of the father’s status as the ruler of family and lessens the emotional distance between father and children” (Datesman and et al., 1997: 224).

Nevertheless, the transformation from an agrarian to an industrialized society undermined the traditional American family values and gender roles. In an agrarian society, family was called an “extended family” which consisted of a father, a mother, children and grandparents. There was cooperation in the family and they cared for each other’s needs and demands. The household duties and child rearing practices were shared with the family members. The institution of family was the most essential unit in order to maintain the integrity in the communities.

With economic and social changes from agrarian to an industrialized one, the traditional value of the family diminished, the institutions of family and marriage weakened, the understanding of parenthood altered, family practices and family forms differed, patriarchal authority demolished, intermingled gender roles existed and finally “modern isolated nuclear families” replaced “traditional extended families.

1.2.3. Childhood in the Post- Industrial Contemporary Era

The necessity of reinterpreting the meaning of marriage, parenthood and family has grown out of demographic, social and economic changes in American society since the 1950s:

“For the United States, as for most Western societies, the 20th century proved a period of intense social, economic, and political change, symbolized by key words like industrialization, urbanization, mass migration, the two World Wars, the Cold War , economic crisis, protest movements, expansion of the middle-class, re-definition of social strata, and globalization. Along with these processes of change came normative transformations, specifically in the realm of family values and gender norms” (Heinemann, 2012: 131).

One of the key elements of change in traditional American family and its core values is demographic. In the book *American Ways*, Datesman and et al. explain these demographic factors as baby-boomers, late marriages, childless families and increase in divorce rates as well as long-life spanning and getting older alone:

“In the 1950s, men who had fought in World War II had returned home, married, and were raising their families. There was a substantial increase (or boom) in the birth rate, producing the “baby-boomers.” A second demographic factor is that today young people are marrying and having children later in life. Some couples choose not to have children at all. A third factor is that people are living longer after their children are grown, and they often end up alone. And, of course, there is a fourth factor - the high rate of divorce” (Datesman and et al, 1997: 220).

The most prominent shift in the form of family is in divorce: *“Approximately one out of every two marriages now ends in divorce” (Datesman, 222).* If the couples are not happy, they do not stay married just for the sake of their children. They believe *“[c]hildren actually may be better off living with one parent than with two who are constantly arguing” (222).* If the husband and the wife do not want to live together anymore, they say that they have “irreconcilable differences” and they get divorced easily. Moreover, the husband and the wife place much value on how much they make each other happy. They believe that *“[h]appiness is based primarily on companionship. The majority of American women value companionship as the most important part of marriage. Other values, such as having economic support and the opportunity to have children, although important, are seen by many as less important” (222).* The divorced

couples generally remarry and have children from their latter marriages, as well. As a result, the children have to live in “blended families” with a stepmother, a stepfather, stepsisters and stepbrothers: *“In a ‘blended’ family, the parents may each have children from a previous marriage, and then have one or more children together – producing ‘yours’, ‘mine’, and ‘ours’”* (Datesman, 228). There are also single parents bringing up their children by themselves: *“Many of the single mothers are divorced, but some have never married... Sometimes single parents and their children live with the grandparents for economic and emotional support”* (228). In addition to nuclear families, blended families and single parenthood families, there is also a lifestyle of cohabitation which has emerged as an alternative to formal marriages: *“The definition of ‘family’ has become much broader in the 90s. The majority of Americans would now define it as ‘people who live together and love each other’”* (229).

It is clear that marriage practices have changed since the 1950s. The American families are no more homogeneous, but rather they are in “blended,” “single parenthood” or in “cohabitation” forms. Although most of the American families are not “stable,” the great majority of Americans believe in the power of the family institution: *“They [Americans] are strongly attached to the idea of the family as the best of all lifestyles. . . . Studies show consistently that more than 90 percent of Americans believe that family life is an important value”* (228).

In addition to the demographic factors, the social changes in American society since the 1950s have led to a degeneration of traditional American family values. The Beat Generation in 1950s rebelled against all kinds of conformist values and materialism: *“The Beats were simply the first to very vocally and artistically decry American materialism and conformity”* (Knight, 1998: 3). Instead, they chose their own way of living supporting unlimited freedom in sexuality, exploration and spiritual quest. The women were also influenced by this counter reaction movement and attempted to live marginally.

“Women of the fifties in particular were supposed to conform like Jell-O to a mold. There was only one option: to be a housewife and mother. For the women profiled here, being Beat was far more attractive than staying chained to a brand-new kitchen appliance. ... Nothing could be more romantic than joining this chorus of individuality and freedom, leaving behind boredom, safety, and conformity” (Knight, 3).

The Hippies were highly inspired by the Beats in 1960s: *“In a very real sense, the Beats helped the Silent Generation find a voice and paved the way for the explosion of the sixties”* (Knight, 3). The Hippie counter culture movement emerged as an opposition to the traditional values and established institutions like family and marriage or nuclear weapons and Vietnam War. Instead of war and violence, they embraced peace, freedom and love. With their long hair styles, ragged clothes, sandals, drugs, free love and communal life, the Hippies revealed their dissatisfaction with the dominant culture and created their own counter culture to seek for the new meaning and happiness in life.

The early 1970s was the era of rising Feminist Movements and Civil Right Movements. The ideology of feminism questioned the dominant social norms and values in the society. The feminist activists struggled to eliminate the patriarchal authority and replace the equality in gender roles and in public sphere. The common idea that the family was the fundamental place for women was no more accepted by women, so they stepped out of their sheltered spaces and adapted themselves to the challenging public sphere: *“Women, so the discourse went, while searching for independence and careers, weakened the family both as the social and the biological key unit of society”* (Heinemann, 134). Briefly, the feminist movements aimed to characterize the women as free individuals whose roles were more than being a mother or a housewife.

Besides this, the economic conditions also caused a striking change in the notions of family. The more the women took part in the labor force, the more the men had to take the responsibilities of domestic duties: *“Within this context the issues of reproduction and women’s work seemed crucial, notably in the years from the baby boom to the early seventies”* (Heinemann, 150). Women dared to integrate themselves to the industrialized society, and succeeded in gaining their personal freedom. There were also great shifts in their motherhood practices. They spent less time with their children because of their job-based lifestyles and they began to pay much attention to their individual freedom and equal rights in the family: *“. . . a more liberal norm gradually gained acceptance and women’s work was regarded both as an expression of equal rights and a social reality by the beginning of 1970s”* (Heinemann, 150).

The gender roles began to change due to the changing economic status of the women and the idea of equality in the family. In the book *American Ways*, the American sociologists Letha and John Scanzoni discuss the status of American women in the family and describe its development in four stages. In the first stage, the wife is regarded as a servant to the husband in the 19th century. The husband is the authority in the family, and the wife does not have power in family decisions: *"American wives were expected to be completely obedient to their husbands"* (Datesman and et al., 225). In the second stage, the husband is the head of the family and the wife is the helper of her husband. As the women begin to work in the labor force in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, they support their families economically and they reject to be the servants of their husbands. They take part in the family decisions though the husbands had the final word in the family: *"The husband could no longer make family decisions alone and demand that the wife follow them. The wife was freer to disagree with her husband and to insist that her views be taken into account in family decisions"* (225). In the third stage, during the 20th century, the husband is seen as senior partner, and the wife is called as junior partner according to their high or low contributions to the family incomes: *"Even though she has a job, it has a lower priority than her husband's. If, for example, the husband is asked to move to advance his career, she will give up her job and seek another in a new location"* (226). And lastly, in the fourth stage, the wife and the husband become equal partners. They share the family responsibilities and the family decisions together: *"In the 1990s, most American women believe that they should be equal partners in their marriages and that their husbands should have equal responsibility for child care and household chores"* (226).

The modern American families emphasized on the individual freedom, self-reliance and the equality of opportunity in the family. The primary goal is to bring up their children as free and self-reliant individuals. Therefore, the American parents give their off-springs a lot of freedom in order to achieve to raise ideal children characterized by independence and self-reliance. Another noteworthy value is the idea of equality in the family: *"Children are given a lot of freedom and equality in the family so that they grow up to be independent, self-reliant adults"* (Datesman and at al., 224).

Indeed, parental authority has almost vanished since the 1960s and some American families began to think that *“There is too much democracy in the home”* (222). Nevertheless, the Americans believe the idea of democracy in the family and in the society, so they do not apply to strict discipline on their children: *“Some parents seem to have little or no control over the behavior of their teenage children, particularly after they turn 16 and get their drivers’ licenses”* (222).

The belief in equality have led American children to express their thoughts and opinions freely in the family. They are not judged or humiliated because of their dissenting opinions. They make their own decisions about their own lives and can reject parental authority. They do not want any “sovereign” in their independent lives. They aim to live autonomous lives which are free from parental controls. Hence, most teenagers leave home for their careers or self-supporting life styles:

“American children are expected to “leave the nest” at about age 18, after they graduate from high school. At that time they are expected to go on to college (many go to another city) or to get a job and support themselves. By their mid-20s, if children are still living with their parents, people will suspect that something is ‘wrong.’” (Datesman and et al, 224)

Moreover, young Americans take their decisions freely whom they will marry. The parents do not interfere with their children’s spouse choices because they believe that their children should determine their own lives with their free wills: *“Americans believe that young people should fall in love and then decide to marry someone they can live happily with, again evidence of the importance of an individual’s happiness”* (221).

Although American parents place lots of importance on the emotional and social development of their children as free individuals, they cannot spend enough time with their children because of their busy business life. So the parents present material things to their children in order to make up for the quality time they cannot spend with their children: *“On the other hand, because most children have mothers who are working outside the home, they may not get enough attention from either parent”* (222).

To sum up, the transformation of the American family and its core values basically stemmed from the social changes and the movements since the 1950s. And

the role of American family has become dysfunctional since then. The idea of equality and the individual freedom became the indispensable values of American family. The family members did not sacrifice their individual freedom and happiness for the welfare of their families. As a result, over the years, the importance of the role of the family faded and people adapted to modern family values and saw themselves as equal and free individuals. Moreover, the new child rearing strategies flourished in the 19th century and continued in the 20th century on account of modernization, industrialization and urbanization. The more the role of the family diminished in the society, the less the children valued the institution of family and respected the family members. Nonetheless, the sociologists and psychologists advocate the idea that the children have been invested with the social norms and values of the society that they have grown up. They, therefore, have observed “*the family is the best place for children to learn moral values and a sense of responsibility*” (229). The idea of equality, individual freedom and self-reliance provide the social construction of children in the family. In other words, contemporary American childhood notion has been regulated according to the core values of American society.

CHAPTER TWO

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AND IDEOLOGY

2.1. DECODING AMERICAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

2.1.1. Historical Background of American Children's Literature

The historical background of American children's literature traces back to the nineteenth century. However, in colonial times, there were religious books and tales which instilled the feeling of fear among children and aimed to discipline them according to Puritan doctrines and teachings. Although the books were not written for children, they learned the Puritan attitudes and beliefs from these religious books and tales. However, in the 19th century, along with the spread of Locke's and Rousseau's child-centered viewpoints about the upbringing of children, the gloomy and religious tales lost their influence:

"The ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Locke had gained currency and altered attitudes toward childhood; instead of a predisposition to evil because of an inheritance of original sin, Rousseau had argued that childhood exhibits original innocence and Locke had spoken of the child as a tabula rasa" (Griswold, 1992: 23).

As a result, didactic stories replaced religious ones and Rousseau's ideas about the moral role of children's books began to circulate throughout the United States.

The second half of nineteenth century and the early twentieth century were the milestones of American children's literature, and Jerry Griswold renders this era as the "Golden Age" of American children's books (1865-1914). Since then, the major authors have begun to write books primarily for children creating child heroes or heroines from magical lands or real worlds. To take an example, Louisa May Alcott's children's novel *Little Women* in 1868 depicted the upsetting experiences of Meg, Amy, Jo and Betty's life. On the other hand, L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* in 1900 both presented the harsh realities of Dorothy's life in Kansas and the magical world of Oz that she was hurled into by a disastrous hurricane:

"Oz is an eclectic place like Disneyland – which visitors enter through an idealized version of an American small town at the turn of the century,

and then can meet (in the flesh) Snow White or Alice (from Wonderland), pass by castles or under futuristic skyways, travel through Frontierland and Tomorrowland. In Oz, as in Disneyland, ordinary American citizens find themselves actually living in a fairy tale” (Griswold, 1992: 32).

In addition, in the Golden Age of children’s books, the literary genres ranged from fairy tales, modern fantasies and autobiographical stories to memoirs, realistic fictions and historical fictions. In the book *Audacious Kids*, Griswold studied twelve of the finest literary works which were written in this period and which gained a reasonable popularity among juvenile and adult readers, becoming time-honored childhood classics of America. These American children’s classics are *Hans Brinker* (1865), *The Little Women* (1868), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876), *Toby Tyler* (1880), *The Prince and the Pauper* (1881), *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884), *Little Lord Fauntleroy* (1885), *The Wizard of Oz* (1900), *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* (1903), *The Secret Garden* (1911), *Pollyanna* (1913), and *Tarzan of the Apes* (1914).

“What made these classical tales American? What made them the most popular books and the best sellers of their time and even today? What stimulated the best authors of the era write children’s books? And what caused the rapid rise of American Children’s Juvenile Literature after the Civil War?” (Griswold, 19-20). Griswold has displayed the answers of these questions in the light of American cultural motifs and the striking similarities of American classical books.

Intertextuality is one of the striking similarities of these stories. They essentially share the same plots since it was the previous children’s novels that inspired the emergence of the latter ones. For instance, Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* gave impetus to Kate Douglas Wiggin to write her children’s book *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*. In addition, Mark Twain adapted the story of *The Prince and the Page* into his own book *The Prince and the Pauper*, and Frances Hodgson Burnett was inspired by Mark Twain’s book in his story of *Fauntleroy*. Moreover, Louisa May Alcott’s children’s novel *The Little Women* had a similar story of Laurie and his grandfather like the story of Cedric and his grandfather in *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

The main plot of the stories is based on a child who is orphaned, adopted by persecuting families or adults, makes a journey, gains a psychological victory over

the antagonists, and emerges as an autonomous self. The remarkable resemblances of the plots are not due to the shortage of plots but the purpose of revealing the national character of America: *"Many American children's books must be seen as nationalistic tracts. Following a long tradition of metaphoric reciprocity, we glimpse in them incarnations of America-as-Child"* (Griswold, 15). However, not only the works of children's literature but also the autobiographical documents and the political texts of American writers and thinkers contributed to the construction of American national character.

In addition, the stories also shared the same political history of America which makes the books favorite among the children and adult readers as they trace their national identity in the lives of child heroes and heroines: *"From the beginning of American history through the nineteenth century, Americans consistently saw their political history in terms of the development of a child"* (Griswold, 14). The child protagonists who separate from their parent cope with the hardships of life, overcome neglect, impoverishment, dispossession and deprivation of happy times by travelling to another place which means a new life for them, and finally, they become independent. Huckleberry Finn, for example, departed from his surrogate family, boarded his raft and floated down the Mississippi River with his friend Nigger Jim, and wished for independence in another place: *"Other places do seem so cramped and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft"* (Griswold, 256).

Nostalgia was another resemblance in American children's classical books. As Griswold emphasized, the second half of the nineteenth century had a dramatic change in the attitudes toward the children and American society itself. The developments in science and psychology, the rise of public attention given to the children put the child in the center of American society: *"Beginning in the 1870's, the child rapidly became the center of American cultural life"* (Martin, qtd in Griswold, 24). Additionally, the rapid rise of industrialization and urbanization reshaped the cities and family structures. As a result, not only American people but also American authors and readers felt themselves broken with their past because of the unbelievable changes in the society. So, the authors tried to retrieve their past by celebrating their childhood and the rural America: *"Americans wished to recall the*

prewar bliss of their own agrarian childhood” (20). Therefore, the children’s books written between the period 1865-1914 extensively consisted of memoirs such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* and *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*, or the autobiographical books such as *Little Women* and *Pollyanna*, or the books that exalted rural and pastoral settings such as *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Secret Garden* and *The Tarzan of Apes*. In other words, during the Golden Age, the exalted figure of the child and the longing to the past led the authors of children’s literature to write memoirs, autobiographical or pastoral books, and thus this era became the “Era of the Child”.

The second half of the twentieth century can be regarded as the “Second Golden Age” of American Children’s Literature. During this century, the literary genres of children’s books became much more divergent and the didactic tone of the stories were supplanted by fantastic and realistic tone. In this era, historical stories, picture books, fantasy stories, realistic fictions, and science-fiction novels largely became widespread and popular. For instance, Laura Ingalls Wilder’s *Little House in the Big Woods* (1932) was a historical story which told the author’s childhood experiences and the experiences of young people on the Frontier. On the other hand, Robert McCloskey’s *Make Way for Ducklings* (1941), Margaret Wise Brown’s *Goodnight Moon* (1947), and Maurice Sendak’s classical book *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) were highly well-known and popular examples of children’s picture books. In addition, E. B. White’s children’s novels *Stuart Little* (1945), *Charlotte’s Web* (1952) and *The Trumpet of the Swan* (1970) were noteworthy examples of animal stories. Moreover, Dr. Seuss’ *The Cat in the Hat* (1957) was an outstanding humorous children’s classic. Furthermore, Madeleine L. Engle’s *A Wrinkle in Time* (1962) was a powerful example for science-fiction novel which depicted the battle of “good” and “evil” characters.

In the late twentieth century and the beginning of twenty-first century, American children’s literature has extremely expanded its topics such as race and ethnicity, gender and equality, diversity, politics, freedom, drugs, sex and drinking. For instance, Eve Bunting’s *Smoky Night* (1994) was an exciting children’s book which gave messages about racial reconciliation. Eve Bunting’s other great children’s stories *Fly Away Home* (1991) and *Train to Somewhere* (1996) told the

story of a hope for freedom. Besides these books, *One Green Apple* (2006) by Eve Bunting portrayed the diversity through the experiences of a Muslim immigrant in America. In addition to Bunting's sensitive stories, Karen Katz's *The Colors of Us* (1999), Mary Ann Hoberman's *All Kinds of Families* (2009) and Alphabet Kids' *Oni's Good Hair Day* (2010) also weaved a message of cultural diversity. On the other hand, another children's book *Tales for Little Rebels* (2008) by Julia L. Mickenberg and Philip Nel contained stories for children that celebrated the concerns of gender and equality, civil rights, peace and the honor of labor. And lastly, Cecily von Ziegesar's *Gossip Girl* (2002) novel series focused on the themes such as drinking, drugs and sex through the adventures of privileged teenagers.

