

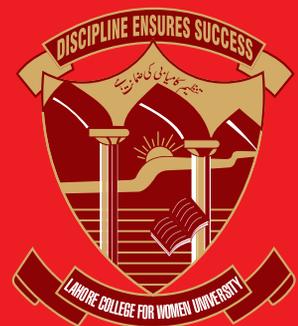
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# Research Journal of Language and Literature

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## Editorial

Welcome to the fourth volume, December 2019 issue of *Research Journal of Language and Literature*, in which you will find the well-established mixture of critical articles on both English language and literature using theoretical and empirical approaches. The essays include analysis of literary texts through cognitive methodologies to text comprehension. Therefore, the submissions explore the connections between disciplines such as psychology, literary studies, narratology, and applied linguistics. We believe that the essential idea for interdisciplinary scholarship derives from evolutionary unavoidability to challenge and appreciate intricate systems. An entity that is deliberated can no longer be studied in terms of an article of a particular discipline, but as a thought-provoking order of components which could be contemplated under the rubric of innumerable branches of knowledge. Following this, we urge authors to engage themselves in integrative debate of topics from wide-ranging areas and use multifaceted perspectives from other areas of the humanities where pertinent. *Research Journal of Language and Literature* is devoted to bringing together academicians, research scholars, and students who work professionally to improve their status of academic occupation and society by their ideas and aspire to encourage studies in the fields of humanities, cross-cultural studies, women studies, language, linguistics, literature and so on. Research should be at the centre and must be helpful in producing a major interface with the academic world. It must offer an original theoretical context that permits review and enhancement of current practices and opinions. This may result in a vital finding and an addition to the knowledge acquired. In short, the central objective of this Journal is to develop academic writing into a more serious and substantial publication, stimulating critical thinking.

Dr Amara Khan  
Editor-in-Chief  
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## **Errors in the Use of English Articles by L2 Learners from Punjab**

Tahira Khanam

### **Abstract**

This paper attempts to explore the strong tendency of learners of English as a second language (L2), living in Punjab (Pakistan) in the use of English articles and also investigates whether a difference is there in errors committed by the secondary and advance learners in the use of English articles. It also focuses on what kind of errors are committed by the learners on category basis. For that hypotheses adopted were (1) All the learners in Punjab (Pakistan) either at secondary or advance level have strong tendency of using English articles. (2) There is no significant difference in the errors committed by L2 secondary and advance learners in the use of English articles. For this purpose a questionnaire was distributed among randomly selected 35 respondents belonging to 2 groups as secondary ranged 14-18 years doing their Matric and advance 2<sup>nd</sup> language (L2) learners of English ranged 22-33 years, doing M.A, M.Phil. and Ph.D. For the first hypothesis 1 Sample t Test was applied. The result revealed that all the learners either at secondary or advance level have strong tendency of using English articles. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> hypothesis Independent Sample t Test was applied. The result revealed that there is a significant difference between the errors committed by the secondary and advance learners. Then for identifying the difference in errors committed by both the groups, category wise Independent Sample t Test was applied and the result showed that in generic, zero and anaphoric use of article there is a significant difference while as determiners in countable, non-countable noun phrases and as specific use there is no significant difference in both the groups.

**Keywords:** English Articles, Errors, L2 Learners, Punjab, Second language

This is a known fact that acquisition of article system and mastering this system seems to be the most difficult challenge for non-native speakers of English. This situation becomes worse when the mother tongue (L1) of the learners is article less language like Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Russian and second language (L2) learners at every level face the same problem when to use indefinite “a / an” , definite “the”, or “no / zero” article before noun phrase (NP) as determiner (Choi; Thomas). Pakistani learners belonging to Urdu and Punjabi languages (article less languages) seem to face the same problems in the use of articles.

As in Pakistan, Urdu is the national language while English is an official language. Except these 2 languages there is a variety of languages and dialects. So most of the people here are bilingual if not multilingual. The systems of Urdu and Punjabi languages spoken here are different from English language as they are languages having SOV (subject, object, and verb) word order (Virk, Humayoun and Ranta) and these languages do not have these determiners in their parts of speech. While English has SVO (subject, verb, and object) word order and it has articles which are used as determiners in noun phrase (McCarthy). So when Pakistani learners learn English as second language or in some places foreign language, they face problem and commit errors especially in the use of articles.

### **Use of Articles**

Many studies categorize articles i.e. words used to modify a noun (“What Are Articles in English Grammar”), on two features i.e. on specificity, definiteness (Ionin, Ko and Wexler) but for the convenience the researcher categorized them as

### **1. Generic vs. Specific Use**

When article can be used to indicate that the individual noun is representing the whole class, it is called Generic use. While according to Ionin, Ko and Wexler who adopted Foder and Sag's definition of specificity, article is used specifically when the speaker refers to that specific individual about whom he has an image or concept.

### **2. As Determiners in Countable vs. Non Countable Noun**

If the noun can be counted, an indefinite article either "a" or "an" is used.

### **3. Zero or No Article**

Some common nouns do not take an article like the names of languages, nationalities, sports, subjects etc.

### **4. Anaphoric Reference**

Indefinite article like "a/an" is used before noun when it is mentioned for the first time but at the anaphoric place or every time afterwards for the same noun definite article "the" is used.

## **Aim and Objectives**

This paper will:

- investigate the tendency of the use of English article by L2 learners of Punjab (Pakistan) at secondary and advance level;
- examine the errors committed by English L2 secondary and advance learners in the use of articles;
- explore why do the learners of L2 not differentiate among definite, indefinite and zero use of article;
- aim at enhancing the learnability of L2 learners by removing their errors.

## **Hypotheses**

1. All the Punjabi (Pakistani) L2 learners either at the secondary or advance level have strong tendency of using English articles.
2. There is no significant difference in the errors committed by Punjabi (Pakistani) L2 secondary and advance learners in the use of English articles.

## **Research Questions**

1. Whether or not all the learners have strong tendency of using English articles in Punjabi (Pakistani) context.
2. Is there any significant difference in the errors committed by Punjabi (Pakistani) L2 secondary and advance learners in the use of English articles?
3. Is there any significant difference in the errors committed by the secondary and advance L2 learners on category basis?

## **Literature Review**

A substantial amount of work is available on the second language acquisition of English articles (Ionin, Ko and Wexler; Ionin, Zubizarreta and Maldonado). Recently the issue in article use in English at adult level are dealing with the conditions on article omission (Robertson; Trenkic), the access to UG which is partial, not full and due to this partiality its problem in making connection between form and meaning (Ionin, Ko and Wexler; Gressang), the role of cognitive strategies (Trenkic) and the role of prosody again because of L1 influence on L2's prosodic rules which results in omission or avoidance of its use (Goad and White).

Ionin, Ko and Wexler classify language into two groups as article based languages

and article less languages and even in article based languages there is a distinction of article based either on definiteness or on specificity (Guella, Déprez, and Sleeman) and it is a common observation that the learners whose L1 is article based language they acquire English article system earlier as compared to those whose L1 is article less (Bergeron-Matoba) which is why those L2 learners who belong to article less language they fluctuate between definiteness and specificity in the use of English article (Ionin, Ko and Wexler) and their use of articles is different from the native speakers (Hawkin and Chan). Researchers give different explanations for this problem and they say that different factors are involved. For example the syntactic properties of noun phrase make it possible for the learners to select articles. As it is observed when the modifier of NP is superlative adjective or ordinal, definite article “the” is selected.

Similarly discourse factor also plays significant role for the selection of article and even it affects definiteness because article less languages have other “ morphological reflexes” like pronouns, demonstratives etc. for the expression of this discursal relation (Gressang).

Speaker’s general knowledge and the use of other cognitive skills is another issue (Avery; Gressang). So for article pedagogy two approaches exist. One of them believes on form and the other believes on communicative approach. According to the first approach which stresses on form, the article usage never creates any problem in oral communication and when learners internalize these rules the focus on meaning appears to be a better pedagogic technique. While according to communicative approach article mistakes have no value or importance for communication (Maslamani).

As errors in the use of article show that they are the part of learning process (Coder), and intralingual errors (within language) are developmental errors and often stand for incomplete learning or over generalization of L2 rules (Rod).

### **Methodology**

Quantitative methodology is used in this study

#### **1. Sample**

Randomly selected total 35 respondents, 16 were the secondary whose age ranged from 14-18 years and who were doing Matric and F.A from different institutions that had Urdu or Punjabi as their L1 and 19 were the advance learners whose age ranged from 22-33 doing master, M.Phil. and Ph.D. from the University of Management and Technology belonged to either Urdu or Punjabi language participated in this research.

#### **2. Tool**

A questionnaire was developed which was consisted of 20 statements with 30 blanks. So the questionnaire was distributed to the respondents and they were asked to fill in these blanks and in this way data was collected.

#### **3. Design of Questionnaire**

As the objective of this study was to see the learners' tendency and difference of errors in the use of English articles between the secondary and advance Pakistani L2 learners so the questionnaire was divided into 5 categories like generic, as determiners in countable vs non-countable nouns, zero/ no, specific and anaphoric use of English articles. So out of 20 statements 8 belonged to the generic use, 4 to countable vs non countable category, 3 to zero article use, 2 to specific use and 2 statements belonged to the category of anaphoric reference (see Appendix). But these categories could not be made open to the learners.

## Analysis of Data

The response of the secondary and advance L2 learners was taken and computed those statements on SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). For seeing their strong tendency one sample t test was applied on the mean score and for examining the difference in errors committed by them independent sample t test was performed by the researcher and to see the difference between secondary and advance L2 learners on category basis Independent sample t test on their mean score was conducted again.

### Results

#### One Sample t Test for Strong Tendency (Hypothesis.1)

One sample t test on the learner's score to evaluate whether their mean was significantly different from 20, the accepted mean for the learner's response was conducted. The sample mean of 15.37 (SD = 4.22) was significantly different from 20,  $t = 6.485$ ,  $p = .000$ . So the test was significant. The result supported the hypothesis no1. That all learners either at secondary or advance level have strong tendency of using English articles.

**Table 1 (Hypothesis. 2)**

**Independent Sample t Test (for error difference between the two groups)**

Variables	N	Degree of freedom	Mean Score	Standard deviation	T
secondary	16	33	12.19	2.26	-5.66*
advance	19	30.77	18.05	3.58	

$p < 0.05$

Independent sample t test was conducted to evaluate is there a significant difference in the errors committed by the secondary and advance learners in the use of English articles or not. The test was found significant at  $\alpha.05$  while the leaners had  $t = -5.66$ ,

$p = .000$  with the advance respondents had mean  $M = 18.05$ ,  $SD = 3.58$  and the secondary had mean  $M = 12.19$ ,  $SD = 2.26$ .

