

**RESEARCH TITLE**

**Functionalism in Leïla Slimani's *The Perfect Nanny***

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**Abstract**

Functionalism strives to solve negative thinking that might harm the self and the other. It tries to figure out what the precise nature behind a certain mental state is, and why it might highly end up in painful decisions. Such behaviorism strikes the normal states of the brain which is a system of physical inputs that produces destructive behavioral outputs. The function, may it be survival, health, or stability of the self, might discharge danger to prevent further anxiety. Such conditions naturally raise questions to learn more about a person's input-output characteristics. In *The Perfect Nanny* (2016), functionalism explores thoughts by undergoing a journey inside the mind of the nanny named Louise. It will describe how the frame of her mind functions in cases of trouble and how she is going to behave to save herself.

**Key Words:** Functionalism, inner thoughts, emotions, behaviour, action.

## الوظيفية في رواية المربية المثالية لليلى سليمان

### المستخلص

تسعى الوظيفية إلى حل التفكير السلبي الذي قد يضر بالذات والآخر. تحاول معرفة الطبيعة الدقيقة وراء حالة ذهنية معينة، ولماذا قد تنتهي إلى قرارات مؤلمة. تضرب مثل هذه السلوكية الحالات الطبيعية للدماغ الذي هو نظام من المدخلات المادية التي تنتج مخرجات سلوكية مدمرة. قد تؤدي الوظيفة، سواء كانت البقاء أو الصحة أو استقرار الذات، إلى تفريغ الخطر لمنع المزيد من القلق. تثير مثل هذه الظروف بشكل طبيعي أسئلة لمعرفة المزيد عن خصائص المدخلات والمخرجات لدى الشخص. في *The Perfect Nanny* (2016) يستكشف المنهج الوظيفي الأفكار من خلال الخضوع لرحلة داخل عقل المربية التي تدعى لويز. وسوف يصف كيف يعمل إطار عقلها في حالات المتاعب وكيف ستتصرف لإنقاذ نفسها.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الوظيفية، الأفكار الداخلية، العواطف، السلوك، الفعل.

## Functionalism: A Definition

The father of American psychology, William James (1842-1890), chose to follow a school of psychology called functionalism. It means that he looks into the psychological manners of behaviour, emotions, and thought that serve function. When there is no function, such processes are lost. Therefore, their goals have to be identified. A functionalist digs for answers on what the purpose is behind a certain behaviour. Such expectations come to surface when the researcher questions the origin of an intercultural behaviour. Functionalism is a branch of structuralism, since one cannot study function unless structure is understood (Johnson, 2006).

According to the English philosopher Edward B. Titchener (1867-1927), structuralism is the true path to the understanding of the mind. He found that functionalism was misguided but the American philosophers John Dewey (1859-1952) and James Angell (1869-1949) developed the term further. From a psychological view, Granville Hall (1846-1924) connected it to Darwinism since it sought to find practical solutions to everyday problems. Hence, emotions play an important role in this philosophy, as James believes that emotions and reason are contrasted. He states that when one faces danger, fear comes after running away from it. One has to face difficulties and control her/his emotions. When self-control is lacking, the case might go out of hands. Functionalists regard that consciousness is a boundary between organism and an environment that bears complex problems of behaviorism. Here, consciousness helps the organism survive and that is why the approach is deeply connected to Darwinism (Ludden, 2019). Functionalism studies what a person does in her/his daily routine through behaviour and realization. It deals with real, physical, and effectual conditions while avoiding elimination (Polger, 2012).

## Louise's Behaviorism from a Functional Viewpoint

The novel starts with the bloody scene of the nanny having tried to commit suicide. This action is done after she has killed two children she was looking after. "With the same level of professionalism; without emotion. She didn't know how to die. She only knew how to give death. She had slashed both her wrists and stabbed the knife in her throat. She must have lost consciousness" (Slimani, 2016, p. 10). The writer introduces her character as a coldblooded person without emotions towards herself or the other. She is dead on the inside and has no regret whatsoever, of how she has ended children's lives. Instead of killing herself with one strike, she chose to stab herself in three different places until her consciousness failed her.

