Review Article

MOTHERHOOD, CLASS, AND ALIENATION IN LEÏLA SLIMANI'S *'CHANSON DOUCE'*

KASHMIR JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
13(1) 129 - 143
ISSN: 0975-6620

https://deanss.uok.edu.in/Files/20ca86b4-9101-4485-98f9-1beb3b33b64b/Journal/373a2e84-d87a-421b-8236-41cc23821508.pdf

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Abstract
This study analyzes motherhood, class, and alienation in Leïla Slimani's Chanson Douce, with a particular emphasis on how class dynamics affect the psychological and social aspects of modern motherhood. It looks at the limitations that surround Slimani's construction of maternal identity, especially as it relates to caretakers and the children they look after. The study examines the ways in which social structures and uneven economic circumstances depict vulnerability via the use of theme analysis. Additionally, it uses the commodification discourse to illustrate how class systems affect emotional wellness, caregiving relationships, and identity. The study contends that in addition to posing moral and affective queries on caring, Slimani's story demonstrates how stereotypes and social pressures influence mothers' experiences. Finally, the research adds to the current discourse on the redefining of motherhood in the modern, economically complicated, and socially stratified world.

Keywords
Care Work, Class, Commodification of Caregiving, Maternal Identity, Motherhood

1. Introduction

The novel "Chanson Douce" by Leïla Slimani offers a profound commentary on the expectations of modern society toward motherhood while deftly examining the subtle relationships of

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class, alienation, and motherhood. As with the work itself, I am more interested in analyzing the socio-political pressures placed on women who are perceived as "mad" or "bad" mothers—that is, women who are trapped by and subsequently within the institution (realization) of motherhood, but who do not suffer from the personal épanouissement or other-facing maternal altruism that is described as its quasi-physiological postpartum side effects or not all the time, anyway. The maternal ambivalence that permeates the mothering experiences depicted in the work and the resulting desire to challenge the binary conceptions of the good or bad mother and substitute them with a co-existing dyad—the majority of mothers, according to the text and this article, are both—is what I find interesting (McIlvanney, 2023). The situation of the mothering figure in the text serves as a solid foundation for this ambivalence. Chanson Douce emphasizes how class and the resulting social alienation, rather than biology, significantly influence our experiences as working mothers and how individual women's choices—or lack thereof—shape their reactions to having children (Arens, 2020). Simone de Beauvoir states in Le Deuxième Sexe II: "It doesn't have a "denaturée" mother because maternal love isn't natural, but specifically because of this, it has bad mothers" (Beauvoir 1949, 386). In her groundbreaking work L'Amour en plus, philosopher Elisabeth Badinter argues in favour of this viewpoint. Still, she notes that the more humanizing—and erratic—word mother love tends to supplant the phrase maternal instinct in contemporary discourse(Marcelli & Nata-, 2015). We are reminded of the relative recentness (the end of the eighteenth century) and, ultimately, artificial origins of the belief that love is a prerequisite of all marital and familial relations by Badinter's historical overview of the perception of maternal love in France from the seventeenth century to the present. On the other hand, Chanson Doude recognizes the variety of shapes motherhood can take as an experience, many of which go against our strict, institutionalized definition of ideal mothering(Lachman, 2023).

Chanson Douce is one of several modern Francophone works that challenge or, at the very least, subvert prevailing narratives of glorified mothering. Whether through their portrayal of "mad" moms (Leïla Marouane's Le Châtiment des hypocrites [2001]) or "bad" mothers (Fête des mères [2009]), these texts demonstrate the ideological limitations that motherhood is subject to and attempt to alter them. Others, like Marie Ndiaye's La Vengeance m'appartient (2021), Laurence Tardieu's Le Jugement de Léa (2004), and Véronique Olmi's Bord de mer (2001), go further and relate cases of infanticide, which is seen by society as the

unmistakable proof of "bad" mothering. Gill Rye's significant study on French and Francophone Narratives of Mothering, which contends that "mothering, as both theory and practice, is currently being contested and interrogated across several different fields of inquiry," is one of the recent critical texts that also question the constrictive behavioural paradigms that dictate "good" mothering. A second indication of a paradigm shift is the release of Stéphanie Thomas's Mal de mères (2021), a compilation of ten testimonies of maternal regret. This work focuses on the later phases of mother-child relationships rather than the typical postpartum phase. Theoretical texts like Orna Donath's Regretting Motherhood (2017), fictional works like Elena Ferrante's The Lost Daughter (2008, 2021) and its most recent film adaptation, as well as more widely read journalistic texts like Eliane Glaser's Motherhood (2021), all demonstrate an interest in broadening ideas of what constitutes appropriate maternal behaviour.