In conclusion, American children's literature has dramatically faced great shifts from colonial times to the present. The first books written for children purposefully attempted to mold or train children according to the values of their adults based on religious and moral patterns. Therefore, the early children's literature was, in a way, a reflection of the adult society rather than the imagination of children. However, the more the child became a public figure in the society, the more the child became a centered-figure in children's stories and novels. In the meantime, as the image of the child altered in the society by the nineteenth century, there was no longer obedient child characters in the stories of American children's books. Mischievous free spirits of the child heroes and heroines in American classical tales reflected the spirit of America itself: "*America was no longer John Cotton's nursing babe but a macrocosmic adolescent rebelling against its royal father in England*" (Griswold, 65). Moreover, the literary genres of the literary works gradually became plentiful in time reserving the American themes and values. The diversity of the genres and the themes in children's books enable the child readers to realize all aspects of life and to face with the realities of life that they live in. As a result, all the issues discussed in children's books implicitly raise the children's social consciousness, guide them construct their world viewpoints, and help them become mature.

2.1.2. American Themes and Values

2.1.2.1. Journey and Adventure

“If England were destroyed, the country could be entirely reconstructed from its children’s books (Hazard, qtd in Griswold: ix). This is even more true of the United States and its children’s books” (Commager, qtd in Griswold: ix.)

Literature plays a significant role in equipping the children with the cultural, social and political aspects of the society of its time. That’s why, as it is quoted above, a society can be reborn from its ashes by the help of its children’s literature. There is no doubt that culture determines the experiences of children, and the children, in return, develop themselves a sense of cultural identity which also reveal the reflection of the society itself. In this sense, it is possible to reestablish the country on virtue of children’s books: *“Children’s books are peculiarly revealing about some of the deepest currents of a society’s life” (Macleod, ix).*

Considering the American literary background, the themes and values which have created the American classical children’s stories have also created the American society itself. In other words, American classical children’s books are the cultural indicators of American society. Anne Scott MacLeod indicates that *“by about 1920, children’s literature was a garden, lovingly tended by those who cared about it but isolated as well as protected by the cultural walls that surrounded it” (Macleod, 1994: 125).* Although there are some contemporary books that criticize the dominant American values minutely, the general tendency is to focus on the themes and values which reflect the American identity in all aspects: *“Like childhood itself, America’s children’s classics are what we have in common. They are part of the fabric of our culture- the boy Tom Sawyer gets a fence whitewashed, the desire to run away (like Toby Tyler) and join the circus, the description of someone as a Pollyanna” (Griswold, viii).* Griswold also emphasizes that American classical tales between 1865-1914 reveal certain themes and values which are particularly American such as journey and adventure, freedom and individual autonomy, self-reliance and positive thinking.

The most prominent theme of American's children's literature is the spirit of adventure which is underlying the reason of the foundation and development of America. Curiosity and courage are the backbones of adventure, and journey is the selected path in order to embark on an adventure. Journey means "*leaving of the nest*" and "*cutting of the apron strings*" (Griswold, 11). Embarking on a journey is the first experience of leaving home and separation from the parents. At first, for the child, the feeling of leaving home and his parents creates the state of in-betweenness. He will either choose his previous safe life, or will prefer a challenging life: "*These dualities seem to represent the competing emotions of separation anxiety: the child's simultaneous desire to be independent and fear of separation from the parents*" (11). In spite of this duality, the child hero generally opts for the second life which means freedom and autonomy. And in most of the American classical children's books, the young readers come across with the child hero and heroines who seek for journey and adventure.

Journey brings new adventures and a new identity into the child hero's life. It means that it is the symbol of the "*transition to maturity*" (11). When the child hero leaves home, he becomes mature because he is on his own in his new life and he needs self-responsibility and self-competency to become successful. MacLeod observes some resemblances between a child hero's maturation with America's maturation as an individual society. She states that "*The recurring story of maturation in American children's books embodies and speaks directly to our own particular cultural experience and to America's vision of itself: as a young country, always making itself anew, rebelling against authority, coming into its own, and establishing its own identity*" (MacLeod, 280).

As a result, journey enters the lives of the child heroes and heroines when they are not contented with their first life. Journey provides with a new life which is excluded from "*the death of parents, vanished happy times, poverty and neglect, dispossession and disapproval*" (Griswold, 6). So for the child characters, travelling is a good start to leave the painful experiences behind and begin a new life with new hopes. They take different kinds of journey to travel, and they board either on a raft, a whirling home, a steamboat, or on a stagecoach which take them to freedom and

maturity. Above all, their journey plays an important role in reflecting the spirit of freedom which is the indispensable value for American individuals.

2.1.2.2. The Spirit of Freedom and the Individual Autonomy

The spirit of freedom and the individual autonomy are the other dominant themes and values in American Children's Literature. In the tales, the child protagonists are in search of their individual autonomy as it is the indispensable value for an American individual. That's why, they desire to separate from their previous life which is a boundary for their autonomy and to involve in a new life which means independence, maturity and self-responsibility: "*Maturation should be seen primarily as a process of the child's separation from its parents to achieve autonomy. The impetus for this process of the child's own wish for independence and partly from the parents' encouragement and expectation of the child's becoming independent and assuming responsibility*" (Griswold, 10).

The child-hero's wish to become independent is essentially very similar to the Independence of America from the English authority. The American readers identify themselves with the child hero who "*overthrows its parents and becomes independent*" (Griswold, xi). Therefore, many American readers reread these classical tales as they encounter with many resemblances between the child-hero character and the American character: "*Many American readers, as Americans, were particularly drawn to this story because of our political history (because our national identity began with a similar struggle for independence from Old World 'parents')*" (xi). America, as the child heroes, separated from her royal parent, made a journey to a new life, and declared independence in the new land. In this sense, Huckleberry Finn symbolizes the disobedient and free American character. He rejected authority like America that rejected the authority of England: "*Instead of filial respect, Huckleberry Finn celebrates disrespect for patriarchs and institutional authority*" (Griswold, 65). In addition, the 'Dorothy' character in Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* is the symbol of American people with her self-reliance and individual autonomy. Moreover, *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* is an exemplary of the

individuality. Furthermore, *Tarzan of the Apes* is an epitome of rugged individualism and self-sufficiency. It means that all these child heroes and heroines reflect the American identity in all aspects.

2.1.2.3. Positive Thinking and Self-Reliance

Positive thinking and self-reliance are also important values in American children's literature. The optimism is replaced by negative thinking, since the American identity is built upon the mottos like "Believe Yourself!", "Have Confidence!" and "Never Give up!" So if an American aspires to make his or her American Dream come true, he or she must have confidence and believe in himself or herself. Above all, he or she must be hopeful and never descent into desperation. There is no place for negative thinking in order to make the dreams real. So it is possible to say "*a distinctive national characteristic is the advocacy of positive thinking*" (Griswold, 213). As a result, the idea of positive thinking is a prevailing virtue in many American children's books. To take an example, *The Secret Garden* is one of the classical children's novels which tells us "the inner lives of children" and share the same point of view "*Believe in yourself!*" (Griswold, 214). And American children's books heartens "a confident optimism" (214) which is a cure for negative thinking. For instance, Dorothy is an optimistic heroine who is hopeful in resolving the problems of Tin Man who needs a heart, a Scarecrow who wants a brain and a Lion who wishes his bravery back. She is also confident and determined to overcome the difficulties that she has faced on her way to Oz.

In the meantime, Dorothy character is a good example of the poor's war with good. In the story, Dorothy has to fight against the Wicked Witch of the West that makes magic and persecutes Dorothy throughout her journey. Eventually, Dorothy triumphs over the Wicked Witch, emancipates her friends and the Munchkin Country from her harassment. Like Dorothy, the other child hero and heroines reveal the triumph over the villains and appear as a savior whose identity is acknowledged in the end. The common point among these child characters is that they are lonely individuals. As they desire freedom rather than captivity, they use their own initiative

and choose being lonely individuals. Although they have surrogate families, they do not rely on them: *“Adoption into a second or surrogate family is a symbol of a child’s separation from its parents”* (Griswold, 11). Instead, they just trust themselves and make their own selves. Ultimately, they are “publicly recognized” and rewarded with wealth, inheritances and the return of the “Vanished Happy Time” (9).

Shortly, American children’s literature tries to build a good child through these optimistic protagonists; however, American good child is different from the traditional one who is generally described as goodhearted, humanitarian and benevolent. Unlike the common sense of good child, American good child is characterized as self-reliant, determined, adventurous and autonomous individual. In other words, American children’s literature aims to establish a national identity among the young readers through the core values of American individualism.

2.2. IDEOLOGY AND LANGUAGE

2.2.1. Ideology and Children’s Literature

“Ideologies...are not necessarily undesirable, and in the sense of a system of beliefs by which we make sense of the world, social life would be impossible without them” (Stephens, 1992: 8).

Children’s literature has a crucial impact on the ideological perceptions of a child reader. These perceptions can be constructed by language as it is the means of communicating, sending messages and interpreting narrative codes and structures. Whether it is oral or written language, it contains an ideological discourse. As Volosinov indicates that *“all language is ideological. All sign systems, including language, have not only a simple denotative role, they are also and at one and the same time, evaluative, and thus ideological”* (Sarland, qtd in Hunt, 1999: 41). In this sense, *“all writing is ideological”* and contains *“a social and cultural framework”* in itself (41). And the child readers’ close reading enables them to reveal the cultural codes and social practices in the writing and construct an ideological significance through language.

Ideology and language are inseparable notions because *"It is through language that the subject (the reader) and the world are represented in literature, and through language that literature seeks to define the relationship between child and culture"* (Stephens, 5). Stephens argues that ideology is the part of a child's social life because when the child joins society, he or she gets the signifying codes of the society which design itself and acts according to its structure. Language is the fundamental code of the society which provides social communication, and one more usage of language *"through which society seeks to exemplify and inculcate its current values and attitudes is the imagining and recording of stories"* (Stephens, 8). So language has a critical role in providing communication with the child reader and making a common sense of the society through an ideological narration in children's stories.

'Identification' is an important ideological device in order to interpret the ideological assumptions hidden in the language. It is assumed that the child is influenced by the emotions and the actions of the characters in the children's novels. As Donna Norton says *"Identification is a process [which] requires emotional ties with the model; children believe they are like these models and their thoughts, feelings, and characteristics become similar to them"* (Oberstein, qtd in Hunt, 16). Thus, the question why and how the children read lies at the core of the idea of 'identification'. The child reader recognizes his or her needs, expectations and feelings while identifying himself or herself with the characters of the stories. As the Israeli critic Adir Cohen has stated:

"Writers have become aware that, for the child, a book is a source of satisfaction that derives from identification and participation, and an expansion of his own experience. They provide him with an opportunity with catharsis, self-knowledge, and broadening his psychic experience. The process of reading, identification, participation and relating brings the reader into the reality of the book in dynamic fashion" (Cohen qtd in Hunt, 1988: 31).

In addition, an impressive plot, a simple language, amusing elements and highly-qualified protagonists immensely affect the perception of the child reader, and these effective elements particularly raise the curiosity of children and help them develop the idea of identification. John Glazer and Gurney Williams states that *"the strong materials - good plots, rich settings, well-developed characters, important themes and artistic styles . . . bold and imaginative language"* (Glazer and Williams,

qtd in Hunt, 22) make the children's books good rather than 'the likes and dislikes' of child readers.

Some authors believe that moral and cultural values are the other essential items which are purposefully instilled into the children's books, and by this way, the child readers are supposed to learn these values implicitly. Rosemary Sutcliff notes "*I am aware of the responsibility of my job; and I do try to put over to the child reading any book of mine some kind of ethic*" (Sutcliff, qtd in Hunt, 18). On the other hand, some authors neglect the moral and didactic patterns in children's stories because they think that the stories should give the child readers spontaneous pleasure instead of giving didactic messages or teaching moral values. For instance, John Aiken avoids giving moral messages in children's books claiming that "*Children have a strong natural resistance to phoney morality. They can see through the adult with some moral axe to grind almost before he opens his mouth*" (Aiken, qtd in Hunt, 18). Although there is a disparity among the writers in reflecting the dominant moral and cultural values of the society, the general tendency is to teach these values in children's books because, as John Stephens points out:

"Children's fiction belongs firmly within the domain of cultural practices which exist for the purpose of socializing their target audience. Childhood is seen as the crucial formative period in the life of a human being, the time for basic education about the nature of the world, how to live to think- in general, the intention is to render the world intelligible" (Stephens, 8).

Charles Sarland puts forth the idea that in the 1970s, there was a discussion about representing specific values in children's books such as white, male and middle-class values. So these stereotypical terms made the books class biased, racist and sexist. The protagonists were generally white middle-class boys; the black characters and the working-class characters hardly appeared in the stories. If they were portrayed, they were described as villain characters or respectful characters for their middle-class 'betters.' Also, the female characters were usually identified with traditional female roles.

In addition, in children's books, the child is generally portrayed as innocent, good, ingenious and talented who copes with the difficulties or with the bad characters in the stories. However, in opposition to the dominant discourse, some authors promote the idea that the child is not as innocent as it is thought to be because

ideological structures are embedded in children's literature, and thus they influence the child's perceptions: "*Children's literature was never pure and objective, never just for instruction or just for amusement*" (Zipes qtd in Mickenberg and Nel, 2008: vii).

According to contemporary literary criticism, all the literary works, even a simple children's book is encompassed with an ideological narration. The ideology can be feminist, racist or politically ideological which are disguised by pictures, symbols or language. For instance, the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* involves feminist items. The children's book *The Slave Dancer* depicts a racist point of view, and the book entitled as *Tales for Little Rebels* has a political ideology. Jack Zipes writes his views about ideology in the introduction of *Tales for Little Rebels*:

"The very idea of 'radical children's literature' may be surprising, because we do not commonly think about the connections between children's literature and politics. But children's literature has always been ideological. Consider an ABC from the 1680s: 'A. In Adam's Fall / We Sinned all.' And, next to a picture of a Bible, 'B. Thy Life to Mend / This Book Attend.' The New England Primer teaches more than just literacy .

. . . From the Puritans to the present day, the didactic tendency of books for young children suggests that adults have no problem prescribing a moral framework for the young. Yet there is the tendency to fear that 'political propaganda' will taint a young child's 'innocence.'

[...] Teaching children to obey a moral authority can be understood as a moral lesson, but it can also be understood as a political lesson" (Mickenberg and Nel, 1) .

Peter Hollindale operates the ideology in children's books in three aspects such as 'overt' ideology, 'passive' ideology and 'underlying climate of belief' ideology (Hunt, 47). Overt ideology has a purposive didactic tone, since the narrator openly reveals his ideological thoughts and opinions in the text and tries to take the child reader to his own side. In these texts, ideology is generally made of the values that are highly granted in that society, and the narrator advocates for these values overtly. In passive ideology, the narrator implicitly illuminates the "*beliefs, politics and social customs*" (Stephens, 10) of the society so that the implicit ideologies are internalized by the implied readers without any enforcement. In a way, the implicit presence of the narrator is much more effective than his explicit presence while reflecting the ideology in children's books. In the third strategy, Hollindale describes ideology as "*the words, the rule-systems, the codes which constitute the text*" (10). It means that the ideology is inscribed in language in order to "*suppress articulations of conflict and to restrict*

signification to the attitudes and interests of dominant social groups” (10). Hollindale argues that all these ideologies aim to create awareness in the child reader so that they will be able to understand “how such ideologies operate in fictional representations they may be more empowered to identify equivalent ideological apparatuses in their experiences in the actual world” (11).

It is obvious that ideology cannot be excluded from children’s literature because, as Jack Zipes asserts “*All literature is political or ideological to a certain extent*” (qtd in Mickenberg and Nel, vii). And ideological messages are transmitted to the children by deconstructing the hidden messages in the texts. The child reader brings the fiction and the reality together and gets the implied messages disguised in fictional world and adapts them to the real world. Thus, the construction of child as an individual depends on the social construction of childhood with the cultural ideologies penetrated into the children’s books: “*All cultures have ideologies . . . All things produced in a culture are expressions of that culture’s ideology- from architecture, to fashion, to laws, to scientific endeavors, to children’s literature*” (Parsons, qtd in Nel and Paul, 2011: 113).

After all, as John Stephens has noted “*Writing for children is usually purposeful* (Stephens, 3). So, throughout children’s literature history, different books are written for different purposes at different periods. Some of them are written for teaching religious beliefs; some are printed for depicting social attitudes; others are produced for demonstrating political viewpoints; some others are published for having a good time or just for commercial concerns. In this respect, the child reader is exposed to the different purposes of adults to generate meanings from the symbolic representations, pictures and implied messages reflected in the children’s books. In addition, it shouldn’t be forgotten that everything in life can be a point of a story whether it is amusing, moral, didactic or ideological. Because fairy tales, stories and fiction are nurtured by the cultural elements of the societies where they have flourished. In this sense, children’s literature reflects the social, cultural and ideological values of the society, and the child as the major subject of children’s books constitute their cultural, moral and political point of views based on these values. In other words, the ideological exploration of children’s fiction help the audience understand the ideological construction of child reader.

2.2.2. Ideology and the Construction of Child Reader

We analyze the child and the children's literature in terms of the adult's worldviews, values, bias and attitudes because of the fact that the children's books are written by the adults for the youngsters: *"Children are our past and our future; in them we invest our hopes and fears, for ourselves and for the world. The literature we write for children is inevitably permeated by our most fundamental emotional attitudes toward ourselves, toward our society, and, of course, toward childhood"* (MacLeod, 1994: ix). That is to say, the child reader reads what the author has presented to them. In a way, the child reader's worldview is shaped by the author's worldview which is weaved by the cultural codes and structures of the society. That's why, it is very crucial what the author intends to transmit to the child readers, and how? In the children's books, the author generally tends to impose the dominant values of the society to the child reader by using effective words, sentences and illustrations. It is almost impossible to think the opposite as the author cannot isolate himself from the dominant social norms and values of his society and also, it is easier to teach these values implicitly in these illustrated and adventurous books. In this respect, Wolfgang Iser (1978), a reader-response theoretician, attracts the attention to the cultural insights of the texts which construct the perceptions of the child readers. He points out the fact that *"texts brought with them a cultural repertoire which had to be matched by the reader"* (Hunt, 1999: 48). Macherey (1978) also draws the attention to the ideology which is implicitly inscribed into the texts, and also into the readers. In addition, Catherine Belsey develops an ideological perspective from Althusser, Derrida and Lacan's observations and analyses *"the ways in which the subjectivity of the reader is ideologically constructed"* (48).

