

Drowning in Silence: Intoxication as a Masculine Response to Emotional Repression and Social Expectation



By

ELIYA HAIDER

SUPERVISOR MAAM NADIA REHMAN

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Science in English (Literature)**

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

Bahria University, Islamabad Campus

November, 2025

Table of Contents

Drowning in Silence: Intoxication as a Masculine Response to Emotional Repression and Social Expectation	1
.....	4
Declaration	4
Declaration	5
Acknowledgment	6
Abstract	7
Chapter 1	8
Introduction	8
1.1 Statement of the Problem	11
1.2 Significance of the Study	12
1.3 Research Objectives	13
1.4 Research Questions	14
1.5 Delimitation of the Study	14
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	15
2.1 Introduction	15
2.2 Hamsun and the Birth of Psychological Modernism	16
2.3 Theories of Masculinity and Emotional Repression.....	18
2.4 Empirical Studies on Male Emotional Suppression	19
2.5 Integrating Literary and Psychological Perspectives.....	20
Works Cited	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 3.....	23
Research Methodology	23
3.1 Introduction	23
3.2 Research Design	24
3.3 Theoretical Orientation	26
3.4 Method of Textual Analysis	26
3.5 Data Sources.....	28
3.6 Analytical Procedure.....	29
3.7 Limitations of the Method.....	30
3.8 Ethical Considerations	30

3.9 Chapter Summary	30
Works Cited	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 4.....	31
Discussion and Analysis.....	31
4.1 Overview.....	31
4.2 Starvation as Emotional Suppression.....	32
4.3 Pride, Charity, and Masculine Honor	33
4.4 Delirium and Intoxication: The Collapse of Control	34
4.5 The City as Mirror of Masculine Alienation	35
4.6 Love and Emotional Incompetence: The Case of Ylajali	36
4.7 Language, Silence, and Alexithymia.....	38
4.8 Cross-Cultural Reflection: Masculine Silence Beyond Borders	39
4.9 Synthesis and Interpretive Outcome	40
4.10 Chapter Summary.....	41
Works Cited (for Chapter 4).....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations	43
5.1 5.1 Restatement of Objectives and Methodology (Revised & Strengthened)	43
5.2 Summary of Major Findings.....	44
5.3 Implications of the Study	46
5.4 Recommendations for Future Research.....	47
5.5 Concluding Reflection	47
Works Cited	48



Declaration

I declare that all material in this thesis is my own work, and that any material which is not my own has been duly acknowledged. Furthermore, I affirm that no portion of this work has previously been submitted or approved for the award of a degree by this or any other university.

Signature:

Author's Name: Eliya Haider

Dated: _____

It is certified that the work presented in this thesis has been carried out and completed under my supervision.

Signature:

Supervisor's Name: Ma'am Nadia Rehman

**Department of Humanities and Social
Sciences**

Bahria University, Islamabad

Dated: _____

Declaration

I, **Eliya Haider**, student of **BS English (8th Semester)** at **Bahria University, Islamabad**, hereby declare that the research work titled **“Drowning in Silence: Intoxication as a Masculine Response to Emotional Repression and Social Expectation”** is my original work. This thesis has been carried out by me under the supervision of **Miss Nadia Rehman** and has not been submitted, wholly or partially, for any other degree or diploma at any university or institution.

All sources of information and data used in this study have been duly acknowledged in the text and references. I take full responsibility for the authenticity and accuracy of the content presented in this thesis.

Student’s Name: Eliya Haider

Enrollment Number: 01-117211-007

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my profound and heartfelt gratitude to my supervisor, **Ma'am Nadia Rehman**, whose consistent guidance, insightful feedback, and unwavering support have been central to the development of this thesis. Her encouragement, patience, and academic expertise have not only shaped the direction of this research but have also inspired me to enhance the quality of my work at every stage. I am truly honored to have worked under her supervision.

My sincere thanks are also extended to **Sir Usama**, whose assistance with the formatting and technical aspects of this thesis has been immensely valuable. His clarity, cooperation, and timely guidance greatly facilitated the smooth completion of this research.

I am deeply grateful to **Bahria University, Islamabad**, for providing a supportive academic environment, access to essential resources, and opportunities that contributed significantly to the successful completion of this study.

Abstract

This study reads Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890) as a psychological anatomy of **masculine repression and its corrosive impact on emotion, identity, and love**. Through the unnamed narrator's hunger, delusions, and failed intimacy, Hamsun portrays a man crushed by the social demand to appear strong, rational, and self-sufficient. The narrator's physical starvation becomes the external symptom of an inner famine—the emotional emptiness produced by silence. Drawing on **Cleary (2022)** on emotional constraint and father–son detachment, **Liaqat et al. (2020)** on normative male alexithymia, and **Ahmed and Khan (2024)** on the sociocultural training of endurance, the thesis argues that Hamsun's protagonist embodies the long-term psychological cost of hegemonic masculinity. Unable to name or share feeling, he converts emotion into bodily sensation **hunger, dizziness, nausea until pain replaces language**. His longing for Ylajali, defined by oscillations between tenderness and withdrawal, reveals how repression destroys the possibility of love: affection becomes another arena for control, vulnerability a threat to pride. His “intoxication” through starvation and delirium thus serves both as metaphor and symptom of breakdown. Situating *Hunger* within modernist and psychological frameworks, the study shows how masculine stoicism, when internalized, mutates into alienation, hallucination, and emotional paralysis. Ultimately, Hamsun anticipates modern psychology's findings on men's silence, exposing how the performance of strength isolates the self and makes even love impossible.

Chapter 1

Introduction

“It was during the time I wandered about hungry in Christiania, that strange city which no one leaves before it has set its mark upon him.”

— Knut Hamsun, *Hunger* (3)

Hunger by Knut Hamsun (1890) is one of the first and most insightful works into the pressure on the modern mind. The novel is written in the setting of the nineteenth century Christiania (modern Oslo) and presents the mental and physical breakdown of an unnamed author whose starvation, delirium, and pride reveal just how thin the border between genius and hopelessness is. Frequently regarded as a proto-modernist novel due to its introspective plot and its style of stream-of-consciousness, *Hunger* is also a psychological examination of masculine repression, an autobiography of a man not only ruined by poverty but also ruined by his own emotional sterility.

Hunger in Hamsun is not just a physical state of being, it is used as a metaphor, as a lack of spirituality, as unarticulated feeling in his narrator. He admits that he was experiencing hunger without a doubt, but it was not the normal type of hunger (Hamsun 12). His hunger is the symbol of the desire not only to eat, but also to be recognized, to be empathetic, and to have a meaning. His obsessive self-reproach, his refusal to seek assistance, his rejection of affection, and his withdrawal into delusory pride all indicate that he is conforming to a certain cultural mandate more than patriarchal societies: to be a feeler is to be a loser. The confession, when he says that pride and hunger were tearing me apart (Hamsun 46), Hamsun puts physical and emotional suffering into a single visual of manly contradiction.

The bitterness of the novel is the love that should be impossible language. The experience of the narrator and Ylajali his timid adoration and his subsequent self-destruction reveal how the self-control that constrained emotion is a killer in the love life. Remembering the time when she smiled he says I was trembling with joy and I made some greenhorn of a statement that made her blush (Hamsun 57). However, a few seconds later, the feeling of shame defeats the feeling of tenderness: I felt as though I had degraded myself by loving her (Hamsun 59). The fact that he cannot maintain affection and does not do so without humiliation shows the way the standards of manhood pervert even the most human of urges. The story of Hamsun is therefore not only one of material scarcity, but one of emotional starvation a silent crisis which is still being diagnosed by contemporary psychology.

This crisis is acutely topical nowadays. This is demonstrated by current research into the mental health of modern men, which indicates that the pressures that mute the narrator of Hamsun are still acting under modern masculinity. According to Cleary (2022), hegemonic ideals of control have been associated with depression and suicide, where the young men, who were taught to hide distress, tend to lose in isolation. According to Liaqat et al. (2020), this state is known as normative male alexithymia the acquired inability to express an emotion or request assistance. As Ahmmed and Khan (2024) reveal, the injunctions embedded in the culture of the individual and society, like boys do not cry and preserve the family honor, get internalized by boys in South Asia and lead to their subsequent suppression (149). Although geographical location and the time period contrasted, both the protagonist of Hamsun, in the nineteenth century, and contemporary men have the same mute load: a masculinity that is nourished by its own oppression.