Despite Chanson Douce's enormous financial success, it has received comparatively little critical notice. The two analyses that most closely resemble mine are Julie Rodgers' (2020)(Rodgers, 2020) study of the darker side of caregiving in Chanson douce, which focuses on the oppressive situation usually experienced by the caregiver and the lack of (self)care they encounter, and Lorenza Starace's (2019) article on the uneasy disruption of readerly expectations and the inherent ambivalence that characterize Slimani's postcolonial literary paradigms and authorial positions.

2. Literature review

A cross-cultural comparative study of motherhood and nanny care methods in various countries was carried out by Jackson & Williams (2023)(Williams, 2023). According to the study, cultural norms and expectations about mother responsibilities and nannies' engagement in child care varied. It emphasized the importance of considering sociocultural settings while analyzing the new flaws in modern parenting and the effects of nanny care on kids' wellbeing. These viewpoints draw attention to the identity and social changes of becoming a mother. But Jackson and Williams ignore an essential component of managing a household: the manipulative tendencies and mental health issues that some mothers and nannies experience.

Building on the conclusions above, Thompson (2024)(Romo, Abetz, & Thompson, 2024) investigates the moral implications of mothers' decisions to assign nannies to care for their children. The research critically examines the possible benefits and drawbacks

of nanny employment and the ethical issues that women encounter when making these decisions. The findings underscore the need for a deep understanding of the complex moral landscape surrounding contemporary parenting and the importance of prioritizing the child's interests in these schemes. Similarly, Charman (2021)(Taylor, n.d.) also posits that motherhood is a political construction notwithstanding its framing within social and historical contexts. Mothers are critical to the nation-state because they produce good citizens and maintain social and political boundaries throughout the home. In this regard, Charman (2021) dismisses the need to reconcile the safety and wellbeing of children with social and political objectives.

Similarly, a quantitative study by Brown (2021)(Brown et al., 2021) This literature investigated how maternal employment affects children's development in nanny-using families. According to the findings, children's cognitive and socio-emotional development are fundamentally tied to the quality of the nanny-child interaction. In addition, the research highlighted the openness of communication between mothers, nannies, and parents as being healthy for better outcomes for children. But still, the minute details involved in the rearing process and the critical position that the biological mothers enjoy in giving their best to the child are omitted in the argument presented by Johnson and Brown.

Qualitative research that explored the views of working mothers who relied on nannies for childcare was also undertaken by Smith (2020)(Linda K. Smith, Anubhav Bagley, 2020). Within the results, it was observed that even though mothers appreciated the help from nannies, they were also afraid of the dangers and challenges of handing their children over to strangers. The research has underlined how important it is that mothers choose suitable nannies so that good rapport builds up to protect the safety and healthy, sound wellbeing of children. However, though biological mothers share a bond with their kids, Smith's argument has failed to understand the depth of the accumulated frustration and resentment dominating the minds of nannies who, even though they carry those feelings of having been made fun of, cheated, and enslaved, still do not find room to react accordingly.

In light of the dilemma writers from postcolonial nations frequently face, (Lorenza, 2019) analyzes Leïla Slimani's Chanson douce (2016). The reception of (im)migrant authors is rife with inconsistencies and paradoxes, whether marginalized to the status of "francophone literature" by the French literary milieu or accused of cultural imperialism by their community of origin. I

contend that Chanson douce embodies many unresolved contradictions that define the "becoming-transnational" of French and francophone studies, drawing on the literature-monde debate and its effects on French, Francophone, and postcolonial studies.

3. Methodology

This study applies a theme-based methodology to explore the intersections of motherhood, class, and alienation in Leïla Slimani's Chanson douce. Through focused thematic analysis, this approach will examine these themes as presented in the novel, drawing into them any complex social and psychological elements that influence the maternal experience.

