



## **Responsibility of Females in John Irving's *The Hotel New Hampshire***

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### **Abstract**

**Aim:** *The present paper analyzes John Irving's females. First commendable thing, the females are exalted in their lives, accomplished to take a stand in their lives. Being austere in their routine lives their decisions are bold and progressive to lead life according to their individuality. And the second one they never strangle their selves, they don't behave arbitrarily, rather they know how to fulfill their responsibilities. Jenny Field, Franny Berry, Candy Kendall, Tabitha Wheelwright, and Ruth Cole are the diva of modern society. This study is based on the novel *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1981) deals with the story of the Berry*

*family with individual growth of the female characters in the references of responsibility.*

**Methodology and Approach:** *The present study is based on the novel The Hotel New Hampshire (1981) by John Irving as a primary text. Post-Colonial approach has applied to analyze text.*

**Outcome:** *The novel points out the saga of Berry family, but the significant part of the novel is the characterization of females. They are stout and able to understand their real inner self but post-colonial effect can be observed in it because these females learn how to tackle problems and how to create a human balance between their individual self and responsibility. These females are new versions of modern world and prove themselves worthy. Irving visualizes females 'futuristic version in his novels.*

**Conclusion and Suggestion:** *The paper concludes with the note of individual self and the theme of responsibility in females. These females are responsible for fulfilling the duties, as well as they also feel an inner urge for their individuality. Most of the time they work vibrantly and become self-complacent. John Irving is successful for depicting the responsible females in this work. Irving firmly believes in the family concept and family the main function is to be responsible so that all duties and desires can be fulfilled. Irving portrays the third hotel as a family in the novel.*

**Keywords:** Responsibility, Family, Individuality, Humanity, John Irving, *The Hotel New Hampshire*

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John Wilson Irving, a remarkable, versatile, voluminous novelist, scriptwriter, and renowned wrestler of America. His mother Helen France (Nee Winslow) had parted from his father during her pregnancy that's why Irving never met his biological father. Although his step-father fulfilled his duty as a father yet an intuitive awareness always can be felt in his writings. His mother's strong personality inspires him to carve females as a leading personality. As a writer, he accomplished international fame through his fourth epoch-making novel's publication *The World According Garp* (1978). The immense success of *Garp* provided him a great impetus for coming work, *The Hotel New Hampshire* (1981). It also brought a great line of readers in a captivating manner. It is a fantabulous creative literary activity. It rekindled the immense popularity with critical acclaim. Most of the critics considered it as A Fairy tale. "It is a family chronicle- a tale of generation of parents coping with children and siblings coping with each other."(Bloom 12). Family is the most prominent facet of Irving's novels. For him Family is a domain of responsibility.

It is a story of the Berry family that shows the individual growth of characters in the family. "The Hotel New Hampshire, more than any of the novels concentrates on the family almost to the exclusion of history insisting on the individual's responsibility to himself and others and the necessity of integrating the various aspects of the personality"(Miller 21) when we live in a family, we have to be responsible in many ways. Responsibility is a human act. Most of Irving's characters fulfill their responsibilities. Whether male or female, all are presented responsibly. They very well know how to complete their duty towards family and society

First, we have to know what the meaning of responsibility is. Different people have different opinions about it. Dictionary says "The state or fact of having a duty to deal with something or of having control over someone." Wikipedia clears, "Responsibility is the state of being responsible, accountable or answerable. Responsibility is a heavy burden, a duty, obligation or liability for which someone is held accountable." Free dictionary points out in these words "Responsibility, a form of trustworthiness; the trait of being answerable to someone for something or being responsible for one's conduct." Dr. Vivek Bindra the motivational trainer tells, "Responsibility never given it's taken by choice." Lucas clears "Responsibility is a key concept in our moral, social and political thinking, but it is not itself properly understood." In my opinion, Responsibility is a human deed that gives meaning to life and it provides the choices to do best in any situation it presents the opportunities to come out of comfort zone.

