

Danielle Steel's Assertion to The Society Through Her Characters

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Abstract—Fiction carries the responsibility of conveying meaningful moral lessons to society. Writers have a unique role in weaving messages that not only engage readers but also inspire critical thought and drive positive change. Danielle Steel is celebrated for her exploration of romantic themes often blended with family drama.

While romantic fiction typically offers readers an escape into a world of idealism, Steel's stories transcend simple escapism. Her narratives consistently embed ethical and moral elements, addressing the importance of personal and societal responsibilities. In works such as *No Greater Love*, *Amazing Grace*, *Kaleidoscope*, and *Mirror Image*, Steel highlights themes of resilience, sacrifice, and integrity, showcasing the profound impact of individual actions on families and communities. Though often regarded as a romance novelist, Steel's writings deliver a deeper exploration of human values, leaving readers with powerful and enduring lessons. This paper explores the deeper insights that Steel gives for the society

Index Terms—Fiction, Danielle Steel, Society, Characters, Community, Human Values, Societal Responsibilities

I. INTRODUCTION

A fictional work may be romantic, women's fiction or family drama but it has to impart some edict to the society of which the plot is dealt with. A writer's onus is to burgeon with moral message to the society so that the readers are interested in the writer's work as well as bring about an upheaval in the minds of the readers. Steel has written around one hundred and two novels in which she predominantly deals with the romantic facets and a touch of family drama. Romantic fiction is meant to make the readers elude themselves and transcend themselves into the world of idealism. The readers of Steel's novels travel with the protagonists in their journey of romance and cataclysm but wrap up with the happy ending. Steel though is deemed a

romance writer she has always been sharing out with ethics and integrities to her readers. In her novels, *No Greater Love*, *Amazing Grace*, *Kaleidoscope*, and *Mirror Image* she gives a great impetus to the moral and social responsibilities of individuals through her characters.

Steel in her novel *No Greater Love* presents Philip, the younger brother of Edwina who at the age of twenty-one takes up the responsibility of joining the war and eventually loses his life in the war. Philip depicts to the society that even at the young age of twenty-one, a person can be patriotic that he joins the army and loses his life for the country. Philip shows utmost sense of responsibility towards the country that he says that he could not sit over in the United States and read about battles in the newspapers and he feels that it is obligation to do his duty for his country which is at war. Even at the early age of twenty-one he loses his life in the war and this leaves the family distraught.

Moreover Edwina, the female protagonist is really strong enough to take care of six young children at the age of twenty. As her parents and her fiancé go down with the RMS Titanic she feels that she had survived the sinking for the reason of taking care of her brothers and sisters. Though she feels that she should have gone away with her fiancé Charles, she musters her power to bestow her life for the prosperity of her siblings. Edwina shows how an elder sister should take up the responsibility of her family in case of a catastrophe. She turns to be accountable to the family as Steel illustrates that how a disaster should not hinder the love of the siblings as Edwina had been everything to her brothers and sisters a mother, a father, a friend, a mentor, a teacher, as well as adviser. The characters show extreme grit and tenacity in their decisions which change their lives as well as the lives of others related to them. Philip and Edwina have their lives pledged, one for the welfare of the country and the other for the

comfort of the brothers and sisters. Steel through the two characters exhibit a great trend of tenacity and obstinacy to fight the sporadic situations.

Amazing Grace is a novel in which the characters portray their societal conscientiousness as Sarah Sloane, the protagonist of the novel demonstrates to the women of the society how to emerge a successful person after a trauma in their lives. When she ascertains that her husband had been fraudulent in his business, she redeems herself and starts to work for her children. Sarah Sloane, has been leading her life in a pompous way returns to her senses when she finds out that the fortune her husband had made is only through deception. She gives up her life with Seth and finds a new job for the sake of her children and a trustworthy life. It is Sarah's societal interest and inner notions of leading an honest life that leads her to divorce Seth for cheating the government.

Melanie Free, a Grammy award winner transforms herself from a teenage sensation to a volunteer and takes the social responsibility to help the deprived and the destitute. Steel, with the character of Melanie shows the world that fame is not a hindrance to take up any social responsibility and age is no bar for working for the society. She is a teenage sensation and has won two Grammy awards still she is not satisfied and at last she finds happiness in service to the society. Steel has crafted the character of Melanie to illustrate that even teenagers should have some social responsibility. Steel presents how a girl of Melanie's age wants to do service to the community and age is not a hindrance in the path of service to humanity.