### Independent Sample t Test on the Difference between the Secondary and Advance L2 Learners on the Category Basis

**Table 2: In Generic Use**

Variables	N	Degree of Freedom	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t
Secondary	16	33	4.88	1.08	-5.84
Advance	19	25.75	8.73	2.45	

$p < 0.05$

An independent sample t test was conducted to evaluate the difference between the two groups in the errors committed by them in the Generic use of English articles. It was found that the test was significant at  $\alpha .05$  while the learners had  $t = -5.84$ ,  $p = .000$  with the advance respondents had mean  $M = 8.75$ ,  $SD = 2.45$  and the secondary had mean  $M = 4.88$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ .

**Table 3: As Determiners in Countable vs Non-Countable Noun**

Variables	N	Degree of Freedom	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t
Secondary	16	33	2.43	1.21	-1.71
Advance	19	27.5	3.05	.911	

$p > 0.05$

An independent sample t test was conducted to evaluate the difference between the two groups in the errors committed by them in the use of English articles as determiners in the noun phrase. The test was not found significant at  $\alpha .05$  while the learners had  $t = -1.71$ ,  $p = .096$  with the secondary had mean  $M = 2.43$ ,  $SD = 1.21$  and the advance learners had mean  $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = .911$ .

**Table 4: Use of zero or no article**

Variables	N	Degree of Freedom	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	T
secondary	16	33	.75	.77	-2.33*
Advance	19	31.86	1.53	1.12	

$p < 0.05$

An independent sample t test was conducted to evaluate the difference between the two groups in the errors committed by them in the use of zero articles. It was found that the test was significant at alpha.05 while the learners had  $t = -2.55$   $p = .026$  with the advance learners had mean  $M = 1.53$ ,  $SD = 1.12$  and the secondary had mean  $M = .75$ ,  $SD = .77$ .

**Table 5: Specificity**

Variables	N	Degree of Freedom	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t
secondary	16	33	.94	.85	.36
advance	19	28.7	.84	.68	

$p > 0.05$

An independent sample t test was conducted to evaluate the difference between the two groups in the errors committed by them in the use of articles on specificity basis. It was found that the test was not significant at alpha.05 while the learners had  $t = .36$ ,  $p = .717$  with the secondary had mean  $M = .94$ ,  $SD = .85$  and the advance learners had mean  $M = .84$ ,  $SD = .68$ .

**Table 6: Anaphoric use**

Variables	N	Degree of Freedom	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t
secondary	16	33	3.1	.83	-.707*
advance	19	30.3	3.8	.73	

$p < 0.05$

An independent sample t test was conducted to evaluate the difference between the two groups in the errors committed by them in the use of articles as anaphoric reference. It was found that the test was significant at alpha .05 while the learners had  $t = -.707$   $p = .012$  with the advance learners had mean  $M = 3.8$ ,  $SD = .73$  and the secondary had mean  $M = 3.1$ ,  $SD = .83$ .

### Discussion

As the result of one sample t test supported the first hypothesis that all the learners either secondary or advance learners had strong tendency to use the article though all of them belonged to different L1 like Urdu, Punjabi which were all articleless languages.

Secondly the researcher hypothesized that there was no significant difference between the errors committed by the secondary and advance learners of English L2. The test was significant but the results were countered to the research hypothesis as the errors committed by the secondary were greater in number as compared to the advance learners. So it indicated that with the more exposure to L2 language the learners would be better able to learn these articles.

Thirdly to see the difference in errors between the two groups on category basis and the first result which was on **Generic basis** showed that there was a significant difference between the two in the generic use of articles as the advance learners showed better understanding of this use than secondary because their P value was .000 which showed greater significance. Another thing is that it also illustrated that the secondary level learners were not made clear by the teachers and teaching material. It is a common observation that the secondary learners are taught that indefinite article “a” is used with

the common noun, “an” is used with nouns having vowel alphabet in the beginning which is why in the first blank most of the secondary level learners used “an airplane” instead of **the world is getting smaller because of the airplane**; where definite article “the” should be used because of the generality. But in the use of articles as determiners in countable vs non-countable nouns there is no significant difference between the two groups as their P value was more than 0.05 which proved that both the groups had no clear understanding of their use. It also showed that both the groups found it hard to use the articles in this category so they committed errors equally.

Again in the use of zero or no articles there is a significant difference between the two groups as the secondary committed more error in the use of zero articles as they put article even where it was not needed like in 14<sup>th</sup> statement instead of **let us buy sugar**, they thought it as countable and put indefinite article “a” as **let us buy a sugar**.

While advance learners had somewhat clear idea about the use of zero articles. Similarly in the category which was based on specificity there is no significant difference between the groups which again proved that both the groups did not have learnt the proper use of article for specific purpose as they used the wrong article i.e. indefinite or “a” instead of definite article “the”.

While in the category of anaphoric use of articles the test was significant which indicated that the advance learners knew that if the antecedent is there in the first part of the sentence always indefinite article “a/an” is used while as the anaphoric expression the second part must contain definite article “the” like the 18<sup>th</sup> statement **I live in a house in a quiet street in the countryside. The street is called ‘Hudson Street’**. While the secondary were not made clear about this use of article.

### **Conclusion**

This article attempted to explore the use of English articles by L2 learners of Punjab (Pakistan) at secondary and advance level and for that purpose a questionnaire consisting of 20 statements was distributed to them and the feedback of those statements was computed on SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences). In the light of the results achieved it can be said that both the groups including the secondary and advance L2 learners have strong tendency of using English articles in Pakistani context. As far as errors committed by learners either at secondary or advance level are concerned, there are different factors involved in it. Firstly the wrong notion on the part of the learners at all levels about the use of article. They think it very simple to put any article with any noun without understanding its use. Secondly improper training of the teaching body and lack of proper learning material are responsible for this situation. If the use of articles is taught through systematic way and for an extended period of time it will make the job of the learners easy and they will be in a better position to use them. Furthermore for future research their use can be examined through written scripts, within the context of NP. Even the other categories of determiners like demonstrative, quantifiers etc. can also be observed within the same context.

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## Appendix 1

### Questionnaire

#### Use of English Articles

Age-----

Gender: Male/Female-----

Qualification: -----

Mother tongue: Urdu, Punjabi or any other-----

Use “the”, “a/an” or no article before these nouns

1. The world is getting smaller because of ----- airplane.
2. ----- supermarket sells not only ----- groceries, but also ----- liquor, ----- plants and----- magazines.
3. ----- computers are useful.
4. ----- university is a place where both ----- students and ----- teachers learn.
5. It has been proven that ----- cigarettes are bad for health.
6. ----- politician must put in hours of campaigning in order to win ----- race.
7. m----- shopping mall can offer everything from exercise to entertainment.
8. ----- shopping mall is rapidly taking the place of “Main Street, USA.
9. I saw ----- milk spill.
10. I admire ----- foliage.
11. I stepped in ----- puddle.

12. I bought ----- liter of grape juice.
13. I like ----- American tea.
14. Let us buy ----- sugar.
15. Is Bob----- thin?
16. ----- teacher is over there, isn't he?
17. Give me ----- chocolate chip cookie.
18. I live in ----- house in ----- quite street in the countryside. ----- street is called "Hudson Street".
19. He drank ----- cup of coffee while he was reading ----- newspaper.
20. In the middle of the wallet there is ----- lottery ticket.

## Healing Through Drama- “De-Stressing” in Athol Fugard’s Plays

Aaisha Umt Ur Rashid

### Abstract

This research article explores South African playwright Athol Fugard’s use of therapeutic techniques for individuals living in a racially segregated society. While focusing on the dreadful damages inflicted by Apartheid upon the psyche of the South African Black man, the paper aims at emphasizing on the Post-Apartheid burden which led to the prolonged mental enslavement even when the chains of servitude were lifted. Through the lens of psychoanalysis, the paper investigates how, using drama as a mode of mental therapy, the playwright employs certain psychological techniques to repair the traumatized minds of his characters. Opposing the idea of being a slave to a dominating oppressor, Fugard instigates an urge in his protagonists for freedom from the shackles of mental slavery while inculcating a sense of self in them. The study throws light on Fugard’s works as agents of collective change for the deprived black majority.

**Keywords:** Apartheid, Athol Fugard, De-Stressing, Drama, Post-Apartheid, Psychoanalysis

“The Theatre cures the actors. It can also cure the audience.” (qtd. in Jones)

Drama is known for its healing potential ever since its origin. Even in the Greek legend of Oedipus, this therapeutic potential can be traced. Shakespeare’s drama, on a personal level, treats the emotional rifts and problems of relationships, contributing towards reducing stress. Be it Hamlet’s feigned madness or Othello’s “green eyed monster”, Lear’s misjudgment or Macbeth’s excessive ambition, Shakespeare’s drama has the ability to heal the wounds of family feuds and the symbolic bearing upon the essence of life for the common humanity. Bernard Shaw turns out to be more like a social reformer to his times. Most of the historical names in drama have contributed immensely towards the same purpose. The playwright being explored in this paper is no exception in this regard.

Athol Fugard, born as Harold Athol Lanigan Fugard, is a South African playwright capturing the horrid aftereffects of Apartheid on the working of South African black natives’ minds. Fugard preeminently wrote at a time when the burden of Apartheid was lifted from South African people, leaving its undying marks upon their psyches. His protagonists are not highly recognizable, political or social activists. He rather attempts to explore the lives of the local, unimportant and neglected natives of Johannesburg, Cape Town or any other populated and yet alienated place in South Africa. His plays and the only novel, *Tsotsi* (1980), in their plots and character development, follow an intense pattern of the way South African natives directed their thinking towards the political and social problems of that time.

Working as a psychoanalyst-cum playwright, Fugard's main concern is to portray the psychologically handicapped individuals with a hope to take them to a mental realm where they can reach sublimation through release of their psychic energies. By analyzing and assessing the intensity of their suppressed desires, Fugard tries to pull them out of their mental prisons. He experiments on various therapeutic techniques and suggests some possible heal-alls for the troubled minds of his audience in general. By taking one individual's quandary for treatment, Fugard accepts the challenge of proposing solutions for the mental slavery for all trauma survivors.