Irving very skillfully handles this term in his works and mostly in *The Hotel New Hampshire*. Most of the works of Irving paints the semblance of the truth with fantasy. Irving narrates the tale in an efficacious manner, we forget the reality, feel ourselves a part of the story. *The Hotel New Hampshire* is a fairy tale, John Berry is the first-person narrator. "He wants to be feel that it is the writer's responsibility to tell a good story well." (Miller 8) In *Hotel* he presents love, life, family, familial relations, and as usual chaos. Although he reveals the goriest scene of life yet he does not ignore the earnestness, sentiments, and emotions.

Coburn rightly observes "Irving has rewritten Victorian women for our times, producing female characters who are some of the most memorable in his body of work. If we try to have a look at Irving's female characters, no doubt they are a matchless piece of work in his creation. They are not to follow the image in society rather they create their own images according to their individual selves. Franny Berry is the most eye-catching character in 'The Hotel New Hampshire' not only physically but also intellectually. She is bold, farsighted,

audacious, and forward in many matters of the family rather than her brothers. Her behavior is always responsible, her nature enhances her skill to assume the seen and unseen responsibilities. She takes responsibility for her own choice, not by anyone's pressure. It can be stated Franny plays a vital role as a son. Frank, John, and Egg are three sons of the Berry family who are less expressive rather than daughters. The first one is careless in his manner, the second one is so meek and the third one is underdeveloped as his name clears. Franny and Lily are mettlesome girls of the Berry family. They are more sensible and wiser. Other females are introduced in the novel as Mary Bates; the mother, Susie, the bear, Ronda Roy, Fehlgeburt, and some whores are also bestowed with the quality of individuality and responsibility.

A human is an emotional creature, especially a woman who is considered a blend of emotions and extremely sensitive. Most of the time females impulsively make decisions. A little incident begins with never-ending thoughts empowered with emotions. A person who is not capable of controlling their emotions is considered an emotional fool. So far, the question of Irving's females is concerned they are bestowed with emotional intelligence. "Emotion intelligence refers to the capability of a person to manage and control his or her emotions and possess the ability to control the emotions of others as well". A responsible woman is always blessed with emotional intelligence. Franny, Susie both are depicted with the power of emotional intelligence. Rape is a silent killer to victims; she passes not only physical assaults but also numerous mental assaults. A victim loses her identity and balance of her life psychological disorder. "Rape victims were found to be significantly more depressed, generally anxious, and fearful than control." No doubt, Franny is a girl with a well-balanced mind, knows very well how to tackle problems. Franny developed herself in such a manner in which she desired. Franny was a virgin till raped by Chipper Dove, Lenny Metz, and Chester Pulaski. She wishes to entrust herself to a deserving person for her.

Being a rape –victim she handles the whole event with her prudence tells her parents that she is beaten up. She interprets things to her parents in a particular way and perceives her responsibility as a strong daughter. After her rape, manages herself in a very calm manner. Although in the nascent stage, to overcome rape's agony creates so much chaos to her on a psychological level, her individuality struggles a lot yet later subjugates it with her aplomb carefully. Her persistent temperament toward hardships and problematic circumstances helps to perceive the reality of her situations so she singles out the responsibilities as an elation. Her glaring manifesto toward her brothers is her responsibility to galvanize their lives smoothly. For John, she comprehends very well that her brother is so meek to be involved with any girl so she encourages him to enjoy Ronda Ray's intimate company. She grasps the idea of taking charge of love-making by Ronda Roy so that John may not embarrass before her. For Frank, she also fulfills her responsibility. Frank's making Sorrow, the dog in an attacking pose through his taxidermy brings a fatal attack to Iowa Bob, and the grandfather could not bear Sorrow as a scary dog; perhaps that was the cause of his death. Frank feels so disturbed by his fatal work she comforts him with her shape observing words. She makes him understand that he must abandon the guilt for that calamity. Franny tries to cheer him up with these words, "Stuffing Sorrow was a sweet idea, Frank", but you must realize not everybody has your taste" (Irving 198).