After the introduction, the story goes back to the starting point when Paul and Myriam hire the nanny. From the first day, the nanny has the intention of looking after children in order to flee from a dark truth. She wants to escape her reality by fitting herself into another family. Loneliness and being haunted by debts make her plan on strategies like disguising herself into an innocent and loving woman. Myriam hires her so that she can go back to work as a lawyer. Believing that she leaves her children in safe hands, Myriam tells the nanny "I'm sorry for abusing your kindness." And Louise always replied: "That's what I'm here for. Don't worry about it" (Slimani, 2016, p. 42). Louise starts her journey with a kind nature so that she can gain all the trust she needs. Little does the family know that she is burying herself into this family for her own sake.

Louise's frame of mind is strong as the two-faced nanny has been planning to stay calm for a long time. This way, everyone can be blinded by her kind behaviour and would never suspect her to have a dark side. This shows how there is an evolution to her character like the Darwinian view. Her character shifts fully between the states of public and private.

She knows when the time is right to activate an action and has to follow certain instructions to make her plans work. This is seen as human effort since she is facing an ugly truth but has to follow steps to avoid her dark past. She has to control herself so as not to reveal her goal behind her acted kindness. There is a purpose for her acting that nobody should know about. Her acting in a nice behaviour succeeds to fool Myriam and Paul since they trust her more than they should. Such situations are especially seen in cases of money. Indeed, Louise is behaving like this because she has money problems.

A neighbor named Rose Grinberg learns about what Louise is going through. One month before the tragedy, the worried Louise tells her about her money problems like debts and bank account, and her harassing landlord. "She'd talked the way a balloon deflates, more and more quickly. Mrs. Grinberg had pretended not to understand. She'd lower her chin and said, 'Times are hard for everyone'" (Slimani, 2016, p. 58). Louise grabs her by the arm and wants to work for her in order to gain more money. At that moment, Mrs. Grinberg could see in Louise's eyes that she could be a threat. Also, Louise's hard grip makes Mrs. Grinberg refuse to let her work for her.

Forcing a desire through tough behaviour confuses people and make them question such actions. Being haunted by debts make Louise ask for high wages and begs others for extra jobs so that she can earn more money. Myriam and Paul pay her because they can see how much effort she puts with the children and in the house. This process is a spiritual binding of behaviour while it is impossible to understand her habits of thinking. This is because her thoughts are not reflected and she knows how to hide them perfectly through kind actions. She knows exactly how to act in different circumstances. She is able to guide her desire through shaping her actions. Hence, her strong consciousness plays an important role into the direction of her survival (Baggio, 2016).

The American philosopher David Lewis (1941-2001) states that

*Pain* is the state that tends to be caused by bodily injury, to produce the belief that something is wrong with the body and the desire to be out of that state, to produce anxiety, and, in the absence of any stronger, conflicting desires, to cause wincing and moaning (as cited in Mandal, 2018, p. 87).

Functionalism studies a person's independent state of physical and spiritual composition. Thus, the mental state embodies it into action. Despite the intelligence, the person is in pain and suffering but does not explain her/his mental state in general (Gokel, 2013). The American psychologist John B. Watson (1878-1958) argues that there is no difference between humanistic and animalistic behaviour because humans learn from animals when studying psychoanalytic behaviorism. The Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) categorizes the psychoanalytic theory of behaviour and mind to humans' desires. First, unconscious desires are hidden within the mind but when action takes place, it becomes conscious through behaviour (Kosh, 2017).