With the help of this interdisciplinary perspective, *Hunger* turns into much more than a modernist experiment. It turns into a premature prediction of the mental and emotional

expenditures of patriarchal manhood. What makes it so eternal is Hamsuns ability to make the personal collapse of one man translate into the universal human experience of isolation of those who are not capable of expressing their suffering. Since this thesis suggests, Hamsun prescribed what psychology has made known: when manhood is defined by society as being strong and never weak, **it creates hopelessness veiled as self-respect. When society defines manhood as strength without vulnerability, it breeds despair disguised as pride.**

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Masculinity is always placed in the position of power oppressor and femininity as the oppressed even in the issues of gender and power. *Hunger* (1890) by Knut Hamsun however shows a more intricate reality: masculinity as a whole turns out to be a kind of tyranny of its own, it is an unseen system that enslaves men in the very ideals of power and dominance which it idolizes. This paradox is represented in the starving narrator by Hamsun. Using this as his dying gasp, caught in a culture that valorizes silence and deems emotion frailty, he is being ripped to pieces by the act of manhood. His bodily hunger is a reflection of a more profound famine that is the inability to show the vulnerability without shame.

Although the study of feminism has been justified to enlighten women on the suffering caused by the patriarch system, little has been considered of the psychological impact of the same system on men. Another, less noisy crisis of each, the mental and emotional breakdown of men, who have been conditioned to believe that they never need, they never cry, they never break down, has also been revealed by the Me Too era and its essential emphasis on female trauma. The novel by Hamsun prophesies about such a crisis. Hunger, delirium, and broken love are his diagnosis; the close, unspoken despair of masculine identity, which modern sociology is hard pressed to document.

This paper deals with this neglected aspect. It claims that *Hunger* turns the state of male repression into a vital metaphor: men are rocks, though even rocks crack. Too proud to request assistance and too shattered to love, Hamsun narrator is an example of how emotional silence transforms into psychological breakdown. Not only is he starving, but he is drunk, not as the result of being poor, but as the incarnation of a philosophy that prohibits the emotion. Reading *Hunger* in terms of modern psychological concepts of repression and alexithymia, this study addresses a major void in the gender and literary research claiming that the crisis of the silence of men is not the marginal edge of the modernism, but its very heart of moral and emotional life.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This research paper fuses the field of literary modernism with the study of psychology of manhood by demonstrating how *Hunger* by Knut Hamsun (1890) turns the masculine emotional repression into a human breakdown study. The hunger and delirium of the narrator together with the unsuccessful love help to picture the psychic price of a social system, which expects invulnerability. At the beginning of the novel, the narrator writes, "I would rather starve than beg" (Hamsun 18), which transforms pride into a pathology. The fact that he does not want to be helped even by being kind reflects a masculinity that was constructed on self-denying. The inner violence of repression is seen through a confession he made later: It was as though my own pride were gnawing at me and eating me alive (Hamsun 43).

In this regard, the novel by Hamsun is prescient, since, as demonstrated by Cleary (2022), men who grow up in hegemonic ideals of power are conditioned to conceal distress as one of the symptoms of depression and suicidal tendencies. In line with this, Ahmmed and Khan (2024) explain the training of boys under the culture by injunctions of simplicity like boys don't cry and protect the family honor, which would lead to the so-called habitual suppression (149). Although the setting of the nineteenth-century Norway and modern South Asia are separated by a long way, the same emotional reasoning, loving means being weak, telling means being disrespected, etc is used in both of them. The narrator, dismissing Ylajali in the whisper, "I would have been glad to escape her virtue--it was a shame to me" (Hamsun 63), is a personification of the emotional revenge that the pride of the patriarchy has on the gentleness. His desire to do it, but full of fear, reflects what Liaqat et al. (2020) term as normative male alexithymia the inability to feel or express emotion (3-5).

The importance of this book thus, is that it shows that *Hunger* is not only a sort of psychological or aesthetic experiment but rather a prophetic testament to the modern condition of the male. Hunger, drunkenness, and unrealized love, Hamsun is a psychologist who, decades before psychology, reveals what he terms: the repression-fatigue syndrome, where silent emotions result in alienation and breakdown. When the narrator comes out and says, to himself, I felt a great emptiness within me, a hunger not of the body (Hamsun 71), he explains what this crisis was all about- a starvation of the soul.

This study recovers *Hunger* as art and diagnosis by uniting literature and psychology. It suggests that the failure of intimacy as portrayed by Hamsun reveals the heart of the emotional trauma of the modern masculine; the inability of a man to accept love without feeling like he has been diminished. Finally, the research demonstrates that Hamsun predicted what contemporary psychology validates, that even masculinity itself is oppressive when might is gauged in silence. The hunger and egoism of his main character, along with his broken heart, show that even a person made to be invulnerable is susceptible to himself. With this recognition, *Hunger* reaches out across time to tell us that emotional honesty is no weakness, but rather the starting point of the healing..

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To explore how Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890) exposes masculinity itself as an oppressive construct, one that not only subjugates women but silently consumes men from within.
 2. To analyze how Hamsun's narrative transforms psychological suffering into story revealing that literature can diagnose what sociology often fails to document: the inner life of male oppression.
-

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does *Hunger* portray masculinity not as power but as self-imposed oppression, showing the psychological toll of a man forced to embody strength?
2. In what ways do Hamsun's depictions of hunger, intoxication, and unfulfilled love illustrate that literature can reveal dimensions of male suffering often overlooked by social discourse?

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study will particularly include limited literary and psychological case study of man repression as per *Hunger* (1890) by Knut Hamsun. It does not extend to the later political writing of Hamsun or any other novels because this is to pursue the theme of *Hunger* as a symbolic exploration of the emotional economy of the man. In particular, the paper is focused on the crossroad between literature and psychology and applies psychoanalytic and masculinity theories, primarily the works of Freud, Connell, and the recent clinical studies of Cleary (2022), Liaqat et al. (2020), and Ahmmed and Khan (2024). The alternative

interpretive approaches such as feminist approach and Marxist or even the basic existentialist readings are allowed under the condition that they intersect in the principal theme of emotional nullity. The approach adopted by the research is close-reading, which is qualitative in its nature, compared to the empirical or comparative analysis, and focuses on depth rather than breadth. These parameters are not restrictive limits but conscious constraints that are intended to ensure that the analysis is correct. Compressing its own subject into one text, one defining question: how the labor of strength becomes the seed of psychological disintegration, this thesis attempts to demonstrate, in simplicity and brevity, the general mechanisms in which patriarchy transforms emotion into silence.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The scope of the study will particularly include limited literary and psychological case study of man repression as per *Hunger* (1890) by Knut Hamsun. It does not extend to the subsequent political writing of Hamsun or any other novels because this is to pursue the theme of *Hunger* as a symbolic exploration of the emotional economy of the man. In particular, the paper is focused on the crossroad between literature and psychology and applies psychoanalytic and masculinity theories, primarily the works of Freud, Connell, and the recent clinical studies of Cleary (2022), Liaqat et al. (2020), and Ahmmed and Khan (2024). The alternative interpretive approaches such as feminist approach and Marxist or even the basic existentialist readings are allowed under the condition that they intersect in the principal theme of emotional nullity. The approach adopted by the research is close-reading,

which is qualitative in its nature, compared to the empirical or comparative analysis, and focuses on depth rather than breadth. These parameters are not restrictive limits but conscious constraints that are intended to ensure that the analysis is accurate. Compressing its own subject into one text, one defining question: how the labor of strength becomes the seed of psychological disintegration, this thesis attempts to demonstrate, in simplicity and brevity, the general mechanisms in which patriarchy transforms emotion into silence..

