

**VULNERABILITY AND SUFFERINGS IN LAN**  
**SAMANTHA CHANG'S THE FAMILY CHAO**

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**ABSTRACT**

Suffering and vulnerability has been used in literature quite frequently in varying order. This paper articulates the logical considerations for their orders i.e. vulnerability precedes sufferings. This was, is and will be center of interest for philosophers, theologians, psychologists, sociologists, literary writers, scientists, etc. This paper also contributes by reconstructing ontological and circumstantial categorization framework. Finally, this paper aims at surfacing this reconstructed vulnerability culminating into sufferings philosophy through the main characters of the novel, *The Family Chao* by Samantha through qualitative and quantitative textual data analysis, with the use of Nvivo-11 and Excel. The paper specifically answers the questions: How do innocent immigrants suffer at the hands of father, Buddhism and the society? And how does evil go scot free? The paper concludes by establishing the vulnerability resulting into sufferings philosophy emerging from ontological and circumstantial categorization.

**KEYWORDS**

Vulnerability, sufferings, ontological, circumstantial, existence, theology Buddhist, Samantha.

**INTRODUCTION**

The research contributes as it explores *The Family Chao* for the first time, through the lens of theme of vulnerability and sufferings reconstructed in order to develop better understanding of the text. The specific objective of this paper is to surface the philosophical understanding of the novel; to correct and reconstruct the theme of vulnerability and sufferings; to analyze the text of the novel in the light of the theme of vulnerability and sufferings; to study the anti-family normative role of father in the theme of vulnerability and sufferings; to analyze the data qualitatively and quantitatively through the use of Nvivo and excel in the novel.

This paper answers the specific research questions regarding the theme of vulnerability and sufferings: How can the theme be reconstructed through the main characters in the novel? What is the role of patriarchy traditions in adding to the theme? How does the Buddhist theology impact on the theme?

There exists numerous references wherein sufferings and vulnerability have been used differently in order e.g. interpreted as a theological and philosophical contribution to the debate over humanity's practical relationship to suffering and vulnerability (Namli, E. (2022). Haizheng (protagonist) narrates her experiences of sufferings and vulnerability as a Chinese migrant in Taiwan through a dense kaleidoscope of sentiments and emotions of unfulfillment, (Zani 2019) old age people of Bangladesh (Chowdhury,2021) interviewer's own sufferings and vulnerability (Bengtsson-Tops, Anita, and Bengt Svensson. 2010). The stream of researchers used sufferings and vulnerability but the development of logic is based on sufferings resulting from vulnerability. Thus unconsciously reverse order is used by these researchers. Another stream of researchers reversed the order vulnerability and sufferings e.g. Humanising healthcare (Youngson, R., & Blennerhassett, M. 2016). Climate change and disaster (Mall, R. K., Kumar, R., & Bhatla, R. 2011). Based on understanding derived after reading researches on the topic this paper supports the second stream of researcher and articulates that vulnerability precedes subsequent sufferings. The logic behind this articulation is that vulnerability leads to sufferings. Vulnerable are subjected to victimization by the powerful and that leads to sufferings. This paper therefore, articulates and settles down the thematic interpretation that vulnerability needs to precede sufferings. This concept needs to be corrected, explored and reconstructed from varying contexts.