Above all, John Stephens explores the key role of ideology in the construction of the implied reader. He focuses on the narrative viewpoint and the narrative focalization which help the ideological construction of implied child reader: *"The most important concept for children to grasp about literary fictions is always that of narrative point of view, since this has the function of constructing subject positions and inscribing ideological assumptions"* (Stephens, 56). Stephens claims that each narration has ideology and it is hidden in the texts in different narrations such as

omniscient narration, first-person narration and focalization. In the first narrating process, as Stephens has emphasized, the omniscient narrator exerts his dominance overtly over the reader and tries to contribute to the ideological formations of the reader. In the second narrating process, the first person narrator constructs the ideology by identifying the reader with the narrator and by placing the reader in a subject position in the text. By this way, the reader shares the ideological assumptions of the narrator, and if the narrator is mistaken about his views, the reader is also charged with the narrator's error. And lastly, in the third narrative process, which is called focalization, ideology is presented to the reader by the main character in the text, and the reader identifies himself with the main character and creates his own ideology based on the main character's ideology. Like Stephens, Charles Sarland also indicates the notion of identification with these words: *"The assumption is that readers 'identify with' the protagonists, and thus take on their particular value positions. Readers are thus ideologically constructed by their identification with the character"* (qtd in Hunt, 49).

On the other hand, Roland Barthes and Umberto Eco particularly focus on the role of the polysemous texts in the ideological construction of the reader. Barthes draws the attention to the plurality of the codes in the texts which cause the plurality of readings. And Umberto Eco analyses this plurality in terms of ideology. He acknowledges the fact that each text has an ideological basis, whether it is presented implicitly or explicitly in the text. However, he asserts that the readers have three alternatives to get the ideology of the texts as:

"They can assume the ideology of the text and subsume it into their own reading; they can miss or ignore the ideology of the text and import their own, thus producing 'aberrant' readings – where "aberrant" means only different from the ones envisaged by the 'sender'; or they can question the text in order to reveal the underlying ideology" (Sarland qtd in Hunt, 49.)

It can be deduced that the significance of the text depends on the ideological perceptions of the reader from the text. As John Stephens states, the significance can be constructed by top-down and bottom-up reading processes. In the top-down reading process, the readers bring their *"prior knowledge and preconceptions about books and the world to a reading"* (Stephens, 1992: 44). And in the bottom-up reading process, there are *"textual structures such as the representations of direct*

speech, and especially conversation, (which) have a powerful influence in implicitly predetermining the significances readers may find” (44). The child reader integrates the top-down reading into the bottom-up reading process. This enables him to “*have assumptions about how narratives are shaped and become meaningful” (44),* and also these processes help him infer overt or covert ideological significance from the text.

In conclusion, all texts contain either an implicit ideology or an explicit ideology, and there are some narrative processes which directly address to the ideological construction of the child reader. Whether the child is under the control of omniscient narrator’s ideology, or influenced by first-person narrator’s ideology, or under the impact of focalization, he is more or less exposed to the dominant cultural ideology: “*Narratives invariably have thematic purposes and functions, whether deliberately because they seek to inculcate something about life, or implicitly because no encoding of a story can be free of societal and / or ideological marking” (Stephens, 14).*

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL CRITIQUE OF AMERICA

3.1. SOCIAL HERITAGE OF AMERICA

3.1.1. American Values and Beliefs

3.1.1.1. Frontier and Rugged Individualism

Historical background of American individualism began with the new settlers in the New World. The desire to be free from the government authority, traditional institutions and churches draw the masses of immigrants to explore new lands to settle and to constitute a new nation. They achieved to establish their new nation in America denying the authority of their old nation in England. Then the exploration continued in the new continent in hope of better places for a better future: *“They came to believe that it was their destiny to control all the land, and eventually they did”* (Datesman and et al., 64). In other words, the frontier experience promoted the progress in the west as it presented abundant resources of free lands. Thus, the frontier experience generated the spirit of freedom and the spirit of rugged individualism which shaped the American character profoundly. The frontiersman faced with the hardships of unknown territories, so he had to be self-sufficient, self-supported and self-reliant in his struggle for this unknown nature. Frederick Jackson Turner represented the rugged individualism as the outcome of the frontier. Not only Turner but also some other American scholars such as Benjamin Franklin, Alexis de Tocqueville, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson largely contributed to the development of rugged individualism. With his thirteen virtues, Franklin formulated the success-oriented life of an American individual. In addition, De Tocqueville observed the American society in 1830s and expressed his beliefs as *“They owe nothing to any man, they expect nothing from any man; they acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands”* (Frohnén, 2002: 467). In his observation, De Tocqueville stressed on the self-sufficiency and self-reliance of

American individual. Moreover, Thoreau, as a rugged individualist, rejected the authority of an unjust government on the individual's conscience and exalted the power of individual in his 1849 essay "Civil Disobedience": "*The progress from an absolute to a limited monarchy to a democracy, is a progress toward a true respect for the individual . . . There will never be a free and enlightened state, until the State comes to recognize the individual as a higher and independent power, from which all its own power and authority are derived, and treats him accordingly*" (Bedau, 1991: 48). Furthermore, Emerson advocated the philosophy of individualism and self-reliance in his 1841 essay under the title "Self-Reliance". He believed that the individuals had to be self-reliant in order to maintain their individual freedom. And this can only be achieved by relying on themselves and their capabilities. He stated that "*Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron spring*" (Lauter, 2010: 240). Emerson was opposed to conformity and consistency; on the other hand, he emphasized self-reliance and individual freedom for the development of the individual. In this respect, for the American scholars, the individual was much more important than the society. They advocated that a responsible individual would be able to develop the idea of trusting himself and create the ideals of the nation such as independence and democracy.

As a result, individualism and self-reliance originated in the battle against the nature in the frontier. The American pioneers paid their prices for their individual freedom and developed self-reliance in order to survive in the untainted nature. In this sense, "the land of opportunity" offered the opportunities of individual freedom, self-reliance, self-fulfillment, equality, hard work, success and material wealth. And all these values shaped the American character and became the part of American value system.

3.1.1.2. Hard Work and Material Success

The value of hard work was a frontier necessity and the material success was the natural consequence of their hard work: "*Hard work has been both necessary and rewarding for most Americans throughout their history*" (Datesman and et al., 27). When the first settlers immigrated to America to chase for fortunes and have a

better life, nature was unexplored and the natural resources were unlimited. When they settled in these new areas, they began to cultivate the fertile lands and changed the natural resources into 'material possessions'. So they saw these material possessions "*not only as tangible evidence of their work but also of their abilities*" (27). They also converted the unsettled areas into living areas and established their communities there: "*The frontier provided many inspiring examples of hard work as forests were turned into towns, and towns into large cities*" (64). Ultimately, they overcame the cruel challenges of the frontier and accomplished establishing a new nation in the new land.

The immigrants owed much to their hard work in attaining their goals for a better life and reaching their higher standards of living. Although not all the immigrants made their American Dream come true, they strongly believed that their hard work would be an opportunity for their children to acquire the material wealth they dreamed of. In this respect, material wealth became a significant sign of determining American's hard work and material success. In the meantime, it was also regarded as the sign of social status as Datesman and et al., stated "*Material wealth has traditionally been a widely accepted measure of social status in the United States. Because "Americans rejected the European system of hereditary aristocracy and titles of nobility, they had to find a substitute for judging social status"*" (27).

Hard work and material success were the highly respected values for American people not only on account of their historical significance but also of their religious heritage. According to Puritan religious belief, material success had a holy meaning because the people who worked hard and attained material wealth in the world were blessed by God and obtained salvation: "*The Puritan work ethic associated material success with godliness*" (27). Even Bishop William Lawrence asserted that "*Godliness is in league with riches . . . Material prosperity is helping to make the national character sweeter, more joyous, more unselfish, more Christlike*" (qtd in Datesman and et al., 48). For Puritans, hard work was also a sublime value as they believed that material wealth could only be gained by hard work; in other words, nobody could get material success without hard work. In addition, hard work was also the basic virtue for "*the planting of a city on the hill that might become*

somehow *City of God itself*" (Susman, 1984: 41). In this sense, American people gave high priority to hard work and material success as these are the blessed values that helped them establish "a city upon a hill" and shape the American character based on Puritan morality: "*Puritanism and Puritan past somehow determined much that has become characteristic of the nation: the sense of the burden or the glory of this particular past has been present in almost every decade*" (Susman, 1984: 41).

Beside hard work and material wealth, self-discipline was also rendered as "*a holy characteristic blessed by God*" (Datesman and et al., 48). The virtue of self-discipline brought with it the idea of 'investing and saving money' instead of wasting it promptly. All these values, hard work, self-discipline and material success, constructed the "*Protestant work ethic*" or "*the Puritan work ethic*" which emphasized on "*industry, thrift, achievement of wealth*" (Susman, 42). These values had also great influence on the social and economic development of America as Datesman pointed out "*Protestant tradition, therefore, may have played an important part in creating a good climate for the industrial growth of the United States, which depended on hard work and willingness to save and invest money*" (48). As a result, this work ethic became the part of American life and largely contributed to the industrialization and urbanization of the United States.

Meanwhile, we still encounter with the reflections of "Puritan work ethic" in contemporary America. Material success is a priceless 'possession' for American people as they ensure their life with prosperity. They work long hours in order to reach their goals and make their dreams come true. And their hard work reward them with material success and with a prestige in the society. They do not like depending on anyone else socially or economically; therefore, they work hard to gain their economic freedom and individual freedom. Many American people even believe that "*people should hold jobs and not live off welfare payments from the government. In the 1990s, ... there was enormous resentment against groups such as "welfare mothers", young women who do not marry or hold a job but have children and supported by payments from the government*" (28). For Americans, the value of freedom is above all, so they dedicate their time and hard work so as to get the freedom in all aspects. Shortly, hard work, self-discipline and material success rooted

in the frontier, flourished in Puritan morality and became the distinguishing characteristic of American society.

3.2. DECONSTRUCTION OF AMERICAN INDIVIDUALISM

3.2.1. The Drawbacks of American Individualism

“Loneliness is a national feeling” (Bellah, 1985: 158)

America whose historical heritage was based on individualism experienced the drawbacks of being an individualistic society especially in the 1950s and thereafter. The rugged individualistic society that Benjamin Franklin, Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson tried to create in the 18th and 19th centuries of America was drawn into transformation due to the developments after the first and second World War, and the following years. The urbanization, industrialization, developing technology and mass-media had a big impact on the reinterpretation of American individualism and its consequences.

Firstly, American individualism caused the emergence of success-oriented and money-oriented individuals who value self-achievement and material wealth. In his *Autobiography*, Benjamin Franklin attributed to the thirteen virtues of virtuous human including industry, frugality and temperance which were the keys for self-improvement and self-success: *“The self-made man, archetypical embodiment of the American Dream, owed his advancement to habits of industry, sobriety, moderation, self-discipline, and avoidance of debt” (Lasch, 1979: 53)*. These virtues were also the leading principles of Puritan work ethic which underpinned the economic prosperity of American society: *“According to the myth of capitalist enterprise, thrift and industry held the key to material success and spiritual fulfillment” (Lasch, 52)*. In addition, in the 18th century, prosperity not only meant material wealth but also *“good health, good temper, wisdom, usefulness, and the satisfaction of knowing that you had earned the good opinions of others” (55)*. However, in the nineteenth century, the meaning of prosperity, success and self-improvement dramatically

disguised: *"In the nineteenth century the ideal of self-improvement degenerated into a cult of compulsive industry"* (56). And in the late nineteenth century, *"preachments on success began to stress the will to win"* (57). Hence, the success-oriented individuals attempted to gain their self-success by competing harshly with their peers: *"The struggle to surpass the previous generation and to provide for the next way to a form of sibling rivalry, in which men of approximately equal abilities jostled against each other in competition for a limited number of places"* (58). Lasch argued that *"the transformation of the myth of success...is a long-term development arising not from particular historical events but from general changes in the structure of society: the shifting emphasis from capitalist production to consumption; . . . the increasingly dangerous and warlike conditions of social life"* (63). These social changes converted the significance of success and the Puritan work ethic as Lasch asserted *"In an age of diminishing expectations, the Protestant virtues no longer excite enthusiasm. . . . Advertising undermines the horror of indebtedness, exhorting the consumer to buy now and pay later. . . . A profound shift in our sense of time has transformed work habits, values, and the definition of success"* (53). Although work ethic tended to lose its excitement gradually, its original meaning did not entirely fade away from American culture *"even at the height of the Gilded Age"* (57).

The capitalist culture which promoted the individual entrepreneur created the perception of working harder, earning more, and becoming happier. The individuals became money-oriented individuals who longed for material comfort and material fulfillment. In other words, the materialistic individuals reinterpreted the meaning of self-success as material success, and thus the ambition to earn more money became the priority target of the individuals: *"The prophets of positive thinking disparaged 'the old adage that hard work alone is the magic key that will unlock the door to our desires.' They praised the love of money, officially condemned even by the crudest of Gilded Age materialists, as a useful incentive"* (58). In addition, in the nineteenth century, "all values" were defined in "monetary terms" like *"Charity was a moral duty because 'the liberal man will command patronage, while the sordid, uncharitable miser will be avoided'. The sin of pride was not that it offended God but that it led to extravagant expenditures"* (56). Moreover, the value of temperance in

the eighteenth century shifted its meaning into excessiveness in the late nineteenth century, and so on. In other words, the early capitalist culture of America encouraged the individuals to live excessively which meant earn more and spend more. Shortly, the ideal of nineteenth century emphasized on success and materialistic values; however, these values were internalized differently from the eighteenth century Puritan virtues.

At the same time, the values on which American individualism based upon created isolated individuals. Due to the excessive addiction to success and materialism, the American people isolated themselves from the society since they believed that there was no need to others on the way to become successful in business life or in social life. As they did not believe in interdependence in the society, they tried to do their best by working hard and relying on themselves: “An emphasis on hard work and self-support can go hand in hand with an isolating preoccupation with the self” (Bellah and et al., 1985: 56). The need to be self-reliant resulted in the lack of confidence to others; and thus they gradually alienated themselves from the society and became isolated individuals. This isolation created emptiness in one’s life as Robert Bellah stated:

“We strongly assert the value of our self-reliance and autonomy. We deeply feel the emptiness of life without sustaining social commitments. Yet we are hesitant to articulate our sense that we need one another as much as we need to stand alone, for fear that if we did we would lose our independence altogether. The tensions of our lives would be even greater if we did not, in fact, engage in practices that constantly limit the effects of an isolating individualism” (Bellah and et al., 151).

As an American sociologist, Bellah focused on the social critique of contemporary American society and middle-class family. He and the co-authors of *Habits of Heart* explained the idea that American individualism rooted not only in John Winthrop’s “biblical individualism”, but also in Thomas Jefferson’s “civic individualism” and in Benjamin Franklin’s “utilitarian individualism” (142). In addition, Emerson and Thoreau exalted the importance of individualism in building up an American character. In the meantime, the materialistic progresses in industrialization contributed to the development of utilitarian individualism, as well. And then the modern individualism became apparent in American society. Whether it was biblical, civic, utilitarian or modern individualism, all of them shared the

“dignity and autonomy of the individual” (143). However, Bellah observed that individualism was a problematic notion not only for American individuals but also for American society as it glorified “private good” rather than “public good”. He did not entirely disregard the importance of individualism, but focused on the possible drawbacks of individualism as he wrote:

“Individualism lies at the very core of American culture . . . We do not argue that Americans should abandon individualism-that would mean for us to abandon our deepest identity. But individualism has come to mean so many things and to contain such contradictions and paradoxes that even to defend it requires that we analyze it critically, that we consider especially those tendencies that would destroy it from within” (142).

Not only modern individualism but also the ideology of capitalism became a problematic issue in the contemporary American society. American capitalist system compelled the individual to survive in the system of mass-production and mass-consumption which promoted materialistic rewards such as wealth, rivalry and competition rather than cooperation, collaboration and coordination. As an American individual, Marra James explained her observations like this: *“Most people have been sold a bill of goods by our system. I call it the Three C’s: cash, convenience, consumerism. It’s getting worse”* (qtd in Bellah and et al., 158). In this respect, American capitalist system condemned the ideology of communal utilitarianism while exalting the individual utilitarianism so that American individual became more and more isolated in the system of economic rivalry and competition. Like Christopher Lasch, David Riesman also stressed on the impact of capitalist culture on the individual like this: *“The linkage between work and property in an era of competitive capitalism . . . reinforced the possibilities of isolation from the people”* (Riesman and et al., 1961: 114).

The more American people became isolated from the society, the more they became lonely. In the second half of twentieth century, American individualism which advocated self-achievement, self-improvement, self-help and self-fulfillment gave place to an entire loneliness syndrome in American society. Because all these individualistic values imposed the teachings of trusting on yourself rather than the others as Tocqueville defined *“The American insistence that one always rely on one’s own judgement rather than on received authority, in forming one’s opinions and that one stand by one’s own opinions”* (Bellah and et al., 147). As a result, the

distrustfulness to the others isolated the people from the society and drove the masses into the feeling of loneliness.

In a way, contemporary American people became like the lonely and isolated cowboy heroes of the frontier. *"The mythic individual hero, the cowboy, who again and again saves a society he can never completely fit into....His destiny is to defend society without ever really joining it. He rides off alone into the sunset....He is isolated and antisocial"* (145). Like the cowboy, the American individual resisted belonging to institutions such as family or society, but he preferred to stand alone, to preserve his autonomy and self-reliance taking the risk of loneliness and emptiness. However, as a Native American writer, Paula Gunn Allen drew the attention to the perils of loneliness and suggested a radical innovation in American society as:

"In 1974, Americans no longer afford the masochistic love of loneliness. The problems that confront us cannot be solved by a lone hero riding into town, a "law unto himself." No one can save us, but we must learn how to save ourselves-all of ourselves. We cannot do it unless we have models of community; America needs to become a tribe" (Allen, 1998: 32).

In the book *The Lonely Crowd*, an American sociologist David Riesman and his co-writers made a socio-cultural analysis of the societies, particularly of the American society, and portrayed three types of social characters which were "tradition-directed", "inner-directed" and "other-directed" types. Riesman claimed that these character structures shed light to understand the social forms of the societies because as long as the social forms shifted, the social characters shifted with them, as well. In this sense, in the mid-twentieth century, American social character was regarded as other-directed due to the rapid social changes of the society in the twentieth century: *"The other directed type does find itself most at home in America, due to certain unique elements in American society. I am also inclined to put more weight on capitalism, industrialism, and urbanization on any character-forming peculiarities of the American scene"* (Riesman and et al., 20). According to Riesman, in modern, industrialized and urbanized American society, the other-directed people were directed by their friends, peer-groups, contemporaries or by the mass media of communications such as popular culture movies, comics, radio or television. These other-directed individuals desired to be approved by the others as they highly valued the opinions and the decisions of other people more than their own opinions and decisions as Riesman stated *"His need for approval and*

direction from others-and contemporary others rather than ancestors- goes beyond the reasons that lead most people in any era to care very much what others think of them” (22). In addition, the rapid social changes in the social structure of the society on account of consumerism, technology and the mass media caused the feeling of ‘anxiety’ among the other-directed individuals: *“The sources are many, the changes rapid . . . one prime psychological lever of the other—directed person is a diffuse anxiety” (25).* In other words, the society became more and more complex compared to the tradition-directed and the inner-directed societies so that the other-directed individuals resolved the problem of their insecurities by isolating themselves from the society which became too complicated. As William Palmer stated on his article *“The other-directed individual compulsively seeks approval from others, tends to withdraw from society because he finds it too complex, and leaves it to others to defend his interest” (21).* Although the other-directed people deeply felt the feeling of isolation and the fear of loneliness, they needed other people in the society to be directed.