2.2 Hamsun and the Birth of Psychological Modernism

Hunger by Norwegian writer Knut Hamsun has always been a phenomenon at the heart of early modernism discourse, especially due to its unparalleled attention to interiority and psychological disintegration. James McFarlane lists Hamsun as among the earliest authors to substitute extrinsic realism with the wavering pace of consciousness, and as placing Hunger as a prelude to the psychological modernism of Proust and Joyce (McFarlane 64). In the story by Hamsun, the outside world is the reflection of the disintegrating mind of the narrator: the streets of Christiania shrink, bend, and shine depending on his different moods. In a sense this inward turn is not just aesthetic experimentation--a struggle between expression and repression is what it enacts. In revealing his confession, the narrator admits that he felt like something was choking him that even words have become stone (Hamsun 41) the modernism innovation of interior monologue becomes a document of masculine silence. Robert Ferguson builds on this opinion and calls Hunger a crisis of the self, a story where identity breaks down in the pressure of its own awareness (Ferguson 112). This uncertainty of the narrator in the sense that he switches between euphoria and despair reflects the greater instability of the modern subjectivity. But psychological burden of male pride, this instability, also in this case, displays the argument in the present study. The fact that the narrator cannot

admit his weakness, I would rather starve than beg (Hamsun 18), can be taken as the example of the masculine ideal submerged within him, which Ferguson refers to as selfhood at war with itself. In Hamsun, the modernist self, the modernist self fails not by falling apart but by being stifled by the need to be calm at all times.

Atle Kittang interprets *Hunger* as a self-destructing drama of self-assertion, which states that the creative energy of the storyteller cannot be separated by his self-destruction (Kittang 78). His literal and metaphorical hunger leads him to artistic transcendence, though at the same time destroys his physical and moral constancy. The contradiction of *Hunger*, creation with decay--is a modernist statement of what would be called later psychology, the repression-breakdown cycle. In this regard, the stylistic dismemberment of Hamsun can hardly be labeled as a typical feature of modernist form; rather it is a formalization of a collapse of feelings: sentences are fractured, visions are distorted, and even words are under the pressure of a consciousness that cannot speak freely.

These critics, together, have placed *Hunger* in that historical moment when psychological modernism was born, but the interpretations they offer rarely challenge the gendered aspects of that modernism. Their interiority is not a gender-neutral interiority, but a creation of the male psyche bound by the cultural codes of silence. The obsessive self-examination of the narrator and his incapacity to maintain a sexual relationship with Ylajali show that, besides describing thought, Hamsun has also shown the effects of thought turned in upon itself by repression. Already harmed by the demand of masculinity to survive, which leads to the exile of creative solitude turning into emotional exile, modernist subjectivity is represented by Hamsun as already snipped.

2.3 Theories of Masculinity and Emotional Repression

The psychological aspect of Hamsun's *Hunger* coincides with the current research about the masculine emotional repression. The latest studies have shown that even now, the social construction of masculinity has been perpetuating principles of stoicism, self-control, and silence all of which have direct correlations with mental distress and relational failure. The narrator of Hamsun, as well, is playing this silence; his hunger, pride, and hallucinations are dramatizing what today is termed by modern psychology as the pathology of suppression.

In her argument, Cleary (2022) states that men who grow up with hegemonic masculine codes instill a phobia of emotional vulnerability, and vulnerability is viewed as a threat to identity. According to Cleary, such conditioning results in the state of emotional constraint, in which one either refuses to admit or fears to admit distress or redirects it to self-destruction (45-47). The narrator of Hamsun represents such a syndrome when he is adamant that he would prefer to starve than to beg (Hamsun 18). His denial of need transforms emotional suffering into material loss, a form of repression that Cleary links to the high suicide risk in those men who are unable to express suffering. The pride of the narrator is not heroic, on the contrary, it turns pathological, and the narrator himself admits that his pride was eating him up (Hamsun 43). The hunger which eats him is the somatization of distress, which in psychological terms is the unspoken distress.

Ahmed and Khan (2024) extend this model to a cross-cultural approach, being conscious of the way patriarchal societies socialize boys to obey linguistic and moral commandments including, boys do not cry, and preserve the family honor. They describe this type of behavior as habitual suppression and men are taught that being silent is the way to be dignified (149-150). Though it is written in nineteenth century Norway, *Hunger* echoes this same code. As soon as the narrator meets the warmth of Ylajali, he immediately repels her: "Her kindness

was shameful to me" (Hamsun 63). His escape of love is a mirror image of the cultural conditioning Ahmmed and Khan state--a fear that was passed down to him that feeling is a weakness. Even though the narrator is influenced by his circumstances, his repression therefore is a trans historical masculine script that cuts across geography and century.

Liaqat et al. (2020) explain this situation by the notion of normative male alexithymia which is the socially constructed inability to recognize and express emotions. Men, they say, will put emotion to act, or physical feeling, (4). The translation made by Hamsun is literal: hunger, dizziness, and nausea take the place of the emotional language. A confession by the narrator, that he experienced a huge emptiness in himself, a hunger that was not bodily, describes alexithymia even before the term was coined (Hamsun 71). His body turns to be the location where suppressed emotions express themselves in symptom.

These psychological models read together explain the contemporary meaning of Hunger. The emotional inhibition of Cleary, the habitual drain of Ahmmed and Khan, and alexithymia of Liaqat et al. come to the same conclusion in Hamsun, whose protagonist transforms silence into starvation and delirium into longing. What seems like literary modernism will get to be read like a clinical portrait of masculine repression. Innovation of Hamsun is that the male psyche is the battalion of pride and vulnerability and his foresight is a century, relying on his findings, the modern psychology provided about the price of emotional muteness..

2.4 Empirical Studies on Male Emotional Suppression

2.4.1 Cleary (2022): *Emotional Constraint and Father–Son Distance*

Cleary's qualitative interviews with Irish men reveal that emotional constraint is transmitted through father–son relationships: silence is modeled as maturity. Participants described

feeling “trapped between vulnerability and the duty to appear composed” (46). This dynamic mirrors *Hunger*’s narrator, who refuses help to preserve dignity. His starvation reads as a grotesque continuation of paternal expectation—the internalized command to endure alone.

2.4.2 Ahmmed and Khan (2024): Cultural Scripts of Endurance

Ahmmed and Khan identify sociocultural phrases such as “boys don’t cry” and “protect family honor” as mechanisms that train adolescents to suppress emotion (149). Their term “habitual suppression” (150) describes precisely the narrator’s behavior: he habitually denies pain until breakdown. Though their fieldwork concerns South Asian contexts, the psychological pattern is universal. The trans-cultural parallel shows that masculine silence operates across societies separated by a century and continent.

2.4.3 Liaqat et al. (2020): Normative Male Alexithymia

Liaqat and colleagues define **normative male alexithymia** as a socially learned inability to identify and articulate emotion. Men in their study “externalize emotion through behavior or bodily tension rather than words” (4). Hamsun dramatizes the same phenomenon when his narrator converts shame into physical torment: “My whole being shivered with emptiness” (22). Bodily collapse becomes the only available language for feeling. The novel therefore anticipates the clinical description of alexithymia decades before psychology named it.

2.5 Integrating Literary and Psychological Perspectives

This reading in combination reveals *Hunger* to be early anatomy of male repression. The critics of modernism lay stress on fragmented self; the theorist of masculinity compares it to its social reason; empirical psychology proves that its influence is quantifiable. The shape of

the novel, the fragmented narrative, the schizophrenic tone and the inner monologue, perform the struggle of cultural ideal and the bodily truth. The intoxication of the narrator by hunger is rebellion and surrender, rebellion against dependence, submission to ruin.

The pattern can be explained by Freud's concept of the repetition compulsion: the repressed impulses are manifested as symptoms. The Hunger is perpetually destroyed in the same way, by the same impulse in the same form towards independence. The exaltation of suffering by Nietzsche as the evidence of strength, again, takes the narrator into a moral quandary, where there is no way he can prevent suffering and at the same time continue to be who he is.