It would not be wrong to say that in his vivid portrayal of South African plight, Fugard is somewhat following Foucault's philosophical critique of the "modes of subjectivity or forms of identity to which we are tied" (Simons 185). Perhaps he is instigating the suppressed minds to think about rebellion, and by investigating the predicaments of the South African black community, he suggests, through his moving dramatic actions and brilliantly formed characters, ways to overcome the problem of slavery. Agreeing with Foucault who "urges us to refuse what we are, meaning that we should refuse to remain tied to the identities to which we are subjected" (Simons 185), Fugard also urges his characters to choose different and better ways of existence. For this, he resists the idea of being a slave to an oppressive master and puts his sole efforts to haul the deranged South African black community out of the shackles of imprisonment.

This resistance leads to the question of power. Foucault defines power as "a mode of action upon the action of others" (Simons 195) while "resistance is possible when power pushes towards its limits" (Simons 195). Rightly exercised, power serves to

be a tool of maintaining order, discipline and harmony in a society, but once corruption overpowers the beneficial power tool, there is no alternative left but to wait for a radical rebellion. “Where there is power, there is resistance,” quotes Jon Simons while discussing Foucault’s views about power-resistance relationships in society.

Apartheid, in many ways, can be referred to such a power that illegitimately snubbed all legitimate rights of the native people. More than eighty percent of the land of the country was declared as prohibited area for the blacks and they had to carry pass books if they were to enter any such “whites only” place. This physical marginalization not only created gaps between the whites and blacks, they also segregated the non-whites from each other. This corporeal division gave way to the fixing of certain bitter notions in the minds of all involved in the activity.

Keeping in mind both their political and personal backgrounds, Fugard slowly tries to heal the past traumatic experiences of his characters using therapeutic techniques. Whether it is Paval Ivanovich from the pigsty, Miss Hellen from her self-created Mecca, Veronica from her world of uncountable urges or Tsotsi from the slums of Johannesburg, Fugard is able to cope up with each of them according to the need of the situation. The drama created by Fugard is not merely an imitation of the South African world of chaos; it is also a means of actively taking part in it.

As a writer, Athol Fugard has never shrunk from the reflection in the mirror. For over half a century he has mined the spiritual, emotional and political landscape of this country, exposing the undercurrents that have shaped our existence. (Thamm 11)

The dramatist's healing method begins with dramatic projection. As a process, projection involves the placing of our own feelings of anxiety and despair into other people or things. On a wider scale, Fugard projects sufferings of South African black community into his protagonists. In *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*, Yalom describes projection as an unconscious process which consists of "projecting some of one's own attributes onto another, towards whom one subsequently feels an uncanny attraction/repulsion" (qtd. in Jones). This technique follows a sequence which starts off with denial where the trauma-survivors are unable to cope up with their current conditions and are in a state of denial. This denial, when the character is able to overcome it, leads to projection. This further leads to exploration of the long trodden desires buried in their unconscious. During their exploration, these characters experience moments of epiphany that open all the challenging vistas of discovery to them. Finally, they develop a deep insight and a modified relation to the initially denied traumatic memories and that is when they can reach sublimation. The article follows this sequence in tracing and analyzing the therapeutic techniques and the resultant effects they have on the minds of the characters.

To begin with, in *A Place with the Pigs (1987)*, the play about an army deserter, Pavel is unwilling to cope up with his condition any longer. He fears to come in contact with the reality and is in a state of denial. Although he has banished himself in a pigsty ever since he ran away from the Army headquarters, his distrust in himself and his inability to control his life have made him restless. Unable to absorb the severity of his own decision since a decade, this "deeply repentant man" (*Place* 1) is so guilty that he has started pitying himself. The speech he has prepared highlights his culpability:

Comrades! Standing before you is a miserable wretch of a man, a despicable, weak creature worthy of nothing but your contempt. In his defence, I say only that if you had witnessed the years of mental anguish, of spiritual torment, which he has inflicted on himself in judgment of himself, then I know, Comrades, that the impulse in your noble and merciful hearts would be: ‘He has suffered enough. Let him go’. (*Place 2*)

The pressure is here exercised through the stress of the circumstances that Pavel is living in. Along with that, the pressure of time, the pressure of his unbearable guilt and the pressure of the banishment he has imposed upon himself in this pigsty combine together to bring to the forefront the cause of his adult distress from the childhood memories. The strongest amongst these pressures is the pressure of time as Pavel explains:

...my soul has had to reckon with Time...leaden-footed little seconds, sluggish minutes, reluctant hours, tedious days, monotonous months and then, only then, the years crawling past like old tortoises. (*Place 3*)

This expression helps him come to terms with his unexpressed feelings. As a matter of fact, Pavel suffers from the Oedipus Complex as is evident from the degree of attachment he has with the slippers made by his mother. But the point where he spontaneously expresses his emotions for these slippers reveals another aspect for investigation and that is, the relationship of these slippers with his ever increasing guilt. “Oh dear God!” exclaims Pavel, “Every time I touch them, or just look at them...sometimes when I even just think about them...a flood of grief and guilt wrecks my soul” (*Place 4-5*).

The audience wonder about the reason of this guilt. What grief is so forcibly attached with the slippers? Grief of losing his mother? And in psychoanalytic terms, is it the grief of his Lack or is it the guilt of deserting the army? This expression of unexpressed desires leads him to the next step of exploration where his projected feelings are further scrutinized through his own reflections from the past. The sudden outburst from him when Praskovya asks him to wear his slippers further takes us closer to the working of Pavel's unconscious:

Wear them? In here? How can you suggest such a thing! That would be sacrilege. No, my conscience will not allow me to wear these until the day when I am once again a free man. That is my most solemn vow!

*(Place 5)*

The slippers are kept safe and unworn, with a wish to use them in good times and ironically enough, turn out to be a hindrance in almost every bold step Pavel wishes to take. It is only when Pavel overpowers his Oedipal Complex that he can reach the point of sublimation. But this fervent soldier is without much action. Initially, we see him convincing his wife to let him go out and confess his sin as this seems to be the only possible solution for his salvation. Well written and well rehearsed, the speech serves as a way of catharsis as he turns desperate for freedom. His endurance level has reached its limits and he is simply unable to bear any more "pig shit" or pangs of time. "Give me support, woman!" cries Pavel in utter distress, "There is no other way. This is my only chance. The alternative is madness...or suicide! I mean it, Praskovya. One more day in here, and I'll cut my throat!" *(Place 7)*.

During this process of exploration, Pavel verbalizes some of his most hidden memories and once they become audible, he is bound to ponder upon the feasible resolutions for his troubles. Struggling between the two extremes – the misery of his condition and the uncontrollable urge for freedom, Pavel experiences severe nervousness. He is simultaneously suffering from anxiety, obsession for liberation, urge for redemption and dread of traumatic memories.

It is worth noticing that these disturbed individuals, amidst the torturous situations of their lives, ultimately reach such a spot of sublimation that they are able not only to laugh and exhibit their optimistic approach towards life, but also to show their potentials of improvement. This is not the original built-in trait of a South African black individual who has actually experienced the pangs of Apartheid. Russel Vandenbroucke writes about Fugard’s characters:

Whatever the desperate conditions of their lives, Fugard’s characters are able to laugh – at themselves, at their surroundings. Sometimes it is the laugh which keeps one from the brink of insanity, but more often it is a simpler bemusement, an ability to see and embrace incongruities. (qtd. in Bryfonski 231)

Similarly, despite the gloom of his current despondent state and the awe of an impending doom, Pavel is able to keep his wit intact. This comic relief at certain intense scenes of the play supplies some ease to the audience as they can relate to the mental state that Pavel is in. Perhaps, through use of wit and jokes, Fugard wants to make his audience believe that in the midst of a completely hopeless situation, man is capable of giving

birth to some optimism and that no matter how excruciating and agonizing life gets, there can still be a chance of the revival of peace.

Pavel's reply to Praskovya when she asks him to wear his wedding suit is extremely humorous when, as an answer to his assumed question of "Why aren't you in uniform, Private Navrotsky?" he says, "Comrade Sergeant, my wife used it to mop the floor, and then the mice and the moths made a meal of what was left" (*Place* 9). Caught in the middle of two terrifying options, Pavel's seemingly out of place wit serves him well. If he stays in the pigsty, he'd die of misery, if he goes out to confess his guilt, he'd surely be shot. The poor "wretch of a man" (*Place* 2) is trapped in the middle of two unbearable circumstances and yet, the quality of his wit, in the core of helplessness, is worth appreciating. This can be taken as the playwright's attempt to assure his audience that hope can emerge out of chaos.

In almost all of Fugard's plays, the protagonists experience a guiding moment that twists their lives from negativity to positivity. These moments occur at the most crucial phases of their lives. Unlike the big revolutions brought by incidents of great importance, these moments of revelation stem from very trivial happenings. It is sometimes merely a baby being a cause of the redemption of a hardened thug like in *Tsotsi*, sometimes it is a well written sentence read from a book, like in *Statements After an Arrest Under the Immorality Act* (1972), while sometimes it might only be a little butterfly, full of colours in the middle of a wilderness like in the play being evaluated here.

This butterfly brings in all the understanding of life and all the lost optimism for Pavel. The scene is entitled as "Beauty and the Beast," as the emergence of a beautiful

butterfly in an ugly pigsty is the encounter between beauty and the wild beasts. It is interesting to notice that the very slippers that meant the world to Pavel and for which he deserted the army and banished himself into a pigsty, the very slippers that were so precious to him that he could never imagine wearing them in this filthy place, are being used in this scene to kill the flies. Apparently, this decline in the status of these slippers seems dreadful, but to the sheer surprise of the audience, it is this decline that makes all the difference. Pavel, after this, turns so confident that he, single handedly, kills a full grown pig. This transformation is extremely important at this point.

With the arrival of the butterfly, Pavel’s “mood slowly undergoes a total conversion as he watches it flutter around. He is ravished by its beauty, reminding him as it does of an almost forgotten world of sunlight and flowers, a world he now hasn’t seen for many, many years” (*Place 17*). The cry of happiness and release of emotions in form of a monologue is quite revealing.

Let me give you back to the day outside, to the flowers and the summer breeze...and then in return take, oh I beg you!...take just one little whisper of my soul with you into the sunlight. Be my redemption! Ha!!

(*Place 18*)

The cry for redemption at the end sounds so profoundly passionate. “Does ten years of human misery account for nothing in the Divine Scales of Justice?”(*Place 15*) Pavel’s voice from scene one echoes in our ears and perhaps he has gotten his answer, his relief being there in the arrival of a butterfly. But this mirth doesn’t last for long as all of a sudden, a pig swallows the poor thing. This is symbolic but what is even more

significant is the reaction that Pavel shows after that. “Murderer! Murderer!!” cries the tormented prisoner. Grabbing a knife, he gets hold of the pig and kills him after a “furious struggle.” Symbolically, this may refer to the murder of his hopes of freedom. Later, while explaining the whole thing to Praskovya, Pavel feels so heart broken and confesses that his soul bleeds for that “happy harmless little beauty with rusty-red wings” (*Place* 18).