First, thematic analysis can start from close reading through Chanson's douce and finding repeated motifs and symbols associated with motherhood, class differences, and alienation. This would necessitate scrutiny regarding how Slimani's structures and character interplay at a deeper level of social hierarchy and power play. Much importance is thus attached to the language and discourses used to represent the protagonist's experiences with motherhood in a class-divided society, revealing which socioeconomic status and alienation define who she is and interacts with. Each theme identified—motherhood, class, and alienation—is discussed singularly but about one another. For instance, motherhood is analyzed not only as an experience in isolation but also as one that highly depends upon class constraints, where the expectations and constraints placed on the maternal role vary across different social strata. In like manner, the theme of class is explored in terms of economic dependency, power imbalances, and how the effects of societal expectation build isolation for characters. Alienation is seen, therefore, both as an effect of these class divisions and as a particular emotional experience that affects the health and identity of mothers.

This thematic approach articulates how Slimani's depiction of mothering can unpack broader social concerns, such as the way class makes classed subjects feel isolated and estranged. Since this research focuses on themes rather than quantitative data or external surveys, results from this qualitative, text-based analysis will be based on how Slimani's narrative deconstructs contemporary mothering in a socially stratified world. These are insights extracted through this theme-based methodology, allowing for a nuanced understanding of the interplay between motherhood, class, and alienation in Chanson's douce, culminating in a rich, textually grounded perspective on Slimani's portraiture of the maternal experience. The exercise reinforces the

foundation of the study to literary analysis again, thus building further on and expanding the thematic framework of layered complexity surrounding motherhood as defined within a modern, class-conscious society.

4. Findings of the study

4.1. Motherhood

Chanson Douce by Leïla Slimani is a book that is written based on a horrific real-life event reported all over the world. This novel focuses on children's vulnerability and the possibility of cruelty enacted among adults and nannies by the activities of a nanny whose suspicion immediately arises as if she brutally kills two small kids who are entrusted under her care. French-Moroccan author Slimani, who is herself a mother, uses this tragedy as inspiration to explore the intricate world of nannies. The unthinkable is turned into art in her hands, inspiring an examination of the flaws in parenthood and the disturbing dynamics in the story.

In terms of characterization and narrative components, the novel begins with the terrifying statement, "*The baby is dead*," which establishes the horrific crime that the nanny, Louise, committed against the children, Mila and Adam (Leila Slimani, 2017). Reviewers of the book, however, frequently suggest that the mother was responsible for the catastrophe, which moves the emphasis from "who" or "how" to "why"(Agwu, 2023). As she looks to return to the workforce, Myriam, a committed law student now a stay-at-home mother, and her husband Paul, a music producer, look for the ideal nanny to look after their kids. The mysterious central figure, Louise, enthrals the family with her perfect manner and gradually takes charge of their lives.

Considering the topics and narrative decisions examined in the sample text, Slimani's story develops clearly and grippingly without sacrificing the readers' feelings or the characters' outcomes. While including several viewpoints adds complexity and suspense to Louise's story, the author's journalistic expertise is apparent through hints of reportage style. The novel reveals that no one is entirely innocent or guilty except Louise, as it strikes a careful balance between conspiracy and the imperfections of parenting (Slimani, 2016). The idea of miracles is rejected by Slimani, who instead emphasizes the situations that motivate parents to strive for perfection and the effects of their imaginations on their kids.

The slain children, Mila and Adam, are shown as multifaceted individuals who balance danger and safety, conscious of their power over the adults in their immediate vicinity within the context of the horrific conspiracy and the representation of children(Leila Slimani, 2017). Despite appearing sincere, Louise's relationship with the kids and their parents belies a darker side marked by compulsive behaviours and a frantic attempt to forget her challenging history. In addition to Louise, Myriam is also held accountable for the conspiracy as she abandoned her young children to focus on her job(Leila Slimani, 2017). Additionally, Slimani examines the paradoxes of contemporary parenting in a world entirely of potential catastrophes in the section on parental paradoxes and societal expectations. Myriam and Paul are unthinkingly confident in their capacity to keep things under control, but they are also terrified for the safety of their kids. When Miriam observes Louis playing with Mila and Adam, she is vulnerable to unwarranted embarrassment and exposed to the intricacies of a parent's relationship. An introduction to the psychoanalytic perspective by Freud highlights the mother-child connection and offers an analytic lens for analysis of how Chanson Doue portrays maternal relationships.

Slimani deliberately keeps Louise as an enigma character, thus leaving it to the readers to understand her intentions even when parts of the book are narrated through her perspective. Louise has been depicted as a symbol of parental anxieties and safety standards rather than a psychological reality per se (Slimani, 2016). By deliberately keeping Louise as an enigma, the author has amplified the ominous and eerie ambience of the book while challenging the readers to come to terms with the fears of modern parenting.