While the 1950s’ America was described as “The Lonely Crowd” by David Riesman, the 1970s’ America was identified with the term “Narcissistic Culture” by another American sociologist Christopher Lasch. According to Lasch, the social changes after the First and Second World War break the family ties and gave priority to the happiness of the individual. Thus, the individual devoted his full time and energy for his own happiness and pleasure, irregardless of others’ lives and well-beings. As a result, this self-oriented society boosted consumerism in the second half of the twentieth century. Hence, the consumer culture promoted admirable lifestyles for competitive individuals, let them chase immediate pleasures and provoked their desire to be admired; and above all, it led up to the emergence of narcissistic social character whose philosophy was to focus on himself and his own happiness; to love himself and care for himself more than others. Even though the narcissist thought himself superior to others, he needed admiration to feel himself powerful and valuable as Lasch wrote:

“Notwithstanding his occasional illusions of omnipotence, the narcissist depends on others to validate his self-esteem. He cannot live without an admiring audience. His apparent freedom from family ties and institutional constraints does not free him to stand alone or to glorify in his individuality. On the contrary, it contributes to his insecurity, which

he can overcome only by seeing his "grandiose self" reflected in the attentions of others, or by attaching himself to those who radiate celebrity, power, and charisma. For the narcissist, the world is a mirror, whereas the rugged individualist saw it as an empty wilderness to be shaped to his own design" (Lasch, 10).

Lasch also argued that not only the consumer culture, but also the lack of commitment to the past, the insecurity to the people in power and all sorts of freedom like sexual freedom and individual freedom made the individuals avoid from constructing permanent relationships, feeling social commitment to others and respecting their past. Therefore, he emphasized that this indifference to the past and to the society drew America into a pathological narcissistic society: *"In a narcissistic society... the cultural devaluation of the past reflects not only the poverty of the prevailing ideologies, which have lost their grip on reality and abandoned the attempt to master it, but the poverty of the narcissist's inner life" (xvii).* The narcissist was not only indifferent to the past but also to the future. Therefore, he seized the day and lived for his immediate pleasures: *"To live for the moment is the prevailing passion-to live for yourself, not for your predecessors or posterity. We are fast losing the sense of historical continuity, the sense of belonging to a succession of generations originating in the past and stretching into the future" (5).* In addition to all these, Lasch drew attention to the void within the self, and the individual tried to fill the void by "narcissistic dreams of fame and glory" which were glorified by the mass media. Lasch displayed the scary scene of the impacts of the mass media on American people as:

"The mass media, with their cult of celebrity and their attempt to surround it with glamour and excitement, have made Americans a nation of fans, moviegoers. The media...encourage common man to identify himself with the stars and to hate the "herd," and make it more and more difficult for him to accept the banality of everyday existence" (Lasch, 21).

In conclusion, the social conditions of the twentieth century changed the social norms and the social character of American society. The Americans who strictly seized Puritan work ethic and morality used this situation as a means of their self-interest, self-satisfying and self-success. And by the influence of competitive individualism, the 1950s' America converted into a "Lonely Crowd", and consequently became a thoroughly narcissistic culture. Lasch summarized the

cultural deconstruction of America and its product of new American social character like this:

“Today Americans are overcome not by the sense of endless possibility but by the banality of the social order they have erected against it. Having internalized the social restraints by means of which formerly sought to keep possibility within civilized limits, they feel themselves overwhelmed by an annihilating boredom, like animals whose instincts have withered in captivity . . . People nowadays complain of an inability to feel.... Outwardly bland, submissive, and sociable, they seethe with an inner anger for which a dense, overpopulated, bureaucratic society can devise few legitimate outlets” (Lasch, 11).

3.2.2. Community versus Society

Community” and “Society” are the two significant human organizations which constitute the values of communitarianism and individualism. Ferdinand Tönnies predicates the terms of community and society on the two concepts of human will which are natural will and rational will. Tönnies has asserted that community depends on natural will which is described as a concept that *“involves thinking in the same way as the organism contains those cells of the cerebrum which, if stimulated, cause the psychological activities which are to be regarded as equivalent to thinking (and in which the center of speech is undoubtedly a participator)” (Tönnies, 1988: 103).* Natural will encompasses feelings like instincts, unconscious motives, emotional demands and feelings of self-expression. *“The most primitive forms of community depended on feeling rather than reason...and the foundation of community-the family came from the sexual and material needs of humanity. Instinct also ruled in the second stage of human development” (Tönnies, xv).* In other words, Tönnies believed that in community, *“instinct motivated human behavior” (xviii)* rather than reason.

On the other hand, he has claimed that society depends on rational will which means *“a product of thinking itself and consequently possesses reality only with reference to its author, the thinking individual, although this reality can be recognized and acknowledged as such by others” (103).* Unlike natural will, rational will embodies reason rather than feeling. In this respect, the rational will brings science into the forefront which is regarded as *“the culmination of the progress of modern civilization” (xvii).* Tönnies has also pointed out that whether it is natural

will or rational will “*each concept of will must be developmental and encompass the progress of humanity from being determined by nature to a freedom achieved by reason*” (xv).

Community differentiates from society in terms of the social norms and values in which it has embodied. Tönnies describes the community (*gemeinschaft*) as a social organization which is associated with traditional rural communities economically based on agriculture and intellectually based on religion, which has close social relationships “*based on friendship, on neighborliness, and on blood relationships*” (5), which has a social lifestyle based on common interests rather than individual interests, which has social norms based on “*habit and custom*” (xvi) and which has social and moral values determined by fundamental social institutions like family and church. “*This attempt to master nature, demanded the structure of the Church and the authority of the Pope . . .*” (xvi). “*In Gemeinschaft these norms are sanctioned by religion through its beliefs, faith, and creeds*” (9).

On the other hand, society contains an entirely different social structure from the community. Due to the industrialization and urbanization, and in parallel with these, the growing cities, increasing trade and rising needs of people cause a tremendous change in economic and social structure, in science and in social relationships. As a result, the community, its social norms and values which are molded by nature will begin to lose its importance, and thus the rise of society which is the outcome of rational will becomes apparent. As Tönnies has pointed out “. . . with the development of trade, the modern state, science, the natural will and *Gemeinschaft*-like characteristics of social entities, norms and values gave way to rational will and *Gesellschaft*-like characteristics” (3).

For Tönnies, the society (*Gesellschaft*) represents a modern city life where the economic relations are based on industrial production which is “*related to the development of capitalism*” (3) rather than agrarian production, where the social relationships are regulated by three types of social norms which are “*order, law and morality*” (8) rather than “*custom which is rooted in common habits*”(8), and where the social order is regulated by “*convention*” rather than “*concord (Eintracht)*” (8), where the law is based on “*written*” rather than “*unwritten law*” (9) , and where the moral norms are “*sanctioned by public opinion*” rather than “*sanctioned by*

religion” (9). And he has asserted that *“The more complex and rationalistic society becomes the more the forms of law become divorced from custom, folkways, and mores of the people, and the more important legislative law becomes”* (9). In this respect, Tönnies describes the society as *“scientific, individualistic and rationalistic”* (10) human organization.

All these social developments are regarded as a shift from natural will to rational will, that is, the transformation of community to society. This shift is necessary, and even compulsory in order to step into a modern society: *“The process of change through which the individual who was controlled by natural or integral will in his Gemeinschaft was “freed” and became the subject of rational will, was “healthy” and “normal”* (2). In other words, as Tönnies has stated *“Gemeinschaft represented the youth, and Gesellschaft the adulthood, of society”* (3).

3.2.3. Communitarianism Beats Individualism

3.2.3.1. The Importance of Communal Values

“A communitarian perspective recognizes both individual human dignity and the social dimension of human existence” (Etzioni, 1998: xxv).

In studying the history of human organizations, communitarianism and individualism are the two significant philosophies that mold the social identities of the humans. Communitarianism is the outgrowth of the concept of community, and vice versa, individualism is the outgrowth of the concept of society. In this sense, communitarian societies and individualistic societies have totally different characteristics.

Communitarian societies stress the importance of society and community more than the individual. In fact, they do not identify the individual as a separate being from the community; on the contrary, community and the individual are bound up with each other which mean that the existence of the individual thoroughly depends on the communities or the groups that he/she belongs to. In addition, the

communitarians do not identify themselves with “I”, but with “we”. This identification reveals the fact that the common goals are much more significant than the individual goals in communitarian societies. The communal identities are molded by communal values such as interdependence, sharing, altruism or communal responsibility:

“Communitarians generally make several claims about the nature of persons and human identity not least that persons are embedded in communities. They claim that the self is constituted to some extent through a community that provides shared values, interests or practices. A person’s individual values are formed in the social context of these communities and often pursued through communal attachments” (Kymlicka, qtd in James and Bailey., 2014: 7).

Moreover, the communitarians feel emotional and social commitment to the other people in the community, and they not only care for social duties and obligations, but also for group decisions and group interests. Therefore, the communitarians need to establish a long-lasting and intimate friendship, neighborhood and family relations so as to maintain the harmony and consensus in the community, and to serve both common good and common interests. As Pitirim Sorokin, a Russian American sociologist, has stated *“familistic relationships are permeated by mutual love, sacrifice, and devotion. They are most frequently found among members of a devoted family and among real friends. Familistic relations represent a fusion of the ego into ‘we’”* (qtd in Tönnies, 1988: 18).

Unlike communitarianism, individualism sees the individual as a separate being from the society that he/she belongs to; that is to say, individualism gives priority to individual over community and society. In this sense, “I” is a dominant notion in individualistic societies, and these societies have autonomous individuals who seek for independence, self-reliance, self-achievement, self-help and self-responsibility. The individuals are in pursuit of their own happiness and their own interests rather than common good and common interests. This means that the individual interests are superior to common interests, and individual rights are much more important than social responsibilities. America, as an individualistic society, shapes its character on these individual values which comes from the social and historical background of American culture:

“The historic decisions made by those first settlers have had a profound effect on the shaping of the American character. By limiting the power of

the government and the churches and eliminating a formal aristocracy, they created a climate of freedom where the emphasis was on individual. The United States came to be associated in their minds with concept of individual freedom. This is probably the most basic of all the American values. Scholars and outside observers often call this value individualism, but many Americans use the word freedom” (Datesman and et al., 29).

Although America establishes its founding values on individualism, it is destined to be criticized profoundly because of its darker sides in contemporary America. The social and cultural changes after the 1950s and the following years, the loss of credibility to the government, the diminishment of important moral values, the destruction of family structure and the excessive stress on the individualism underpinned the emergence of communitarianism in the 1990s: *“The new, post-1990 initiative that launched The Responsive Community and formulated the communitarian platform often has been credited with taking communitarian ideas from the campus to the larger society; . . . ” (Etzioni, x).* The foremost sociologist of the communitarian thinking, Amitai Etzioni, aims to emphasize the importance of communal values in order to balance the individual values with the communal values in American society. He advocates the idea that *“the theory of a good society will need to deal simultaneously with both dangers; with a society whose communal foundations are crumbling and with one in which they have risen to the point that they have block out individual freedoms” (xi).* In the meantime, the ideas of new communitarians differ from the ideas of old communitarians in interpreting the communitarian concepts:

“While the old communitarians tended to stress the significance of social forces, of community, of social bonds, (and in the case of Asian communitarians- that of social harmony), elements neglected in the individualistic ideologies they criticized, the new communitarians have been concerned from the onset with the balance between social forces and the person, between community and autonomy, between the common good and liberty, between individual rights and social responsibilities” (Etzioni, x).

As a new communitarian, Etzioni attempts to increase the awareness of the ideology of communitarianism regardless of Puritanism in American society. This ideology focuses on the reawakening of the morality, restoring the social order and rearranging the social structure of the society. In this sense, family and school play a critical role in restoring the moral voice and maintaining the social order in American

society: *“To rebuild America’s moral foundations, to bring our regard for individuals and their rights into a better relationship with our sense of personal and collective responsibility, we must therefore begin with the institutions of civil society”* (Etzioni, xxviii). The family and the school are the two prominent institutions of civil society which help *“the moral education and character formation”* (Etzioni, xxviii) of people. The new communitarians believe that the destruction of the family structure means the destruction of the society; however, they do not advocate a traditional family in which the father is regarded as the authority; on the contrary, they advocate a family in which the members share the same rights and responsibilities and the parents both devote themselves to their children. So the parents have a social and moral responsibility to raise their children in accordance with moral values. This is very important for shaping the characteristics of the children: *“The best place to start is where each new generation acquires its moral anchoring: at home, in the family. . . . Child-raising is important, valuable work, work that must be honored rather than denigrated by both parents and the community”* (xxviii). Like families, schools should take the responsibility of shaping the characteristics and of teaching moral values to the children: *“In effect, the whole school should be considered as a set of experiences generating situations in which young people either learn the values of civility, sharing, and responsibility to the common good or of cheating, cut-throat competition, and total self-absorption”* (xxx). Etzioni argues that teaching the moral values at schools should not be considered as “brainwashing”; on the contrary, he believes that schools and teachers should take the responsibility of moral education. However, the argument is that *“Whose morals are you going to teach?”* (xxix). Etzioni sheds light on the matter as:

“We ought to teach those values Americans share, for example, that the dignity of all persons ought to be respected, that tolerance is a virtue and discrimination abhorrent, that peaceful resolution of conflicts is superior to violence, that generally truth-telling is morally superior to lying, that democratic government is morally superior to totalitarianism and authoritarianism, that one ought to give a day’s work for a day’s pay, that saving for one’s own and one’s country’s future is better than squandering one’s income and relying on others to attend to one’s future needs” (Etzioni, xxix-xxx).

The new communitarians agree that giving due importance to education, strengthening the family structure and reanimating the social and moral virtues, keeping the balance between the individual rights and social responsibilities, and keeping the consensus in the common values can provide a moral, social and public order without depending on religious and authoritarian concepts. And this order can be achieved by creating the awareness of “we” in the society because the society cannot exist unless there is a common sense, common good and common values which hold the society together.

In this respect, in an attempt to revive the American society, it is necessary to heal the moral, social and cultural structure of the society by uniting in common values without regarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual. In other words, shared values and shared goals can generate the spirit of community in American society. Thus, as Etzioni has stated “*America should foster a spirit of reconciliation*” (xxxi). And “*the mutual respect and tolerance*” (xxxi) can provide this reconciliation in American society.

Robert Bellah is another new communitarian sociologist who seeks for the balance between individualism and communitarianism: “*For a long time, our society was held together, even in periods of rapid change, by a largely liberal Protestant cultural center that sought to reconcile the claims of community and individuality*” (Bellah and et al., 155). Bellah has a critical point of view to American individualism as it creates isolated individuals in contemporary American society, yet he does not totally ignore the core values of individualism. Rather he emphasizes the importance of communal values in American individualistic society: “*Therapists see a need for the social ties that they cannot really comprehend-they cry out for the very community that their moral logic undercuts. Parents advocate ‘values’ for their children even they do not know what those ‘values’ are*” (144). In his book, *Habits of the Heart*, Bellah shares the experiences and thoughts of American individuals about the significance of the concept of community and communal values in American society. In this sense, Parker Palmer believes the consensus between “private and public” as he explains that “*in a healthy society the private and the public are not mutually exclusive, not in competition with each other. They are, instead, two halves of a whole, two poles of a paradox. They work together dialectically, helping to*

create and nurture one another” (163). Bellah also explains the importance of communal values through Cecilia Dougherty’s point of view as “Community means a solidarity based on a responsibility to care for others because that is essential to living a good life” (162).

In addition, an American scholar and author Paula Gunn Allen underlines the necessity of communal values and communal goals in order to resolve loneliness problem in American society. As the ideology of American individualism created lonely and isolated individuals, there must be a way out of this loneliness and isolation, that is embracing the values of the community. Allen has pointed out that: *“It requires giving up America’s real love: loneliness. This time America can’t do it herself. She needs models for community...America needs to find ways to preserve identity that do not result in destruction of the community...Humans cannot exist in isolation; they go insane (Allen, 32-33). Like Etzioni and Bellah, she advocates the idea that there must be a balance and harmony between the individual interests and common interests. In this respect, “America needs to learn ways to preserve the individual’s sense of identity, and the nation’s, in a pluralistic, culturally diverse society” (33).*

Like Etzioni, Bellah highlights the significance of family in the social structure of the society: *“Families can be communities, remembering their past, telling the children the stories of parents’ and grandparents’ lives, and sustaining hope for the future...Where history and hope are forgotten and community means only the gathering of the similar, community degenerates into lifestyle enclave” (Bellah and et al., 154). So the institution of family has a great prominence in strengthening the social ties, building up a bridge between the past and the present, reserving hope for the next generations, and forming the characteristic traits of the children through identification: “Children do not grow up through abstract injunctions. They identify with their parents, they learn through role modeling, and they are influenced by the historic specificity of their family, church, and local community” (152). In addition, Paula Gunn Allen also suggests strong institutions like family and good child-rearing practices so as to secure uniformity in American society: “America needs child-rearing models and models for communities that integrate and support families in their economic, interpersonal, and child-rearing*

tasks. America needs a guide to the overhauling of institutions so that they can foster persons and communities instead of dividing and destroying them” (Allen, 33).

It can be inferred that the importance of communal values and the ideology of communitarianism has begun to be realized in contemporary America due to the negative influences of individualism in American society. The more American individuals become isolated, lonely and narcissistic, the more the value of communitarianism is recognized, and thus, the awareness of the communal values raises as these values awaken the feeling of belonging to a place, to the family, to the others, and above all to the society. For many sociologists, scholars and individuals, it is essential to live in balance and in harmony melting the core values of American individualism and unifying power of the communal values in one pot. For them, that is the way of a healthy society and a happy society.