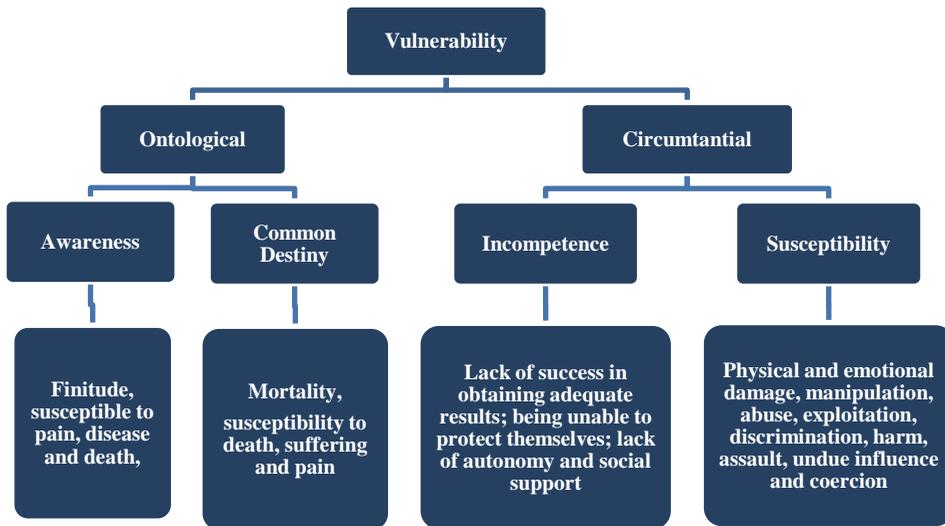
Vulnerability varies on the basis of individuals, groups of people who can be maltreated, coerced, deceived and harmed by others. These groups have common characteristics such as their marginalized position, weakness and relative status (Sutton, Erlen, Glad, & Siminoff, 2003). The vulnerable group generally include those with severe, chronic and fatal illnesses. Prisoners; racial and ethnic minorities are other vulnerable groups. From social categorization perspective, less functional groups may include but not limited to the older people; the poor; women; children (Fees, Martin, & Poon, 1999). Vulnerability and sufferings have relation to disciplines such as psychology, law, and practice (Ewin, 2021). This suggests that the vulnerable are those who lack the ability to protect themselves by virtue of their weak position (Alexander, Pillay, & Smith, 2018). While conducting research in bio-ethic domain, the vulnerability is defined as an idea explained in many moral precepts and principles (Mergen 2021).

Power and those subjected to power i.e. vulnerable remained an area of interest ever since the eternal triangle resulting in the murder of Cain at the hands of Hain. There exists a concern that vulnerability is a social construct used for political and economic interests (Green, 2007). Vulnerability is an implicit part of the language intended to bring an influence of risk, urgency, seriousness, social-ill, etc. (Gibbs, 2018). Vulnerability can thus be regarded as a possibility that materializes in specific situations and circumstances. Another way of looking at vulnerability is from its three types: existential, social and moral. Existential vulnerability is characterized by situations that lead to suffering, illness and death, and affects everyone regardless of social conditions (Schramm 2006). Social vulnerability refers to social structures that lead to creation of classes, dominant and the marginalized class. Finally, moral vulnerability refers to the perception of right and wrong. It arises from culture based on religion, customs, and art. The perceived values make vulnerability easy to surface. Socially disadvantage people suffer from maltreatment and are subjected to hatred. To avoid these situations, cultural transformations are needed (Sanches, Mannes, and Cunha 2018).

The social structures create dominant groups with the right to impose on socially disadvantaged groups their point of view, the way they look at values and norms (Godoi, Garrafa 2014). According to Silva (2019), the search for profitability and power has led to the surfacing of abuses. Numerous factors such as economic, social, cultural and socio-cultural have given rise to terminologies like, isolation, stigmatization, sexual identity, discrimination, cultural values, etc. Relational factors indicate weakness, inequality, race, color, etc. Vulnerability paves the way for stigmatizing groups and individuals on the basis of specific circumstances (Luna 2009). Kierkegaard (1844, 1957) has explained the emotions of stress and anxiety are the result of vulnerability. The vulnerable direction and focus has a tendency to move towards powerful. Tolstoy (1912) with his practical reason openly criticizes the religion and the state for preying on the vulnerable and the abuse of power. The vulnerability of individual in the family is another area which needs to be explored (Roberts, 2018 and Trakakis 2008).

The above discussion leads this work finally to reconstruct the vulnerability on the basis of two major categories i.e. ontological and circumstantial. The former category for vulnerability emphasizes on the existential meaning of human nature and human existence, whereas the later emphasizes on the social and individual structures, such as social life, races and cultures that appeared at different places and times. Briefly, ontological vulnerability refers to human existence, while circumstantial vulnerability refers to socially constructed relationships between individuals, groups and populations. Vulnerability based on ontological grounds can be represented by words and phrases giving meaning to permanence in suffering, shared across ages and space, intrinsically felt, etc. This vulnerability is independent of time, space and conditions (Kottow 2003). The ontological vulnerability category can further be determined by awareness and common destiny. Awareness refers to understanding of human beings regarding their finitude, susceptibility to sickness, legal course and death. Once this awareness is realized by humans, it is their moral responsibility to care for the vulnerability of others. The second determinant common destiny refers to mortality, susceptibility to death, suffering and pain. These are important consideration to understand the ontological vulnerability. Thus the human beings are all vulnerable resulting into sufferings and pains. They are victim of losing their happiness and liberty.