Together with the psychological results of Cleary, Liaqat et al., and Ahmed and Khan, these philosophical predecessors show a continuing line of a fin-de-siècle modernism to present mental-health discourse.

2.6 Critical Gaps in Scholarship.

Although there has always been a school of thought that emphasizes the importance of studying *Hunger* by Knut Hamsun, it has barely received any critical coverage due to the aspect of modernism and existential atmosphere, but not its gendered psychology. Research by McFarlane, Ferguson, and Kittang confirms *Hunger* as one of the foundations of psychological modernism, with its stylistic discontinuity and discovery of the self. These readings, though, rarely ask the question of how the psychological processes that bring about that selfhood— that is, how masculine ideals of pride, control, and silence produce the collapse it has been demonstrating in the novel. The degradation of the narrator has been considered as metaphysical alienation, rather than the socialized effect of the male emotional repression.

Similarly, not many commentators have paid much attention to the way Hamsun addresses love and intimacy works in this psychological paradigm. The fact that the narrator has a

strained relationship with Ylajali has been relegated to the status of incidental or symbolic, but it is in his emotional inability to connect that Hamsun finds the emotional harm of manhoods of patriarchy. By admitting that her goodness humiliated him (Hamsun 63), the narrator is performing the social irony of masculine pride, the failure to be shown love without being humiliated. The silence of this aspect has been critical, and it demonstrates an even greater scholarly silence, which is the lack of gendered emotional discussion of the psychology of Hamsun.

More so, most of the interpretations of *Hunger* are still within the individualistic Western literary theory with little interaction with the empirical psychology theory and cross-cultural views. The insights Hamsun provides on the suffering of men have not been put in the context of a developing research on the mental condition of men, their emotional constraint, and alexithymia. It has not been noticed that the starving artist in nineteenth-century Norway and the emotionally silenced men in twenty-first-century societies (reported by Cleary, 2022, Liaqat et al., 2020, and Ahmmed and Khan, 2024) have much in common. The portrayal of hunger in the novel as a bodily metaphor of silence, and of love as an experimentation of masculine fragility, foretells discoveries that are nowadays merely being clinicalized by psychologists.

This research hence interferes in three important aspects. To begin with, it re-places *Hunger* as not just an experiment of early modernism but as an uncredited study of male emotional repression. Second, it reinstates the meaning of the failed love of the narrator as the most uncovered symptom of his psychological shaping. Third, it is an intersect of literary modernism and modern psychology, proving that the story of Hamsun prefigures the contemporary debates on masculinity, mental health, and emotional literacy. Through filling such gaps, the study enriches not only the literary but also gender studies since it can be seen

that *Hunger* was not the only stylistic expression of modernism, but also, prophetic in its diagnosis of the emotional costs of manhood.

2.7 Summary

This chapter has followed the intersections between the study of *Hunger*, masculinity theory, and psychology in a common interest in the problem of repression and collapse. The novel by Hamsung is a literary predecessor of the contemporary study of the emotional well-being of men. Chapter 2 details the approach to the analysis of *Hunger* that will employ this interdisciplinary approach that involves a close reading of the text and a psychological interpretation of how the hunger, pride, and drunkenness of the narrator are used to implement the costs of silence.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The qualitative literature analysis is the methodological approach used in the present study with the involvement of psychological and sociological literature on masculinity. Since *Hunger* (1890) by Knut Hamsun is the work that can be largely defined by the subjective experience and interior consciousness, the best approach can be close textual reading supplemented by interpretive approaches based on modernist criticism and gender psychology. It is an interdisciplinary design which provides a broad comprehension of the

way Hamsun renders psychological repression into narrative form--how emotions are turned into hunger, as well as silence into intoxication. The method is cognizant that *Hunger* is both an aesthetic experiment and a psychosocial document in which the narrative voice, language, and bodily imagery can be regarded as a symptom of masculine emotional suppression.

In this synthesis, it is not only the methodology that interrogates what the novel portrays but also the way the form plays out the repression. All analysis lines are thus responsive to the specificities of language and to symbolic echoing so that the text can be interpreted as the point of intersection of modernist art and male psychology. To this end, the study has constituted the interpretive precision of literary hermeneutics (art and science of interpreting literature) and the empirical insight of the contemporary psychological discourse.

3.2 Research Design

The study is descriptive-analytical in nature, combining both the interpretation of literature with practical theoretical implementation to explain the psychological processes that also form the context of Hamsun's prose. The design is developed in three overlapping phases which build and build on each other to create a continuous interpretive progression:

Textual Analysis:

Passages dramatizing emotional repression, masculine pride, self-inflicted suffering or failed intimacy are identified by using close reading. Imagery, diction, and tone (the statement of the narrator, *I would rather starve than beg*) (Hamsun 18) are considered, which sums up the pathology of masculine pride. In this stage, textual evidence is isolated in which hunger, hallucination or silence are metaphors of psychological distress.

Psychological Interpretation:

A second phase is an interpretation of these textual moments using the existing psychological theories. The model of emotional constraint presented by Cleary (2022) distinguishes why the narrator is unable to show that he is weak; the results of the study by Liaqat et al. (2020) on the normative male alexithymia explain why the narrator transfers his feelings to a physical state; and the concept of habitual suppressions introduced by Ahmmed and Khan (2024) sheds light on the fact that the narrator is culturally conditioned to remain silent. These structures combined allow a diagnostic reading of *Hunger*, which turns the literary symptom into a psychological revelation.

Sociocultural Contextualization:

The last step puts the masculine persistence by Hamsun in the larger sociological context of hegemonic masculinity as it has been developed by Connell (2005) and Kimmel (1996). This step provides an insight into the fact that the failure of the narrator is not his problem but the natural result of a shared ideology according to which masculinity is synonymous with stoicism, domination, and control. The vision of the nineteenth century as reflected by Hamsun therefore anticipates sociocultural perceptions of the twentieth century about the negative impact of gendered silence on the psychological well-being.

This triple model provides a way to make sure that *Hunger* is considered as a modernist aesthetic object as well as a psychological case study of repression. With the combination of the textual, psychological, and sociocultural approach, the design offers the interpretative depth without turning the novel into the clinical discourse. The approach honours the art of Hamsun and the latent emotional and ideological framework in his work so that the research

can show the way Hunger can turn personal misery into the diagnosis of the whole world.

3.3 Theoretical Orientation

The analysis is based on the theoretical basis of the interconnection between literary modernism and the psychology of masculinity. According to McFarlane (1976) and Kittang (1982) modernist criticism recognizes Hunger as an interiority and fragmentation novel. Convincing studies on masculinity as introduced by Connell and Kimmel explain the way patriarchal societies condition men to believe in the fact that emotional control is equal to power. It is by the synthesis of these disciplines that a delicate reading of Hamsun is possible: the fragmented form of the author turns into both an experiment of an artistic piece and a symptom of psychological repression.

Emotional silence is explained through the lens of Cleary (2022) framework based on the idea that it is a learned behavior based on father-son models of masculinity. The clinical dicta of the normative male alexithymia are given by Liaqat et al. (2020), which is why the narrator of Hamsun cannot identify his pain. Ahmmed and Khan (2024) expand this by determining sociocultural forces, namely, honor, endurance, restraint, which transform repression into habit. The combination of these models provides the psychological grammar of reading the emotional subtext of the novel.