This exact behaviour is seen in Louise. When the children go on a vacation with their parents, Louise goes to her own home where she is alone. "When she opens the door to her studio flat, her hands start to shake. She wants to tear apart the sofa's slipcover, to pinch the window. A sort of shapeless, painful magma burns her insides and it takes an effort of will to stop herself screaming" (Slimani, 2016, p. 59). The scene of her home and the feeling of loneliness bring about bad memories. Since functionalism studies the reason behind behaviour, it causes effective and painful states. Ignorance this is dangerous, as seen in the silence of Louise. Her sensitivity is hidden and her pain brings dismay but hides such feelings with a fake smile. Functionalists call it a bodily injury that are sufferings from within a person. When it is ignored even further, it transforms into a mental state, ending up in a mind-

body problem (Sprevak, 2009).

After suffering throughout the weekend, Louise finally goes to take care of the children. She takes them to the park where they all fall asleep. When Louise wakes up, she realizes that Mila is missing. After a long and tiresome search, she finds Mila with an old woman. Louise warns Mila that she should not run off anymore because she would fall into the hands of dangerous people. She would never see her parents because nobody will know where to find her. These words anger Mila and she drives her teeth into Louise's shoulder. Louise remains calm and does not tell Myriam about it so that everything would go according to her plan.

The American philosopher Sydney Shoemaker (1931-2022) states that people are subjects of mental states. They should mirror appropriate behavioural expressions that are a part of the same person. Since such characteristics belong to a certain person, s/he has to deal with this disorder and has to have a special condition to be persistent about it. Shoemaker insists that functionalism should not be ignored because a mental case might transform into a more powerful matter. The past can develop this mental state and thinking into the unknown future might continuously lead to crucial conditions. Here, a mental state becomes extremely complex, as it stretches out into the branching of intentions and needs. Mostly, it is unclear why the nature behind mental states is connected to people's identity through thinking. Shoemaker explains that it is a matter of properties that brings about causal powers without assumptions. This makes the bearer persistent to surrender the self to the shadows of the mental state (Olson, 2002).

The dark truth behind Louise's mental state is that when her husband died, she felt lonely as he left her in debts. She was lost and did not know what to do with the documents of debts. The thought of burning them comes into her mind, imagining that the fire should devour

the house, the street, even the whole neighborhood. In that way, this entire part of her life would go up in smoke. She would feel no sorrow if it did. She would stay there, motionless, discreet, to watch the flames devour her memories, her long walks in the dark empty streets, her bored Sundays with Jacques and Stéphanie (Slimani, 2016, p. 68).

When a person is lost in thoughts, the worst ideas can come up to mind. In Louise's case, it always rotates around the idea of death. Functionalism differs from one person to another, based on experiences, nature, environment, and understandings. That is why it also differs when it comes to the input of the sum of happenings that enter the brain and the output through action. Comprehension transfers the case into behaviour and action. Thus, functionalism explains the case of what the brain is made out of and how it works from a psychological point of view. This is what makes each person unique as each one reacts differently to similar cases. Only the owner of the mind knows how her/his mind exactly works, so functionalism has to do with private systems of the psychological states of the mind. It deals with the psychological states between consciousness and unconsciousness.

Whenever Louise goes to her own home, solitude makes her feel lost and insane with the thought that the world has forgotten about her. To escape, she would

sleep for hours and wake up swollen-eyed, her head aching, despite the cold that seethed through the room. She only went out when she absolutely had to, when her hunger became too painful to ignore. She walked in the street as if it were a cinema set and she were not there, an invisible spectator to the movements of mankind (Slimani, 2016, p. 69).

As functionalism reflects the pain that happens from within the body, it produces anxiety. Common sense holds the bond between mental states and behavioural expressions. Painful



past experiences and fear of the future trace the memory, and unhappiness strikes the sufferer. Here, the person enters a lower-level state that causes contrasting and unexpected behaviour (Levin, 2018).