CHAPTER FOUR

E. B. WHITE

4.1. THE MORAL VOICE OF E.B. WHITE

4.1.1. E. B. White and His Writing Style

E.B.(Andy)White deserves the title he bestows, through the characters in Charlotte's Web:

"Some Writer!" (Atkins, G. Douglas, 2012: ix)

E. B. White is one of the foremost literary figures of his time. He is a versatile writer who addresses the audience of all ages with his poems, essays, letters and books. White got into a new literary field in 1945 releasing his first children's book *Stuart Little* with a great success. Then, he published two more children's books, *Charlotte's Web* (1952) and *The Trumpet of the Swan* (1970), which received high acclaim like his first book. White became one of the most prominent children's authors of his era with his three distinguished children's books which reflect the moral voice of E. B. White successfully.

When E. B. White creates his stories for children, he does not aim for writing to a specific group of age. *"I am lucky though, as I seldom seem to have my audience in mind when I am at work. It is as though they don't exist"* (*The Paris Review*, 2009: 147). Although he believes that there is a distinction between children's fiction and adult fiction, he does not "shift gears" in his writing style for the sake of his child readers. *"Anybody who shifts gears when he writes for children is likely to wind up stripping his gears"* (*The Paris Review*, 2009: 146). White advocates the idea of creativity in language. He also believes in creativity and curiosity of his child readers, so he advises that:

"You have to write up, not down. Children are demanding. They are the most attentive, curious, eager, observant, sensitive, quick and generally congenial readers on earth. They accept almost without question, anything you present them with, as long as it is presented honestly, fearlessly, and clearly" (White qtd in *The Paris Review*, 147).

White's audience can easily feel pure language in his children's classics. He avoids unnecessary words, long sentences and elaborate descriptions, but rather he

prefers needed words, short sentences and plain descriptions. For instance, he describes Stuart simply, but clearly like: *“When Mrs. Frederick C. Little’s second son arrived, everybody noticed that he was not much bigger than a mouse. ... He was only about two inches high; and he had a mouse’s sharp nose, a mouse’s tail, a mouse’s whiskers, and the pleasant, shy manner of a mouse”* (SL, 1-2). Meantime, the young readers can feel the rhythm of words and sentences which make White’s stories pleasant to read. For instance, the “swing” passage in *Charlotte’s Web* invites the readers not only to visualize the scene and remember their own swing experiences, but also feel the motion of the swing and rhythm of the words:

“Mr. Zuckerman had the best swing in the country. It was a single long piece of heavy rope tied to the beam over the North doorway. At the bottom end of the rope was a fat knot to sit on. You climbed a ladder to the hayloft. ...Then you got up all your nerve, took a deep breath, and jumped. For a second you seemed to be falling to the barn floor far below, but then suddenly the rope would begin to catch you. ...Then you would drop down, down, down out of the sky and come sailing back into the barn almost into the hayloft, then sail out again (not quite so far this time), then in again (not quite so high), then out again, then in again, then out, then in; and then you’d jump off and fall down and let somebody else try it” (CW, 68-69).

In E. B. White’s novels for children, the protagonists are animals, and the human world is pictured from an animal point-of-view. Although they are animal characters, they have human abilities and feelings which help them understand the human world better. *“‘What does exalted mean?’ asked the cygnet. ‘It means you will feel strong, glad, firm, high, proud, successful, satisfied, powerful, and elevated-as though you had conquered life and had a high purpose’* (TS, 55). In addition, the human characters choose the animal characters to befriend in the stories. So they have the opportunity of empathizing with the animals, and they get to know the world of animals better. By this way, E. B. White equalizes the feelings of human characters with the feelings of animal characters. In a way, he aims to subvert the supremacy of human world over the animal world which is in fact equal in nature:

“Stuart Little is a novel that disturbs the clear demarcations human have drawn between themselves and other living beings in order to maintain ascendancy in a human-devised species hierarchy. White’s insistence on Stuart’s indeterminacy and unfinalizability - he simply is both a mouse-

like animal and a human and must remain so-gives readers the post-humanist license to acknowledge that all humans are animals and to look for ways to level those systems of value and behavior that allow humans to exploit non-human species” (Elick, 2015: 169).

In the meantime, the stories are told by the third-person narrators with an omniscient point of view. The omniscient narrator enables the child readers to learn everything that happens throughout the story, hear the inner voices of the characters, understand their feelings and thoughts, and be aware of their dreams and plans. For instance, in *Charlotte’s Web*, we hear the loneliness of Wilbur from his inner voice saying that “ *I am very young, I have no real friend here in the barn, it’s going to rain all morning and all afternoon, and Fern won’t come in such bad weather. Oh, honestly!*” (CW, 27). The third-person omniscient narrator hides himself in the background and never appears in the story; whereas his omniscient point of view reveals the covertness in lines and tells us what the story characters are thinking. For instance, in the book *The Trumpet of the Swan* it is written like “*The cob stood quietly, thinking about what his wife had just told him. He was a brave, noble bird, and already he was beginning to work out a plan for his little son Louis*” (TS, 46). In other words, the third-person narration with an omniscient point of view becomes the mouthpiece of the author in his children’s novels.

4.1.2. Healing Narrative of E. B. White

“A writer should concern himself with whatever absorbs his fancy, stirs his heart, and unlimbers his typewriter ... A writer has the duty to be good, not lousy; true, not false; lovely, not dull; accurate, not full of error. He should tend to lift people up, not lower them down. Writers do not merely reflect and interpret life, they inform and shape life” (The Paris Review, 147).

The narrative of a story is very crucial for children as it becomes a voice for children’s own experiences: “*Children can ‘see’ themselves mirrored in the faces, cultures, language, and traditions of the narrative, and this is both comforting and affirming*” (Karges - Bone, 2015: 6). The child readers make sense out of the characters and the narrative of the story, and shapes his or her own critical thinking. In this respect, the author’s narration gains a special importance in embracing the social and cultural issues through the well-fictionalized plots and characters. The

narration becomes a mediator between reality and fiction. And the words, pictures and characters become the significant patterns to create a reality in the narrative of the story.

While an author is narrating a story, he or she purposefully brings his or her own worldviews into the story and attempts to reshape the child reader's point of view. E. B. White sets forth the idea that an author should put himself in the background of the story and convey his opinions implicitly throughout the story using an effective narrative: *"Every writer, by the way he uses the language, reveals something of his spirit, his habits, his capacities, his bias. This is inevitable as well as enjoyable"* (qtd in Root, 2008). Besides, the authors' opinions, creativity and critical thinking take shape by means of the cultural values and social developments of the society that they live in. Therefore, it is rather difficult for the authors to isolate their individual identities from their social identities. On the contrary, they must be the voice of their societies. *"A writer must reflect and interpret his society, his world; he must also provide inspiration and guidance and challenge"* (E. B. White qtd in White, 213).

E. B. White reflects the American society and its core values in his literary works, including his children's books: *"Throughout his career, he wrote often of the importance of having freedom, fighting for it when necessary, and the responsibilities that come with having freedom"* (Aronson, 2005: 26). In fact, a history professor named George Lincoln Burr had a great impact on White's opinions and critical thinking. He realized and appreciated the significance of the individual when Burr talked about the grim reality of lack of fundamental freedoms and education in middle ages. White states his gratitude with these words: *"My chance encounter with George Lincoln Burr was the greatest single thing that ever happened in my life, for he introduced me to a part of myself that I hadn't discovered. I saw with blinding clarity, how vital it is for man to live in a free society"* (Aronson, 25).

Above all, what distinguishes E. B. White from his contemporaries is that he successfully melts the American individual values with the communal values in the same pot through a healing narrative: *"At various times White has commented wryly on the American scene and has defended human values and aspirations, always with*

*a grace and precision that set his style apart from that of his contemporaries” (Gale, 1988: 476). On the one hand, White exalts the values of freedom, success and determination in his children’s books; on the other hand, he highlights the spirit of community and glorifies the significance of communal values which are neglected in American society. Even though he adopts the American values as an American individual, he criticizes his own society on account of creating isolated individuals and lonely Americans: “. . . but it was White who more gently tapped the individual American on the shoulder, directing his attention toward the folly and beauty of his own humanity” (Gale, 480). But then he proposes a healing by embracing both the individual values of American society and the universal values of humanity as equally important in opening the doors of self-made and self-reliant man: “White became one of these century’s most admired humorists, although his reputation as a thoughtful, serious defender of human values is equally if not more significant. On various occasions, he criticized, worried over, or poked fun at the natural and human worlds- but he never ceased to love and celebrate them” (480). As a result, in White’s children’s books *Stuart Little* (1945), *Charlotte’s Web* (1952) and *The Trumpet of the Swan* (1970), the child readers feel not only the importance of communal values such as friendship, compassion and loyalty, but also the vitality of American core values such as competency, achievement and self-actualization.*

4.2. THE MORAL VOICE IN *STUART LITTLE*, *CHARLOTTE’S WEB*, *THE TRUMPET OF THE SWAN*

4.2.1. Awakening Individual Consciousness Through Communal Bonding

E. B. White’s children stories appeal to so many readers of all ages and create an awareness in their imagination. White with his children’s story *Charlotte’s Web* recieved the Newberry Medal in 1953; the National Medal for Literature in 1971 and the William Allen White Award for *The Trumpet of the Swan* in 1973. And these rewards demonstrate his success in the field of American Children’s Literature, as well. As an influential writer, E. B. White achieves to touch the hearts of his audience with his three fascinating animal stories, *Stuart Little* (1945), *Charlotte’s*

Web, and *The Trumpet of the Swan* (1970). The stories successfully blend American individual values such as success, determination, freedom of individual with communal values such as friendship, loyalty, sacrifice, solidarity, compassion, empathy and social responsibility. The communal values are not so common themes in children's fiction as they do not belong to the core values of American society. Reminding the significance of these values, E.B. White aims to demonstrate his critical point of view of American society. He succeeds his primary goal in depicting the availability of communal values in American individual society that can help an individual feel less isolated, but much happier. For the most important fact is that the characters are not isolated individuals. They value their families and friends who saves them from loneliness and isolation: *"To be all alone in a hotel room gives a person a cozy feeling and a feeling of importance. Louis felt great. But soon he began feeling rather lonely, too. He thought of Sam Beaver. He thought of Camp Kookooskoos. He thought of his father and mother and sisters and brothers, back home in Montana. He thought of Serena"* (TS, 161). Louis's case explains the strength of family and friendship and their impact on eradicating the feeling of loneliness and isolation. Although Louis feels himself as an important person staying alone at such a grand hotel, he feels much more important and valuable when he spends time with his family and has an adventure with his friend Sam. That is to say, family and friendship are the healing of loneliness and isolation. In short, the protagonists reach their goals with their self-reliance and self-competence. However, they never become lonely or isolated heroes with the help of their friends and families, and also with the communal values that they have tightly embraced throughout the stories.

White's first distinguished book *Stuart Little*, is a story of a two-inch mouse born into a human family. The arrival of the mouse, Stuart, is highly welcomed by the family members and Stuart's parents take care of him carefully like his human brother, George: *"Before he was many days old he was not only looking like a mouse but acting like one, too- wearing a grey hat and carrying a small cane. Mr. And Mrs. Little named him Stuart, and Mr. Little made him a tiny bed out of four clothes-pins and a cigarette box"* (SL, 2). Stuart lives in New York City with his parents Mr. And Mrs. Little, his elder brother, George and the cat, Snowbell. After a while, a new

guest arrives home named Margalo, a beautiful little bird. Stuart helps his parents in the house, plays with Margalo and seeks for adventure in the city. Stuart befriends Margalo in a short time and have good time together: *"Margalo liked it so well at the Little's house she decided to stay for a while instead of returning to the open country. She and Stuart came fast friends, and as the days passed it seemed to Stuart that she grew more and more beautiful. She hoped she would never go away from him"* (SL, 57).

However, Snowbell, the cat doesn't like living with a mouse and a bird in the same house. And Margalo is afraid of Snowbell since he waits for the opportunity of attacking her. Because of the fear of being hurt by Snowbell, Margalo runs away from the house without daring to say anything to anybody, not even to his friend Stuart:

"Finally, just before dark, she hopped up to an open window and without saying anything to anybody she flew away" (SL, 71). Margalo was a true friend to Stuart, so when he leaves, Stuart is very saddened and worries about her: *"Stuart was heartbroken. He had no appetite, refused food, and lost weight"* (SL, 72-73). One day, Stuart leaves home in hope of finding Margalo. On his way to find Margalo in the countryside, he goes on some adventures like driving his own car, substituting a teacher, meeting new people, or drinking sarsaparilla. His journey filled with new adventures and experiences helps him to acquire new skills and competency. It serves as a rite of initiation through which he gains self-awareness and maturation. Travelling alone and overcoming various obstacles on the way, he builds self-confidence and self-mastery. He feels like everything is working on his behalf: *"As he peered ahead into the great land that stretched before him, the way seemed long. But the sky was bright, and he somehow felt he was headed in the right direction"* (SL, 131).

His second profound book, *Charlotte's Web* was released in 1952 with the story of true friendship between a spider, named Charlotte and a pig, named Wilbur. Their true friendship is an exemplary friendship for the other barnyard animals on the farm. First, the story begins with the friendship of Wilbur and Fern Arable who adopts Wilbur after convincing her father, Mr. Arable, not to slaughter Wilbur for being born as a weak piglet. Fern takes care of him carefully and befriends him. Then

when Wilbur is strong enough, he is sent to Mr. Zuckerman's (Fern's uncle), farm where Fern can visit Wilbur whenever she wants. In his new barn, Wilbur feels lonely and isolated until he meets his new friend named Charlotte. Charlotte is a helpful, self-sacrificing and imaginative spider which saves Wilbur from being butchered in the winter: *"He is a very innocent little pig. He doesn't even know what's going to happen around Christmastime; he has no idea that Mr. Zuckerman and Lurvy are plotting to kill him (CW, 40).* Charlotte weaves words into her web like "Radiant, Some Pig, Terrific" so as to describe Wilbur and to persuade Zuckerman that his pig is worth saving: *"Just before they left the pigpen, Mr. Zuckerman took one last look at Wilbur. ... 'I have thought all along that that pig of ours was an extra good one. He's a solid pig. That pig is as solid as they come. You notice how solid he is around the shoulders, Lurvy?'" (CW, 81-82).* Charlotte's plan works well and helps Wilbur's owner believe that he has an extraordinary pig. Wilbur also drives the other barn animals into his deep-laid plan and sends Wilbur to the County Fair to show his skills and he becomes a famous pig by the help of his true friend, Charlotte. *"While Wilbur was being unloaded and taken out of his crate and into his new pigpen, crowds gathered to watch. They stared at the sign Zuckerman's Famous Pig" (CW, 133).* While Wilbur's life is rescued by his self-sacrificing and loyal friend, Charlotte's life ends after she lays her eggs. In order to show his gratitude and loyalty to his friend, Wilbur takes care of the egg sac and help the little spiders grow up. And then most of the baby spiders leave the barn for their own journey and maturation in other places. However, three little spiders stay with Wilbur to befriend him.

"At last one little spider took time enough to stop and talk to Wilbur before making its balloon. 'We're leaving here on the warm updraft. This is our moment for setting forth. We are aeronauts and we are going out into the world to make new webs for ourselves'.

'But where?' asked Wilbur.

'Wherever the wind takes us. High, low. Near, far. East, west. North, South. We take to the breeze, we go as we please'" (CW, 179-80).

And in 1970, White released his third children's novel, *The Trumpet of the Swan*, which became well-known in children's literature with the story of an ambitious, voiceless trumpeter. Louis, the mute swan is born in Red Rock Lake in

Montana, in the wilderness of Canada where it is the best habitat for the swans to live together happily and freely. The Red Rock Lake is described in the book as:

“And there, in a lovely valley surrounded by high mountains, are the Red Rock Lakes, which nature has designed especially for swans. In these lakes, you will enjoy warm water, arising from hidden springs. Here ice never forms, no matter how cold the nights. In the Red Rock Lakes, You will find other Trumpeter Swans, as well as the lesser waterfowl– the geese and the ducks. There are few enemies. No gunners. Plenty of muskrat houses. Free grain. Games everyday. What more can a swan ask, in the long, long cold of winter?” (TS, 54).

Having a speech defect is such a big problem for a swan that it is too difficult to find a mate without a voice. *“But it will be serious two or three years from now when Louis falls in love, as he will surely do. A young male swan will be greatly handicapped in finding a mate if he is unable to say ko-hoh, ko-hoh, or if he can’t utter the usual endearments to the young female of his choice” (TS, 44).* Louis, the cob is determined to overcome his speech handicap by learning how to read and write and how to play the trumpet with the help of his human friend, Sam Beaver. *“I’ll buy you a music book that tells what the notes are. And Sam did. He found a book of trumpet calls, such as they use in the Army. He read the instructions to Louis” (TS, 100).*

Sam Beaver and Louis becomes friend and Sam helps his swan friend to read and write and to play the trumpet, but Louis needs a trumpet to communicate and attract his female mate, Serena. So Louis’ father makes a plan and steals a trumpet for his son from a music store in Montana. He takes a risk for his son, Louis in order to help him get rid of his speech handicap and lead a happy life with his mate. Louis learns to play the trumpet and achieves to attract Serena’s attention. However, Louis feels so sorry as his father has broken into a music store and has stolen the trumpet just for his son’s good: *“In his beak was the trumpet. In his heart was the pain of having committed a crime” (TS, 94).* Louis desires to save his father’s honor, so he decides to earn money and repay the debt of the trumpet that his father has stolen. He makes enough money playing the trumpet in different jobs and pays back the money to the music store for the stolen trumpet and for the damage at the store: *“My moment of truth is at hand. I shall soon be out of debt, out from under the cloud of*

shame and dishonor that has cast a shadow over my life for lo these many months” (TS, 228). Eventually, Louis recovers his father’s honor, wins his mate’s heart and unites with Serena: “As long as he lived, he felt grateful to his father, the brave cob who had risked his life in order to give him the trumpet he needed so badly. Every time Louis looked at Serena, he remembered that the sound of the trumpet was what had made her willing to become his mate” (TS, 248).

E. B. White was a writer not only for his adult audience but also for his young audience. During his life, he received many letters from his child readers about his fictional characters, Charlotte, Wilbur, Stuart and Louis, asking him if his animal characters were true. He replied to his child fans in a letter saying that *“No, they are imaginary tales, containing fantastic characters and events. ... But real life is only one kind of life – there is also the life of the imagination. And although my stories are imaginary, I like to think that there is some truth in them, too – truth about the way people and animals feel and think and act” (White, 221).*

4.2.1.1. The Sources of Communal Bonding

4.2.1.1.1. Friendship

“Friendship is one of the most satisfying things in the world” (CW, 115).