The second subcategory for vulnerability based on circumstantial grounds refer to a number of situations resulting from explicit circumstances, contexts and subjectivity. Taking a broader view, this category can be seen in relation to time and space. To be very specific, this category is contextual, conditional and situational. This category is further determined on the basis of two themes i.e. incompetence and susceptibility. Incompetence refers to making relatively wrong decisions regarding his or her interest. It includes relatively more missing in obtaining success. The human beings fail in protecting themselves and they do not enjoy the autonomy and social support. Whereas susceptibility can be explained through physical and emotional damage. It can also be seen through coercion, threat, exploitation, harm, assault, etc. People who experience societal (political, economic and social) marginalization and discriminatory treatment prior to such a humanitarian event, tend to be more vulnerable to adverse effects when a crisis occurs.



**Figure 1: Vulnerability and Suffering Framework**

It is at this juncture that Samantha's novel *The Family Chao* is explored with a view to understand it from the theme of vulnerability and suffering. These perspectives are to be seen from ontological and circumstantial perspective. With an understanding that the world of the novel is different from that of philosophy, this paper aims to articulate philosophical questions of vulnerability through the lens of ontological and circumstantial vulnerability and sufferings.

The fictional protagonists are predicted to evolve with clarity. This paper is based on vulnerability and sufferings pinning that *The Family Chao* needs to be read and understood. This paper centers more on Dagou who is the novel's most absorbing central character. The philosophical understanding of Albert Camus (Camus 1953, p. 82), Jean-Paul Sartre (Sartre 1985, p. 22), Georg Henrik von Wright (Wright 1994, p. 93) are useful for understanding the importance of Dagou's vulnerability and sufferings in the face of ontological and circumstantial evidences. Dagou's attempt to go against patriarchy with the objective to find better survival meets with a failure and he is finally perpetuated with a world full of meaningless suffering.

Lan Samantha's novel *The Family Chao* published in 2022 addresses the family issues such as hybrid identity, racism, culture, Buddhist theology, nationalism, food and American dreams. The novel contributes to the entailed discussion regarding immigrant humanity's practical relationship to vulnerability and sufferings. This relationship needs to be explored in the light of the questions with which Samantha attempts to paint a picture related to human agency: How can human beings continue to live in tise continual presence of suffering?

*The Family Chao* is a novel about the meaning of the vulnerability before law, Buddhism, filial relations, immigrant dreams to live in modern America. Samantha came from a family of the Chinese immigrants. Leo Chao is successful in establishing a family business and all seems perfect. He is a man of worldly wisdom and quite successful in taking advantage of his position even with his wife and three sons. The novel represents three sons' suspected of murder of their father representing an appalling state of chaos and sufferings doomed for immigrant Chinese. In the beginning of the story, James comes across on the railway station an old Chinese and tries to help him from the medicare education that he has received. He fails in saving the oldman and leaves the station with blue carpet rug bag and the bag and money in it remains recurring throughout the novel. Here we find ontological and circumstantial vulnerability. The old man's death represents ontological vulnerability and James is haunted by the bag throughout the novel refers to circumstantial vulnerability. Then, the introduction of the old Buddhist nun Gu Ling Zhu Chi, who predicts to Ming: "You should seek tranquility immediately" (Samantha 2022 P-70). According to her, Ming has health issues and this prediction is confirmed throughout the novel. Her another prediction is a bad death of Leo Chao which haunts the town Haven and the family afterwards. Dagou is forbidden from seeking his partnership in his father's business and disagreeing with this prediction results in 30 years imprisonment. Winnie presents Buddhist philosophy about food: "Winnie says it's sinful to eat living creatures, it amounts to killing, it's an act of violence, especially because the choice is an act of will, because we can decline to eat meat, because it's okay—and maybe even healthier" (Samantha, 2022 P-73).

This paper reconstructs the theme from the words used in the novel with their specific references. Thus adding a quantitative approach to the qualitative work. The frequency of the occurrence of words is in the background of the study explored through Nvivo-11. James being a main narrator is there in the novel most of the time. He is classified for vulnerability awareness under ontological perspective as he is seen aware of the looming shadows after the murder and reaches the culprit. Death, dead, kill, etc. denote common destiny which is followed by freezer room frequency, since murder is associated to freezer room (Table 1).