Susie is a female character in the novel who conceals herself behind the bear costume. She is a girl, knows how to control her emotions to manage her life. She plays as a bear of Freud and accomplishes her responsibility towards the Berry family, especially in the rape crisis. Susie's arrival in the novel is late. We meet her at the second Hotel of New Hampshire but her responsible behavior enhances her value till the end. As a bear she works for Freud later her loyalty can be felt toward the Berry family. Apart from it, she is also a victim of rape knows the mental agony of it. So, she decides to live life according to the world's present

scenario, she is a prudent girl aware of the reality so to earn her livelihood she confines her real being behind the suit of a bear. Susie is the foremost classical woman, loses her real identity, eventually the arrival of the Berry Family especially Franny helps her to recognize her true individual self. Unaware of her individuality can't be a hindrance in her way to fulfill her responsibilities. Susie very well understands the mental condition of Franny because she has been a victim of rape. She also comforts Franny. She becomes the vital instrument in the act of rape crisis. In the last John marries her and she runs a rape crisis center. The center provides medical, psychological, and legal counsel for rape victims. It is her emotional intelligence, enables her to be responsible not only for the Berry Family but also for the victims of rape.

A responsible personality is consistent in his/her standard. Irving's females' behavior is consistent. They are not baseless but powered with a stout ideology. Franny, Lily, and Susie all fulfill this duty. We are failing to grasp the double-dealing behavior. Franny, being a stout girl, expects males to respect her and other females. Even her brothers also get scolded by her to mock females' dignity. Her responsibility to teach males to respect females is quite unambiguous in her action as well as in her words. She respects the one who respects the females. Junior Jones rescues her and she feels love and respect for him the same as for her brother John. She does not bear any insult of a female by anyone. John asks Franny for Junior's sister, "Is this the sister who was raped?" (Irving 204). She utters looking straight at him, "Does it matter to you that she was raped?" (Irving 204). She observes Sabrina's feelings after meeting her family members. Sabrina is amazed by seeing the Berry family then she tells her, "You see we aren't eccentric we are not bizarre. To each other we are as common as rain." (Irving 217) Franny is not only responsible for others but also for herself, so she remarks her foul behavior in her mind not to repeat the errors in her life. Love matter is one of the errors especially with Chipper Dove so she doesn't want to sleep with

her lover (Junior Jones). She comes to know about the infidelity of Junior Jones with Ronda Ray during the Christmas party, becomes annoyed with him, and denies sleeping with him before leaving the Diary. She unfolds her love for Junior Jones in front of John but clarifies her own choice and individuality to her love life. It is not necessary to sleep with the lover. Once she was in love with Chipper Dove and he raped her. As a responsible female, her dignified self wants to teach a sharp and moral lesson to Chipper Dove for his crime. She clears, "one day Chipper Dove might fall in love with me. And you know what... Maybe if that happens, if he falls in love with me; may be- by then-I wouldn't love him anymore. And then I'll really get him" (Irving 272).

Lilly Berry is also responsible in her life with her consistent behavior. She is an under-developed girl, never gets proper physical development but on the mental level she accomplished certain features of maturity. Lilly, the second daughter of the Berry family dedicates her whole life to the family as a responsible member of it. She never heeds properly on her own development apart from her family. She produces her semi-autobiographical work but apart from it, she struggles a lot to write anything. Her novels depict the direct or indirect story of the Berry family. So her individuality colored responsibly towards the Berry family. Lilly's role is very commanding. She responsibly handles her duty. She is so consistent when writing about the deep urge of her character. So her first novel acclaims her a great name and fame and one of the finest writings of her life is the fake rape scene for punishment to Chipper Dove. Mrs. Berry is called mother in the novel and is also ample to be a responsible lady. She is a lady who fulfills her duty as a mother, as a wife and as a human. As the starting, she marries Mr. Barry and struggles a lot to survive in her life with him but never desires to leave him. Most of the time she is alone with her children, even in her pregnancy. She manages her life and family. She always nails down the problems with her stout courage and never desires to run away.



Even Mr. Berry sells out his all property to go to Vienna yet she doesn't oppose her husband's decisions and for everything, she forgives him. Her consistent behavior to maintain her domestic life lasts till the end no doubt making her responsible.