The last scene entitled as “Orders from the Commissar,” sums up the reasons of almost all of Pavel’s problems. As discussed previously, Pavel suffers from Oedipus Complex, this last scene completely explains the reason of his guilt for the slippers, his mad pursuit for freedom and his running away from army and the men of authority. His shattered confidence in his abilities after deserting the army is all due to his Oedipus Complex that accompanies him since childhood, leading to the Castration Complex. “What breaks up this oedipal desire,” according to Freud, “for boys, anyway, is the father, who threatens Castration” (Freud n.pag.). The voice that communicates with Pavel in this scene is perhaps his fear of the father figure as we hear the “oily, evil” voice saying, “I think Daddy should take off his belt and drag you out from under the bed and give you a bloody good thrashing!!” (*Place* 34) and in reply, Pavel’s helpless “I’m sorry, I’m sorry. I won’t do this again” (*Place* 34) highlight his inability to overpower this terror. The sarcastic remarks that this voice passes to Pavel prove to be the final blow. The repeated use of the word “little” for a grown up character refers to the immaturity of his emotions. “Oh, you’re finally interested in the truth, are you!” the “oily” voice investigates,

Can you even remember why you betrayed your country and its people?

A pair of slippers. (*Heavily sarcastic tone of voice*) A pair of pretty red slippers which dear old Mama made for her darling little Pavel. (*Place 35*)

The little Pavel, of course, is heavily encumbered with this talk about his mother. The reactionary warning is well expected, “DON’T drag my mother into this! Say anything you like about me but *leave my mother alone!*” (*Place 35*). The psychological analysis of this reaction discloses a natural feeling of rivalry that a boy has with his father. “The son,” explains Freud in his *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, “when quite a little child, already begins to develop a peculiar tenderness towards his mother, whom he looks upon as his own property, regarding his father in the light of a rival who disputes this sole possession of his” (Freud 174).

The pressure Pavel experiences is strongly required for his mental liberation. “What do you mean ‘leave her alone!’” teases the voice again. “Giving birth to you makes the old bitch an accomplice in all your treachery,” and Pavel’s loud “STOP NOW!” assures us that the required energy level is reached. His struggle for freedom, his anxiety for the unknown future and his internal guilt find one final way of catharsis through which he is able to at last rescue his dying ego and make it control the other two devils, the id and the super ego. When the idea of freeing the pigs comes, Pavel is shocked to realize that it had all been so effortless and uncomplicated. “Unbelievable!” says the startled man, “So simple...so obvious!...just let them go. Yes yes yes...of course! It makes total sense. Just...open the doors, open the pens and let them go!”

(Place 36). When Pavel happily kicks the pigs away, he is actually freeing himself from the years of torture and it has all been possible because he has realized his potential to regain his original identity. With the use of projection and later exploration, Pavel has finally gotten rid of his self imposed banishment. The last action of liberating the pigs can be seen as the last act of his “obsessional condition” which directs him towards normality. After this, no goal seems difficult to achieve. This displacement has led him to the independence he had dreamt for himself. Freud explains while talking about the meanings of such obsessive acts in his lectures:

The actions performed in an obsessional condition are supported by a kind of energy which probably has no counterpart in normal mental life.

Only one thing is open to him-he can displace and he can exchange...

(Freud 220)

The ending of the play leads Pavel to an optimistic urge of seeing the sunrise that was missed earlier. Fugard meets the challenge of finding redemption for his hero, of proving himself as a social reformer and in Pavel’s voice, merging the voice of the whole of South African black community.

Another one of Fugard’s masterpieces, *Statements After an Arrest under the Immorality Act (1972)*, follows the same sequence for the investigation of the guilty mind of a black man and his white seductress. In this play, Fugard has shifted roles of black and white, assigning white attributes to the black and linking black deeds with the white. The attempt is to satisfy the vengeful vein in the black audience to have some confessions from the white man for his maltreatments. Most of his characters go against

the set norms of society and experience sheer guilt of doing something wrong. Like Pavel, Philander has also broken the law by indulging in a sexual relation with Frieda, a white woman. In a racial society, this is no less than a sin. The guilt of having an illicit sexual relationship with a black man is strong enough to make Frieda wish to stay hidden from the judging eyes of society. Her escaping movements to remain concealed even from the eyes of the man lying next to her portray the attempt of the white society to keep the black man in a state of oblivion.

By doing so, perhaps, Fugard is daring to label the white community as the guilty one. At another point of the play, Frieda’s outburst of her internal emotions is of great importance as it encounters the self/other dichotomy. She says:

I am not no one. I am also me. I’m the other person on the floor. With you.

[*Pause.*] I’m jealous. You can make me so jealous. And I’m frightened.

Yes. And there are things I don’t want to see...(Statements 5)

It is Fugard’s audacity that this white woman, this “other person” is on the floor next to a black man. The idea of other is investigated by many theorists and critics in a variety of perspectives. Central to the idea of other is Lacan’s view point that the unconscious is the discourse of the other and the “ground of all being” (Klages 74). Lacan probes into the notion that other is what actually characterizes the self by not only existing as something what the self is not, but also, being deficient of what the self possesses, hence, becoming what the self both fears and at the same time, wishes to be. In case of the struggle between the white man and the black one, this happens because of various reasons. It might be due to an uncertainty on the part of the white man about

the unexplored world of the black man or because of his inability to be intimate with the black man due to societal constraints. In this way, while Frieda considers herself an other, it is but clear that Fugard's intention here is not only to mortify and humiliate the white race but also to reveal the desire of the white man to be like the other of the society, i.e. the Black man. It is this deconstruction in the self/other dichotomy that Fugard is actually aiming at.

Frieda's outburst after this is laden up with a lot of meaning. "I'm jealous," says the woman after a pause, "You can make me so jealous. And I am frightened" (*Statements* 5). At this point, another version of the same idea propounded by Jacques Derrida can be seen at work. Center, according to Derrida is something where everything links to. The center is like an army headquarter where all the dedicated soldiers come to report. In post-colonial terms, this center remains the governing power of the Westerners or the Colonizers over the colonized others. In the play under discussion, Frieda is supposed to be the center as she belongs to a race that has been enjoying all the privileges over the blacks. Through exchange of roles, Fugard attempts to satisfy the impulse of the black man to get to the central position. Frieda is jealous, and at the same time, quite frightened. She seeks peace of mind and body by getting close to the assumed core, wishes to have an identity of her own when she says, "I'm also me" and at the same time, is terribly scared of getting close to this center. This exchange seems quite apt to satisfy the black audience.

In "Remembering Fanon", Homi K Bhabha explores and expands this idea. Quoting Fanon's notion that "What is often called the black soul is a white man's

artifact,” Bhabha emphasizes that “to exist is to be called into being in relation to an Otherness, its look or locus” (qtd. in Williams). In simple words, for a thing to exist or be, it is necessary for it to be valued and judged against another thing. The center would be able to create a system if only there are others whom it can rule and dictate.

Frieda sees her own artifact in Philander. Fugard is attempting to highlight the white man’s guilt as well as the black man’s desires, with a deeper look at the latter issue. Bhabha agrees with Fanon that the black man wishes to be noticed, to be considered and also to have an “objectifying confrontation with otherness” (qtd. in Williams). Frieda serves this purpose for Philander very rightly and the play attempts to do the catharsis of the black audience on a wider scale.

According to Philander, his moment of revelation comes while he is reading the conclusion of Charles Lyell’s book, *Principles of Geology*, and comes across this very moving expression, “...no vestige of a beginning and no prospect of an end” (*Statements* 4). Like Pavel’s butterfly, this sentence works wonders with Philander and he is able to gain a greater confidence in himself. It is this magnified moment that brings all the change in his personality and he dares to have an affair with a white woman. The fact that he has been “bloody sick of his life,” enhances the urge for this transformation in him. The effect of that “precise moment” on Philander is very vividly expressed,

Being me, just being me there in that little room was...[*choosing his words carefully*]...the most excited thing that had ever happened to me.

I wanted that moment to last forever! It was so intense it almost hurt. I couldn’t sit still. (*Statements* 5)

Perhaps this moment of epiphany brings extreme mirth with it. It is uncanny that throughout the play, the black man is portrayed as someone having the nerve and eagerness for the present moment and is making powerful decisions for himself all by himself. On the other hand, the white woman is not sure of anything. She is in constant need of the black man to explain to her every essential thing about life, about relations and decision making. The inherent inferiority that is considered to be the ultimate fate of the black man is now made a trait of the white community. Knowledge is power and power belongs to the white man only. By making the black man powerful while the white woman weak, Fugard wants to make the black man feel significant. By this reversal of positions, he is trying to prove that the black man has the knowledge and is therefore, able to fully control his life and emotions. He is not only placed on a higher platform, but has also turned strong enough to observe the white man and invent truths about him.

The emotional intensity of Frieda's questions such as, "Are you sure you are happy?" (*Statements* 7), "Am I alone?" (*Statements* 9), "Do I have you?" and "Is there nothing we can do any more except hurt each other?" (*Statements* 11), expose two aspects of the Post-Apartheid South African society. Firstly, the unstable relationships between blacks and whites is exposed even after the reconciliation is done. Secondly, Frieda's confused state of mind can also be a glimpse of what the white man experiences as a result. "What will make you happy?" (*Statements* 15), asks Frieda, a very loaded question in deed. Now that the atrocities of Apartheid are over, the white man is seeking reconciliation. Philander's reply, "No, I haven't got you. You haven't got me," explores

the deep rooted wrath of the black man for the white race while offering a sense of satisfaction to the black audience.

Another very significant point in the play is when Philander has this outburst of emotions while Frieda talks about sending him some of her water. Fugard wants the black man’s plight to be exposed and his deprivations to be highlighted. “*Your water,*” says Philander:

You want to send me some of your water. Is it so hard to understand?  
Because if you can’t...! Why do you think its easy? Is that what I look  
like? Is that why they’re so nice to me out there? Because I’m easy?  
But when for once I get so...I feel so buggered-up inside that I say ‘No’  
instead of ‘Yes.’ (*Statements 10*)

The condition of Bontrug, the shortage of water and the refusal of this black man to accept a favor of getting water from a white woman’s borehole accentuates not only the plight of the black man under the unkind supervision of the white man but also the ignorance of the ruler. “I don’t understand... anything,” says Frieda to which Philander’s reply again mocks at the failure of white society to understand their stipulation. “Then you can’t. Don’t even try” (*Statements 11*).