**Table 1**  
**Vulnerability and Sufferings**

Ontological				Circumstantial			
Awareness		Common Destiny		Incompetence		Susceptibility	
Word	Count	Word	Count	Word	Count	Word	Count
James	861	Died	13	Love	78	Restaurant	212
Dagou	692	Sick	11	Woman	75	Haven	98
Ming	547	Death/ Dead/Kill	79	Chinese	61	Bag	83
Father/Leo	470	Die	15	Ring	56	Christmas	83
Katherine	243	Freezer Room	193	Parents	42	Kitchen	71
Alice	162	Hospital	49	Police	38	American(s)	59
Mother/ Winnie	341	Alone	36	Judge	25	Witness	14
Brenda	201	Locked	11	Prosecution	22	Evidence	13
Chao	195	Suspects	12	Attorney	17	Involved	13
Immigrant	14	Family/ Brother	239	Court (Room)	29	Appeal	11

The data from ontological vulnerability and sufferings have been plotted on Figure 1. The awareness is associated to the characters shown through green line on x-axis in the bottom. For common destiny the red line reflects ontological vulnerability and sufferings. For awareness James has the highest frequency from the novel *The Family Chao*. The judge has the lowest frequency. From Common destiny perspective death, dead, kill die died and sickness has the highest frequency. This refers to ontological vulnerability from common destiny perspective.

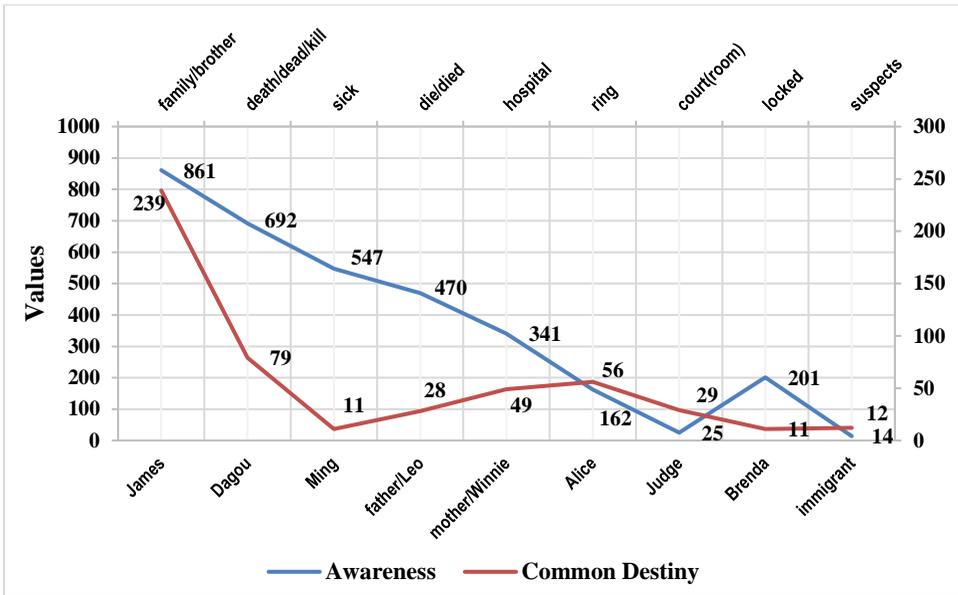


Figure 2: Ontological Vulnerability and sufferings

From circumstantial vulnerability perspective data from The Family Chao show freezer room and restaurant carry the highest frequencies reflecting incompetency and susceptibility respectively. Similarly witnesses and evidence are on the lower side respectively.