Irving enables her females proactive to recognize the necessity of the situation. So, they skillfully estimate how to behave at the moment. No doubt Franny is more responsible than any other female in The Hotel New Hampshire. Her behavior reveals a responsible manner. In Vienna after mother and Egg's death Frank, John, Lily, Susie, and Franny all are indulging in going back home conversation, Franny fumes and scolds everyone with harsh words. At her dominant behavior, they are angry too but she is concerned about her responsibility. Her behavior here is just the replica of a responsible mother. She is only playing the role of a mother because it is her responsibility to be a mother like after her death, they all understand her behavior. She clarifies that none is here to be a mother so she has to be a mother. As a mother, she wants to lead her children on the right path. As she speaks, "From now on, I'm mainly a mother, I'm going to take care of you fuckers – you, you, you...Because mother's not here to do it – and Iowa Bob is Gone. The shit detectors are gone...so I'm left to detect it...that's my role. Father doesn't know what's going on." (Irving 320). Franny is so tough and knows how to face worse situations in a very cool manner. This responsibility is not told by anyone to her but it is her maturity to perceive herself.

A Responsible person does not make a hazy decision without concerning other points of view. Franny is an extraordinary girl, can perceive things from various points of view. In one instance she understands her father's point of view and fulfills her responsibility as a daughter when Lilly, Frank, John all want to go back home after their unrecoverable loss (mother and egg's death). They find themselves unable to adjust to the worse conditions of Vienna. Their lives have got a gigantic change. John urges his father with these words, "We all want to go

back home...to the United States. We want America. We don't like it here."(Irving 329) Father tries to make them understand that he has promised to Freud. As he softly says, "but I already have a commitment to Freud" (Irving 330) later he gloomily confesses that they cannot leave on this time due to insufficient money and lack of dwelling. They all try to convince him to go back home except Franny. She, in a thoughtful manner, indulges in some very serious matter. At the moment the father seeks her opinion on what she thinks about leaving. Comprehending the situations and father's point of view or his dream she utters, "I think we should stay...We should see what it's like."(Irving 333) Franny carries on her responsibility here she wit fully handles the situation and knows the value of her father's respect. Although she is aware of the fact that her father always lives in the future more than the present yet she doesn't want to break her father's commitment to Freud. She cannot compromise with her father's respect. At another time in the second hotel New Hampshire when a woman from New Hampshire comes with her husband and daughter, faces an obscene sight of the Whore's room with her customer. All the children and members of the hotel gathered hearing some strange noise. On this point, The New Hampshire lady scolds Franny's father, "You should be ashamed exposing children to this sordid life."(Irving367) Franny considers her father's condition and nature more than the New Hampshire Lady so she says, "We might criticize father but no one else could."(Irving 368) So she angrily replies to the lady in some abusive language.

After knowing through Fehlgeburts, the news of the explosion of the opera house by radicals frightens John so much. He returns home from Fehlgeburts room and meets Franny. Both discuss the matter and Franny consoles him as well as shows great affection to make him feel comfortable in the worst mental condition. She fun fully says, "Everything's safer than love."(Irving 391) Franny stands by responsibility for herself being a rape victim she tries to live a normal sexual life. She makes love with Ernst, the pornographer for preceding a healthy

sexual life. In another instance, the radicals; Ernst, Schwanger, and Arbeiter threaten and make prisoners to the Berry family and Freud with Susie. First, Franny asks them what their demands are. They demand a driver who will drive the bomb car, on the time Franny says responsibly that she knows the driving to save her family. Even Ernst feels the responsibility of family by Americans. As he clears, "Americans are simply crazy about the idea of the Family." (Irving 425). In the radical violence, all are affected, so father admits in hospital after his treatment Franny's decisiveness decided to present 'A Louisville slugger', a baseball bat to father. She understands the nature of every member of the family so they present a bat for the father and after getting the bat father is so enthusiastic about it.

Fehlgeburt, the radical girl, is presented in the novel as a reader and American literature lover who meets the Berry family in Vienna. Being a terrorist girl, her heart is endowed with mercy and reason. She is kind of a girl who is proactive and responsive so she discloses her plan in front of John so that he and the Berry Family may protect the city from the blow-up of opera. Her sharp observation enables her that this American family is capable of failing their fruitless plan in which numerous innocent people will be losing their lives. Her proactive decision comes out. She does a commendable job.