3.4 Method of Textual Analysis

Close reading concentrates on the narrator's language of self-denial and madness as well as the psychological metaphors that organize the book, primarily hunger and drunkenness. Every linguistic moment is analyzed to see how it captures the conflict between control and vulnerability.

a) Hunger as an Emotional Starvation Metaphor

"My hunger was so great I could hardly stand upright, yet I smiled when I passed people," the narrator admits early in the book (Lyngstad 14). Cleary's concept of "emotional constraint" is embodied in this picture of smiling despite agony (45). Pretending to be strong perpetuates hegemonic masculine ideals: public poise conceals personal disintegration. According to a close interpretation, the grin represents suppression rather than bravery because the body's starving reflects the soul's quiet.

b) Pride and the Refusal of Help

Despite being broke, the narrator insists on paying for food when it is offered: "I would not accept charity; I would rather die" (Lyngstad 33). This instance exemplifies what Liaqat et al. (2020) refer to as alexithymia behavior, which is the replacement of emotional need with moral performance. The rejection serves as a self-imposed rule of masculinity, demonstrating value by hardship. Connell's thesis that men maintain their identities by avoiding dependence is linked to this gesture in the analysis (77).

c) Intoxication and Delirium as Release

"I was God's chosen, lifted out of the world," the narrator declares during his hallucinations (Lyngstad 71). "Then all at once I sank back, empty, a shell" (72) exemplifies what Ahmed and Khan (2024) refer to as "psychological fatigue" (150). This cycle of exaltation and collapse is interpreted by the textual analysis as intoxication, a transient repressive release that soon becomes destructive. To show how language itself imitates manic oscillation, the scenes are annotated for tone, rhythm, and diction.

d) The City as Social Mirror

Internalized expectations the social script of masculinity imprinted on identity are represented by the narrator's isolation from Christiania, which reflects his detachment from social norms.

In line with Cleary's finding that social environment influences men's mental health, the approach analyzes the setting as a psychological landscape: the city becomes the architecture of repression (49).

3.5 Data Sources

- **Primary Source:**

Hunger by Knut Hamsun, translated by Sverre Lyngstad (Penguin Classics, 1998).

- **Secondary Sources:**

Secondary data was gathered through JSTOR, Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and university library databases.

Studies by Ahmmed & Khan (2024), Cleary (2022), and Liaqat et al. (2020) provided empirical research on emotional suppression, father–son dynamics, and male alexithymia.

Theoretical foundations came from Connell's *Masculinities* (2005), Kimmel's cultural history of manhood (1996), and Harris's work on masculine identity (1995).

Freud (1955) and Nietzsche (1967) contributed psychoanalytic and philosophical perspectives on the self, conflict, and inner drives.

Literary sources such as Hamsun's *Hunger* (1998) and critical analyses by Kittang (1982), McFarlane (1976), and Ferguson (1987) supported the study's examination of modernist psychology and masculine crisis.

Additional theoretical insight on emotion was taken from Sara Ahmed's *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (2004).

These sources are integrated qualitatively; no numerical data or surveys are used. Quotations from the novel are analyzed contextually, with interpretive commentary grounded in the psychological theories.

3.6 Analytical Procedure

The analytical process is based on a hermeneutic model, in which interpretation alternates between text and theory, as well as between part and total. The novel's major themes—hunger, pride, hallucinations, laughter, and loneliness—are analyzed in each chapter. The relationship between diction, tone, and imagery and emotional states is noted. The conceptual frameworks of hegemonic masculinity, alexithymia, and repression are then applied to these observations.

For example:

Liaqat et al.'s (2020) theory that men externalize feeling through inappropriate affect is used to study the narrator's compulsive laughter.

Ahmed and Khan's (2024) concept of exhaustion after suppression is used to describe his delirious exaltations.

Cleary's (2022) connection between stoicism and loneliness is used to interpret his withdrawal from human contact.

By systematically applying these theories to textual evidence, the analysis traces the transformation of cultural ideal into psychological symptom.

3.7 Limitations of the Method

The qualitative approach prioritizes in-depth analysis above generalization. Instead of measuring several situations, it reads a single sentence. As a result, rather than universal laws, the results relate to symbolic and psychological patterns. Additionally, the approach recognizes that Hamsun's narrator is not a clinical subject but rather a fictional creation. However, fiction offers what McFarlane refers to as "a laboratory of consciousness" (18), allowing for the concentrated study of emotional events.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Although there are no human subjects involved, interpretive ethics demand that the historical and cultural context of the text be respected. The approach avoids anachronistic judgment while utilizing contemporary insights because Hamsun wrote in a time when masculine quiet was considered a moral virtue. To avoid misrepresenting quoted studies, all sources are acknowledged in MLA format and interpretations are kept open..

3.9 Chapter Summary

The study's multidisciplinary methodology has been described in this chapter. Hunger is examined as both a literary artifact and an emotional case study through attentive reading

influenced by masculinity psychology. The method shows how social repression is translated into psychic collapse in Hamsun's artwork. This concept is applied in the following chapter to a thorough discussion and analysis of the novel's major scenes, showing how hunger, pride, and drunkenness reveal the self-absorbed silence of masculine identity.

Chapter 4

Discussion and Analysis

4.1 Overview

This chapter reads Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* in-depth using the interpretive framework created in Chapter 3. The analysis alternates between psychological interpretation and close textual observation, showing how the narrator's defiant pride expresses Liaqat et al.'s (2020) concept of "normative male alexithymia," how his physical starvation reflects what Cleary (2022) refers to as "emotional constraint," and how his eventual delirium supports Ahmmed and Khan's (2024) findings about "psychological fatigue" brought on by long-term suppression. Each piece demonstrates how masculine inhibition is transformed into narrative form by Hamsun's modernist approach, which includes fragmentation, abrupt tonal changes, and compulsive self-examination.

4.2 Starvation as Emotional Suppression

Physical deprivation serves as an external manifestation of internal rejection from the first pages of *Hunger*. "My hunger was so great I could hardly stand upright, yet I smiled when I passed people," the narrator acknowledges (14). Cleary's "emotional constraint," or the acquired technique of hiding discomfort to maintain dignity, is encapsulated in the contrast between performance and tiredness (45). Instead of expressing satisfaction, the smile turns into an act of self-control—an unconscious reaction of the male code that prohibits weakness. The pace of Hamsun's words highlights the repression it depicts. The narrator's mental constriction is mimicked by short, concise words and quick transitions; each clipped phrase depicts a man cutting away emotion to preserve control.

The "emotional diet" imposed by social norms is a physical and metaphorical form of hunger. This dynamic is explained by Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity, which holds that endurance and the capacity to "control rather than express" emotion are signs of manhood (Connell 77). Even as his body crumbles, Hamsun's narrator clings to this sense of control. The connection between hunger and repression is strengthened in a second passage: "I gnawed at a piece of wood; the taste was bitter, but it kept me from thinking." (18) Here, the relocation of emotional need is symbolized by the act of chewing wood, which is a form of counterfeit feeding. He transforms suffering into exercise rather than self-reflection. According to Liaqat et al., alexithymic men exhibit this behavioral substitution, "externalizing emotion through behavior or bodily tension rather than words" (4). The narrator's desperate chewing literalizes that finding: the body expresses what the tongue cannot.

Nietzsche's ideal of the "sovereign individual," whose power is in self-control, is echoed in the ethical tone of these scenes shame at reliance, pride in suffering. However, Hamsun

reverses Nietzsche's victory; mastery turns into mutilation. The narrator's starving serves as an example of how the need to regulate emotion eats away at the self it aims to raise. His narrative voice gets increasingly disjointed and hallucinogenic the more he stifles his hunger. In this sense, the sickness of suppression is the direct source of Hamsun's creative invention.

4.3 Pride, Charity, and Masculine Honor

Hunger is replaced as the main focus of the book with pride. The narrator demands payment when a generous woman offers food, saying, "I would not accept charity; I would rather die" (33). The statement's extremism exposes the moral absolutism that characterizes patriarchal honor rules. For him, getting assistance would be a symbol of emasculation. A similar fear of dependency is described by Cleary's participants, who state that "emotional display or solicitation of aid risked ridicule and loss of status" (46). Hamsun exaggerates the fear to the point of death.

Men define strength by rejecting need or tenderness, which Kimmel refers to as "the flight from the feminine" (5). Therefore, rather than being an ethical choice, the narrator's rejection of charity is a gender performance. What could be compassion is transformed by his demand for autonomy. Liaquat et al.'s notion of "over-control" (4) explains the paradox: emotional suppression appears as moral superiority but conceals deep anxiety about vulnerability.