Myriam notices teeth marks on Adam's shoulder and questions the nanny about it. Louise says it is Mila's action due to jealousy and as proof, she shows Mila's teeth marks on her shoulder. It is a behaviour that she uses to save herself from being blamed as a bad nanny. If they know the truth, her career may be lost and she would not be able to flee from her past again. She continuously acts to be innocent and convinces Myriam not to tell Mila so that trust would not be broken between the child and her nanny. This way, Louise is capable of hiding her true self by acting innocently. However, Paul's mother comes to pick up the family to spend a week with her. As the parents are packing, Louise looks at Sylvie with dark and sunken eyes and mumbles. Sylvie is Myriam's mother-in-law. Myriam feels that Louise might be sad because the children are going to leave her once again. She does not know that she is dealing with a dangerous character.

To Louise's luck, Myriam starts to complain about Sylvie so Louise takes Myriam's side with "excessive zeal, accusing Sylvie of being mad, hysterical, of being a bad influence on the children. She encourages her boss not to let it happen; or worse, to distance the grandmother from the poor children (Slimani, 2016, p. 85). Little does Myriam know, that Louise is describing herself. The functions of her behaviour are to act calm but has in fact a hysterical character. She wants the children to be hers only because they can save her out of her current problems. With the children, she can flee the landlord and the debts that haunt her. So, whenever the children are taken away from her, Louise loses self-control.

When the family finally returns home after a week, they see that Louise has arranged a nice atmosphere and dinner. The parents cannot imagine running a family without her. Through abilities, functionalism is a continuous chain to the naturalistic attitude towards human beings. Utilities and functions are major characteristics in functionalism. This is because these fields study the mental processes that are accomplished in this world. Functionalism is a process of revolt when ignorance takes place. Since functionalism deals with mind-body problems, it is an interaction between the psychical and the physical. This is because the inner mind reflects its pain into the outside events which make it two different entities yet a continuous chain. It develops through stages while facing judgment, feelings, and willingness. First the person forms a habit and with further expansion, it ends in a fixed habit wherein reactions become automatic (Shook, 2001).

Louise's truth is that she acts innocent to gain all the trust she needs. In contrast, her dark side uncovers when she is alone and that is why nobody can accuse her of being wicked. She benefits from this idea to pave the way towards her goal. She watches a true-crime show and falls asleep, being unbothered by disturbing scenes and can easily fall asleep. Functionalism deals with social facts that collide with the deep effects within the mind. It is a challenge of the person against society and culture, which in turn grows resistance, conflict, and personal practice to reflect her inner being at the right moment (Valsiner, 2012). This is exactly what Louise follows. She is preparing herself for a horrifying act that nobody can imagine. She is just patiently waiting for the perfect moment to reveal her true self in front of society whenever she feels ready.

To Louise's surprise, the unhappy Paul receives letters about her husband's debts. Her agony has reached the place where she is supposed to find comfort. The letters might ruin her career and her thoughts pile up. She wants

to hug Myriam, to ask for help. She would like to say that she is alone, completely

alone, and that so many things have happened, so many things that she hasn't been able to tell anyone, but that she would like to tell her. She is upset, shaky. She doesn't know how to behave (Slimani, 2016, p. 99).

When a serene and stable person meets with a personal weakness, the individual does not know how to act. Even unwanted behaviour might take control which makes matters worse. Louise is now in a position wherein she is about to lose herself and she has to do something about it. She has been planning for a long time and she refuses to allow her weak point to take over her future.

Sometimes when a person schemes for future strategies, things may not go exactly as planned. Surprising moments may hit the upcoming steps to freedom. Louise seeks to be free from her husband's debts but does not know how. "She had thought naively that they would just give up if she didn't reply. That she could just play dead. She doesn't represent anything, after all, doesn't possess anything. What can it matter to them? Why do they need to hunt her down?" (Slimani, 2016, p. 100). She is still being followed wherever she goes until she pays the debts. This makes her angry and she has the desire to burn these letters into ashes. The increasing numbers of debts keep growing because she ignores them.