The paradox of the thinking patterns of white and black is evident when Frieda forces him to take aid of water at least for his family. The compassionate black man of course, cannot tolerate this differentiation and does not consider himself apart from the whole black race, wishing all of them to get water from the same source. This unity of the black community is also highlighted by Elsa in *The Road to Mecca* when she

explains that since Helen is an Africaner hence it is a fact that she is “one at heart (Mecca 22)” with them all. Similarly, here the white man’s self-centered approach towards life contradicts the selflessness of the black man. He refuses to take water from Frieda for the fact that the whole “Bontrug is thirsty” (*Statements* 10). Fugard’s therapy heightens its own effect when, through the tool of “free association,” he leads Frieda to make many confessions in her last dialogue towards the end of the play,

All of me that found you must now lose you. My hands still have the sweat of your body on them, but I’ll have to wash them...sometime. If I don’t, they will. Nothing can stop me losing that little bit of you. In every corner of being myself there is a little of you left and now I must start to lose it. I must be very still, because if I do anything, except think nothing, it will all start to happen, I won’t be able to stop it. (*Statements* 25)

Fugard is able to find redemption for his black man and challenge the mode of conduct of the white man by the end of the play. His last words are full of ease and Fugard’s aim is fully achieved when we hear Philander’s final declaration that “Now I’m here. There is nothing here. They can’t interfere with God any more” (*Statements* 28). Philander’s adultery can be taken as an example of Fugard’s attempt to highlight the inborn instinct of freedom in human beings. He struggles to bring the trapped minds of individuals closer to the point of realization of this instinct and shows them ways towards independence.

The same tool of projection can again be traced in the play that Fugard himself labels as “the biggest of them all” (Sichel 25). A miserable white train driver, striving to get a clue about the grave of the nameless woman and her child that he has accidentally

killed, exhibits the guilt almost similar in intensity as the one experienced by Pavel in *A Place with the Pigs*. Fugard has projected and transformed the whole of South African White man’s remorse in Roelf while the black community is depicted through the gravedigger, Simon. Completely lost in the depth of his guilt, Roelf is suffering from the Post-Traumatic Disorder (PTD). Despite the various attempts of people around him and his physician to make him believe he has not been the cause of the woman’s death and that it was a clear suicide, and despite having the newspaper clipping in his pocket stating the whole event as an accident, Roelf is unable to satisfy his superego and is in constant search of some relief for his soul. This true story greatly stirred the white man’s compunction which Fugard equally shared because of his white skin. He quotes his friend Stephen Sacks, a theatre director, who was one of the first ones to read *The Train Driver*:

In *The Train Driver*, white anger turns into self-realization and transformation. Realizing he must ‘claim her’ as his own. Which is what you’ve done all your life. With all of your plays. Each character you’ve created. Claimed them as your own. And challenged audiences around the world to claim them for themselves. It is what your life’s work is all about. (qtd. in Sichel 25)

Fugard was obsessed with the intensity of the accident and, unable to digest the bitterness of the choice that Pumla Lolwana, the black woman made, he tried converting it to the work of art for the purpose of catharsis. “For eight years I have been trying to write that story,” explains Fugard in an interview, “Trying to deal with it because I felt I needed to

go through a process myself to understand how a human being can end up in a place so dark, so without hope, so alone, that she would do that not only to herself but her three innocent children as well” (Sichel 25). This horrendous story-cum-nightmare turns out to be a play that is “of intense personal significance” (qtd. in Cohen 9) for Fugard.

The moving speech that Roelf delivers in scene five of *The Train Driver* captures the culpability of the white man towards the black. Roelf is experiencing one of the worst agonies of his life and that is depicted through the way he confesses the helplessness of white man to understand the condition of black man’s life.

You see, Red Doek, most of us white people got no idea about what it’s like because our world is so different! We always think we know – like Lorraine, my wife – she thinks she knows everything about you people ...and I did as well ... but the truth is, we don’t. (*The Train Driver*)

Strangely enough, the white man, otherwise a symbol of supremacy and limitless knowledge, is shown making confessions about his ignorance. This comes naturally to the patient suffering from PTSD. In an interview, Robert Jay Lifton, while expressing his views on Trauma and Survival, affirms that “there can be self-condemnation in survivors or what we call guilt” (Caruth138). Roelf’s self-condemnation transforms his guilt to a sense of responsibility which according to Lifton is laden with “enormous therapeutic value.” (Caruth 138) Some compensation is further offered when Roelf agrees that he now understands how the black world is. Perhaps, the attempt here is to make the black sufferer feel triumphed in at least knowing that there is some tinge of repentance in the white man for his wrong actions. And it is not this repentance only,

the claim that the white man feels he has over this black woman is also very significant:

You see, Red Doek, if I did lose you ... if I ever, for one day, forget what happened to me and you there between Perseverance and Dispatch, then God must send me off to hell when I die. (*The Train Driver*)

This claim, however, being the strongest desire of the occident, can be misinterpreted as well. As discussed earlier, it is a grave fact that the “relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination” (qtd in Williams), the claim of Roelf can also refer to this power and dominance over the black dead woman. Viewed from this perspective, Roelf can be mistaken as the same occident that the orients fear. But contrary to this idea, Roelf’s search for the nameless black woman and his fanatical wish to claim her are projecting white man’s struggle for reconciliation. Fugard has tried to give voice to the unvoiced thoughts of this white man against his own acts of oppression. “...black man or white man,” says the obsessed train driver, “...the worms don’t care about that ... its all the same to them” (*The Train Driver*). And later when Simon mentions the dogs, Roelf’s reply is replete with great meaning, “And they don’t give a shit either, do they, about white or black?” asks Roelf. “And you know what we call them, white men – the dogs? Man’s best friend! How’s that for a joke?” (*The Train Driver*). Roelf’s association with the black world and his open confessions are very significant to make him come out of his traumatic memories. Lifton explains the beneficial effects of this association in the interview with Cathy Caruth:

...the only way one can feel right or justified in reconstituting oneself and going on living with vitality is to carry through one’s responsibility to

the dead. And it's carrying through that responsibility via one's witness, that survivor mission, that enables one to be an integrated human being once more. (138)

Fugard's attempt to offer some relief to both the white and black man can be taken as his survival mission, moving from the individual to the society in general. What happens to Roelf due to the amnesty between the black and white race is beyond the scope of this article but by the end and before his death, Roelf has acquired the true ease of mind and soul that he was striving for. Harvey Perr writes about the appeal of the play, "Most of the time, redemption does not come to his characters as much as it comes to us, the audience, at that moment when we finally begin to live inside those characters." (qtd in Perr)

Apart from the political and social strife leading to mental prison, Fugard caters personal issues in a very interesting way too. *The Road to Mecca* is an outstanding example of 'obsession' and its impact on the mind. "Crazy" as the people regarded poor Helen, she made "statues and sculptures" and kept them all around her house. This variation from the normal living style and freedom of choice she generously exercised on her statues forced the stereotypical society to regard her as eccentric.

Her Mecca has become her obsession. From the Psychoanalytical standpoint, Miss Helen suffers from many mental issues which result in her social isolation. She has suffered the loss of her husband and as this trauma has been extremely intense for her, she has acutely suffered from PTSD which has ended up in this 'Projection' of her grief into objects of interest which ultimately forms her Mecca. Although this deviation

from her loss has resulted in creativity, yet it strongly signifies Miss Helen’s “fixation” upon the trauma of her husband’s death. Freud explains that such victims, “give the impression that they are “fixed” to a particular point in their past, that they do not know how to release themselves from it, and are consequently alienated from both present and future” (Freud 231). This universal characteristic of neurosis can be traced in the actions of Miss Helen while the audience can also link up their obsessions with hers. Miss Helen reassures Elsa that “The only reason I’ve got for being alive is my Mecca. Without that I’m ... nothing ... a useless old woman getting on everybody’s nerves” (*Mecca* 35) and later when Elsa investigates what the reason behind it is, Miss Helen replies “My Mecca has got a logic of its own, Elsa. Even I don’t properly understand it” (*Mecca* 36).

On the other hand, Fugard’s attempt to open the bolts of social prisons for the black people, forcing them to take free flights for their own survival, is illustrated through Elsa. She is an independent woman, capable of not only thinking freely, but also to transform her thoughts into actions. It is because of her free will and boldness that she has to appear before “Board of Enquiry of the Cape Town School Board”. The charge against her is that despite teaching in a “Coloured School,” she has assigned her students a task “to write a five-hundred word letter to the State President on the subject of racial equality” (*Mecca* 27). She wants “to make those young people” in her classroom “think for themselves” (*Mecca* 28) and this is exactly what Fugard aims at achieving for his audience on a larger scale.

In case of Miss Helen, it is not merely a matter of confinement or fixation to a

certain obsession. Her imagination has made her travel the distances she wouldn't ever have covered in reality. It is Mecca, the "city of light and color more splendid" than she had ever seen in reality, that her imagination takes her to. And it is this city where she finds the solution to her problem.

"This is my world," says Helen to Marius, "and I have banished darkness from it" (*Mecca* 73). Certainly, this is the point of self awareness, a revelation which no one else can understand but herself. For the onlookers, she has turned insane, but it is only Helen who can tell the difference between madness and sanity as she is the one experiencing the whole thing. She has illuminated her internal world in order to shun the outside darkness. "It is not madness, Marius," explains Miss Helen, "They say mad people can't tell the difference between what is real and what is not. I can. I know my little Mecca out there, and this room, for what they really are" (*Mecca* 73). The play ends with an optimistic vision as the one seen by Pavel at the end of *A Place with the Pigs*, and certainly, the audience feel the confidence and hope inculcated in the protagonists of both the plays. Elsa suggests that Helen should make an angel next and Helen believes that if she makes one, it would not be "pointing up the heaven" like others. "...I'd have it pointing to the East," to her Mecca.

Fugard's therapeutic techniques work wonders when it comes to the questions of mental freedom and self awareness of individuals and even of bridging gaps between white and black races. It is as if he tries to move his characters from the amphitheatre to the operating theatre for their treatment and fortunately enough, none of the operations fail. However, this is purely mental treatment based on the strong observations of the

author. The combination of drama with therapy makes his work more beneficial for the local natives and even for the audience outside South Africa. It is hence no exaggeration to infer that Fugard’s plays are not mere ordinary plays, they present before us the nuanced view of the South African history and the conditions of black people during and after Apartheid. His core processes of drama therapy successfully dig out the most sensitive, comprehensive and focused study of the human mind. Fully energetic with his strong belief in healing-through-drama, Fugard remains, unquestionably, the most valued playwrights of South Africa.