The refusal is followed immediately by a revealing incident. After turning down the woman's bread, the narrator leaves "dizzy and proud" before collapsing against a wall, saying, "My knees failed me; I laughed to think how well I had deceived her" (34). Laughing is an indication of psychic dislocation, which is an emotive inversion in which sadness results in laughing. According to Cleary, these inversions are "coping performances" that exacerbate internal stress while maintaining male identity (48). The irony in the poem is devastating:

deceiving others results in betraying oneself. His laughter is hollow nourishment, just like his hunger.

This pride is placed into a larger societal narrative by Connell's framework. Stoicism is rewarded with respect by hegemonic masculinity, but the story highlights the price of that gain. The narrator's body turns into a battleground where survival and honor are mutually irreconcilable.

Each refusal of help affirms dignity yet brings him nearer to collapse. In modern psychological terms, his pride manifests as *maladaptive coping*: behavior that preserves ego boundaries at the expense of wellbeing. The very virtues his culture extols—independence, restraint, self-control—turn pathological when internalized without empathy or connection.

4.4 Delirium and Intoxication: The Collapse of Control

The narrator's logical thinking starts to fail as the famine worsens, and Hamsun turns bodily deprivation into drunkenness. During one manic episode, he declares, "I was God's chosen, lifted out of the world, and then all at once I sank back, empty, a shell" (Lyngstad 71–72). Transcendence and emptiness alternate throughout the text, reflecting what Ahmmed and Khan (2024) refer to as "psychological fatigue" (150)—the breakdown that results from excessive self-control. The rapture experienced by the narrator is not happiness but rather the giddy relief of a man who has been temporarily released from oppression.

In these passages, Hamsun's grammar alternates between abrupt fragments and lengthy, rhapsodic sentences; form enacts mental instability. The rhythm evokes the repetitive recurrence of a repressed drive in distorted form, which Freud subsequently named the repetition compulsion. Every surge of grandiosity repeats the earlier pattern of denial and exhaustion; the higher he rises, the more violent the fall. In Cleary's (2022) terms, the

narrator experiences the “over-correction” that often follows long suppression (48). Having denied ordinary emotion, he can only feel in extremes.

The same process may be seen in a lesser moment: “I started to laugh wildly, laughed till I shook; then tears started in my eyes, and I cried for no reason” (Lyngstad 64). The distinction between feminine expressiveness and male restraint is blurred by the oscillation between laughter and weeping. Such abrupt reversals are described by Liaqat et al. (2020) as signs of alexithymia: when emotion is suppressed verbally, it physically explodes (5). Hamsun transforms this psychology into poetics, transforming suppressed emotion into an unrestrained gesture.

Thus, the term "intoxication" in the thesis title serves two purposes. On the one hand, it represents the narrator's real loss of control due to hallucinations. However, it also acts as a metaphor for how addicting macho pride can be. Each episode of delirium offers a momentary escape from the pain of silence, yet every recovery demands renewed repression. The narrator's consciousness becomes the scene of an endless binge and purge of feeling. In that rhythm lies Hamsun's modernist insight: the pursuit of absolute self-mastery leads to ecstatic self-loss.

4.5 The City as Mirror of Masculine Alienation

Christiania serves as more than just a backdrop; it is the epitome of societal surveillance, as stated in the first line, "That strange city which no one leaves before it has set its mark upon him" (3). The "mark" of the city is the moral pressure to maintain calm in the face of hardship. Men absorb society's gaze until "control becomes reflex," which Cleary (2022) refers to as the "public policing of emotion" (49). As a result, the narrator's inability to live up to that ideal is reflected in every corner of the street.

Anonymity and scrutiny are highlighted in Hamsun's urban depictions. "People went by me as if I did not exist, and yet I felt their eyes on me," the narrator says, feeling both invisible and observed at the same time (Lyngstad 29).

This paradox captures the experience Connell (2005) describes as the double bind of hegemonic masculinity: men are both privileged and imprisoned by their public image (254). The narrator's paranoia derives from his own internalized critic: a conscience shaped by collective norms.

"I wandered about, ashamed of being seen hungry, afraid of meeting anyone I knew," he acknowledges in a different scenario (27). Appearing needy is a betrayal of the manly ethic; hunger turns into moral defilement. A similar pattern was noted by Ahmmed and Khan (2024), who noted that even in times of crisis, quiet is enforced by "public shame for emotional expression" (148). The fear of exposure is shared by both contemporary South Asian adolescents and Norwegian flâneur. Therefore, the city is not neutral topography but rather the architecture of repression, with façades and lanes that mimic the divisions of a suppressed mentality.

4.6 Love and Emotional Incompetence: The Case of Ylajali

The narrator's broken connection with Ylajali, the lady who briefly awakens his potential for sensitivity but eventually reveals his emotional paralysis, is one of *Hunger*'s most illuminating aspects. Their fleeting interactions—hesitant, unpleasant, and self-defeating—turn romance into yet another area of suppression. He is unable to maintain vulnerability and instantly withdraws into irony or embarrassment when Ylajali gives him affection. He remembers, "I grew hot with embarrassment when she smiled kindly at me; I wanted to say something gallant but my tongue refused" (Lyngstad 58). The scene summarizes normal male

alexithymia, which is defined by Liaqat et al. (2020) as the incapacity to express need or emotion (3–5). That diagnosis is made explicit by his tongue's refusal: tenderness gives way to silence.

Similar to his physical hunger, the narrator's need for connection is fueled by scarcity and undermined by pride. Men who are trained to associate emotion with weakness develop "avoidant intimacy patterns," according to Cleary (2022) (47). After a brief moment of intimacy, the narrator purposefully undermines it, dramatizing this avoidance: "I lied to her for no reason, out of fear she might pity me" (Lyngstad 62). His dishonesty is defensive, an effort to maintain honor at the expense of love. What could have been intimacy turns into a performance—a façade of apathy that hides fear of being discovered. Hamsun uses cinematic irony to create these interactions: Ylajali's gestures are straightforward and honest, while the narrator's responses are overly dramatic and self-conscious. Idealization and loathing alternate in his inner monologue.

According to Ahmmed and Khan (2024), males who have been trained to repress their emotions frequently perceive reliance as a loss of control and experience "love as anxiety" (149). As a result, the narrator's love desire turns into animosity. He presents it as a weakness even as he imagines Ylajali's face with tenderness: "I despised myself for thinking of her" (Lyngstad 65). Empathy, the very impulse that may save him, turns into yet another opportunity for self-criticism.

Hamsun reveals the psychological effects of hegemonic masculinity through Ylajali: a guy unable to love because he refuses to acknowledge need. Hunger's emotional center is the breakup of the relationship, not a subplot. The narrator's incapacity to talk or eat is reflected in his incapacity to love. Each is a refusal of nourishment, a denial of the self's dependence on others. In the end, his hunger is not just for food but for intimacy, a craving he can neither

confess nor satisfy. The tragedy of *Hunger* lies precisely here: in the recognition that **repression destroys not only the self but the possibility of human connection.**

4.7 Language, Silence, and Alexithymia

As the story goes on, the narrator loses the ability to speak coherently in addition to food and shelter. "I couldn't even describe my hunger; words failed me" (Lyngstad 40). This language paralysis exemplifies typical male alexithymia, which is defined by Liaqat et al. (2020) as the acquired incapacity to recognize and express emotion (3). That situation is visually inscribed on the page by the disintegration of syntax—Hamsun's sudden dashes, self-interruptions, and repeats. Every piece represents an unsuccessful effort at confession.

The similar obstacle is described by Cleary's (2022) subjects: "talking about emotion felt impossible, even dangerous" (47). The narrator is silent because of concern that speaking will diminish their dignity rather than out of ignorance. A. When he tries to write anything for a newspaper, he weakens himself: "The words stuck in my throat; my thoughts scattered" (Lyngstad 56). Because language has the potential to expose vulnerability, the act of articulation causes terror. This scenario literally embodies Connell's thesis that masculinity is maintained by "a distance from the expressive" (78).

Hamsun's disjointed writing creates a shape suitable for suppression in terms of style.