People cannot tell what lurks inside the minds of others due to the lack of access. That is why nobody can understand Louise's hidden character. Functionalism cannot be eliminated or be under control by other systems. It is formed and built by the same person so society cannot affect it. Maybe others think they can change such a system but the truth is that functionalism within such frames of mind is almost impossible to change. Louise is therefore undergoing the process of Darwin's 'survival of the fittest.' Despite the fact that she is living in a unique cultural environment, it does not intermingle with her behaviour. Her character does not evolve into a better person but she surrenders to revolutionary actions to survive. This shows how her pyramidal system is incomplete and does not develop herself (Ratner, 2006).

The theory of mind is connected to the language of thought. It attributes mental states like beliefs and intentions to the self and others. A person with negative thoughts thinks that others bear these as well, and count that they are surrounded by people who want to harm them. Such mental representations arise from personal experiences with the surrounding world. Disturbance of negative vibes inside the brain leads to a distorted frame of mind. The neurons that shape the mind are hereby weakened and influence the connections with others (Simpkins and Simpkins, 2013). That is why Louise does not want to meet her landlord. She is afraid to face her fear and always chooses to flee from this responsibility which only makes matters worse.

On her way home, Louise sees a man excreting in the street. In terror, she runs to her apartment and falls into her bed in exhaustion but cannot sleep. The thought of ending up like that man is haunting her. Similarly, she fears that she will soon end up in the street like an animal.

She doesn't sink into sleep but into a sort of perverse lethargy. At night she is inhabited by a silent screaming inside her that tears at her guts... She feels as if her face is being crushed under a boot heel, as if her mouth is full of dirt... She emerges from sleep the way you might rise up from the depths after you have swum too far, when you are oxygen-deprived, the water is a black sticky magma, and you are praying that you still have enough air, enough strength to reach the surface and breathe in, greedily, at last (Slimani, 2016, p. 105).

Louise feels not only haunted in real life, but also in her dreams. She fears to sleep so that she

would not see vicious scenes. Even when she wants to flee the harsh life into the world of dreams, she feels that she is being tracked down. When she is awake her hidden character wants to be freed from the shadows of her silence. She is suffering from the inside but she does not reveal her pain.

Functionalism bears the mental states and their causal role. Inside suffering leads to panic and abnormal behaviour. Still, when an action is done, the other cannot understand fully what the sufferer means by that. When Louise acts in a certain behaviour, others think it is out of kindness, but the truth is that she intends on other things to survive. Hence, people do not doubt any of her actions and trust her in everything she does. This is an advantage that Louise seeks so that she can build herself upon others as she pleases. Functionalism shares how it is impossible to know what offerings really mean (Thau, 2002). When Louise offers to do more than she can handle, she has her reasons but Paul and Myriam deny to reason her and think that she is doing nothing more than her work. When she is alone however, she has to face and fight her inner self alone.

Hate rises up inside her. A hate that clashes with her servile urges, her childlike optimism. A hate that muddies everything. She is absorbed by a sad, confused dream. Haunted by the feeling that she has seen too much, heard too much of other people's privacy, a privacy she has never enjoyed herself (Slimani, 2016, p. 106).

Louise is entering the stages that lead her to her downfall. She is going through more physical pain and it is more than she can handle. This way, she has to pave the way to her inner darkness to exit its imprisonment of Louise's silence.

Breaking the chain of silence is a hazardous stage when a person has to go through it. The explanation of psychological functionalism is a mode by breakdown. Functionalism undergoes two stages which are philosophical and psychological. The philosophical one is when it identifies the causal generalizations of commonsense psychology. The underlying overviews of a reasonable mindset have to be recognized. It is a level that the helpless sufferer cannot comprehend. The psychological one however, focuses on the understanding of the relations that connect the causal generalizations with various stages of explanation. When one responds to this, s/he denies to identify the self to the problem, as s/he thinks that personal thinking is similar to governmental relations between mental events and behaviour on which functionalism relies (Bermúdez, 2005).