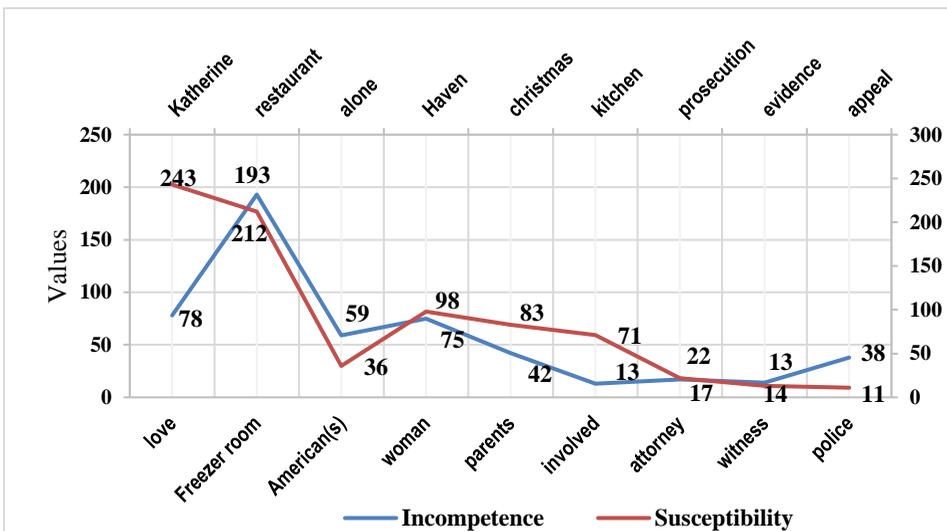
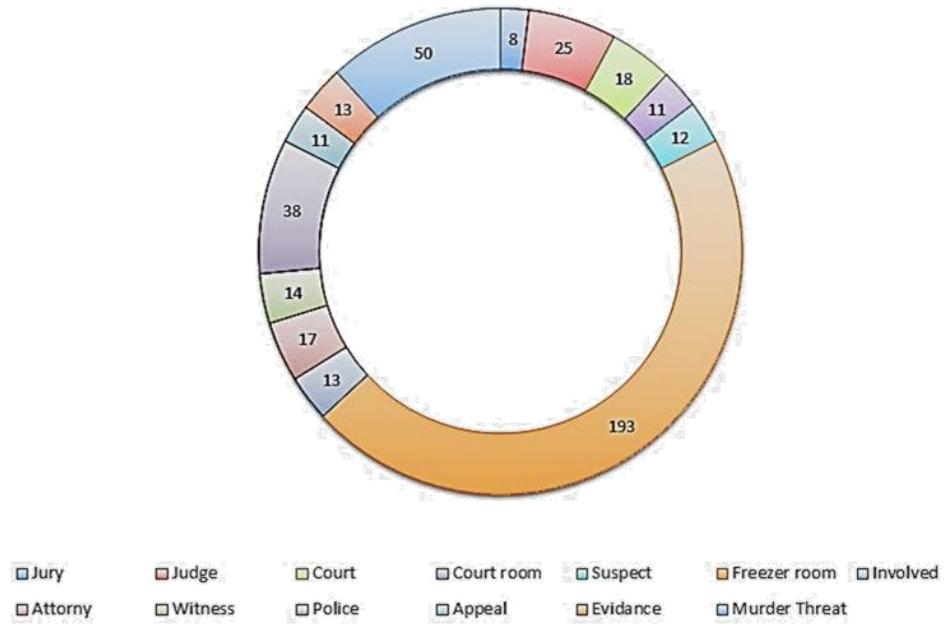


Figure 3: Circumstantial Vulnerability and Sufferings

**Dagou**

The main protagonists of novel are the three brothers Dagou, Ming and James. They represent themselves through various ways, they engage with vulnerability and suffering as a practical problem. Dagou's vulnerability and subsequent sufferings fall within the framework from ontological and circumstantial categories perspective. From ontological perspective, he is susceptible to law and falls a victim to be accused of his own father Leo Chao's murder. He is held in detention and the case is decided by jury only on his intentions, not on committing the murder. This is another pathetic episode that he ends up with 30 years' imprisonment. Dagou's interest in the partnership of the restaurant is another example of his vulnerability. All his desires dash straight to the ground. His dream to live with Brenda in a penthouse near lake shatters miserably since he is vulnerable and susceptible: "I haven't told anyone-I signed a lease on this swanky eighth-floor penthouse across town, over in Lakeside. Starting January first. I'm going to surprise Brenda with the penthouse, ask her to live with me" (Samantha 2022, P-70). Another circumstantial vulnerability with Dagou can be seen in Dagou's understanding of his father. Winnie advises Dagou to respect his father whereas Dagou knew at heart that his father was responsible for her present condition i.e. her admittance to hospital. Daggou accuses his father: "You're the one who put her here!" His voice shakes. "You couldn't help tracking your shit into her temple! Even there, you had to torment her!" "Mama's boy!" Leo sneers, his face grotesque and knowing. Something shatters in Dagou's mind. He lunges at his father, fingers reaching for his windpipe. "You deserve to die! I hate you. I'm going to kill you!" Leo is pushing back. He's a strong old man, but Dagou has not been working out for nothing. Dagou brings his father closer, tightens his grip on Leo's throat. A woman is shouting, giving orders, but Dagou can't listen. He feels his father's pulse: hot, human. Leo's eyes bulge. Then Dagou is jerked away. Someone has him in a headlock. It is Corey. Panting, he tries to fight off the men and nuns who close in upon him, seizing his head, his arms and shoulders. He is forced to let go. (Samantha 2022 P-108). This whole scene is adduced before the jury as an evidence against Dagou. This is how Daggou's vulnerability is further exposed that he cannot control his anger. He creates witnesses against him for his father's murder.