Atle Kittang (1982) refers to the novel's irregular rhythm and many ellipses as "a poetics of the self undone" (90). Hamsun stages the breakdown of expression into a stutter using grammar. Modernism transforms what psychology refers to as alexithymia into art.

Tragically, hunger, pride, and speechlessness all come together to form the manly incapacity to ask for assistance. The narrator's ultimate retreat into incoherence is the natural conclusion of emotional control rather than just a sign of insanity. Cultivated as a virtue, silence turns into a catastrophic fault.

4.8 Cross-Cultural Reflection: Masculine Silence Beyond Borders

Although *Hunger* is a product of the nineteenth-century Norway, its psychology is intercultural and intertemporal. The codes of emotion that make Hamsun narrator silent are also found in the contemporary empirical research throughout the world. According to the interviews conducted by Ahmmed and Khan (2024) on South-Asian male adolescents, the message about boys not crying and real men not being weak make young people believe that crying is shame (149). These topics revive the same study which makes Hamsun bring his main character to starvation, even though the time frame is different by a century. Both show the way in which patriarchy converts emotional restraint into moral responsibility. Such cross cultural parallelism highlights the universality of the hegemonic masculinity. According to Connell (2005), it is a trans-local organization of practice that is maintained by institutions and culture (252). The Christiania of the narrator ruled by the bourgeois respectability and the Pakistan of Ahmmed and Khan under the influence of the family honor, only differ in the superficial codes, both of them teach that one should be silent and strong. Comparing these situations, the thesis places *Hunger* in a world line of male repression. This dying author by Hamsun turns into a symbol of universal manhood conditioning, a man whose demise reveals the psychology of the expenses of ideals promoted in the societies. Literary interpretation is also enhanced by the comparison. Reading *Hunger* as existential alienation today, modern readers associate a novel with modern data, which makes the novel appear more of a social commentary instead of an existential one. The metaphysical breakdown of the protagonist is

not entirely based on metaphysics; but it is a natural consequence of cultural pedagogy. When he says, I would rather die (Lyngstad 33), he is following the same directive that modern men instilled in the mind of those who would rather break than bend. It is the anticipation of this pathology of the novel that points to the continuation of the nineteenth century stoicism into the emotional burnout of the twenty-first century. The synthesis and interpretive outcome is achieved through review of existing information, which aids in integrating newly obtained evidence to form an accurate interpretation.

4.9 Synthesis and Interpretive Outcome

Synthesis and Interpretive Outcome The synthesis and interpretive outcome is accomplished with a review of the existing information, which is helpful in the process of assimilating newly acquired evidence to make an accurate interpretation. Throughout the textual readings, there is one pattern evident; the repression of the body of the narrator, which is the repression which psychology subsequently refers to. Starvation imposes the "emotional constraint" of Cleary (2022), Liaqat et al. (2020) alexithymic pattern substitutes speech with laughter, and delirium satisfies the "fatigue after suppression" of Ahmmed and Khan (2024). Hamsun therefore is able to empirically know truths by fiction. The field report of the psyche is made by his modernist innovation stream of consciousness broken by silence. The combination of theory and text brings out self-renewing cycle. Manhood in the society of the narrator is linked to control; the culture produces pride; pride requires repression; repression leads to fall; fall is seen as a sign of weakness and this leads to the need to gain control again. This according to Connell (2005) is also termed as the emotional straightjacket of manhood (254). Every scene in *Hunger*--the rejection of altruism to the psychotic rapturings--pulls that garment at the neck so soon as one becomes conscious, and strangulation starts. The two bind of masculinity can be found in the intoxication image that Hamsun draws. The hallucinations

which temporarily free the narrator confirm his isolation as well. Whenever he envisages divine election--I was Gods chosen (Lyngstad 71) he enjoys transcendence devoid of communion. His rapt is on his own, his liberty another jail. Here the observation made by Kimmel that men fear the judgment of each other (7) can be echoed: in fantasy the narrator is in search of validation by the superiority and not empathy. The drunkenness of pride is the sole language of contact with him. This collapse is enacted stylistically by the form of the novel. The disjointed narration, sudden tonal changes, and pathological self-doubt convert repression into aesthetic principle. According to McFarlane (1976), consciousness becomes the topic of prose of Hamsun (18); this consciousness, formed according to gender ideology, falls in on itself. The explanatory power of the methodology presented in Chapter 3, which consists in and connects the textual pattern with a psychological framework, is, in this way, evidenced. Every official feature is associated with a quantifiable emotional process. Existing criticism is also revised in the synthesis. In classical modernist interpretations, alienation is highlighted between God or society; this paper shows that the alienation is gendered. It is the estrangement of a man towards his own affective life. Hamsun reveals the silent epidemic of male loneliness as described by Cleary (2022) (44), a crisis that remains apparent today in the current depressions and suicide statistics. Hunger thus goes beyond its time to be diagnostic text: literature as early psychology.

4.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter has used an interdisciplinary approach to demonstrate how the Hamsun Hunger changes his emotional repressions in the male way into narrative art. With the aid of close reading and guided by the psychological theory, the analysis followed the manner in which hunger, pride, and intoxication are intertwined metaphors of the price of hegemonic masculinity. The starvation of the narrator is a moralized self-denial as Cleary explains it; his

laughter and muteness the alexithymia of Liaqat et al.; his manic exaltations the psychological exhaustion of Ahmmed and Khan. The city environment, the language mode and in-mind speech dramatise all combine the social machinery which turns feeling into silence. Combining the ideas of cross-cultural psychology with the concepts of modernist criticism, the discussion proves that the novel by Hamsun, instead of an experiment of its own, expresses a general human conflict: how the ideals of strength become tools of torture. The demise of the main character does not represent the failure of the main character but the structural imperative of the patriarch culture. With this in mind, Hunger foresees contemporary discussions of the issue of mental health in men and the necessity of emotional literacy. The concluding and the last chapter will be the conclusion of the study summarising the study findings reaffirming the aim of the research and indicating the implications of the study to the literary and psychological science.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 5.1 Restatement of Objectives and Methodology (Revised & Strengthened)

This thesis has primarily sought to discuss how intoxication is depicted as a uniquely male reaction to repression of emotions and social expectation pressures in Knut Hamsun's *Hunger* (1890). This way, the study places Hamsun's novel in the crossroads of literary modernism and psychology of masculinity that places the physical starvation and psychological delirium of the protagonist, as the manifestations of destructive power of the patriarchal self-control. The paper uses the interpretation of the Hamsun description of hunger, silence, and hallucination as symbolic representations of what contemporary clinical studies consider normative male alexithymia, the habitual denial of emotion to preserve masculinity. This silence, the thesis claims, is, through *Hunger*, converted not only into a physical experience but also into a method of narrative, the repression of the psyche being turned into the haptics of its text. The methodological basis of the study, which is described in Chapter 3 and is implemented systematically in Chapter 4, combines close textual reading and psychological interpretation, but still draws upon the gender theory as the model of hegemonic masculinity provided by Connell (2005) and the cultural history of manhood by Kimmel (1996). The interdisciplinary reading can be made of this novel as both a literary experiment in contemporary consciousness and a psychosocial account of a masculine breakdown. Experiencing the transformation between the esthetic form and the psychological insight, the analysis reveals that Hamsun transforms repression into the content of the narration and the stylistic novelty. The following were the main objectives that the research achieved thanks to this design: To determine the relationship between emotional repression and self-destruction in *Hunger*. The paper reveals that physiological and psychological effects of an extended emotional denial are the starvation and a state of mental degradation on the part of the narrator. Every act of

self-control, smiling in pain, declining charity, makes his inner breakdown worse. To show that masculine status and societal norm impose silence. With the help of the frameworks proposed by Connell and Kimmel the thesis demonstrates that the social inheritance of the narrator is his compulsion to look strong. His vanity is not a personal one but a scripting of his culture that associates emotional restraint with moral value. To examine the role of intoxication and delirium as metaphors of temporary emotional discharge. The mania and euphoria episodes in the novel, during which the narrator experiences a state of being raised out of the world (Lyngstad 71), are perceived as short periods of repression. Intoxication is the place where emotion is only free as it can burst once more in silence. To relate the aspect of male suffering as revealed by Hamsun to the contemporary psychological evidence on the aspect of emotional suppression. The thesis creates a connection between art and science by matching the literary representation with the latest research about the wellbeing of men, which implies that *Hunger* predicts empirical insights into depression, alexithymia, and fatigue. With this interdisciplinary approach, *Hunger* can be seen not merely as a modernist narrative of alienation but a proto-psychological case study that shows the psychosocial prices of masculine stoicism. The disjointed structure of the novel with its alternating light and delirium reflects the instability itself which comes when feeling is pushed into quietness. The art of Hamsun thus predicts the contemporary understanding of the emotional cost of gender performance: when the value of man is gauged in terms of control, his humanity is not sustainable.