Louise chooses to stay silent for a longer time and refuses to admit what ails her. One day, she rushes out when Myriam comes home late. The latter sees a carcass of a chicken on the table and is shocked to see how Louise has washed the skeleton with soap "as an act of vengeance, like a baleful totem" (Slimani, 2016, p. 109). The contrasting fact of that death has a pleasant smell is mysterious. Myriam is confused how a lovable nanny can put death in front of her eyes but soak it in soap to make something ugly seem nice. Myriam feels uncomfortable and has an uneasy feeling about it. However, later Mila explains that it was a game with the nanny and that they would get a treat if they could win.

In Louise's case, functionalism shows that it deals with stress. When matters get worse, a sufferer wants to get rid of such feelings and decides to do something about it. Having a puzzled mind pressures against the relation between the mind and the body. This is the point wherein functionalism succeeds. The person becomes like a machine that has to follow the programmed system and acts out its desires through behaviorism. Such a person decides to take the risk instead of allowing if-questions or then-clauses take over the mind. S/he is aware of different outcomes but to take the decision that controls the mind is the best solution for the time being.



Although adults differ from children when it comes to personal suffering, but feelings have to do with beliefs and possessions. A grownup has been through so much more than children, as feelings grow with each person. That is why it is harder for an adult to control borderline cases than a child. A child can be spoken out of doubtful matters which is a harder case for adults. Whenever Myriam asks Louise about her debts, the latter is silent and refuses help. Because the image of the chicken's carcass haunts Myriam, Paul shares the idea of firing the nanny. Still, Myriam realizes how much of an important member the nanny has become to the children. She knows that Louise will return if "[t]hey'll say their good-byes and she'll knock at the door, she'll come in anyway; she'll threaten them, like a wounded lover" (Slimani, 2016, p. 118). Hopelessly, Myriam surrenders and keeps Louise as a member of the household for the children's sake.

Myriam cannot imagine that something wrong could happen when she keeps the nanny around. She thinks that danger is more obvious when she distances the nanny from her children. That is why Myriam decides to act more hostile around the nanny. She decides to do so by leaving her whenever they are in the same room. Nobody can understand the theory of mind of an individual as much as the person her/himself. Mental operations of abstraction cannot be simply corrected through the study of functionalism. Yet, it is the closest way of understanding how a person thinks and why s/he behaves in a certain way. It sheds the light on collecting information of behaviorism, action, and the frame of mind. It goes through the processes of various levels of consciousness. It focuses on structure as an arrangement of connection and the representational theory of the mind. It bears the characteristic of dualism as a person behaves at first in contrary to what the mind bears. With ignorance, the case transforms into a much serious one and ends up with a fundamental relation to the personal nature of the sufferer (Heil, 2013).

In a flashback, Louise's daughter Stéphanie is shown to be negatively influenced by her mother. At school, she was an annoying pupil who hid the notes of teachers' warnings from her mother. Instead of going to school, she went to smoke in the park. Louise felt betrayed when she was summoned by the headmaster. It was like a court wherein the teachers would tell Louise about her daughter's bad behaviour. Louise pleaded them to give Stéphanie another chance and left the meeting to give them time to discuss the case privately.

Louise wanted to slap her, to shake her as violently as she could. She wished she could make her understand how humiliating and exhausting it was to bring up a daughter like her. She wished she could rub Stéphanie's nose in her sweat and her anxieties, could wipe that stupid, carefree smile off her face. She wanted to rip apart what remained of her childhood (Slimani, 2016, p. 121).

Louise cannot comprehend that she is the reason behind the negativity of her daughter. To be under the wings of a perfectionist is a problem that children can suffer from. Because a child cannot show bad behaviour in front of such a character, it is done outside. An inner demon wanted to break free from Louise's silence in order to handle Stéphanie in a harsher way.