Steel exhibits a resolute girl in Hilary Walker in *Kaleidoscope* as she marshals herself after the death of her mother and the suicide of her father for the welfare of her sisters. Steel through Hilary presents to the world though she endures so much agony in her life such as rapes, humiliation and separation from her sisters she recuperates from those disasters and hopes and prays for the security and wellbeing of her sisters. Steel brings out the mental forte of Hilary as she confronts Arthur Patterson, her Godfather for separating her from her sisters and putting her through all the toughness in life.

Though she becomes a successful person Hilary's life is an example to the women in the society that women should not hold themselves up after a rigour in their lives giving impetus they have to confront all the ordeals in life.

Steel's protagonists Victoria Henderson in Steel's novel *Mirror Image* enlists herself as a part of the Women's Suffrage movement, fights for the benefit of women, becomes a part of the First World War and serves the soldiers in the war. The other protagonist in this novel Olivia Henderson sacrifices her life for the enrichment of her sister through which the readers know the value of sacrifice. Danielle Steel can be identified as the romance novelist but she should be termed as dramatist. She deals with family and issues related to family in a persuasive way. Her characters revolve around their family and kin. Danielle Steel emphasizes the importance of the family in all her novels. As a family woman with nine children, Steel stresses on the fact that family is an inevitable part of everyone's life. The characters have a strong bonding towards their family and they would sacrifice their lives for each other. The female characters have a great relationship towards their siblings, their parents and children. The protagonists of the novels are ready to go to any extent to defend their kin.

Steel in her novel *Mirror Image* brings a great attachment between the twin sisters who fight for the interests of each other. Olivia Henderson tries hard to keep the family together. She being the elder sister acts as a mother too for her sister who is a little apathetic about her family but only about the Women's Suffrage Movement. When Victoria starts to have an affair with Toby Whitticomb, Olivia warns her but she does not pay attention to her. Victoria becomes a prey to him believing that he would divorce his wife and marry her; at last, she learns that she has been cheated by him and is into a scandal. She becomes pregnant and loses her baby due to haemorrhage. Steel gives an account of intimate relationship between the sisters that Olivia feels the pain her sister feels. Olivia herself could experience the suffering of her twin sister Victoria as Olivia finds her sister gasping for air and she instinctively reaches for her sister. She instantly clutches Victoria's hand, she realizes that the pain wasn't her own, but her twin's. Their father decides to get Victoria married to Charles Dawson, who is a widower with a child and his friend's associate. Victoria refuses to marry him but Olivia accentuates the importance of her marrying Charles though she herself has feelings for him. Steel's heroines are willing to sacrifice their life for the family and they decide to forgo their marriage for the welfare of their

family. Olivia, like Edwina in *No Greater Love* gives up the idea of marriage for her sister.

Victoria marries Charles but could not wholly take him as a husband or be a mother to his son Geoffrey. She proposes an idea to her sister to switch places as she wants to go to England to help the world war victims as Olivia. Olivia, at first does not consent to her plan but Victoria convinces her to stay with Charles as his wife as no one could find a difference between them. Steel's Edwina Winfield sacrifices her marriage life for twelve years for the interests of her siblings. But Olivia starts to live with her sister's husband for her sister without marrying him and she even loses her virginity to him. Yet she thinks that she would hand back Charles to Victoria when she comes back.

They are physically away from each other; however, Victoria and Olivia are concerned about each other and yearn for the welfare of each other. Victoria reaches London after lots of hurdles. But she finds the love of her life in Captain Edouard de Bonneville, who comforts her after she is saved from Lusitania. She starts to live with him and gives birth to a baby boy, Olivier. Olivia starts a family by giving birth to twin girls but her love for Geoff, Charles's son of his first marriage die away. She tells the secret of that he was her aunt Ollie and not Victoria only to him. Olivia feels disturbance and pain lately and finds out that Victoria, who is in the name of Olivia, is hurt in the war and she is gravely ill in England.

At last when Olivia and Victoria meet up they review their exchanged lives and confess to each other about the happenings of life. Olivia confesses of her relationship with Charles and her twin daughters and Victoria announces of her son Olivier. They reveal their secret to Charles who at first hates to hear it and is enraged of the act of the sisters. But eventually he finds out the love Olivia has for him and accepts her and Charles and Olivia adopt Olivier as their son after the death of Victoria. At last Charles confesses his love for Olivia and Steel brings together one big family of Charles and Olivia with Geoff, their twin daughters and Olivier.

In all these novels Steel gives a clear picture of how a family and love towards family can change the life of the protagonists in the novels. Further she gives a clear picture of how the protagonists and their kith and kin contribute for the society.

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