Daggou's circumstantial vulnerability revolves around his love for his mother. He gets back to Haven six years ago when he received information that she has fallen ill. Then, he stays here working as underpaid chef at this father's restaurant (Figure-4).



**Figure 4: Dagou’s Ontological and Circumstantial Vulnerability and Sufferings**

The sickness of Winnie Chao and her condition at hospital develops a sense of looming danger as to her life, but dramatic touch here shows Leo Chao’s death. Chao’s will reveals that everything goes to Winnie and Winnie’s will shows that the restaurant goes to Spiritual House. Thus, against all expectation of the population of Haven and family of Chao, the three brothers are left with to face the charge of murder. This is circumstantial vulnerability. Dagou revolts against his father’s authority and he positions himself as a proponent of anti-traditions. His desire to buy a flat from the amount earned through the partnership of the restaurant and live with Brenda is expressed: On this James asks him: “Dagou. What Gu Ling Zhu Chi warned you about.” “To stay away from the restaurant.” “Is she right about that? Is it true?” “Yeah, Snaggle. It’s true (Samantha 2022, P-54).

However, his desires remain unfulfilled and finally he proves so much vulnerable on ontological category as to suffer 30 years’ imprisonment for his alleged father’s murder. The murder that he has not committed. The protagonist remains victim of continual sufferings. These sufferings are undeserved still he submits them. Therefore, Dagou’s nihilism—his radical rejection of filial morality is in fact an anti-normative attitude. Dagou, Chao’s son, distinguishes himself from his brothers by his talent in music and in preparing recipes for tasty dishes. In the novel, Dagou represents the challenge posed by nihilism to filial morality. Dagou refuses to accept that there can be meaning in something that an honest person finds meaningless. To him, his father never cared for his mother Winnie Leo. To him, it is immoral to justify the suffering of his mother, who still loves her husband. Dagou returns his entrance ticket to the realm of 30 years imprisonment because he speaks truth about his intentions. Dagou subjects his faith in his mother to the test of reason, arguing that it is dishonest to accept her orders regarding his father’s authority, which is

characterized by appalling injustices. The wicked live well while innocent people and animals suffer.

Dagou's existential vulnerability abounds in the novel. Dagou speaks about his life plan: "You're full of questions, aren't you, Snaggle? Well, you know my old dreams of living in the city? Of living as a small fish in a big pond until I make it as a musician? Well, I'm done with that. I've given up, I'm ready to settle down for good in Haven, to be a big fish in a small pond. But the problem is I'm not big enough to do it!"

Dagou is also victim of immigration and as a member of immigrant family, he has to face a situation, which in itself is vulnerable. He explains his own and even his parent's immigrant position: It's why Ma and Ba came to the States. Or we're sad about what might have been. Ba says he wishes he hadn't left China. Ma's trying to get back to a time without Ba. I'm thirty-three and I want to be nineteen again. We want to travel back in time, but we can't, and so we want to go to a new place instead. Place is what we have instead of time. No. Not true. Money is what we have now, instead of place or time."

Dagou's plan of living a married life with Katherine changes to that of Brenda. The former keeps on nurturing a hope to live with Dagou. Katherine is more value based and loves the ring given by Dagou. However, circumstantial vulnerability plays its role as Dagou switches towards Brenda, who is more of worldly wisdom. She wants a better life as compared to Katherine, who wants Dagou. Katherine interest in James proves to be a time pass, but that too ends, nowhere. She continues seeing him even in Jail.