After the headmaster told Louise that Stéphanie was expelled from school, Louise felt hate towards her daughter whom she dragged with incredible strength. Anger drove her to strict ideas instead of talking things out. She wishes to dig her nails into Stéphanie's skin but chooses to act calm. When they get home, Louise hit Stéphanie on the back. She fell to the floor and cried but Louise continued to "hit her in the eyes. She insulted her. She scratched her until she bled. When Stéphanie didn't move anymore, Louise spat in her face" (Slimani, 2016, p. 122). Rather than finding a solution, Louise chose violence. She counted disobedience as a sign of disrespect. This shows that she cannot understand that a child has boundaries to a perfectionist's system. When disobedience shocks Louise, she protests with

violence instead of hearing a youngster out. This way, she is making things worse than they already are.

“According to functionalism, mental states are identical to *whatever state it is that plays the relevant functional role*” (as cited in Symons and Calvo, 2009, p. 156). Here, a person is most likely to be independent with a system that seems to be serene. However, the complete opposite is happening in the inside of the mind which only the sufferer knows of. The American philosopher Hilary Putnam (1926-2016) characterizes functionalism as an empirical hypothesis. He symbolizes functionalism to terms of probabilistic automata which is a generalization of the English mathematician Alan Turing's (1912-1954) finite state machines. Thus, functionalism is similar to a computing system that represent brilliant models for human psychology (ibid).

The atmosphere in Myriam's house is getting thicker as she follows Paul's advice to treat Louise as an employee instead of a friend. When Louise goes back to her own apartment, she finds her landlord waiting. He has discovered her true nature and cannot be fooled by her silence anymore. He refuses excuses and wants his money. Her behaviour scares him because she always looks down on him. Even though she has a hard time, she scares her landlord with her silence and shifty behaviour. He gives her one week to hand him the money or she has to leave the apartment.

Functionalism prevents any kind of skepticism about other mindsets that threatens the sufferer her/himself. Thus, the sufferer clings to her/his own frame of mind and nothing or nobody can change such thoughts. These steps are important to know in functionalism because this way, one can understand why a person might think like that and why negative thinking lurks inside a person's mind. Also, it is important to understand upon what this kind of function affects and what its properties are. Hence, functionalism reflects science from an explanatory point of view (Bayne, 2013). Publicly, Louise never shares her thoughts but gives away polite smiles.

Despite the fact that Louise wants another job to gain more money, she acts with a different behaviour when such an opportunity comes. Nobody knows how someone's mind really works when a chance appears yet acts in a contrasting way. Louise should be happy to grasp it but acts in violence when another nanny named Lydie offers her to babysit a set of twins that will soon be born. With a sudden and shocking behaviour, Louise remains silent but leaves her in a rush after pushing her brutally. With this sad gesture, she knocks the stroller over and leaves a crying baby. “What the hell is wrong with you?” shouts the nanny as her shopping falls into the gutter. Louise is already far away” (Slimani, 2016, p. 135). This news makes Louise think of another idea so new plans form inside her brain and she wants to carry them out immediately.

The new plan is that Louise wants Myriam to have another baby but the latter does not think about it. Louise accuses the children of disturbing their parents' private time. “This baby, which she will love madly, is the solution to all her problems...it will drive away her horrible landlord. It will protect Louise's place in her kingdom...Her desire for that baby is fanatical, violent” (Slimani, 2016, p. 136). The way how Louise is planning for others for her own benefit is a bizarre method of thinking. This is the function of her mind since the theory that she believes in centers inside her system. The feeling of possession transforms her yearnings into beliefs. Louise does not want the baby as a desire but actually believes that it can save her out of her painful problems. Furthermore, she acts upon this belief in the outside world. Putnam believes that the mind cannot reveal its true nature but it mirrors metaphysical obscurities. This paves the way for doubts to block the way of intentional understanding (Buechner, 2008).