E. B. White’s highly well-known children’s books can be regarded as success stories. What is striking is that success and friendship goes hand-in-hand throughout the stories. The implied narrator covertly gives the message that success gains meaning in true friendship. All the animal protagonists have true friends who help them reach their targets in life. In other words, the true friends bring success into the lives of animal heroes by displaying their loyalty, making commitment, making sacrifices and feeling empathy.

In *Charlotte’s Web*, the story is fundamentally based on a true friendship. Charlotte keeps up Wilbur’s friendship above all. The power of friendship between Wilbur, the little pig, and Charlotte, the loyal spider, saves Wilbur’s life and brings

publicity to him on the farm. When Wilbur is sent to Mr. Zuckerman's farm, he suffers from loneliness and boredom on his first days on the farm complaining like:

*“‘Are you out there, Templeton?’ called Wilbur.
There was no answer. Suddenly Wilbur felt lonely and friendless.
‘One day just like another,’ he groaned. I am very young, I have no real
friend here in the barn, it’s going to rain all morning and all afternoon,
and Fern won’t come in such bad weather. Oh, honestly!’ And Wilbur
was crying again, and for the second time in two days” (CW, 27).*

Wilbur has no friends to play and enjoy his time. Henceforth, he misses his old friend, Fern who saves his life from Mr. Arable's brutal plan and she looks after him painstakingly. Fern also likes Wilbur so much that she visits him in the pigpen so often and watches Wilbur for long hours. *“But he told Fern that she could sit on the stool and watch Wilbur as long as she wanted to. It made her happy just to be near the pig, and it made Wilbur happy to know that she was sitting there, right outside his pen. But he never had any fun-no walks, no rides, no swims” (CW, 16).* However, in his new home, he feels a little scared as it is quite difficult to make a new friend in a new place and it is like a “gamble” as he says: *“‘Well, ’ he thought, ‘I’ve got a new friend, all right. But what a gamble friendship is! Charlotte is fierce, brutal, scheming, bloodthirsty – everything I don’t like. How can I learn to like her, even though she is pretty and, of course, clever?’”*. In time, Wilbur and Charlotte become best friends and Wilbur's fears about Charlotte disappears:

“Wilbur was merely suffering the doubts and fears that often go with finding a new friend. In good time he was to discover that he was mistaken about Charlotte. Underneath her rather bold and cruel exterior, she had a kind heart, and she was to prove loyal and true to the end” (CW, 41).

Before becoming friend with Charlotte, Wilbur asks for the geese, the sheep and the rat, Templeton to become his playmate. However, they are not in need of making a friend as they do not know the meaning of friendship. Although they live in the same barn, they don't communicate or play together. The answers of Templeton clearly display the fact that he even does not know the meaning of play:

*“‘Will you play with me, Templeton?’ asked Wilbur.
 ‘Play?’ said Templeton, twirling his whiskers.
 ‘Play? I hardly know the meaning of the word.’
 ‘Well,’ said Wilbur, ‘it means to have fun, to forlic, to run and skip
 and make merry.’
 ‘I never do these things if I can avoid them,’ replied the rat, sourly.
 ‘I prefer to spend time eating, gnawing, spying, and hiding. I am a
 glutton but not a merry-maker” (CW, 29-30).*

Charlotte, a spider, is the sole barn animal who knows the value of friendship. She greets Wilbur with the words “Salutations!”. She even creates an harmony in the barn and let the other barn animals become friend with Wilbur in time. Charlotte removes Wilbur’s loneliness and repays Wilbur’s love with her deep friendship. She keeps her promise and saves Wilbur’s life by making a plan and tricking Zuckerman. Her plan has worked successfully so that Wilbur owes his life to his true friend Charlotte. And Charlotte reveals his plan about Wilbur’s future like:

*“Having promised Wilbur that she would save his life, she was
 determined to keep her promise.
 Charlotte was naturally patient. She knew from experience that if she
 waited long enough, a fly wood come to her web; and she felt sure that if
 she thought long enough about Wilbur’s problem, an idea would come to
 her mind.
 Finally, one morning toward the middle of July, the idea came. ‘Why,
 how perfectly simple!’ she said to herself. ‘The way to save Wilbur’s life
 is to play a trick on Zuckerman. If I can fool a bug,’ thought Charlotte, ‘I
 can surely fool a man. People are not as smart as bugs.’
 Wilbur walked into his yard just at that moment.
 ‘What are you thinking about Charlotte?’ he asked.
 ‘I was just thinking,’ said the spider, ‘that people are very gullible.’
 ‘What does gullible mean?’
 ‘Easy to fool,’ said Charlotte.
 ‘That’s a mercy,’ replied Wilbur, and he lay down in the shade of his
 fence and went fast asleep. The spider, however, stayed wide awake,
 gazing affectionately at him and making plans for his future. Summer was
 half gone. She knew she didn’t have much time” (CW, 67).*

Charlotte also feels empathy for his friend Wilbur because all the animals in the barn know that Wilbur will be killed and turned into ham in winter. When the old sheep tells Wilbur his brutal end, he feels terrified and worried: *“‘I can’t be quiet,’ screamed Wilbur, racing up and down. ‘I don’t want to be killed. I don’t want to die. Is it true what the old sheep says, Charlotte? Is it true they are going to kill me when the cold weather comes?’” (CW, 50).* Charlotte identifies with Wilbur’s feelings and

makes a commitment that she will rescue Wilbur from slaughter: “*That remains to be seen. But I am going to save you, and I want you to quiet down immediately.*” (CW, 51). She remains committed to Wilbur and works on a plan to create the perception that Wilbur is a special pig. Charlotte is successful in his plan, and thus Wilbur becomes a famous winning-prize pig at the county fair and guarantees his life. “*Your success in the ring this morning was, to a small degree, my success. Your future is assured. You will live, secure and safe, Wilbur. Nothing can harm you now*” (CW, 163). In addition, Fern also feels empathy for Wilbur when he was born as a runt and her father decides to kill him. She identifies herself with Wilbur and attempts to prevent Wilbur’s killing begging his father “*‘Please don’t kill it!’ she sobbed. ‘It is unfair.’ ... ‘The pig couldn’t help being born small, could it? If I had been very small at birth, would you have killed me?’*” (CW, 2-3). Then she makes a commitment to raise the little pig lovingly and affectionately. She keeps her promise, feeds Wilbur and becomes his friend. “*A minute later, Fern was seated on the floor in the corner of the kitchen with her infant between her knees, teaching it to suck from the bottle. The pig, although tiny, had a good appetite and caught on quickly*” (CW, 6-7).

We can say that the traces of friendship begin at the very beginning of the story between Fern, the little girl, and Wilbur, the piglet. Then Wilbur finds friendship in Charlotte, the affectionate spider, when he is taken to Zuckerman’s farm. Both Fern’s and Charlotte’s struggle for rescuing Wilbur from being ham in Christmastime can be regarded as their great success. Because Fern persuades her father not to kill Wilbur, and Charlotte spins web with magical words for Wilbur in order to convince Zuckerman that he owns a magical pig. Their struggle brings success to them, and their success is hidden in their true friendship.

In *The Trumpet of the Swan*, E. B. White represents friendship as the means of success, as well. In the story, Louis, the trumpeter swan, succeeds in acquiring what he has dreamed about life with the help of his loyal friend, Sam Beaver. Louis was born with a speech defect which is a serious handicap for a trumpeter swan not to communicate with the other swans. Because he will not be able to express his feelings and win a female swan’s heart without a voice. However, Louis overcomes his speech problem with his true friend. Sam Beaver takes Louis to school and helps

him learn how to read and write. He begs for the teacher to accept Louis to her class saying that:

“‘Please, Mrs. Hammerbotham,’ he said. ‘Please let him stand in your class and learn to read and write.’

‘Why does a bird need to read and write?’ replied the teacher. ‘Only people need to communicate with one another.’

‘That’s not quite true, Mrs. Hammerbotham,’ said Sam, if you’ll excuse me for saying so.

...

All right, Louis, you may join the class. Stand right here by the blackboard. And don’t mess up the room, either! If you need to go outdoors for any reason, raise one wing’” (TS, 68-70).

In addition, as a good bird watcher, Sam knows a lot about birds and understands their feelings well. *“I have watched birds and animals a great deal. All birds and animals talk to one another-they really have to, in order to get along. Mothers have to talk to their young. Males have to talk to females, particularly in the spring of the year when they are in love.” (TS, 70).* Therefore, Sam feels empathy with Louis and tries to regain his voice via a stolen trumpeter. So he teaches Louis how to blow a brass trumpet and play great songs with it.

Eventually, Louis becomes a successful trumpeter, earns enough money to repay his father’s debt and restores his honor. Moreover, Louis gains Serena’s heart with his deep and amazing sound coming out of his well-beloved trumpet. Louis owes all his success to his human friend Sam Beaver. It is an individual success comes up with a true friendship which is essential for one’s happiness and success in life. As a result, E. B. White reminds the child readers the prominence of friendship through a success story.

When we analyze E. B. White’s third children’s book *Stuart Little*, we also encounter with a success story through a friendship. When the little bird Margalo leaves the Little’s house for the fear of Snowbell, the cat, Stuart feels so sorry that his friend left him without saying anything. However, he is determined to follow her footsteps in the countryside and find his true friend. *“Stuart never let a bird pass without looking to see if it was Margalo” (SL, 125).* With these thoughts, Stuart leaves his home, goes on a journey in the countryside. He tries to decide where to go asking that *“I am going out into the world to seek my fortune and to look for a lost bird. Which direction do you think should I start out in?” (SL, 76).* It is such a great

success for a little mouse that he goes away from his home for the first time without any fears of danger. He faces with some problems, but he never gives up his journey and returns home. For instance, his car is broken, Dr. Carey repairs it, then he restarts his journey: *“The next morning, Stuart started early, to avoid traffic. He thought it would be a good idea to get out on the road before there were too many cars and trucks. ... He was very careful not to press the button which had caused so much trouble the day before”* (SL, 84). In fact, he takes all the risks for the sake of his friendship with Margalo. He hopes to find Margalo, but also he hopes to find his fortune. *“‘While I am about it, I might as well seek my fortune, too,’ he thought”* (SL, 73). His search for his friend help him discover himself which brings success in his life, too. He gains new experiences like substituting a teacher or driving his own car as a little mouse. All these experiences let him become aware of himself and his abilities. And he discovers that he is brave enough to take a journey on his own, and to handle his problems by himself. Although Stuart cannot find the trace of Margalo, he is hopeful to find her in the north. The story does not have a classical happy ending, but keeps hope alive which also means a success in life. As a result, Stuart learns the true meaning of friendship throughout his adventurous journey which brings success in his life.

It is clear that in E. B. White’s children’s books, all the animal heroes, Stuart, Wilbur and Louis, achieve their goals with the help of their true friends. When they feel lonely and desperate, their friends always help them feel hopeful. When they are in trouble, their friends are always with them and let them overcome their troubles. However, it is the fact that the animal heroes draw their own path to success with their self-determination and self-reliance, as well.

4.2.1.1.2. Compassion, Loyalty, Solidarity and Sacrifice

Compassion, loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice are the common values which sustain friendship. If you have a true friend, you need to back him or her up when he/she is in trouble, you need to be in solidarity to overcome the problems together and you need to make a sacrifice by placing your friend’s priorities first in your own priorities. These are the requirements for a longstanding friendship which keep the

one suffering from loneliness and isolation. Being aware of the fact that compassion, loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice are not welcomed by American society as it is based on individualism, E. B. White aims to remind the significance of these communal values to American society through the concept of friendship.

In *Stuart Little*, we come across with the communal values in the friendship of Stuart and Margalo. The mouse-like boy, Stuart and the little beautiful bird, Margalo quickly become friends when Margalo arrives at Little's house. Stuart feels compassion to Margalo when they meet for the first time because Margalo has a sore throat and she can't speak well. Stuart even warns Margalo not to go closer to him as he is ill, and Margalo can get ill, too. Stuart would like to help Margalo recover her illness soon saying that: *"'You can use my gargle if you want to,' said Stuart. 'And here are some nose drops, and I have plenty of Kleenex'. . . . And he tossed her the thermometer. . . . 'Normal,' she announced. Stuart felt his heart leap for gladness (SL, 50-51).* Thus Stuart and Margalo's friendship begins with the feeling of compassion for each other.

After they become friends, they have great time together and they help each other when they get into trouble. Both Stuart and Margalo make a sacrifice to each other for the sake of their friendship. When Snowbell, the cat, tries to attack Margalo while she is sleeping on the bookshelf, Stuart saves his little friend from the paws of Snowbell. *"'This is the finest thing I have ever done,' thought Stuart. And he shot the arrow straight into the cat's ear. Snowbell squealed with pain and jumped down and ran off toward the kitchen. . . . 'Thank heaven! Well there's a good night's work done.' And he threw a kiss toward Margalo's sleeping form" (SL, 55-56).* And then Margalo helps Stuart when he has fallen into a big garbage truck, and rescues Stuart's life before the garbage is dumped into the Atlantic Ocean. *"'I was looking out the window this morning when you left home and I happened to see you get dumped into the garbage truck, so I flew out the window and follow the truck, so I flew out the window and followed the truck, thinking you might need help'" (SL 62-63).* So the solidarity between Stuart and Margalo saves both of their lives and let them live in safe.

Moreover, we also realize the solidarity between Stuart and the repairman of the telephone company whom he has run across on his way to the north to find

Margalo. Stuart asks the repairman if he has seen a bird named Margalo thereabouts. The repairman asks for the bird's description and promises Stuart to be on the lookout for Margalo. *"The repairman wrote it all down briefly. 'Fields-wheat-pastures, fern & thistle. Vales, meadowsweet. Enjoys whistling.' Then he put the pad back in his pocket, and tucked Stuart's card away in his wallet. 'I'll keep my eyes open,' he promised"* (SL, 128). And thus the story ends with this solidarity and with the hopes of running into new adventures on the new road that Stuart has chosen.

In addition, loyalty is another highlighted value in *Stuart Little*. Stuart is loyal to his friend Margalo. He discovers true friendship in Margalo, so he decides to leave his home for the first time to meet Margalo and shows his loyalty to her. Stuart runs the risk of being disappointed and unsuccessful, but he never gives up seeking for his beautiful little friend in the north.

When we have a look at *Charlotte's Web*, we sense the communal values like compassion, loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice, as well. In the story, these are the important values which are implied through friendship between Charlotte and Wilbur. When Wilbur arrives at Zuckerman's farm, he feels deeply lonely. All the barn animals ignore him, except Charlotte. Charlotte feels compassion to Wilbur as he is the newcomer to the barn and he has nobody to play with and talk to. He only needs love, and Charlotte is the only one who fulfills Wilbur's need for love: *"Wilbur didn't want food, he wanted love. He wanted a friend – someone who would play with him"* (CW, 27). Charlotte befriends Wilbur and helps him get rid of his loneliness. Charlotte also knows what is going to happen to her friend in the winter. Wilbur knows the reality, too. Therefore, Charlotte feels pity on Wilbur's upcoming end and talks with him compassionately and assuringly: *"'Were you serious when you promised you would keep them from killing me?' 'I was never more serious in my life. I am not going to let you die, Wilbur'"* (CW, 63).

Charlotte strives for saving Wilbur's life by coming up with magical words for Wilbur. "Some Pig!", "Terrific!", and "Radiant!" are the words of praise on Charlotte's webs so as to increase Wilbur's renown on the farm, attribute him a "private" pig and dissuade Mr. Zuckerman from killing Wilbur. *"'Some pig!'" whispered Mr. Zuckerman. They stared and stared for a long time at Wilbur. Then they stared Charlotte. 'I think you had best be told that we have a very unusual pig'"*

(CW, 79). Charlotte's spinning a web and creating new messages for Wilbur are the significant indicators for her sacrifice. However, the most touching point is that Charlotte does not ask for anything in return for her sacrifice. Nobody even knows the real hero of Wilbur's success at the fair: *"Nobody, of the hundreds of people that had visited the Fair, knew that a grey spider had played the most important part of all. No one was with her when she died"* (CW, 171). She helps her friend just because of their deep rooted friendship: *"'You're terrific as far as I'm concerned,' replied Charlotte, sweetly, and that's what counts. You're my best friend, and I think you're sensational. Now stop arguing and go get some sleep!'"* (CW, 91). In addition, Charlotte is also loyal to her friend, Wilbur. She proves her loyalty by thinking of helping him even before he dies. Charlotte explains to Wilbur the reason of helping him with these words:

"You have been my friend...That in itself is a tremendous thing. I wove my webs for you because I liked you. After all, what's a life, anyway? We're born, we live a little while, we die... By helping you, perhaps I was trying to lift up my life a little. Heaven knows anyone's life can stand a little of that" (CW, 164).

At the end of the story, Wilbur also exhibits his loyalty and sacrifice to Charlotte by taking care of the egg sac carefully when Charlotte dies after she lays her eggs, and he looks after Charlotte's babies as though they were his own babies when they are born: *"I think it is only fair to tell you that I was devoted to your mother. I owe my very life to her. She was brilliant, beautiful, and loyal to the end. I shall always treasure her memory. To you, her daughters, I pledge my friendship, forever and ever"* (CW, 182). And even three of the Charlotte's babies stay at the barn not to leave Wilbur friendless. They also show their loyalty and sacrifice to Charlotte like their mother: *"'Salutations!' it said. 'I'm up here.' 'So am I,' said another tiny voice. 'So am I,' said a third voice. 'Three of us are staying. We like this place, and we like you.'"* (CW, 180-181). Both Charlotte and Wilbur maintain their loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice to each other, and these values bring success and happiness to Wilbur's life, and Charlotte's life ends with the happiness of having such a true friend and helping him gratuitously.

“Mr. Zuckerman took the medal from Wilbur’s neck and hung it on a nail over the pigpen, where visitors could examine it. Wilbur himself could look at it whenever he wanted to.

In the days that followed, he was very happy. He grew to a great size. He no longer worried about being killed, for he knew that Mr. Zuckerman would keep him as long as he lived. Wilbur often thought of Charlotte. A few strands of her old web still hung in the doorway. Every day Wilbur would stand and look at the torn, empty web, and a lump would come to his throat. No one had such a friend – so affectionate, so loyal, and so skillful” (CW, 172-173).