Chanson Douce by Leïla Slimani masterfully analyzes the complexities of family dynamics and the imperfections of parenting. Themes and plot choices in the novel underlined the thin dividing line between safety, restraint, and dependency. Bringing forth a critical question through Louise, Myriam, and Paul, Slimani has tried to raise various questions about the concerns and insecurities of parents and the challenges in providing security within an insecure climate. After all, Chanson Douce is a chilling story that unfolds before us: How much of society's expectation do mothers have to bear? What complexities are formed inside this institution of motherhood?

4.2. Class struggle

In Chanson's douce, Leïla Slimani presents class as the insidious force shaping the lives and relationships of her characters, primarily through the dynamic between Louise, the working-class nanny-and her middle-class employers, Myriam and Paul. In the narrative, Slimani probes into how the divisions of class not only are an influence on the material conditions of characters but also the emotional landscapes and the sense of self (Akdoğan, 2024). Through the thematical analysis of class representation in the novel, Slimani proves how social and economic status depends on power arrangements, thus affirming the social hierarchies and influencing personal identity, asserting that it is through the subtle yet pervasive way class differences occur alienation and disconnection(Howell, 2017).

As a working woman, a precarious and subservient class position situates Louise beneath the economic status of both Myriam and Paul. Slimani forms her character with the struggle and sacrifices involved in this kind of role, thus turning the character of Louise into both indispensable and invisible for the house family (Starace, 2019). As the story unfolds, Louise's identity is conflated with her work. In a society that soon deprecates her job, her classism-driven labouring constitutes a desperate effort for class validation. The focus is, therefore, on the class as a social wall shaping her possibilities and self-esteem. For instance, Slimani elaborates on Louise's routine and the interactions between her and her family members in detail, creating such a picture of an individual performing sexual, familial chores often regarded as a matter of course by her employers. These interactions reveal a power dynamic between Louise and her employers, describing the class as an activity that makes her submit to a position that deprives her of power and dignity(Lehrer, 2020). Even though she is essential to the care of their children and the maintenance of their home, the narrative repeatedly speaks to her in terms of this role, not as someone her equal. Slimani thus continues to utilize Louise's situation to demonstrate how class ties her to a life of servitude devoid of any spirit of belonging or personal accomplishment.

The middle-class position that Myriam and Paul hold provides them with a very different life; they can enjoy such privileges and freedom because of their wealth. Slimani, in these characters, tries to discuss the issue of class privilege, leading to entitlement and separation from the lives of the less fortunate. This privilege is embodied in Myriam's choice to return to work and, therefore, in her selection of Louise to assume care for her children and perform household chores. Such an arrangement positions

Myriam's motherhood within a framework of choice and pragmatism, a framework that is only made possible through her economic capital. Slimani accentuates this theme by linking Myriam's professional aspirations with Louise's economic dependency. For Myriam, economic security allows personal ambition and self-expression, while, for Louise, a similar level of protection does not seem within reach- a life stuck in service as if time stood still around her (Achille & Achille, 2022). This only makes the class dimension at play evident, which will also have her professional improvement resting on the labour of someone else- Louise- an arrangement that Slimani sees as oppressive. Through Myriam, Slimani presents how class privilege clouded sympathy and comprehension, leading to a lack of feeling for the struggle of those who made comfort and prosperity possible.

Slimani deepens the class theme by giving insight into its effects on Louise's psychological state, showing how insecurity and insecurity impose reductions upon her self-confidence. In this respect, for example, poverty and exclusion enhance vulnerability and fragility in more ways than one. Slimani illustrates that the desire for acceptance, which Louise wishes to earn from the family she serves, gradually translates to emotional dependency through economic dependency. This dependence comes alive through Louise's desperate yearning for validation and belonging. Yet, Slimani highlights the class differences that bar her from fully belonging to the family(Yasmin, 2020). When Louise becomes further enmeshed in the household dynamics, her sense of self crumbles into resentment and longing. Slimani uses the emotional arc to describe how class inequality creates an impossible chasm between caregivers and employers and how they labour. Louise is both a source of meaning and a reminder of her social isolation. In this regard, a class position, as perceived by Louise to transcend beyond her class position with a failure to do so reflects there is a psychological cost in terms of economic precarity to those in subservient positions, framing class as not only financial but also as a division of personal fulfilment.