Louise has enough of the sound of crying children that disturbs her silence. She is lacking self-control and wants to break her silence with a scream as her patience is vanishing. Dangerous ideas form in her head, like wanting “to put her fingers around Adam’s neck and squeeze until he faints. She shakes her head to get rid of these thoughts. She manages to stop thinking about it, but a dark and slimy tide has completely submerged her” (Slimani, 2016, p. 142). Functionalism inherits social needs like the problematics of the symbolic self. When a person is not able to retreat from the limitations of social boundaries, s/he cannot control the problems that differ from society. Hence, Louise’s peace of mind abandons her and is stuck in a loop of darkness that she is incapable of escaping. Corrupted ideas linger in her mind and pushes her being into a greater level of melancholy and depression. These characteristics mostly lead to unthinkable actions of demise (Goldschmidt, 1966).

Indeed, Louise is at the last level of gloominess and thinks of death that repeatedly knocks at the walls of her silence. She is unable to get rid of these ideas and is confused by the origins of such planning. She comes to the conclusion that

*[s]omeone has to die for us to be happy.* Morbid refrains echo inside Louise’s head when she walks. Phrases that she didn’t invent—and whose meaning she is not sure she fully grasps—fill her mind. Her heart has grown hard. The years have covered it in a thick, cold rind and she can barely hear it beating. Nothing moves her anymore. She has to admit that she no longer knows how to love. All the tenderness has been squeezed from her heart. Her hands have nothing left to caress. I’ll be punished for that, she hears herself think. I’ll be punished for not knowing how to love (Slimani, 2016, p. 143).

Functionalism reflects how a person with such an unstable mind has the goal of an independent world swirling in her mind. Louise is suffering of stress and has an inner battle to remain silent or to bring out her dark nature. It is impossible to hide feelings forever. The longer a person hides emotions, the harder the reveal gets. Also, the more a person keeps sketching for schemes with the power of persistence, the more wicked the outcome will get. That is why Louise’s silence flows over the brim, driving her to attack with an unexpected action. Her extended silence and refusal to share her problems or seeking help is because she thinks she can handle things all by herself. This selfishness and ignorance make functionalism reveal that people differ from one to another in the way of thinking and in the style of the outcome (Thompson, 1979).

After Louise has killed the children, the police search for evidences in the neighbourhood. They go to a store where she went shopping with the children. In a camera, they see the children running around while being ignored by the nanny. “Louise, the captain thinks, looks like one of those duplicitous mothers in a fairy tale, abandoning her children on the darkness of a forest” (Slimani, 2016, p. 150). According to functionalism, everyone has a dark nature but it differs from one person to another. One has to control the self and take care of this negativity so as not to harm the self and others. It can be a hard competition with the inner system to control the inner thoughts which have been expanding within the mind for a long time.

When things go out of hand, such thoughts take over the mind so the sufferer becomes a slave to these ideas. The body will act as the overtaking schemes places the person in a situation wherein s/he cannot stop the self, nor can the other be of any help. The person is then unconsciously similar to a computer device and has to act out all the programs that the system has laid. Whenever the actions are granted, a person like Louise breaks down and thinks that she will be saved from humiliation and further problems if she ends the self to shuts down her system.

When the perfect moment of being alone with the children comes, Louise starts to fill the bathtub with water. She is in panic because she cannot hear any crying children. Repeatedly, she walks in anxiety between the kitchen and the bathroom. Finally, she calls the children to take a bath but little do they know that it is the last bath that they will ever have. They are murdered with a knife and the water is soon mixed with innocent blood of children. The police disturb her action after she slashes her wrists and neck and falls into unconsciousness.

## Conclusion

Since functionalism studies the mental cases of suffering people, it is shown that Louise is in great misery of her haunting past. She tries to stay calm but the continuous problems lead her inner screams to take over her muteness. To force the self into a disguise leads to inner pain. The more it is ignored, the more horrifying the end result will be. Indeed, Louise is driven into a scene that her tainted soul has painted from within the silent walls in which the nanny has locked herself. The writer has written this about this real-life event to warn people not to end up like Louise. She wants to guide them to seek help and share their pain before matters get worse.

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