A responsible woman never ignores the value of another one's self. So Irving loads his females with this feature. They always have the comprehensive skill to understand the desires, passions, and unrevealed world of others. They consider it their responsibility. Franny, Lily, Susie, and the mother all are colored with this feature. The most important responsibility faced up by Franny in the whole novel is the love towards her brother John. She loves him so much and vice-versa. Although she loves all her family members yet the love for John is no doubt, beyond limits. She has done everything for him since his childhood. She knows him so well that he doesn't know. John himself confesses that Franny can

read him like a book. She knows that John is too shy for any girl to develop a relationship so she makes several efforts to him. She is aware that John had established some physical relationship to get pleasure with different other girls but doing sex with all of them couldn't make him satisfied. He is restless Franny very well observes this feeling of John. She understands that he wants to make love to her because he is very fond of her in every situation. She knows her value in his life so she decides to make love with John. Morally it may be wrong to make love with her real brother but in this matter, we can say that it is not only a corporeal desire to be satisfied but it is a real deep love felt since birth. She has to play the role of a mother. A mother's responsibility is to fulfill all the needs of the family or her children, so does Franny. John accepts if she wants to sleep with him, she very well knows what she is doing, why she is doing it. She is doing her responsibility as a fulfillment of the promise she had made to mother for children and the mother was gone as the only way to take care of the children. It is the only way to save children. Franny makes John understand some special things by these words, "You and me need saving, kid but especially you need it. You think we're in love and maybe I think so, too. It's time to show you that I'm not so special. It's time to prick the bubble before it bursts." (Irving 445). It is Franny's love for him that she conceives for a baby only for her Brother John's sake.

Franny's responsibility towards Lilly also proved her very essential in the novel. As a sister, she never fails in her role. Franny understands Lilly's trouble about not growing; she tries to counsel her. The most important responsible manner can be seen after being a successful writer by producing a semi-autobiographical work 'Trying to Grow' Lilly enjoys her name and fame. Being a successful writer with her maiden work she was expected to do another best work but Lilly fails in her second attempt of writing called 'The Evening of Mind'. Being a literature lover, she feels depressed about the failure of her second book. On this point Franny supports Lilly. Apart from Lily her elder brother Frank also

perceives her observation skill, presents his second-time creation of Sorrow through taxidermy all family members applaud him for making sorrow in a real pose but Frank doesn't accept the result till Franny gives her praises. She has the power to understand people's psyche so easily. John confesses that she can read him like a book.

Susie is also a responsible female and has immense power to consider the other one's self. She understands the mental agony and traumas of Franny have resulted from her rape. She proves a source for her mental tranquility. To punish Chipper Dove in the fake rape act, her role is enough that she understands well that her victim is quite terrified with the performance of her rape so she stops it. Apart from this, she considers lots of things without anyone's saying. She is a good bear of Freud. To run a rape crisis center mark, her as a responsible and comprehensive female personality.

Irving also focuses on the self-concept because to live freely, first a person has to satisfy himself or herself. Irving's females are stout and believe in their existence. So, they are bold and able to make their decision according to their selves. But for their selves, they don't mean arbitrator behavior. Franny, Lily, Susie, and Fehlguburt all give importance to their selves. For them individuality means not the lack of responsibility, they fulfill the responsibilities along with the gratification of self. Individuality enhances the embellishment of decision-making and taking a stand for one's own self. Whether to sleep with her brother to vanish his vulnerable features or to wear the bear suit to earn a livelihood or make love with an American boy, all are the deeds of individual selves but another aspect of these deeds is colored with the responsibility.

Franny is blessed with an amazing observation forte that enables her bold and daring as well as loving and it marks her exalted in her decision making. We appreciate her love for her individual self. She also fulfills her responsibility towards herself. Being a victim of rape, she decides not to only overcome this