The class representation of Slimani comes across as some form of illumination of how commodified human relationships are in the novel. Professional and personal life becomes blurred as Louise assumes an ever more intimate role in the household, yet strict class lines enforce an emotional distance. Louise repeatedly attempts to make genuine relationships with her bosses. Still, she is always brought back to realizing her subservience, signifying that true intimacy cannot exist within the boundaries of their economic exchange(‘No Title’, 2022). Slimani presents

commodification as part and parcel of the class structure wherein even such an intimate activity, raising one boss's children, becomes transactional. The depiction of how Louise gradually realizes her expendability further solidifies Slimani's concept of the dehumanizing potential of class over interpersonal relationships. By focusing on such a foundation, the story comes out to reveal that Louise's emotional hunger for being accepted and becoming a sort of surrogate mother is replaced by the bitter reality of her dispensability, a harsh reality reminding her that her connection to the family remains defined by this newly formed economic hierarchy. This tension between Louise's investment and her economic reality reflects how class commodifies people, turning actual acts of care into impersonal services that can be bought and sold.

Slimani also highlights the distinction between Myriam and Louise's experience of motherhood, which is constructed through their class positions. Myriam has privilege, summed up in the capacity to outsource parts of motherhood to Louise; that is class privilege, a privilege underwritten by the labour of working-class women. This sets motherhood up both as a privilege and a burden, and Slimani shows how socioeconomic status is articulated through the ways women experience and perform motherly roles. While Myriam can balance career and family life free of charge, Louise is tied to care responsibilities for which she does not receive emotional or financial rewards, which typically go to mothers. Slimani criticizes this imbalance, unveiling the paradox of care work: working-class women like Louise are called to care for other people's children while balancing their economic difficulties. This disproportionate burden of care speaks to the way class divisions shape women's rights and choices, suggesting mothers are a privilege for a few while it's a burden on others, sifted through the sieve of class.

Ultimately, Slimani's exploratory examination of class leads to the alienation theme since Louise's social and economic status leaves her isolated from working within a family framework and detached from who she is. The difference in Louise's role in the family and her social status cuts a gulf in her emotional world; she is neither a total participant in the family nor can she come to develop an identity outside of this work. This alienation intensifies because Louise's desire for belonging collides with the reality of her expendability, underlining the isolation imposed by class boundaries. Through Louise's alienation, Slimani makes a compelling commentary about the dehumanizing effects of socioeconomic inequality, making her more like a spectre caught

within a liminal space between servant and kin. As the novel progresses, Louise's sense of isolation deepens, revealing how class divides not only limit material opportunities but also erode emotional and psychological wellbeing. In this way, Slimani connects the theme of class to the broader experience of alienation, suggesting that the structures of economic inequality foster a profound sense of disconnection and disempowerment in those relegated to society's margins.

4.3. Alienation

A large portion of *Chanson's douce* is set in the apartment of the upwardly mobile Massé couple. For Myriam, the mother, and, as the work comes to a close, Louise, the nanny, this household (dis)location serves as a kind of spatial pressure cooker, creating a monde à part that is becoming more and more isolated from the outside world. "The feminine question is a spatial question," as Slimani states in Le Parfum des fleurs la nuit. It is impossible to comprehend the dominance that women experience without studying geography and assessing the constraints placed on their bodies by clothing, locations, and other people's perceptions (Beno, Silen, & Yanti, 2022). Slimani reminds us of the primary politics of the home every day in Chanson douce, a term often associated with the uninteresting and unremarkable. According to her, it is a Hegelian arena with a never-ending struggle for dominance. Women, in particular, are expected to excel in so many fields that are mutually exclusive that the master-slave dialectic can also manifest as an internal conflict over the expectations of society regarding domestic and maternal roles. The relationship between an employer and a nanny is particularly relevant to the master-slave antinomy. Être autrui désigne une subordination, mais aussi une aliénation de la liberté, as Geneviève Fraisse states in Service ouservitude. In this way, men who worked in the home were excluded from the French Revolution's citizenry. They were not free to be political subjects because they depended on their master (Fraisse, 2021). The economic and political hegemonies that govern this employer-employee relationship, as well as the general social and mediatic invisibility of the nanny figure, and the fundamental isolation that characterizes her position, are partially explained by the fact that being a nanny is one of the few jobs where "service" remains at an exclusively individual level and is located within the private domain. Other jobs that are comparable to this include domestic cleaners and elder care providers. "Is there something that keeps it hovering under the radar, a kind of devalued preoedipal

downstairs juxtaposed against the more privileged oedipal upstairs and its fairly limited/inevitable cast of characters?" Susan Scheftel poses this query about the nanny subject (Scheftel, Ph, & Scheftel, 2012). Being the other mother to Adam and Mila and the other child to Myriam and Paul (the "devalued preoedipal"), Louise is in a situation where she is constantly being othered. She can access the Massé at their most intimate moments but can never be anything more than a usurper, a subaltern other.

