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## REVELATION OF THE SELF: EXPLORING THE HEART OF PRENTIS AND PAULA IN GRAHAM COLIN SWIFT'S SHUTTLECOCK AND TOMORROW

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### ABSTRACT

**T**his paper aims to bring out the heart of Prentis and Paula in the novels of Graham Colin Swift's *Shuttlecock* and *Tomorrow*. Swift has revealed the self of his two characters struggle to be loved by their family members but they are failed to receive love from their family. Prentis expects love, respect and response from his children but they are neglecting by watching television whenever Prentis returns from his office work. He is infuriated by his wife's attitude because of her reluctant expressions. He suffers under mental pain that pain is because of his self-focused desires and expectations. Prentis forgets to love his family people and he thinks that he works and earns for his family so they should love him blindly. This is the reason for his



inferiority feelings also. In *Tomorrow*, Paula tells about the necessity of the truth revelation that Nick and Kate are not Michael's children but he is their father. Paula, wife of Michael, loves children but she couldn't conceive by Michael because of his low sperm count for that she seeks the help of science. She becomes pregnant by artificial insemination and delivers the twins. After sixteen years, she wants to tell the secret to her kids and also she thinks that by coming to know the truth what the twins may do that is they may dislike Michael but Paula is their biological mother but Mike is not their biological father.

This study has explored the mind of Prentis and Paula through their articulation in these two novels.

**KEYWORDS:** Revelation, Self, Heart, Explore, Graham Colin Swift.

### INTRODUCTION :

The present research paper aims to reveal and explore the heart of Prentis and Paula in Graham Colin Swift's novels *Shuttlecock* (1981) and *Tomorrow* (2007). Graham Swift is a well-known British novelist and short story writer who awarded the Booker Prize in 1996 for his novel *Last orders*. He explores the world around him lucidly in all

his novels. Prentis is the major character in *Shuttlecock* and he is actually unable to control his family. He is estranged from his family and also from nature. He is a bionic man and a robotic hero. Prentis is the son of a World War II hero who is afflicted by inferiority feelings and inadequacy. Marian is his wife and his two sons are Martin and Peter. Quinn is his boss; he is an engineer and a secret agent in France. The spy code name is *Shuttlecock*. *Shuttlecock* is about Prentis's self-revelation. Prentis is working in an office which is a sub-department of the police. But he is not a policeman, he is a specialised clerk; he is really an archivist. This department won't do works like men in blue and conspicuous plain clothes but this is an indispensable department.

Prentis thinks about his pet hamster named Sammy. This is a gift to Prentis when he celebrated his tenth birthday. Hamster is a small Eurasian rodent with cheek pouches which is used to reach almost to the shoulders. He recalls its blond fur, pink nose and its jet-black eyes. He also tells about its food that is it used to eat the sunflower seeds and bits of carrot. His hamster obeyed his words by one paw raised, head poised and also in apprehension. But one day its corpse was thrown into kitchen boiler by his parents. He loved Sammy; its arrival made changes in his mind. He loved and pitied for Sammy even though he felt after Sammy's death is that he tortured and tormented Sammy putting in a cage. He feels guilty because he was cruel to Sammy at that little age. He says that love ought to be straightforward but it is not simple. After twenty-two years, Prentis again feels and worries for Sammy because he feels that he tormented a living thing. Prentis is the most senior amongst the assistant staff. But they won't promote on seniority alone instead they bring people from outside for their talent. Prentis is particularly bad-tempered most evenings but Monday evenings are the worst evenings. The reason is that he used to work more and sleep more on Mondays. When he arrives to his house, his wife says simply: 'hello, darling' (4). Her voice is like a surprising tone that is atleast he has arrived here. His two sons are glued to the television in the living-room. He guesses that tonight they are watching the Bionic Man. He dislikes these two kids' activities because they used to watch television not caring their father's arrival from his office work. When Marian and Prentis lived in this house, Prentis liked three things. Those are reading, sleeping and having sex. They never cared about television. But these two kids are usurped the television but which has become focal point of their lives. They won't even eye off the screen to say hello to their own father. His sons neglect him by watching television programmes especially the Bionic Man. The Bionic Man radiates Californian confidence. He performs impossible feats, and solves impossible riddles and he has no relation with anything natural. Prentis switches off the television and tells them that he is their dad but they didn't give response to their dad actually he is from his office work. He tells by touching his hand in his breast. Peter giggles by seeing Prentis. He is his younger son aged eight. In anger, Prentis holds the hands of Peter and gives vigorous shaking. Martin has not moved still he is covering his biscuits. Prentis says: "There'll be no more television for either of you! This evening or any evening! That's final. Do you hear? I said, do you- (7)". He guesses that they will cry because he will be easily beguiled by tears. He is a weak man which means he has to accept his children's desires that's the trouble to him. This is the reason his sons won't say hello to him when he enters into the house after his office work. He doesn't get tender moments in his life even if he gets promotion in his work.