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## Construction of Self and Post-Modern Consumerism in Richard Matheson's *Button Button*

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### Abstract

The present study's focus rests upon analyzing Richard Matheson's short story *Button Button*, (1970) an American postmodern literary text, with respect to Jean Baudrillard's concept of the 'system of needs' as presented in his work, *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structure* (1970) with special emphasis on deciphering the socio-economic dynamics of the post-modern civilized man's never ending pursuit and hunt for both material and monetary gains resulting in the ignorance of moral considerations accompanied by deconstruction of the sense of Self. In this connection, the consequences of the degeneration of human set of moral values have been examined with particular reference to Man's Race Against Himself and Entropy of Feeling, two deadly sins discussed in Konrad Lorenz's (1974) "Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins". The study finds out that the female protagonist stands out as the epitome of a typical hollow, post-modern self as she is blinded by greed and competition to supersede in the social hierarchical structure where self-imposed individual preferences outdo the collective benefit or welfare. Having similar priorities on a macro level, the consumer society engulfs individuals by compelling them to make choices (deadly sins) that are potentially destructive forces for an ideal survival in a consumedly entrenched post-modern society.

**Keywords:** Consumerism, post-modern, self, seven deadly sins, entropy of feelings

Readers are more familiar with Richard Matheson's characters than they are with him despite the fact that he has been winner of many awards including the popular World Fantasy Award for Life Achievement, Bram Stoker Award for Lifetime Achievement, and Science Fiction Hall of Fame. Perhaps Matheson is not as household a name as popularly acclaimed names of Ray Bradbury or Stephen King for that matter. Perhaps this is also owing to the fact that the characters he portrays, be it Norma, Lousie Carey or Scott Carey are so life-like, so mysteriously foreboding and so unforgettable that the audience's imagination are caught up in, overwhelmed with and appalled by their representations for long after their reading or watching them. Due to their unique appeal to the viewers, many of his writings including 'The Shrinking Man' and 'I am Legend', 'What dreams may Become', 'Bid Time Return', 'Hell House', and 'A Stir of Echoes' have been adapted for television and screen much like Ray Bradbury's writing. Matheson's works like 'Third from the Sun', 'Deadline' and 'Button Button' primarily belong to the middle-brow short popular fiction tradition of the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and have the potential of scaring the soul out of the reader and audience, similar in vein to Hitchcock's adaptations of screen plays filled with utmost horror and suspense and equally psychologically deep with penetrating undertones of a didactic message.

The paper primarily focuses with special consideration upon the female character of the protagonist, Norma and her disrupted sense of distorted self that is drenched in post-modern psyche and increased pursuit of materialism and consumerism, in short this need to possess the concrete. She is an archetype of a typical American woman from the post-modern times who is caught up in the whirlpool of worldly desires that

blind her to the potential act of murdering (as her husband puts it in the short story) any human being around the world. She assumes that if someone dies anywhere around the world just by pressing a single button, that should not create a difference in her life. She, being a human being, turns into a man eater as a result of this act. However, ironically, the consequences turn out to be fatal for her personal life.

The Twentieth century literature has been inspired by technological and scientific advancement that have brought about revolutionary and challenging modifications in the modern and post-modern pseudo civilized societies. Quite recently, industrial capitalism has introduced a new culture at sociological levels equating *living* with *consuming* (Agbisit, 2014, p.1). Consumption has become the new ‘morality’ of the consumer society which is shattering the very foundations of the human world (Mayer, 1998, p. x). Todd (2012, p. 48) is of the opinion that consumerism is directly linked to the creation of the sense of self. Therefore, it is apt to state that consumerism is ubiquitous and has penetrated in every aspect of identity formation and life, from art and culture to human action and relations (Agbisit, 2014, p.1). Arsel and Thompson (2011, p. 793) suggest that people deem making investments in time, money and identity building akin to the sense of self formation. People see goods as a source of helping them build identities and, hence, are in a constant state of race or war to maintain the status, differentiation and group loyalty the products bring to them when they associate themselves with these goods and products.

In a postmodern society, an important feature which is akin to consumerism is the never-ending competition that the modern man has landed his self into. Eliot reiterates similar notion in his poetry where he mourns the loss of genuineness in

fact Eliot writes during modern times and lays bare the thematic concerns of post-modernism to follow. This competition, whether with others or his own self, has led the individual to set aside moral considerations to achieve success. The ever-growing hunger for “instant gratification” (Lorenz, 1974, p.37) and avoidance of strenuous effort have deprived individuals of the sense of real ‘joy’ or happiness resulting in entropy of feelings. According to psychological school of thought and Instant Gratification Theory, one of the most basic drives inherent in humans is considered to be a quest for instant fulfillment i.e., the tendency to evade pain and seek pleasure which could take any form. When sliced, short term pleasure turns out to be a temptation difficult to resist. Matheson is interested in dissecting the results of getting lured by similar short-term pleasure for temporary monetary benefits.

Richard Matheson's “*Button, Button*” (2006) is a story about difficult moral choices people have to make when drooled by worldly desires with a powerful dénouement. The act of pressing the button which Norma, the female protagonist, initially considers it a childish act to improve her life style proves disastrous for her family life. The story was originally published in 1970 (Christian, 2006) and has been examined in this paper with respect to Jean Budillard's (1998) concept of consumerism, Konrad Lorenz's (1974) “Man's Race Against Himself” and “Entropy of Feeling”, mainly focusing on two deadly sins from his book “The Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins”. The study aims at achieving the following objectives:

1. To identify, in the text, symbols and character(s) representing a generation of the system of needs in a consumer society

2. To find out how self-created competition deprives individuals of any sense of morality in a postmodern society.
3. To explore how the drive for instant gratification and neophilia results in entropy of feelings.
4. To understand how competition in a postmodern society deludes the sense of self and frames society to be more and more tilted towards consumerism.

### **Literature Review**

The Postmodern era refers to the period following the Second World War (Bradbury, 1995, p. 763) that lasted from 1938 to 1945 and the term ‘post-modernism’ started to gain a degree of artistic and literacy currency during the 1950s (p. 767). Postmodernism is considered to remain a prominent social theory for about three decades (Christensen & al., 2005, p. 156). An American critic Irving Howe (1959) in his essay ‘Mass Society and Post-modern Fiction’ describes postmodern writing as a protest against American postwar alienation. These writings directed an angry criticism against ‘a relatively comfortable, half-welfare and half-garrison society’ in which people become passive, insensitive, and atomized-an affluent America which comprises conformists who seem worthless, being dominated by an oppressive and hostile culture (as cited in Bradbury, 1995, p.767). An important feature of the postmodern era is its social fragmentation of which disintegration of family is an important aspect (Rezaie, 2014, p. 17). Rosenau (1992) associates the post-modern period with disintegration, depression, meaninglessness, a vagueness, social chaos and absence of moral standards (as cited in Fierlbeck, 1994, p. 108).

Keeping in view the societal disintegration, several writers of the period drew people's attention towards how civilization was leading them towards destruction and damnation. In one of his book '*Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins*', Lorenz (1974), an Austrian zoologist and writer, pointed out eight sins that could cause human destruction. The sins he discussed in his book are overpopulation, devastation of the environment, man's race against himself, entropy of feeling, genetic decay, the break with tradition, indoctrinability and nuclear weapons. *Man's Race Against Himself* represents the modern man's cut throat competition with others as well as with his own self. It focuses on the constant pursuit of meeting artificial standards of success. The concept of *Homo homini lupus* (Lorenz, 1974, p. 25) or in its unabridged version *homo homini lupusest*, is a Latin proverb that means "A man is a wolf to another man," or more precisely "Man is wolf to man." By comparing individuals with wolves, Lorenz highlights what harm people can cause others in quest for their own material gains. The wolf as an animal is related to having traits of being predatory, cruel, and inhumane. Hence in making this analogy, Lorenz declares humans to be more like a brutal animal than civilized when dealing with other humans. Likewise, consumerism leads man to *Entropy of feeling* referring to the shriveling or death of feelings which are caused by man's never-ending pursuit of "instant gratification" (p. 37). When people are unwilling to sacrifice or resist pain, they are unable to experience real joy (p. 39).

Post-modern American literature depicts a growing consciousness of the adverse effects of industrialization and commercialization of public life which led to consumerism (Rezaie, 2014, p. 17). The advent of consumerism globally and at societal

levels has led the modern humans to be more oriented towards consuming services and goods for material gains and instant, but ironically not very long lasting, satisfaction of acquisition and idealizing a world containing increasing demand of goods. The main reason deciphered for doing so is the urge of the modern man to feel good about himself and the surroundings and to drive the economy of the world (Suzuki, 1997, p.56). When we delineate the dilemmas of the modern man, self-love is a major factor behind his ever increasing obsession with individual, luxurious material possessions in comparison to the emotional demands and fulfillment.

Man's ever growing hunger to satiate his needs and desire is highlighted in Jean Baudillard's *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (1998) originally published in 1970. He regards the modern civilized man as *homo oeconomicus* (economic man), the one who is driven by his/her own self-interests and who pursues self-defined goals. Describing the post-modern man's effort to satisfy his self-created needs as a folk lore, he says that man is "‘endowed' with wants or needs" which take him towards objects yielding satisfaction but since he is never satisfied, this course of action is repeated over and over again (Baudillard, 1998, p. 69).

Cushman (1990) describes the modern post World War Two individual as an "empty-self" who is hollow in terms of a sound identity formation. This giving away of historical identities that are linked with status, place of stay, the group associated with and tradition followed creates the need for forming new identities. He says "the empty self is soothed and made cohesive by becoming "filled up" with food, consumer products, and celebrities" (p. 603). Baudillard's (1998) contends that it is the 'system of

needs' which is the outcome of the 'system of production' meaning thereby, needs are created by companies and imposed by capitalist societies (pp. 74-75).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The present study carries out an analysis of Richard Matheson's short story "Button Button" (2006), a post-modern literary text, in the light of Konrad Lorenz's two out of eight deadly sins "Man's Race Against Himself" and "Entropy of Feeling" discussed in his book "Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins" (1974). The book was originally published in 1970 (Christian, 2006). The study also examines the text with respect to Bauillard's concept of the "system of needs" presented in his book *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures* (1998, p.74) originally published in 1970. A/the "System of needs" is a product of a/the "system of production" which inculcates needs in people they didn't have before and triggers *homo oeconomicus*, an economic human, who pursues subjectively defined goals out of self-interest.