### **Ming**

Ming's practical wisdom in corporate finance in New York insight involves accepting the necessity of one's own suffering as a way of becoming reconciled with the situation and the rest of humanity. The paper permeates with a reconstruction of vulnerability and sufferings by probing the differing approaches used by Ming. Ming tries to establish his corporate finance away from family ties but has to suffer from health predictions, legal system under the charge of his father Leo's murder, and upon imprisonment of his brother Dagou. He has to suffer in making recipes for his brother to come and take over the restaurant, *The Family Chao*. Dagou claim about James: Love is going to matter to you, more than anything else, and the love of your life is going to be unrequited." He is devoid of intimacies of love and as a result is vulnerable to material pursuit and there too, circumstantial vulnerability plays its role. He joins the Christmas on his mother's request and is susceptible to the charge of murder of his father. The restaurant is a symbol of power and the whole family, Dagou, Ming, James, even Winnie Leo suffer for its sake. The Leo Chao made restaurant such a powerful place or business that everything seems to be revolving around it. Even Dagou's imprisonment pushes the family to work more for the restaurant with a view that once released from imprisonment, Dagou will start his life afresh.

### **James**

James sacrifices his medical career and dream to live with Katherine. He is the youngest of the lot, who represents Samantha's embodiment of the better understanding of the situation and reaches the main culprit, his illegitimate sister O-Lan. She has committed the cold-blooded murder to take revenge of the illegitimacy that she inherited. She has

travelled all the way to America to become orphan. Still he develops his own morality and allows his illegitimate sister (criminal) scot free and Dagou to suffer. James is more intelligent of the brothers in Chao family. Still his circumstantial vulnerability leads him to remain bound to Spiritual House and the restaurant.

James adaptability to the situation is established right from the beginning of the novel, when he comes across the death scheme and tries to use his medical skills to save the old man. He moves with the bag, which remains center of interest throughout the novel. He has got the ability to reconcile himself with the situation. He sees Dagou sympathetically and helplessly being grinded in the legal system. In this way, he exhibits his inability to save humanity from suffering. At first, James has no answer to his brother Dagou's "damned submission" to the decision of 30 years imprisonment. But then, Dagou forgives him for letting O-Lan go scot free. Dagou argues, this punishment may be the result of some other crime or sin that he might have committed. James probably unwillingly accepts Dagou's this argument. James submits to the meaning of suffering and decides to live as if all guilt-guilt before all and for all—is his alone. This submission to the meanings of sufferings leads James to a kind of insight into the grandeur sense of his elder brother. This gives rise to some questions. What does this vulnerability consist of? Do these sufferings hold true? This paper is an attempt to find answers to these questions. These are more elaborated in a discussion between James and Dagou's theology of guilt before all and for all.

In one of the novel's final scenes, James talks to his brother while revealing the truth that he has hidden regarding the murderer seeking apology and Dagou forgives him. James is interested to communicate his depth of feelings for Dagou. These feelings strengthen the power to bear the sufferings. Even James, the character in the novel who represents better understanding, agrees with his brother that the price for potential reconciliation with the "circumstances" of the Christmas night is too high (Samantha 2022). It is not possible to retain one's honour when requesting to a father whose intentions entail senseless and unjust suffering because Chao knows how to take advantage of his position by offering less and going for sex and money.

### **Leo Chao**

The description of Leo Chao as a cruel, opportunist, going for bargaining and sex is well depicted. Leo Chao named his son, Big Dog, Second Dog, Third Dog. Named by their father if they had a daughter she would have been named Little Dog. James further continues describing his father that no one likes his father: "She's a tight-mouthed, prissy type, and I can tell right away she doesn't like my father one bit. Most people don't. For one thing, he's bigger than the average Asian guy, and also he's dark. I'm like him, too, big and dark; it's Ming with the alabaster complexion; and my youngest brother, Snaggle, is 'just right.' But for another thing, Ba is crude. He's checking out the clerk in a way I don't understand because I'm six years old, but I now get that he's undressing her. Considering her possibilities. She's not young and she's not pretty. But he's an equal opportunity barbarian (Samantha 2022 P-71).