What is surprising is that the other barn animals, the geese, the sheep, and even the rat Templeton, learn the meaning of true friendship and show an example of solidarity. Charlotte also makes them believe that Wilbur is an extraordinary pig. Then they start to talk with him and like him, as well. Charlotte and Templeton accompany Wilbur when he is sent to the Fair: *“I have decided to go with Wilbur. He may need me. We can’t tell what may happen at the Fair Grounds. Somebody’s got to go along who knows how to write. And I think Templeton better come, too – I might need somebody to run errands and do general work” (CW, 122).* At the fair, when Wilbur faints because of his excitement and embarrassment, Templeton helps him revive and everybody becomes happy: *“He took Wilbur’s tail in his mouth and bit it, just as hard as he could bite. The pain revived Wilbur. In a flash he was back on his feet. ... Mr. Zuckerman was the most pleased of all. He sighed with relief. Nobody had seen Templeton. The rat had done his work well” (CW, 159-160).* And also, Templeton is convinced by Wilbur to get Charlotte’s egg sac from the ceiling. Templeton carries the egg sac to the ground carefully, Wilbur takes them to the barn in great attention without damaging any of them: *“Wilbur had already decided how he would carry the egg sac-there was only one way possible. He carefully took the little bundle in his mouth and held it there on top of his tongue. He remembered what Charlotte had told him- that the sac was waterproof and strong” (CW, 170).* And thus Wilbur and Templeton work in solidarity and save all Charlotte’s children. *“But as he was being shoved into the crate, he looked up at Charlotte and gave her a wink. She knew he was saying good-bye in the only way he could. And she knew her children were safe” (CW, 170-171).* After Wilbur returns from the fair, his barn animals compliment on him for his success: *“His friends the sheep and the geese were glad to see him back. The geese gave him a noisy welcome. ‘Congratu-congratu-congratulations!’ they cried. ‘Nice work!’” (CW, 172).* As a result, we

clearly see the unity, the harmony and the spirit of solidarity in the barn which is the inheritance of the friendly and big-hearted spider, Charlotte.

And lastly, in *The Trumpet of the Swan*, E. B. White also focuses on the communal values such as compassion, loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice through a friendship between an eleven-year-old son named Sam Beaver and a trumpeter swan named Louis. Sam likes observing the trumpeter swans in the Red Rock Lake which is the best habitat for the trumpeters to lay their eggs and to raise their family. However, on one of his nature trips to the pond, he notices the Red Fox creeping toward the female swan and planning to attack her. Just then, Sam Beaver frightens and moves the fox away hurtling a stick to him. Sam's compassion and bravery saves the female swan from being a fresh appetite for the Red Fox. So the swans are so thankful to their human savior, and Sam is so much delightful because of helping the trumpeter swans and winning their company:

"The swans now realized, beyond any doubt, that the boy was their friend. He had saved the swan's life. He had been in the right place at the right time and with the right ammunition. The swans felt grateful. The cob swam over toward Sam, climbed out of the pond, and stood close to the boy, looking at him a friendly way and arching his neck gracefully" (TS, 27).

In addition, Sam is loyal to the swan family. He never leaves them alone in the wilderness of the woods. He visits them very often and helps them when they are in need of finding a solution to their son's speech defect. Sam is also loyal to his true friend, Louis, the cob. He supports Louis in his speech handicap, and then helps him find a job at the Camp Kookooskoos for playing the trumpet: *"He came from Montana with Sam Beaver. Louis is a musician, he is in need of money. He will wake you at daybreak with his trumpet; he will call you to meals; and at night, when you're dropping off to sleep, he will play taps, and that will bring the day to a close"* (TS, 113-114). Moreover, Sam Beaver shows his loyalty to his swan friend, Louis when he asks for help for his mate, Serena. Sam immediately flies to Philadelphia Zoo as the Head Man plans to clip the tip of Serena's one wing and make him stay at the zoo forever. Sam talks with the Head Man not to do it and leave Serena free. And thus Louis and Serena can go back to their home in Upper Red Rock Lake in Montana and they can raise their happy family there. He also talks about his true friendship with Louis and Louis's determination to read and write and to play the

trumpet, and his sacrifice to his father to pay his debt back to the shopkeeper for the stolen trumpet.

Sam assured the Head Man that Louis was an old friend. He told about discovering the swan's nest almost three years ago in Canada, about how Louis came into the world lacking a voice, about Louis's attending school in Montana and learning to read and write, about the theft of the trumpet by Louis's father, the old cob, and about Camp Kookooskoos and the Swan Boat in Boston. (TS, 213)

We can also say that the camp Kookooskoos is the symbol of friendship, loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice. Because a camp is the best place to learn the meaning of the common values with the friends that you have met at the camp. For instance, Sam Beaver helps a skunk whose head has been stuck in a tin can: *"Sam, holding his pole, waited patiently on the roof. He looked like fisherman waiting for a bite. When the skunk wandered close to the buildings, Sam reached over, dangled the noose in front of the skunk, slipped the noose around the can, and gave a jerk. The noose tightened, and the can came off"* (TS, 123). And also Louis saves the boy named Applegate from drowning in the lake. *"Applegate Skinner broke a camp rule, took a canoe out alone, and upset. He was drowning when Louis the Swan rapidly outdistancing all other campers, reached his side, held him up, and saved his life. Let us all give Louis a standing ovation"* (TS, 129-130). And thus, Louis is given a lifesaving medal for his friendship and sacrifice. On the medal, it is written, *"To Louis the Swan, who, with outstanding courage and complete disregard for his own safety, saved the life of Applegate Skinner"* (TS, 132). The boys at the camp experience leaving their home and feeling the spirit of freedom. On the one side, they are free and competent enough to take their own decisions at the camp. They feel themselves as free individuals. On the other side, they have the responsibility of obeying the common rules at the camp. They feel themselves as the member of a community where they learn to share, help each other and act in solidarity. In addition, the boys learn to respect someone who is different from the others: *"I caution you to treat him as an equal and to treat him with respect. ... Do not forget, however, that Louis is one of your counselors. Whether you like him or not, he must be treated with respect"* (TS, 114). And also, the campfire is the symbol of bringing someone together who is different from each other, but sharing the same feelings of love, respect and compassion: *"That evening after supper, the director of the camp,*

Mr. Brickle, built a big campfire in front of the main lodge. The boys gathered around. They sang songs and toasted marshmallows and swatted mosquitoes” (TS, 113). Not only the campsite but also the Swan’s family represent the sense of belonging, the responsibility to the community and adopting the communal values. At the same time, they represent the idea of freedom, competency and self-reliance. Louis adopts both the communal values and the individual values in his character as his father says: *“Louis is a Trumpeter Swan, noblest of all the waterfowl. He is gay, cheerful, strong, powerful, lusty, good, brave, handsome, reliable, trustworthy, a great flier, a tremendous swimmer, fearless, patient, loyal, true, ambitious, desirous –” (TS, 89).*

In conclusion, in all his three children’s books, E. B. White praises the communal values such as compassion, loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice. Without these values, one cannot have long friendships or a happy family which is also highly glorified in the stories. The heroes of the stories, Stuart, Charlotte and Louis, all have these communal values which bring them success, happiness and freedom in their lives.

4.2.1.1.3. The Importance of Family

“There is no place like home. Home, home, sweet home” (TS, 225).

If you have a true family, you always feel the support of your family members when you need help, and you know your responsibilities for them when they need help. When there is trouble in the family, their compassion makes you feel stronger and your compassion makes them feel better. If you have a true family, you feel devoted and loyal to your family members, but on the other hand, you feel free and determined in your decisions. And if you have a true family, there is such a big solidarity that makes the sense of indestructibility and invincibility in the family. In this case, E. B. White not only deals with the communal values in terms of the friendship, but also focuses on the power of family and its common values to attract his child readers’ attention on the vital importance of the communal values in the family.

In *Stuart Little*, Stuart, the mouse, finds the true meaning of family in Littles' family. Stuart has a devoted family. They look after their mouse-like son carefully and affectionately. When Stuart is born, Mr. Little makes a special bed for his son, and Mrs. Little sews special clothes for him: "*Mrs. Little saw right away that the infant clothes she had provided were unsuitable, and she set to work and made him a fine little blue worsted suit with patch pockets in which he could keep his handkerchief, his money, and his keys*" (SL, 2). Mrs. Little is also an affectionate and compassionate mother, she worries about her son's health as he weighs a third of an ounce and she takes him to the doctor right away: ". . . and when at the age of a month, he had gained only a third of an ounce, his mother was so worried she sent for the doctor. . . . Everything seemed to be alright, and Mrs. Little was pleased to get such a good report" (SL, 3). She also worries about his son coming home late because of being dumped into the garbage truck accidentally: "*When she heard what had happened and how near she had come to losing her son, she took Stuart in her hand, even though his clothes smell nasty, and kissed him. Then she sent him upstairs to take a bath, and sent George out to take Stuart's clothes to the cleaner*" (SL, 65-66). And Stuart is so satisfied with having such a compassionate and caring family. Therefore, he fears for not seeing his lovely family anymore while he is waiting for help in the garbage truck: "*The thought of death made Stuart sad, and he began to think of his home and of his father and mother and brother and of Margalo and Snowball and of how he loved them (all but Snowbell) and of what a pleasant place his home was, . . .*" (SL, 61). So it is clear that Stuart loves and cares for his family so much and his family does, too.

In addition, there is not only a compassion in the Little's family, but also a solidarity and sacrifice among the family members. Stuart aids his family with the chores at home like taking a ring out of the drain or repairing a piano key: "*Stuart was a great help to his parents, and to his older brother George, because of his small size and because he could do things that a mouse can do and was agreeable about doing them*" (SL, 4). And when Stuart is terribly ill because of his bronchitis, all the family members try to make him happy and help him recover his illness soon:

"But his mother made him some hot broth instead, and put him to bed in his cigarette box with a doll's hot water bottle against his feet. Even so,

Stuart caught a bad cold, and this turned into bronchitis, and Stuart had to stay in bed for almost two weeks. During his illness, the other members of the family were extremely kind to Stuart. Mrs. Little made him a pair of ice skates out of two paper clips” (SL, 49).

Stuart is safe and happy with his human family members. There is even no need to come from the same origin to maintain happiness in the family. The Littles accept Stuart with his mouse-like appearance and behaviors. They accept him as the member of their family and as a true Little. And Stuart also loves his family so much that when he decides to leave home to find his friend Margalo, he takes a strand of his mother’s hair with him to remind him Mrs. Little. This means that Stuart cares for his family and would like to remember them when he is far away. That is to say, the family is important and precious for the hero of the story:

“I ought to take along something to remember my mother by,’ he thought. So she crept into his mother’s bedroom where she was still asleep, climbed the lamp cord to her bureau, and pulled a strand of Mrs. Little’s hair from her comb. She rolled the hair up neatly and laid it in the handkerchief with the other things. Then he rolled everything up into a bundle and tied it onto one end of a wooden match. With his grey felt hat cocked jauntily on one side of his head and his pack slung across his shoulder, Stuart stole softly out of the house” (SL, 73-75).

And in *Charlotte’s Web*, Zuckerman’s barn is like a home for Wilbur. The barn unites all the characters and all the animals in the story. Although Wilbur primarily does not like his first place, he begins to feel overjoyed there by the virtue of Charlotte’s friendship. The concept of family gives a sense of belonging to its members. And the awareness of belonging appreciates solidarity among the family members, develops responsibility for others, and creates a sense of compassion. E. B. White’s animal characters also learn the meaning of belonging, responsibility, compassion and solidarity in their family. For instance, Wilbur belongs to Fern; then he belongs to Uncle Homer; the baby spiders belong to Wilbur; Charlotte and the other animals belong to the Homer’s barnyard. As Wilbur belongs to Fern at the very beginning of the story, Fern feels compassion and responsibility for helping Wilbur, for saving him from the bloodthirsty end and for looking after him affectionately. In this sense, Fern saves Wilbur’s life, then Charlotte saves Wilbur’s life, and then Wilbur saves Charlotte’s babies’ life. Because belonging means the feeling

responsibility, helping others, being in a family and being part of something. Wilbur expresses his satisfaction being the member of the Zuckerman's barn like:

"Life in the barn was very good-night and day, winter and summer, spring and fall, dull days and bright days. It was the best place to be, thought Wilbur, this warm delicious cellar, with the garrulous geese, the changing seasons, the heat of the sun, the passage of swallows, the nearness of rats, the sameness of sheep, the love of spiders, the smell of manure, and the glory of everything" (CW, 183).

Wilbur and the other barnyard animals are all the members of a big family. Although they are not a human family, they share the same feelings and have the same values that a human family has. They start to love each other, act in solidarity and make sacrifices for each other. As well as they are friends, they are also like the members of the barn family. In this case, E. B. White tries to display the meaning of home and belonging to a family from the animals' point of view so that it attracts the child readers' attention more. Moreover, E. B. White invites the children to think about the communal values and develop the sense of belonging to their friends, and to their families, as well.

In addition, Charlotte's web is her home where she writes her magic words to Wilbur and saves his life: *"That Zuckerman's barn, or more broadly, his farm becomes Wilbur's home and the novels' central setting is worthy of attention" (Elick, 173).* By saving Wilbur's life, she gives Wilbur the opportunity to raise her own family in the future. Her web is also the safest place for her eggs. Although she dies after she lays her eggs, she knows that her babies are safe. And the young babies will also raise their own families in the future. Wilbur takes care of Charlotte's egg sac carefully until they are born safely: *"All winter Wilbur watched over Charlotte's egg sac as though he were guarding his own children. . . . For Wilbur, nothing in life was so important as this small round object-nothing else mattered. Patiently he awaited the end of winter and the coming of the little spiders" (CW, 175-176).* This shows how Wilbur appreciates the motherhood of Charlotte and attaches great importance to the concept of family. In a way, Wilbur and Charlotte's children become a family in the barn although they do not come from the same origin. And there is always loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice in this family.

"As time went on, and the months and years came and went, he was never without friends. Fern did not come regularly to the barn anymore. She was growing up, and was careful to avoid childish things, like sitting

on a milks tool near a pigpen. But Charlotte's children and grandchildren and great grandchildren, year after year, lived in the doorway. Each spring there were new little spiders hatching out to take the place of the old. Mont of them sailed away, on their balloons. But always two or three stayed and set up housekeeping in the doorway" (CW, 183).

And lastly, in *The Trumpet of the Swan*, E. B. White focuses on the importance of family at the very beginning of the story. Sam Beaver, as a nature lover and a bird observer, takes nature trips with his father in the wilderness of Canada and discovers the pond where the trumpeter swans build their nests and raise their families: *"They were Trumpeter Swans, pure white birds with black bills. They have liked the looks of the swampy pond and had decided to make it their home for a while and raise a family"* (TS, 11). He is an eleven-year-old boy who has witnessed the cygnets' hatching and growing near the Red Rock Lake. He is thrilled with what he has seen in the lake and decides to go there often to explore the nature and to observe the swans. Sam Beaver is so much surprised with the process of a swans' making a nest and laying her eggs. In a way, he witnesses the first step of raising a family and learns the meaning and the importance of the family there. He even writes in his diary his excitement and astonishment about the beginning of a life for a trumpeter swan:

"I don't know of anything in the entire world more wonderful to look at than a nest with eggs in it. An egg, because it contains life, is the most perfect thing there is. It is beautiful and mysterious. An egg is a far finer thing than a tennis ball or a cake of soap. A tennis ball will always be just a tennis ball. A cake of soap will always be just a cake of soap- until it gets so small nobody wants it and they throw it away. But an egg someday be a living creature. A swan's egg will open and will come a little swan. A nest is almost as wonderful and mysterious as an egg. How does a bird know how to make a nest? Nobody ever thought her. How does a bird know how to build a nest?" (TS, 27-28).

Sam Beaver also observes that a female swan is responsible for building a nest. And it was such a difficult decision for a female trumpeter to find a suitable place to make her nest. Otherwise, she can't grow up her cygnets safely: *"If she picks a good place, she stands a good chance of hatching her eggs and rearing her young. If she picks a poor place, she may fail to raise a family. The female swan knew this; and she knew the decision she was making was very important"* (TS, 12). The

responsibility of the female swan building a nest patiently and caringly is described thoroughly in the book to draw the attention of children into the importance of family.

Louis, the cob, is lucky that he has a caring mother and a courageous father who help him overcome his speech problem. He also returns home with Serena, and his family is pleased with their homecoming. They are all happy coming together and forming their family unity with great honor: *"This was his dream-to return with his love to the place in Canada where he had first seen the light of day"* (TS, 243-44). Throughout the story, we realize the unity and solidarity in their family. The Swan family portrays a great example of solidarity. Each member of the family struggle for other's favor. The mother swan tries to build up a beautiful and safe nest in order to save her cygnets from the dangers in the woods. And his husband helps her who shows the solidarity in their family: *"When the swan had laid five eggs, she felt satisfied. . . . Then she settled herself on the nest to keep her eggs warm. . . . The cob cruised around close by, to keep her company and to protect her from enemies"* (TS, 22-23). Moreover, the female swan settles on the nest without moving for hours in order to keep her eggs warm and give birth to her cygnets healthily. Her husband is also surprised with her patience and sacrifice asking her like:

"-Do you never find your duties onerous or irksome? Do you never tire of sitting in one place and in one position, covering the eggs, with no diversions, no pleasures, no escapades, or capers? Do you never suffer from boredom ?

- 'No,' replied his wife. 'Not really.'

- 'Isn't it comfortable to sit on eggs?'

- 'Yes, it is,' replied the wife. 'But I can put up with a certain amount of discomfort for the sake of bringing young swans into the World'" (TS, 23).

In addition, Louis's father is the epitome of compassion, responsibility and sacrifice. As a compassionate father, he wants to show his responsibility for his speechless son, so he takes the risk of getting into trouble by breaking into a music store and stealing a brass trumpet which can be a substitute for his mute son. The familial solidarity helps Louis cope with his disability. When Louis becomes aware of his handicap, his father comforts him saying that:

"Do not let an unnatural sadness settle over you Louis', said the cob. 'Swans must be cheerful, not sad; graceful, not awkward; brave, not cowardly. Remember that the world is full of youngsters who have some

sort of handicap that they must overcome. You apparently have a speech defect I am sure you will overcome it in time. There may even some slight advantage, at your age, in not being able to say anything. It compels you to be a good listener. The world is full of talkers, but it is rare to find anyone who listens. And I assure you that you can pick up more information when you are listening than when you are talking” (TS, 49-50).

Although Louis’s father feels sorrow for becoming a thief and losing his dignity, he feels the proud of helping his son learn to play the trumpet: *“The long and short of it is, I had no money; I took the trumpet without paying for it. This was deplorable. But the important thing is that you learn to play the instrument”* (TS, 98). Moreover, the idea of having little swans and even being a father make the male swan feel so proud: *“The idea of fatherhood made him feel poetical and proud”* (TS, 30). He shares his joy with his wife saying that *“Now, slowly, the light of day comes into our sky. A mist hang low over the pond. The mist rises slowly, like stream from a kettle, while I glide, swanlike, while eggs hatch, while young swans come into existence. I glide and glide”* (TS, 30). The feeling of fatherhood is so thrilling for the male swan and he carries the burdens of his family’s responsibilities on his shoulder. As a responsible and caring father, he expresses his feelings like: *“A cygnet at last! I am a father, with all the pleasant duties and awesome responsibilities of fatherhood. ... blessed little son of mine, how god it is to see your face peering through the protecting feathers of your mother’s breast, under these fair skies, with the pond so quiet and peaceful in the long light of afternoon”* (TS, 32). At the end of the story, Louis has a lot of money, fame and publicity, however, he prefers flying back to Montana with his mate, Serena. This shows that how raising a family is more important than money, fame and publicity for Louis.