Chanson Douce shows a Sartrean-like hui close to three people, connected but secluded. The work highlights the self-deception and unhealthy mutual dependence that define the trio's relationship. Slimani skillfully captures the daily choreography of cramped domestic life as each character tries to outdo the others and the varying demands placed on oneself. Between Louise and Myriam, this choreography becomes implicitly antagonistic since the former is used as a tool for production, evaluated by her output and level of circumspection. Louise is described as performing "*en coulisses, discrète et puissante" (59), which means she is all-seeing and influencing the action off-stage. Regardless of her "inferior*" status in the home, she has disproportionate control over events. This is similar to the servant in ancient French play. Indeed, Louise's persistent wearing of her "col Claudine" costume, the suffocating "unity of place" all of the primary action takes place there—and the fact that we hardly ever get to see behind the nanny façade make the Massé apartment setting resemble a theatrical production. Myriam occasionally acts like a kid when Louise is around, letting her take charge of the household, avoiding any challenges to her authority, and abdicating responsibility: "*Louise est là, tenant à bout de bras cet édifice fragile*." *Myriam agrees to be a mother (59) as Louise gives birth to Myriam*, who in turn gives birth to the perpetually immature Paul, who in turn "mothers" Louise in the scene where he teaches her to swim; this remarkable image highlights the role-switching among the characters that inhabit this hellish huis clos of dysfunctional denial. Myriam gives up domestic control to Louise, in part. She is grateful to Louise for relieving her of many of the challenges of parenting, partly because she feels socially awkward about hiring a nanny in the first place and partly because she is exhausted from being a working mother. Like any proud mother, Louise also takes pride in the material and professional success her surrogate children, Paul and Myriam, have achieved thanks to her assistance.

Louise's Medea-like unwillingness to give up control over Mila and Adam is the culmination of the subaltern's paradoxical mastery within this relational triangle; in other words, if she cannot have the children, no one else will. She terminates her position by doing the ultimate act of severance between mother and child. "Neonaticide and infanticide do not give death: they are the work of possession," argues Julia Kristeva in "Reliance, or Maternal Eroticism"(Kristeva, 2014). "*Elle voudrait les retenir, s'accrocher à eux, gratter de ses ongles le sol en pierre*." Louise sees the Massé as her ticket to happiness and social acceptance. She wants to pause their life together, freeze the status quo, and trap them in an existential snow globe where they would do the same things repeatedly. She wants to put them under cloche as two fidgety and lustful dancers snatched from the bottom of a music-filled box. (81). In addition to being the ultimate act of possession and expression of her freedom, the murder of the children also represents the most traumatic way to halt their progress and independence, without which she will no longer be employed and needed. It also perfectly captures the ambivalence of mothers, as she "lovingly" runs a bath full of toys before killing them. The texts emphasize that the façade has broken down, and the "real" Louise—one who is full of self-hatred—is exposed by repeating the proper subject noun "*Louise" at the start of a series of actions rather than "la nounou*" (213) and whose auditory hallucinations drive her to murder in an attempt to find some relief.

5. Conclusion

In *Chanson's douce,* Leïla Slimani weaves a compelling narrative that uncovers the complexities of maternal experience within the confines of class disparity and societal expectations. The study demonstrates that Slimani's portrayal of motherhood extends beyond biological ties, encompassing the emotional labour and social alienation of caregiving in a class-stratified society. Through the character of Louise, Slimani illustrates the dehumanizing effects of socioeconomic inequalities, highlighting how caregivers, despite their essential roles, are often marginalized and subject to emotional detachment. Ultimately, Slimani's work challenges traditional definitions of motherhood, revealing the nuanced emotional terrain that mothers and caregivers navigate in contemporary society. This exploration underscores the need for a re-evaluation of caregiving roles, addressing both the psychological toll of alienation and the socioeconomic factors that shape maternal identities.

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