Leo Chao is represented as a man of worldly wisdom. He can take advantage of everyone to run his business. Winnie, his wife helps him in giving birth to three sons and works as laborer to establish the restaurant. Their thirty-five years together could not bring

about the conjugal love rather he was taking advantage of his position. She finally takes refuge in Spiritual House as a Christian, Buddhist nun. Leo Chao underpays his sons and they all want to stay away from him. They know that Chao knows his position and the girls appointed at the restaurant are underpaid and used for satisfying his sexual lust. He is master of his fate. He finally proves ontologically vulnerable. The novel exposes that each of the persons that he encounters hates him. Chao's remarks regarding Brenda and his ethics: "You want that girl to eat your Chinese cock?" His father taunted him weeks later, after she was hired as server. "Why so slow? If you don't make a move, I will!" erstanding that his mother is in the hospital due to his father and all these factors culminating into anger openly reflected are beyond his control. Apparently he is a strong fellow with keen interest in recipes and prior to that in music. He returns to Haven six years ago when he received information that Winnie innie is suffering from Pneumonia, and then he stays here working for the restaurant and being underpaid (Samantha 2022 P-111).

### **Winnie Chao**

Winnie suffers from ontological and existential sufferings. From existential vulnerability, she has a crush on Chao as an immigrant. She is a docile lady and is loved by all around. Her existential vulnerability is exposed as immigrant, then she succumbs to Buddhism and becomes a Nun at Spiritual House. She remains Christian Buddhist. This shows her ontological vulnerability. She feels embarrassed by her husband but never complains before anyone. She keeps on insisting on Dagou to honor his father. On her call Dagou returns from New York leaving his ambition to become a musician and ends up as an underpaid chef. On her desire, Dagou puts everything to make a Christmas of life and all her children gather at Haven. She is vulnerable to Theocracy and finally gives the restaurant to Spiritual House, leaving her sons no legacy. Her death in the novel shows her ontological vulnerability. She hates eating meat and that reflects her expression regarding food on religious basis.

### **Katherine**

Katherine is engaged to Dagou and the ring she kept on wearing even to the end of the novel. Katherine speaks about value and Brenda about money: Katherine flinches. "That's not true. He once told me the ring isn't about money. It's about the value of family, the value of history. It's to be given only, not sold, and given out of affection." She pays Dagou the amount he needed and does not return the ring. Brenda wants that ring badly in order to break the cord between Katherine and Dagou. She falls a prey to Dagou's love followed by James' company. Her vulnerability is so pathetic that she has to leave Dagou and James i.e. one after the other with nothing to go further in her life plans. She thinks of starting her life again but that too leaves open-ended questions regarding her destiny. Even in jail, she keeps on visiting Dagou, on which Brenda has serious observations.

## **CONCLUSION**

In the light of all this, this paper gives insight to the readers of the novel as an engagement with precision, what it means for an immigrant family to take vulnerability and sufferings seriously. The novel presents various practical approaches to vulnerability and sufferings in how the brothers, particularly Dagou is in serious doubts regarding the objective of immigration. He, not only meditates on it but also voices these damned

questions. The trial happens near the end of the novel. Several family secrets so far applauded by Haven community regarding Leo become known to all. This changes the intended trajectory of the brothers' lives.

The family is an untidy mess revealed after the Christmas or more precise after the murder of Leo Chao. It is after Christmas that the action starts taking place. The murder of Chao causes an uncertainty mainly among the brothers, but also among the residents of Haven. The murder reunites the disintegrated and disenchanting brothers into one whole, trying to pull together. It is more of a domestic drama than a murder mystery. The author brings readers into each of the main characters' heads, but more specifically in Dagou's. Less significant characters such as Katherine and Brenda are relatively more highlighted, as the narration changes in the chapters. The family is living in an exaggerated soap opera revolving around a lot of different forms of guilt (deserved and not deserved). Vulnerability seems to be transformed into claustrophobic, brought on by the characters helplessness and their inability to, be thoughtfully quiet. Some of the fictional scenes of bullies terrorizing the Chinese kids isn't so fictional, and close-knit families are all up in every family member's business, especially in a small town. The vulnerability is associated to this close-knit family secrets revealed after the murder. This fact is further highlighted during the trial.

### **Delimitations and Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The examination of the text of *The Family Chao* from vulnerability and sufferings fall within delimitation of the research and those aspects which are beyond the scope of this research are its limitations. This research does not take into account a comparative study of the literary work of Samantha vs. her contemporaries or with the same theoretical considerations.

*The Family Chao* by Samantha can be researched on food, culture, trans-culture, immigrants dreams and their realization, murder, filial bondage and family traditions, comparison with other literary works, its film adaptation, etc.

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