Consequently, family is the smallest unit of the community where the children learn the basic values and beliefs which help them develop their characters. And it is the first stage of education in internalizing the individual and communal values and transmitting them to the next generations. Being aware of this reality, in his children’s books, E. B. White aims to raise the concept of family which is deconstructed in American society in the 1950s and thereafter: *“Charlotte’s Web is one of those works that helped to solidify values and emotions connected with the American family farm at the midpoint of the twentieth century”* (Elick, 173). In this

respect, E. B. White creates his children's stories in order to highlight the significance of family and the true meaning of home through his animal heroes. They all learn the meaning of compassion, loyalty, solidarity and sacrifice first in their families, then in their friendships. What is amazing is that, E. B. White's heroes also do not deviate from individual values which actually make them American heroes. So we can say that E. B. White successfully keeps the communal values and the individual values together in his stories in order to show the possibility and the necessity of it in American society, as well. In this respect, British critics Margaret and Michael Rustin states the children's book *Charlotte's Web* as “‘a very American story’, one whose atmosphere of plenitude’ is balanced by ‘a healthy respect for the principle of self-interest’. They also comment on the influence of class in White's depiction of “a community without over-many levels of status” (qtd in Elick, 173).

4.2.2.1. The Individual Spirit of American Identity

4.2.2.1.1. The Spirit of Adventure and Freedom

“Freedom. Safety is all well and good: I prefer freedom.” (TS,206).

White's animal characters are the true lovers of freedom as well as friendship. And journey and adventure are essential items for the individuals to make their way to freedom. That's why, the journey that the animal heroes take throughout the stories bring adventure and the feeling of freedom with it. Apparently, the child heroes leave home either in quest for finding the traces of a best friend, saving a pig's life or regaining a voice with the help of a true friend. In fact, this is the quest for the community. And the family is the first community where the one is socialized and embrace the communal values. And then friendship is the second step for a child to get socialized and learn the values of the community.

In *Stuart Little*, Stuart learns the values of the community by his friendship with the bird Margalo. When Margalo escapes from home because of the fear of the cat, Snowbell, Stuart becomes so sad and heartbroken. He doesn't want to lose his friend as the values of solidarity and sacrifice arise in Margalo's friendship. So he

decides to go on a journey as he knows the meaning of friendship and what the friendship has brought him. Although he sometimes feels hopeless so as not to find Margalo's footprints, he never stops his journey: *"It had been an unhappy morning, and Stuart was already homesick. He was sure that he was never going to see Margalo again"* (SL, 82). However, he goes on his journey decisively and keeps his hope alive. It means that Stuart keeps on searching for the meaning of community and its values that he finds in Margalo.

In Charlotte's Web, Wilbur, discovers the values of the community in Charlotte's friendship. Wilbur is sent to a new barn where he is bored of loneliness: *"He didn't know whether he could endure the awful loneliness any more"* (CW, 31). He cannot find the love and compassion that his human friend, Fern shows him in Mr. Arable's farm. Although Fern visits Wilbur in Mr. Zuckerman's farm, Wilbur needs new friends to share his time joyfully in the barn. In short, Wilbur is in need of love, compassion, solidarity and sacrifice in the new barn with his new friends. Wilbur's journey to the new farm starts with a dissatisfaction, however, in time everything is reversed and he finds true friendship in Charlotte. Charlotte is a compassionate, self-sacrificing and trustworthy spider who creates the unity in Mr. Zuckerman's farm. After Charlotte and Wilbur becomes friend, the other barn animals also learn the meaning of true friendship and they learn to live in harmony. The atmosphere of the barn has changed, as well. The barn animals begin to help each other and learn to be in solidarity, even the gluttonous rat, Templeton. In other words, Wilbur's journey to the new farm contributed to the flourishing of the community spirit in Mr. Zuckerman's farm. And Charlotte is the one who fires the community spirit in the barn. And the other barnyard animals promote not to extinguish this fire forever.

In *The Trumpet of the Swan*, we, firstly, feel the spirit of the community in the Swan's family. The solidarity and the sacrifice in the Swan's family destroy all the obstacles in front of Louis, and the search for community spirit goes on the Louis's journey to gain his voice and win his mate, Serena's heart. Louis has many adventures on his journey and manages to reach his dreams. At the end, he reunites with Serena and sets up a home which keeps the communal values in it. In other

words, his adventurous journey is the starting point of his dreams and willingness of saving the spirit of community in his new family.

The animal heroes are not only in quest for the community on their journeys, but also in search of their freedom. They all live their homes for the first time and follow their dreams on their journeys. Leaving home is a symbol of becoming mature and tasting the first experience of freedom. One who leaves home must rely on himself or herself because he or she must take the decisions alone. He or she must overcome the handicaps by himself or herself. In this case, all the protagonists take a journey to make their goals come true and feel the spirit of freedom.

In *Stuart Little*, Stuart leaves home for the first time in pursuit of Margalo. He also discovers the feeling of freedom in his journey: “*Stuart Little ends not only on a note of freedom but also ends with the wise dictum that ‘a person who is looking for something doesn’t travel very fast’ (131)” (Elick, 169)*. Stuart also experience some adventures in the city centre, and then in the countryside while looking for his friend Margalo. Stuart leaves his safe home saying that “*‘Goodbye, beautiful home’ . . . ‘I wonder if I will ever see you again’” (SL, 75)*. Stuart sails a boat at a race in Central Park, and when he arrives home at night, he replies his brother’s question with this quote: “*Oh, knocking around town” (SL, 46)*. His utterance gives the sense that he is a free individual making his own decisions.

In *Charlotte’s Web*, Wilbur feels the spirit of freedom on his journey to Mr. Zuckerman’s farm because his life is saved by his friend Fern. Wilbur leaves Mr. Arable’s farm and he is sent to Mr. Zuckerman’s barn where he fights for his freedom, too. Because he is destined to become a ham in the winter. In his new barn, he first experiences the feeling of freedom when he has pushed the barn board with his head and gone out of the yard. The goose asks Wilbur “*‘How does it feel to be free?’ and his answer is like: ‘I like it. That is, I guess I like it’. Actually, Wilbur felt queer to be outside his fence with nothing between him and the big world” (CW, 17)*. In addition, Charlotte also cares for Wilbur’s freedom so much so that he makes a plan to save Wilbur’s life and let him live a free life without any fears of death. Wilbur’s journey to the fair is also the evidence of his freedom. Because his life is guaranteed by his publicity at the fair.

In *The Trumpet of the Swan*, Louis is a voiceless trumpeter who leaves his home and looks for his human friend Sam Beaver all around the towns in order to ask for help for his speech problem. Like Stuart and Wilbur, Louis also explores freedom in his long and adventurous journey. Although Louis has a lot of money, a Lifesaving Medal, fame and publicity, he prefers freedom and love because he values his freedom and love more than anything else he owns in his life:

“What a triumph return it would be! When he left Montana, Louis had been penniless. Now he was rich. When he left, he had been unknown. Now he was famous. When he left, he had been alone in the World. Now he had his bride by his side-the swan that he loved. His medal was around his neck, his precious trumpet dangled in the breeze, his hard-earned money was in the bag. He had accomplished what he had set out to do. All in a few short months! Freedom felt so good! Love felt so good!” (TS, 224).

Lastly, leaving home for the first time means discovering oneself, too. At the end of the stories, Stuart, Wilbur and Louis all discover their inner potentials through friendship and journey. They learn the values of compassion, empathy, loyalty, solidarity, sacrifice or making a commitment. They achieve to get these values via friendship. In addition, they discover themselves that they are determined and self-reliant enough to go on an adventurous journey in order to feel the spirit of freedom. The journeys of the heroes are the means for self-awareness and self-actualization. That is to say, after taking a journey, the heroes all become self-made man. They achieve what they dream about their lives. It reveals the fact that, White’s characters can act, think and dream freely from their family members although they have a great sense of commitment to their families. In a way, family and friendship has a crucial role in the happiness of individuals.

4.2.2.1.2. Self-Reliance and Competency

Although E. B. White highlights the importance of family and friendship in his children’s books, he represents his protagonists as self-reliant individuals. Although they really find the real love and affection in their families, they dare to leave their family behind them in order to make their own dreams come true. The spirit of adventure drives the animal characters into an adventurous journey for the

sake of their freedom and friendship. However, their self-reliance and competency bring them accomplishment on their journeys.

E. B. White's children's stories can be regarded as success stories. In fact, at the beginning, the story of *Stuart Little* does not seem like a success story. However, being so tiny as a mouse, Stuart craftily overcomes human affairs such as taking a ring out of the drain, repairing a piano key, sailing a boat, substituting teaching and driving his own car. He achieves all these duties with his self-assuredness and competence of a mature man. In *Charlotte's Web*, Charlotte succeeds in saving Wilbur's life by spinning magical words into her web. First, Charlotte believes in herself that she will find a solution to Wilbur's problem. Then she makes the farm dwellers and the barnyard animals believe in her dream and saves Wilbur's life forever. And Wilbur is self-reliant enough to carry the reputation and fame that he has gained with Charlotte's magical web. And in *The Trumpet of the Swan*, the most important achievement for Louis is that he regains his voice with a trumpeter. He is such a self-competent cob that he passionately learns to read, write and to play the trumpet. He is also so brave that he regains Serena's freedom after a long struggle at Philadelphia Zoo. They fly back to their home in Upper Red Rock Lake in order to raise a happy family and lead a free life. In a way, he makes his dreams come true with his self-confidence and know how attitude.

Moreover, White's characters are determined individuals as well. They insist in achieving their goals. But their determination is not for their own good, rather it is mainly for the sake of their friendship and family. They never give up; conversely, they believe in themselves and follow their dreams. As Louis the cob states "*I am not going to become a trumpeter in a day, that's for sure. But Rome wasn't built in a day, and I am going to learn to blow this horn if it takes me all summer*" (TS, 103). That is to say, self-determination, competency, self-reliance and the "spirit of freedom" make the animal heroes become self-achievers.

CONCLUSION

Although E. B. White was generally known as one of the most prominent essayists in the literary world of America, he began to make a name in American children's literature with the great success of *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte's Web* and *The Trumpet of the Swan*. What made these children's stories so popular among children was the deeply human and friendly yet at the same time highly individualistic animal characters. It is true that each of the stories has more or less an impact on the imaginary world of a child. However, the most important reason is that each story gives the child an opportunity to come across familiar and unfamiliar American values and themes. On the one hand, it is pleasing for American children to encounter with individual values that they have already known, and on the other hand, it is surprising and intriguing to run into communal values that they were unfamiliar but eager to know. Although there are some books and studies focusing on White's life, his writing style, and his literary works, there is not so much research regarding his moral voice. Therefore, in this dissertation, I aimed to analyze E. B. White's three books *Stuart Little*, *Charlotte's Web* and *The Trumpet of the Swan* from a different point of view. Focusing on both the communal and the individual values in White's children's stories, I attempted to reveal his moral voice through his healing narrative, and his desire to remind the importance of communal values that American society needs to embrace as much as its core values. Accordingly, in this context, the views and the critics of prominent theoreticians, children's literature writers, scholars and sociologists like Peter Hunt, Anne Scott Macleod, Gerry Griswold, Robert Bellah, Amitai Etzioni, Christopher Lasch, Ferdinand Tönnies, David Riesman were acknowledged.

Considering the era that E. B. White's three children's books were written, the highlighting of communal values become much more significant. The 1950s were the period of the collapse of family institution, the decline of morality and the increase of loneliness and narcissism due to the excessive emphasis on individualism. Although individualism is a key for freedom, self-reliance, self-improvement and self-fulfillment, it has some dark sides as well. The dangers of individualism have reached such proportions that people have become socially

isolated individuals. They do not believe in interdependence and do not believe in or rely on anyone else except themselves. However, there is a resolution for this chaotic social and psychological atmosphere. It is the realization of communitarianism which underpins communal values in the society. Balancing individualism with communitarianism can be a good remedy as well as a good starting point.

In most children's literature, the story-plot is mainly based on the conflict between good and evil. The good character triumphs over the bad character and wins at the end of the story. However, in E. B. White's stories, there is not a sharp difference between good and evil; on the contrary, there is some sort of balance and an emphasis on "healing." The good is not rewarded with the defeat of the bad but with the victory of true friendship and success. In this sense, friendship plays a healing role among White's animal heroes. The animal heroes hold on to friendship as the most sacred value in their lives. In *Charlotte's Web*, the true friendship between Charlotte, the spider, and Wilbur, the pig, becomes the bedrock of emotional stability and physical well-being. Moreover, in all three books, E. B. White aims to build up a balance between the individual and the community through friendship. Without friendship, an individual is unable to internalize communal values such as sharing, helping, sacrificing or being loyal. In a way, White posits that the first step of socialization should be the strengthening of social relations and setting a high value for friendship. As long as the individual has strong relationships with others, s/he will not feel isolated and lonely. The communal values that s/he has gained through his/her social relationships will prevent him/her from being driven into desperation, isolation and loneliness.

Although E. B. White basically focuses on true friendship in his children's novels, he also highlights the significance of family values which keep the family together. In his fiction, White tries to reinvigorate the family structure and its values which are deconstructed and degenerated in the 1950s. Unlike the classical children's tales in Golden Age of American children's literature, E. B. White's children's books portray the family as an important unit in building a union. In the children's books of Golden Age, the child readers encounter with the broken families, adopted children and displaced individuals; whereas in E. B. White's children's books, the family

takes care of the hero and helps him with his problems until the hero makes his own way. After the hero leaves home, he is alone but self-reliant enough to overcome the hardships of life by himself. For instance, in *The Trumpet of the Swan*, Louis, the cob, leaves his home for the first time in order to learn how to read and write and how to play the trumpet so as to pay the debt of the stolen trumpet and regain his father's honor.

As well as friendship and family, the values such as loyalty, sacrifice, solidarity, empathy, compassion or social responsibility are uncommon themes in children's fiction as they do not belong to the core values of American society. However, E. B. White desires to remind the young generation the importance of communal values. Reminding the significance of these values, E. B. White demonstrates his critical point of view of American society on account of creating success-oriented, isolated and materialistic individuals. He succeeds his primary goal in depicting the availability of communal values in American society. In addition, one of the foremost American sociologists, Robert Bellah also stresses on the importance of communal values sharing the opinions of an American individual stating that "*Many people feel empty and don't know why they feel empty. The reason is we are all social animals and must live and interact and work together in community to become fulfilled*" (Bellah and et al., 158). Although the individuals are successful and wealthy enough, there is an emptiness and loneliness that they cannot fulfill. In order to get rid of the feeling of emptiness and loneliness, one should live in harmony and in consensus with the others sharing the common goals and common interests not only for the sake of himself or herself but also for common good.

Moreover, just like communal values, White also advocates individual values such as freedom, success and determination. At this point, his healing narrative gains importance in unifying the individuality and the community. E. B. White does not disregard the core values of American society, whereas he advocates the significance of individual values in American culture as long as they go hand-in-hand with the communal values. Each of the animal protagonists in his children's stories, Stuart, Charlotte and Louis, reach their goals through their friendship. In other words, their personal success depends on their true friendship. In addition, in the stories, the

animal characters go on a journey for the sake of their friends or family rather than for their own sake. They embark on various adventures, overcome some dangers, recognize the meaning of true friendship and eventually become successful. If the individual fights for these values, then the journey becomes meaningful and raise self-awareness in oneself. In this sense, we can say that E. B. White's children's books share the interwoven themes such as friendship, family and journey which are based on communal and individual values.

What is striking is that unlike American classical children's books, E. B. White successfully integrate the unfamiliar themes and values with the familiar ones for the purpose of creating an awareness in children's mind about the spirit of community in American society. E. B. White highlighted the significance of communal values such as friendship, loyalty, sacrifice, solidarity, empathy, compassion and social responsibility which are commonly exalted in his three children's novels. In addition, he advocates the necessity of American basic values like the spirit of adventure and freedom, success and determination which shape American character. In other words, E. B. White reveals the idea that individuality and the spirit of community should compensate each other in order to create healthy individuals and a healthy American society. Not only E. B. White, but also many American sociologists and scholars agree with the necessity of the spirit of community in American society:

"America needs a way to understand how society and community can function harmoniously and how a person can fit meaningfully into the massive body of this century's life. Above all, America needs a tradition that is relevant to this continent and the life upon it; America needs a sense of history, a sense of America's place in eternal time, a way to use history as renewal , not as denial. To do this, America must absolve herself of the historic guilt toward her predecessors and heal the split in her soul" (Allen, 1998: 33.)

All in all, in this study, it is portrayed in all aspects how contemporary American society has been converted into "a lonely crowd" and become narcissistic individuals due to the radical individualism, and the way out of this case is to realize the spirit of community that E. B. White has tried to awaken in American society through his three children's books. In other words, the spirit of community can be

fundamentally regarded as the healing of contemporary American society as Etzioni states:

“American men, women, and children are members of many communities-families; neighborhoods . . . and professional associations; Nor can any community long survive unless its members dedicate some of their attention, energy, and resources to shared objects. For these reasons, we hold that the rights of individuals cannot long be preserved without a communitarian perspective” (Etzioni, 1998: xxv).

White’s main purpose for writing his children’s books is conveyed in his sentence as *“All I hope to say in books, all that I ever hope to say, is that I love the world”* (White, qtd in LaBrie, 20013: 99). He loves the world, the human and the animals. His animals in his barn give an inspiration for his animal characters in his books. He attributes human characteristics to his animal heroes so that his animal protagonists experience the perils, adventure, love, friendship and freedom of human life. In addition, these heroes act and feel like human beings; therefore, they have the ability to feel empathy for both the human characters and the other animal creatures in the stories. Moreover, the human characters also understand the feelings of animal characters and help them pave the way for their success in life. E. B. White also has the respect for nature and the freedom of individual. That’s why, there are descriptions of the nature and admirations for free and adventurous animal protagonists in his children’s books. White’s animal characters are not only independent, self-reliant and adventurous heroes, but also loyal, devoted, cooperative, helpful, compassionate, emphatic and responsible characters. As a result, the ethic of self-fulfillment and achievement is attained by bridging individual values with the communal ones.

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