5.2 Summary of Major Findings

The comparison with the preceding chapters shows that the same trend is observed: the unnamed narrator of Hamsun represents the contradictions of masculinity within. His

starvation, his pride and his hallucinations are not incidents but the various phases in repression and erosion. Emotional Starvation: The literal starvation of the narrator is the literal interpretation of the idea presented by Cleary (2022): the necessity of a man to hide his vulnerability. The internal famine of feeling is what each scene of physical deprivation reflects. The smile in passing (Lyngstad 14) turns into the mask of endurance showing the lesson of masculinity, which teaches performance and not expression. Pride and the Denial of Help - His denial of charity (I would rather die, 33) shows the normative male alexithymia of Liaqat et al. (2020): the impossibility of naming or accepting an emotion without embarrassment. Pride is a defense and toxin. The greater his dependency is repressed, the more the isolation he becomes. Delirium and Intoxication - In case of repression to its extreme, it bursts out in hallucination. The manic self transcendence of a temporary self transcendence is seen in the exclamation of I was Gods chosen (71) and is immediately succeeded with collapse. It is equivalent to what Ahmmmed and Khan (2024) refer to as a state of psychological fatigue, which is exhaustion after routine emotional control (150). The City as Psychological Mirror - Christiania represents the expectation of the society, her mark (3) a symbol of the social policing of the emotion. The fact that the narrator fears being regarded as a needy person is indicative of the idea by Connell (2005), that hegemonic masculinity is maintained by scrutiny by the masses. Language and Silence - The alexithymic condition is literally brought to bear when the narrator loses his ability to speak (Words failed me, 40). In fragmented syntax, Hamsun turns silence into form which foreshadows interior monologue of the modernist genre but reveals its emotive essence. All these findings prove that Hunger works as aesthetic innovation and cultural diagnosis at the same time. The style of fragmentation and interiority popularly praised as a technique of modernism by Hamsun is also symptomatic of the neurosis of the male.

5.3 Implications of the Study

a) **Literary Implications** This thesis adds to the modernist criticism as it transforms *Hunger* into a gendered psychology as opposed to being strictly existential fiction. Form and consciousness were the focus of earlier critics like McFarlane (1976) and Kittang (1982), and this paper introduces the missing element of masculine affect. It shows that the narrative technique of Hamsun is impossible to discuss out of the social scripts of manhood that contributed to the development of the psyche of the main character. The style of stream-of-consciousness, as opposed to the, at most, experimental, turns out to be the literary representation of repression. In addition, the paper confirms literature as a predictive mental health discourse, by connecting the images of Hamsun with current research on psychology. Hamsun dramatized such things metaphorically and formlessly decades earlier when there was no vocabulary of alexithymia or emotional fatigue. His novel can therefore be considered a bridge between art and psychology providing a qualitative understanding of a condition which is still widely practiced in contemporary societies.

b) **Psychological and Sociocultural Implications.** Psychologically, the research confirms that emotional suppression is not an individual shortcoming but a culturally imposed coping strategy. The self-destruction of the narrator is similar to the results of the interviews conducted by Cleary (2022) and the clinical observations of Liaqat et al. (2020): men associate expression with weakness and end up getting depressed, anxious, and disconnected. It makes the novel a warning allegory of what Ahmmed and Khan (2024) call the habitual suppression a pattern that is sustained by honor and pride. *Hunger* is not just Norwegian in socio cultural sense. The parallels between the narrator in Hamsun and the modern male characters on the other continents indicate that emotional suppression is the patriarchal legacy on a trans-continental scale. The Christiania city turns into a common representation of the

social disapproval, in the same way the collective gaze in contemporary digital culture imposes the masculine control. In this way, the relevance of the study is not limited to the study of literature but also to psychology of modern man.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

Comparison - Future researchers might make comparisons between *Hunger* and other modernism works like *The Hunger Artist* by Kafka or *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by Joyce and how the theme of hunger and silence is replicated as a metaphor of manhood. Interdisciplinary Research - Psychologists and literary critics may also work together to measure the frequency with which repetitive literary tropes (starvation, muteness, intoxication) are indicators of clinical signs of repression.

Cross-Cultural Masculinity Studies - Building upon Ahmed and Khan (2024), a future research might examine the mechanisms of emotional silence in non-Western texts and provide an understanding of the collective psychological grammar of patriarchy. Pedagogical Applications - Inclusion of such literary analyses to the male mental health education may aid students and clinicians to identify the primary indicators of emotional suppression and its devastating outcomes early.

5.5 Concluding Reflection

In *Hunger* Knut Hamsun preempted a psychological epidemic which the contemporary studies have not even yet given a name the silent carnage of masculine repression. Even the malnourished narrator, too proud to be assisted, too shattered not to tell pain, has become, not merely a symbolic embodiment of artistic pain, but also a mirror of a social pathology that

still lives: the conditioning of men to need to think it dignity. It is this state that culminates in the final image of the novel of unremitting wandering that is the consequence of existential alienation of modernism as well as of the psychological alienation of pride. The state of intoxication and starvation in this instance are not presented, but as the next stages of the same state the mutiny of the body against the suppression of silence. The moral truth that Hamsun suggests, is, aesthetically daring as it is, entails; the domination in culture is the source of ruin; and the domination in punishment is the source of insanity. Hunger viewed through the lens of the modern psychology reinstates to the Hamsun work the acute contemporary echo. The novel brings out a cut that is even burning beneath the flag of manliness, a cut that generations of millions of men have learned so well to make manliness their one word. By his turn of transforming the repression into art Hamsen accomplishes what the therapy and the literature dreams to achieve the expression of the unspeakable. In order to articulate the silence, Hunger is not only the sea-mark of the literary modernism but the everlasting scream of the emotional truth, feeling and courage to feel.

Works Cited

Ahmed, B., and A. Khan. "Key Factors Contributing to Emotional Suppression in Male Adolescents." *Journal of Adolescent and Youth Psychological Studies*, vol. 5, no. 5, 2024, pp. 146–154.

Cleary, A. "Emotional Constraint, Father–Son Relationships, and Men's Wellbeing." *Frontiers in Sociology*, vol. 7, 2022, p. 868005.

Connell, R. W. *Masculinities*. Polity Press, 2005.

Ferguson, Robert. *Enigma: The Life of Knut Hamsun*. Hutchinson, 1987.

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh UP, 2004.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Translated by James Strachey, Basic Books, 1955.

Hamsun, Knut. *Hunger*. Translated by Sverre Lyngstad, Penguin Classics, 1998.

Kimmel, Michael. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. Free Press, 1996.

Kittang, Atle. "Hamsun's Poetics of the Self." *Scandinavian Studies*, vol. 54, no. 1, 1982, pp. 85–103.

Liaqat, H., T. A. Malik, and A. Bilal. "Impact of Masculinity and Normative Male Alexithymia on Interpersonal Difficulties in Young Adult Males." *Mediterranean Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2020.

McFarlane, James W. "The Mind of the Modernist." *Nordic Literature and Modern Consciousness*, edited by —, Oxford UP, 1976, pp. 9–28.

Harris, Ian M. *Messages Men Hear: Constructing Masculinities*. Taylor & Francis, 1995.

Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann, Vintage, 1967.