Lorenz predicted the relationship between market economics and the threat of ecological catastrophe. In his 1973 book, *Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins*, Lorenz addresses the following paradox:

All the advantages that man has gained from his ever-deepening understanding of the natural world that surrounds him, his technological, chemical and medical progress, all of which should seem to alleviate human suffering... tends instead to favor humanity's destruction. (Lorenz 264)

The eight pathologies identified by Konrad Lorenz are considered in the essay. They

are explained and corresponding therapies are proposed. Firstly Lorenz talks about overpopulation about which he states that a high-density population causes a loss of humanity, community and solidarity. Secondly, he mentions about devastation or destruction of the Environment in which greed and profit maximization lead to destructive exploitation of resources. At number three, he discusses about competition by which he means a constant struggle of humankind competing against itself which breeds fear and leads to accelerated work rates and the desire for instant gratification on part of the populace. Fourthly, Lorenz labels the lack of emotional empathy as a cause of social unrest. He names it emotional entropy by which he means the degeneration leading to a loss of empathy. Fifthly, the debate is on genetic decay by which Lorenz means that a selfish or free economic competition leads to negative selection in the society. Lorenz goes on to decipher the reason or causes of such malpractices in society and reaches to the sixth point of discussion which is based upon the break with tradition, past or roots. According to Lorenz, addiction to novelty leads to a loss of culture and a post-modern society embodies novelty in totality. At number seventh, Lorenz speaks upon indoctrination done on part of science on mankind. This indoctrinability allows domination by natural science and positive economics that lead to mechanistic ideas. And lastly, the debate rests upon nuclear weapons and the potential havoc that these weapons could project. This paper dwells on these points put forth by Lorenz to develop an argument as to how the characters in *Button Button* personify a modern man paving his way towards the deadly sins as enumerated categorically by Lorenz.

## Analysis and Discussion

The short story "Button Button" (2006) starts with the portrayal of an apparently content couple, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lewis, receiving a box with a red button delivered by Steward, an agent of an international organization, with the temptation of \$ 50,000. If they push the button, it will kill someone they didn't know, anywhere around the world. Matheson develops a chain of psychological plotting where the female protagonist impulsively gives up on the moral side of getting someone killed and resorts to pressing the button which apparently is an insignificant and benign act bringing blessings or material satisfaction to the family in the form of money. The box with the red button in the play symbolizes Baudillard's (1998) concept of the 'system of needs' (p.74). The color red is symbolic of impending danger, warning and threat. Also, it represents man being drooled over by passions and desires where logic and rationality lack.

For Baudrillard, societal and cultural system in its entirety is but a system of signs. In his works, such as *Le système des objets* (1968), and *Le société de consommation* (1970), Baudrillard has reconstructed the political economy of Marxism. For Baudrillard, any consumer would desire what others possess. This fundamental alteration and desire in human species from consuming or utilizing what is considered necessary to aiming for what is not necessary, except psychologically (desire), has led to a culture of affluent individuals or those with the aim to achieve elitist status (p.170). Earlier, Norma, Arthur's wife who eventually falls prey to her greed, might not have any desire to get \$50,000 or go on a trip to Europe etc. but the box with a button becomes the triggering force and generates a need to satisfy her yearning for improved lifestyle. When

the line between wants and needs; desires and necessities is blurred or removed and materialism takes precedence of all humane considerations, entropy of feeling ensues and this is what Matheson wants to signify through the plot of the story. Confusing wants with needs is thus linked to the entropy of feelings as Matheson intends in the play which is an epitome of the larger consumerist and capitalist society. Mechanisation of consumerism has made the process even easier than before. As Tanaka & Murooka (2012) have it, lacking self-control, consumers even borrow on their credit cards to attain instant gratification. Nora does not even have to do that. She just needs to press a button to accomplish his worldly desire. Roberts (2014) calls America “the impulse society” due to a common urge for instant gratification in this age. Commodities are part of a “system of objects” which is correlated with a system of needs. As Baudrillard (1998) writes, “It is even the ultimate in morality, since the consumer is simultaneously reconciled with himself and with the group. Thus becomes the perfect social being.”. It is in fact the international company that compels Norma to hit the button regardless of the consequences. Likewise, organizations in the consumer society arise needs in consumers to buy and aim for what they even do not need in their lives. They aim to create the need of the needless so much so that the unnecessary products and objects appear to be an essential commodity to buy. The wishful desire is hence created in the subconscious self of the individual that blinds the conscious self. This *system of needs* triggers Norma, a homo economicus (Baudrillard, 1998, p. 69), who does not display care for others and yields to her self-interested goals. Contrary to traditional neo-Marxists, Baudrillard does not accept the socio-cultural approach, insisting that

there is no way to demarcate between “true” and “false” needs in the whirlpool of a system that is governed by magical signs by which it is meant that what is consumed is not the material goods or actual objects. The point is that the consumed objects are only signs of needs and satisfaction of desire, a desire that always recurs in a post-modern society.

Matheson further develops the appearance and case of Mr. Steward in the play. Just like attractive offers presented by famous brands and companies, Steward sets up the creepy, devilish temptation of awarding \$50,000 on pressing the button. Even though Arthur returns the box immediately to Steward rejecting the idea of getting a large fortune in return for murdering someone, Norma succumbs to the temptation presented by Steward after wavering and showing indecisiveness for some time. Curiosity and greed win over all Norma's moral considerations as she keeps asking her husband “Doesn't it intrigue you?” (p. 106). Similarly, the companies in a consumer society arouse people's curiosity by employing different techniques so as to entrap them in their web and the already entrapped customers try to tempt the others and the chain goes on. Out of curiosity, Norma contacts Steward later refusing his offer on moral grounds. However, on finding the box again at her doorstep left by Steward, a figure symbolic of famous brands who keeps tempting till one falls a prey, Norma takes the box in giving herself excuses for what she is doing, thinking it is ‘ridiculous’- ‘this furor over a meaningless button’. Justifying to herself that she is not being ‘selfish’, she presses the button, shuddering afterwards at the thought whether its result i.e., killing somebody, was taking place somewhere else.

The story line invites and is receptive of much critical debate. Norma, the conventional wife, is the traditionally symbolic representation of Eve who was tempted to eat the apple and bring man down from heaven to the Earth. In the current post-modern analysis, Norma stands for every man. She is a universal figure of human beings who have to struggle between Id and Super Ego in Freudian terms. On a much larger scale, Norma stands for a typical modern man, “hollow man”. as Eliot puts it in his poem with the same title. This hollow man is stuffed n brain with an increased obsession with material pursuits and possessions and has little to no consciousness beyond selfish gratifications. Norma’s surrender to wishful thinking, greed and material possessions is something any post-modern individual striving in a setup of a system of needs is likely to fall prey to. In the same context, it is apt to understand that Arthur is not only the better half of Norma but also her insider- the conscious self that constantly reminds man to stay within the naturally and morally acceptable bounds.

In addition, Norma’s action of falling prey to impulses can be analyzed by keeping in view Konrad Lorenz’s one of the deadly sins “Man’s Race against Himself”. Lorenz (1974) regards human being as “homo humini lupus—Man is the predator of man (p. 25) stressing upon the fact that in order to surpass others in cut throat competitions, he ignores almost all the values for the pursuit of “value-blind commercial” goals (p.26). This notion is largely relatable to Darwin’s conception of ‘survival of the fittest’ i.e. who so ever is able to stand the test of time and survive in the worst possible scenario in the best possible way, guarantees his survival and evades extinction. Norma runs after surviving in her best possible manifestation and the trip to Europe is a realization

of that. Blinded by her greed to acquire \$50,000, she shows willingness to commit the indirect murderous act of pressing the button despite her husband's disapproval of this idea. She rejects the insider's voice. The norms and systems of a post-modern society, largely mechanical and robotic in essence, govern and direct the protagonist's mind. The advancements of the Western society go against the favor of creating a social system that values morality and a humanistic approach. It is a cruel aspect of the advancement of technology where a device with a red button is powerful enough to kill someone somewhere and generate monetary benefits for the one pressing it at some other corner of the world. Hence, science turns into an evil, rather an instrument for evil instead of being a rescuer. Lorenz (1979, p. 7) addresses the following paradox: "All the advantages that man has gained from his ever-deepening understanding of the natural world that surrounds him, his technological, chemical and medical progress, all of which should seem to alleviate human suffering... tend instead to favor humanity's destruction".

The civilized man surviving in a post-modern society cares only for what brings commercial benefits in order to surpass the fellow human beings. Driven by her desire to go to Europe and buy a cottage on an island (p. 108), Norma becomes indifferent towards who would die if the button is pressed. For Norma, it is alright as long as it kills 'some old Chinese peasant' or 'some diseased native in the Congo' (p.108), far away from America's geographical boundaries and racial identities although Lewis declares that a murder is a murder no matter who it kills. In her psychological frame of mind, Norma is running a race and aims to win the competition by hook or

by crook. Therefore, her mind joins the dots that allow her to foresee triumphing in the race of achieving the best of the best in terms of material possessions especially when presented to her in the most enticing and easy-to-get manner by the modern digitalized consumerism. She makes a sincere effort to convince her husband to support her win the race. The principle of competition, typical of the Western societies, destroys any chance of this: “The competition between human beings destroys with cold and diabolic brutality... Under the pressure of this competitive fury, we have not only forgotten what is useful to humanity as a whole, but even that which is good and advantageous to the individual. [...] One asks, which is more damaging to modern humanity: the thirst for money or consuming haste... in either case, fear plays a very important role: the fear of being overtaken by one’s competitors, the fear of becoming poor, the fear of making wrong decisions or the fear of not being up to snuff...” (Lasch, 1979,p. 45–47). Norma indeed, fears lagging behind and is afraid of losing the opportunity which the red button provides her with. However, the big question arises as to who she is competing with or who she wants to outdo. It is no one but her own selfish and greedy self. Lorenz (1974) criticizes the civilized man for being indulged in a race that gets him nowhere. In this pursuit of the so-called success, civilized man has lost his peace of mind. Throughout the short story, Norma remains occupied with the idea of whether or not she should press the button to bring a revolutionary change in her life instantly gratifying her lust for material possessions. She does not want to lose the opportunity to go on the “trip to Europe” or a chance to purchase “that cottage on the island.” (p.108)

Norma’s desire to acquire a large fortune is what Lorenz (1974, p.37) calls

“an impatient demand for instant gratification of all budding wishes” which is one of the reasons of entropy of feeling and the absence of the sense of empathy. Norma experiences death of feeling as nothing can bring happiness to her but a lot of riches which she desires immediately. She grows impatient to acquire “a nicer apartment, nicer furniture, nicer clothes, a car” (p. 109). As for Arthur, the idea offended him while for Norma, it is a source of intrigue. Arthur sees it as an immorally sickening practical joke while Norma considers it a case for psychological research. In short, Matheson juxtaposes rational and illogical viewpoints, moral and materialistic considerations by using his male and female protagonists in a semblance of the Adam and Eve tale:

*“Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur,” Norma interrupted. “A chance to take that trip to Europe we’ve always talked about.”*

“Norma, no.”