Prentis likes his wife only for sexual acts that's why she simply lives with him not giving full heed to his words. His sons think that their father is so terrific and they keep distance from their own father because of his abusive words. So, Prentis fails in his family relationships and he feels that he is not a worthy man. He suffers under inferior fluctuations. The novel ends with the family picnic to Camber Sands. Peter sits with his mother in back seat and Martin sits beside Prentis in the front seat but he is so silent and aloof. Prentis has revealed his expectations that he wants love from his family members but he becomes a failure because of his own selfish desires and self-pity. Sammy, his hamster, obeyed his words but not his wife and his sons. His heart seeks love from his family but he couldn't understand his family members' wishes that his wife wants to communicate about worldly matters and his sons want to play with him but he is busy in his work. He thinks that he works and gets remuneration and runs his family for that his wife should obey him sexually and also his sons live happily because of his income for that they also must give respect and response to their father incessantly. Prentis's self-focused life is the reason for his failure to be loved by his family people.

Paula is the narrator who narrates her past life to her sleeping twins, Nick and Kate in Tomorrow. She tells about the secrets of the artificial insemination. She became pregnant through artificial insemination. She thinks that when the twins come to know the secret, the day will change their lives. She has decided to reveal their birth secret at sixteen age because she thinks that this is must to tell them that Michael is not their biological father. Paula says that her twins may think that Paula and Michael are disciplined couple and also they are very strict pair. But the truth is that they are not disciplined couple. Paula will be fifty after august 1995. She says that life is long and more elastic. Her twins are sleeping in the same dens, even if they are in their teenage life. They didn't know about the world's hurtling. They were born in 1979 in the month of June to Paula through the artificial insemination. Tomorrow will change Paula's family. Michael will ask the teenage twins to assemble in the living

room and he may have something in his voice when he reveals the secret. The twins may guess that this is odd and strange. When they come to sit on the sofa side by side, their minds may be filled with many stories of their friends at school have shared on domestic crisis. They have just finished their examinations; ordeal is over so that Paula decided to tell the secret after their exams. They may want to know the intricate story.

Paula watches Mike, he is sleeping and snoring gently. She recalls what Kate asked about her birth. Paula was shocked by this question at that moment. Sixteen is equal to eighteen so that they should know the facts of life. The life facts are in the air and abstention is the new liberation. Paula's intuition is that her twins are virgins. But this is not an important one in this world. Tomorrow will affect both children. They may say that they have each other. Paula tells about their works that is Michael is a student of biology at Sussex and Paula is a student of English and also she has known well about history of art. Michael owns and runs Living World Books, which includes Living World Magazine. He emerged only as a successful publisher when the twins were young. His special field is molluscs and snails. He is a real scientist, Paula is busy in her buying and selling art works. Their house is surrounded by snails. They treat them as regular garden pest and despatch them mercilessly. Linda and Judy are Paula's flatmates, they were also shared Michael.

Paula slept with Michael for nearly thirty years but not sleeping with him tonight because she wants to talk with her sleeping twins. Paula says that when she was with her flatmates, she heard plenty of noise but at present there is no noise, she simply lays awake and talks about the birth of the twins. When Michael was born in 1945, his father was in some freezing prison camp. But when the twins were born, they were in a fashionable campus on the South Downs. Paula likes to tell about her father and also about her father-in-law. Her father is Dougie who was sixty six ever then. Dougie got Paula even later than the twins. Dougie got Paula at his forty-five. In 1944, Dougie had married Fiona but she was twenty years younger than him. Fiona lived upto seventy-five, but Nick and Kate never meet them because they were divorced. Paula had a stepfather, who is Alex, and her stepmother is Margaret, she is merely thirty-six. Paula was younger than her own children when she got the wind of family matters. Paula came from Kensington and became a Campbell. She fell in love with Michael Hook and became Paula Hook.

Paula gives reasons for her truth revelation: "I'm your mother, but you're sixteen now, how much longer will you even need me around? (222)". She also asks that: "Your dad was never your biological father. That disqualifies him? How many real fathers are qualified biologists? (223)". Paula's decision is that she will tell the sixteen years secret to the twins tomorrow. So, tomorrow may change their lives in this novel *Tomorrow*.

Paula tells about Simon to her sleeping twins whom they have seen him for dinner. The truth is that Simon is enchanted by the twins. Tomorrow looks like a rainy day to Paula. When the twins are asleep, Paula tells about hard truth. The whole world will be a new one to them tomorrow. Paula and Michael are fearsome parents, because they lived their early life without their parents. Paula and Michael were born in the historic year of 1945. Paula is with full stress and she says that the dawn has arrived one week after sixteenth birthday of the twins. It's raining, she hears the heart song of some little bedraggled bird, she couldn't identify but which has a nest somewhere. Paula waits to tell them about their birth secret that's why she couldn't sleep and narrates her past life. Thus in these two novels, Swift has explored the self realities of Prentis and Paula.

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