crisis but also to teach a lesson to the culprit. It is appreciated that a rape victim is concerned to teach a sharp lesson to her rapist. To overcome her mental agony Franny firmly decides to do it. Franny's responsibility to teach a lesson to the rapist is the most important task not only for her but also for the Berry family. Here she has a very crucial role. It is very hard to undergo the suffering and pain of a rape victim not for the corporeal assaults but the cerebral strike. So as with Franny in the initial stage, she pretends to be normal, and to some extent she recovers from her rape crisis but as soon as comes to know about the arrival of Chipper Dove in the same city it petrified her so much. At this stage, all her siblings sustain her for this uncanny situation. Franny so soon understands that being petrified will not cure her but it is her responsibility to face this terror to be usual in her day-to-day life activities. Franny Berry, her siblings along with Susie teach a lesson by playing a fake rape for Chipper Dove by a bear (Susie) so that he can understand the rape victim's actual conditions. It is her 'self' that encourages her to teach him (Chipper Dove) a proper lesson to his unpardonable act because in the beginning she is so frightened. Later her decision to create the same pain, fear, and scare in the rapist is praiseworthy. After the revenging act of Chipper Dove, she has to develop her own self so wisely chooses the acting career to express her feelings. The movie version of 'Trying to Grow' provides her huge acclaim as an actress. This success is true gratification for her real inner self or autonomous self.

Irving's attention to the self-concept for his females enables them to be so jubilant and flourish with their own fragrance. Susie's individual self is never recovered from her complexity so she is never ready to give birth to a baby. She has fear, her baby may mar with her ugliness. So, Franny conceives a baby for her brother John and Susie. John never forces her to have a baby. He also values her individual decision. To run a rape crisis center is also her own choice. Fehlgeburt also has the quality of self, she is a radical girl, falls in love with John Berry,

establishes a corporeal relationship with him because she was a virgin and wants to experience a corporeal pleasure. Her individual self allows it with an American boy and she commits it with her choice. She is self-disciplined and does it only a single time. Although by doing it she betrays her community yet her duty for humanity is more important than to the radical community. Lily always wants to do things to gratify herself so she writes the novels and by doing so her individual self is satisfied.

If we attempt to have a look upon the females' responsibilities, in the frame of humanity we'll find it as a value for us. Lily, Susie, and Fehlgeburt are examples of it. Fehlgeburt, the radical girl, is presented in the novel as a reader and American literature lover who meets the Berry family in Vienna. Being a terrorist girl, her heart is endowed with mercy and reason. So, she fulfills her responsibility toward humanity. She falls in love with John Berry, establishes a single time corporeal relationship with him. Although her loyalty must be for her radical group yet she understands her responsibility toward humanity. So, she makes John aware of the news of the bombing of the opera house by radicals. She is very well acquainted with the fact that the blow-up of the opera will not destroy only the Berry family but also several other innocent people so she breaks out this news to save all people. Fehlgeburt is a responsible girl, perceives the value of family and familial relations so she never wants to destroy any family, especially the Berry Family where she feels the true love of relations. Betraying to her radical group leads her to suicide.

Lilly, the second daughter of the Berry family dedicates her whole life to the family as a responsible member of it her observation for humanity outcomes in her creative work. She never heeds properly on her development apart from her family. She produces her semi-autobiographical work but apart from it, she struggles a lot to write anything. Her novels depict the direct or indirect story of the Berry family. So, her individuality colored responsibly towards the Berry

family. Lilly's role is very commanding. She responsibly handles her duty. Her deep bonding with Frank is always helpful to him so many times. For her sister, Lily is also very responsive to survive in her life as a usual person. As a writer, she is very authoritative. Responsibly she is a fast companion for her brother Frank and supports Franny. She writes the crucial part of the story the fake rape act for Chipper Dove. It is very essential to write the script for the revenging act to understand the desired results for both sides. Lilly completes it very effectively. Her starting creations prove her a very promising writer. Although she commits suicide yet she had done her responsibility toward the Berry family by giving support to Frank and more important by creating a fake rape act for punishment to Chipper Dove. It is a lesson for all races of rapists, certainly it is an elevated deed for the sake of humanity.

Susie is the foremost classical woman, confines her real being behind the suit of a bear, she loses her real identity, eventually the arrival of the Berry Family especially Franny helps her to recognize her true individual self. Unaware of her individuality can't be a hindrance in her way to fulfill her responsibilities. Susie very well understands the mental condition of Franny because she has been a victim of rape. She also comforts Franny. She becomes the vital instrument in the act of rape crisis. In the last John marries her and she runs a rape crisis center. The center provides medical, psychological, and legal counsel for rape victims. Establishing Third Hotel New Hampshire as a rape Crisis center is an act of responsibility and Humanity.



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