“A chance to buy that cottage on the island.”

“Norma, no.” His face was white. (p.108)

As stated earlier, Arthur acts as the inside voice of Norma’s conscience. He is the in-built sense of right and wrong, yin and yang occurring in every individual’s mind regardless of which time he or she belongs to. Norma’s struggle is real. The comparative angle used by Norma suggests that she is fed up with her already possessed nice apartment, furniture, clothes and a car. This reiterates the notion that modern man is dissatisfied and contains an unflinching urge for more and more. Afflicted with the civilizational disease “neophilia” (Lorenz, 1974, p. 40), she desires to get new, improved and nicer

things to enjoy life. The term neophiliac or neophile, was popularised by the cult writer Robert Anton Wilson. He called it a personality type characterized by high level of affinity for newness or novelty irrespective of need. The same term was used earlier by Christopher (1969) in his book *The Neophiliacs*, and by Salinger (1965) in his short story *Hapworth 16, 1924*, Lorenz's criticism centers round an individual who easily forsakes his possessions and shows no concern for a long affiliation with the things he has possessed for a long time. The desire attains the shape of a vicious cycle where the new overtakes the older. This is contrary to the current popular belief of minimalism. At its core, minimalism is the intentional promotion of the things we most value and the removal of everything that distracts us from it. Minimalism propagates holding on while the philosophy that Norma preaches is to let go of what we have in search of more and better using any kind of means available. Norma, hence, craves for new and 'nicer' things to improve her lifestyle. Mr. Steward merely acts the voice of temptation present in every being. He keeps on knocking down her sense of right and wrong by confusion and successfully blurs the boundaries between the two in her mind. Norma seems to be unaware of the fact that things acquired without making effort cannot bring happiness to anybody's life and that the process of acquiring is equally important as a result. For Baudrillard, our purchases or the products bought reflect our innermost desires so that consumption gratifies our psychological realization of self. Postmodern consumers can never be fulfilled because the products they consume are only "sham objects, or characteristic signs of happiness" and do not have any real power to bestow happiness to the possessor (Malpas, 2005, p 122). According to Lorenz (1974, 39), pleasure may be

acquired without making effort but the pursuit of 'joy' is impossible without strenuous effort. Norma, driven by her desire to achieve pleasure, ends up getting neither joy nor pleasure as her husband dies as a result of her pressing the button. "Baudrillard's ideas on consumerism lead to a sense of loss, as there is no real identity, and no way of gaining fulfillment" (Todd, 2011, p 50). The story, therefore, meets a tragic, unanticipated but rationally acceptable denouement. Matheson strikes the cords and touches didactically upon the message he had to convey to the audience belonging to the times the story is produced in and hence, coming across similar circumstances on day to day basis.

The study also throws light on the conjugal relationship of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lewis. Apparently, the couple seems to be a contented couple kissing and patting each other. However, there are a few examples in the text which give an insight into their mutual understanding. The story takes a hard look at the most intimate relationship and, in its ending, asks the readers a very difficult question, a question Norma did not previously consider. What does it mean to "know" someone? After the button is activated, the presser's husband dies and the baffled, despondent presser is told, in a smirking, ironic-twist fashion, that she never really knew him, neither in his life, nor in death. This also reminds of Arthur's words to Norma, "I don't understand you", and 'Are you saying what I think you are?' (p. 108) when she argues whether it will be a murder even if we do not know the killed. Despite living contentedly with each other for long, there is lack of understanding between the husband and wife.

## Conclusion

The analysis of the short story “Button Button” from the perspectives of Baudillard’s theory of hyper consumerism (1998) and Lorenz’s (1974) two deadly sins i.e. “Man’s Race Against Himself” and “Entropy of Feeling” presents the selected literary text in an entirely different light. The symbolic representation of the box as the “system of needs” (Baudillard, 1998, p. 74) generated by capitalists is a different interpretation of the box used as a tool for temptation. Another important aspect that the analysis highlights is the civilized man’s attempt to outdo his own self just as Norma yearns for nicer furniture, house and clothes without comparing her lifestyle with anybody else’s. She creates and indulges in a competition for her own self with her own self and blinded by her greed to win the competition, goes to the extent of murdering a person she doesn’t know. Her “neophilia” leads her to wishing for getting rid of the old stuff and makes her aspire for an improved standard of living and makes her lose her husband in the process. Deconstructing the conjugal relationship of Arthur and Norma depicts a lack of understanding and a sense of alienation between the couple. Despite living an apparently contented married life, Norma is exposed to the bitter reality in the end that she never knew her husband. This highlights the communication gap and a sense of alienation or estrangement between the two which Norma had never realized before.

In short, the selected text sheds light on the element of consumerism which has penetrated in our modern, civilized society making people lose their peace of mind. It also highlights how a civilized man, driven by commercial gains, goes to the extent of taking people’s lives mercilessly and without significant second thoughts.

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## **Borderline Personality Disorder, a New Site of Revolt in *The Edible Woman* and *The Vegetarian***

Basila Hasnain

### **Abstract**

The diversity and complexity of women and madness as a subject in English Literature gained much attention in the wake of feminism and post-colonialism. However, the representation of borderline cases among women in literature has surfaced as a popular subject only in the recent years. Many contemporary fictional works with feminist and psychological themes concentrate on female protagonists with borderline personality disorders for example eating and sleeping disorders, abandonment issues and compulsive behavior. The current research is an attempt to highlight the significance of this emerging narrative and to propose that it has become a new form of resistance within the feminist narrative. For this purpose, the paper critically analyses *The Edible Woman* (1969) by Margaret Atwood and *The Vegetarian* (1997) by Han Kang within the framework of psychological and feminist theories. The scope of this study is to evaluate the significance of BPD female characters (borderline personality disorder) as more impactful agents of change against the oppressive systems and societies.

Keywords: abjection, borderline personality disorders, feminism, patriarchal oppression, resistance, narrative

Literary canons like Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892), Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963), Marge Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and innumerable other works by female authors, Victorian to current times, furiously establish the 'mad woman' rhetoric as a narrative of resistance against the oppressive patriarchal system. The second wave of feminism paralleled with breakthroughs in psychiatry therefore many female writers appropriated the motif of 'female malady' to comment on the social injustice, repressive stereotypes and institutionalized exploitation of women. A long history of art and literature represented the unconventional and unruly woman as mad. "Basically, any behavior that was outside of the social norms was considered to be "madness"" (Matošević). In her essay, *Frailty, thy name is woman: Depictions of Female Madness* (2015, Julianna Little notes that, "Madness has been perceived for centuries metaphorically and symbolically as a feminine illness and continues to be gendered into the twenty-first century." (1) Consequently the Feminists by the twentieth century were able to perceive how 'female madness' is actually a 'historical label applied to female protest' and the literary madwoman was in fact the social deviant (3). As a result, just as male authors used the trope of madness until the end of nineteenth century, to silence the female narrative and to set the boundaries of social norms, many of the female authors employed the same trope to subvert the existing male narrative.

In nineteenth-century literature, madness became an important theme as an expression of suppressed rebellion; the image of the "madwoman" has mirrored the oppression of feminine potential, her symptoms seeming to critique the society that oppresses her. (Little 36)

This ensued a period of female authored works of mad narratives including asylum fiction and autobiographical works about maltreatment of people with mental illness during the nineteenth century. Even post-colonial feminism aimed to readdress the status of mad woman pioneered by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Mad Women in the Attic*. Later on with the advent of the complex theories like 'doubly colonized self' and non-western feminism the image of mad woman drew more attention embodied in works of Morrison, Lessing and Bessie Head. The new parallels between the colonized Other and suppressed female 'other' became the key concept of the post-colonial fiction. Women like the diseased and the enslaved Other became the outsiders in the eyes of the jaundiced patriarchal societies. She was locked up, deprived of rights and silenced. It was realized that this new madwoman "suffers from "double colonization"". (Tyagi 45)

Therefore critics and authors celebrated the trope of female madness as an act of defiance and resistance as within the suppressive patriarchal system it was interpreted as their only voice and possible redemption. Although it is a visually dramatic and aesthetically shocking image, but this paper contests that there is no doubt that it worked as a dual device in the historical representation of women in literary narrative. At one hand women unshackled themselves from the hands of male dominance by refusing to comply with the ordained rules and stereotypes but at the same time madness confirmed the female's position as an outcast thereby strengthening the process of Othering by depriving them of language or degenerating their voice as unreliable narrative. Shoshana Felman in her book, *Writing and Madness: Literature/Philosophy/Psychoanalysis*. (2003) recognizes this limitation of madness as narrative and warns that madness has become so "commonplace" that it's "sensationalized to the point of banality." (12)

Furthermore, in psychoanalysis the narrative is construed from the signifying ability of the being, the symbol or meaning making process that is language which shapes the Self and implements the law of Father. While the non-speaking being, Other or the order of the Mother is seen as annihilation of the Self. Silence itself is considered monolithic narrative which furthers the mutation of the mad woman and reduces her to a mere status of nonbeing. As we know, the nonbeing has little chance of becoming an active agent of change within the law of father, the order and system. Therefore there are, undeniably, certain confines of the madness narrative as “madness usually occupies a position of exclusion: it is the outside of a culture.” (Felman 13). This paper though, acknowledges the strength of madness as a narrative of revolt but it also proposes that the theme of female madness can be more improvised and studied as inclusive or inside of culture to voice the resistance of women against oppressive systems of patriarchy. For that purpose this paper moves on to an analysis of more complex and contemporary narrative of female madness and resistance, namely, the narratives of borderline cases.

The border line personality disorder are mental issues with certain social and psychological indicators that may seem similar to hysteria but are somehow more definite. These cases may bear cursors like eating disorders, insomnia, memory issues, anxiety, and obsessive compulsive disorder. ‘Women diagnosed with borderline personality disorder have affective, behavioural, interpersonal, self and cognitive dysregulation’ (Feigenbaum 51). This dysregulation is not only a reflective of the social systems but it is also a critique of its repressive and oppressive norms. There has been little or no awareness of the borderline personality disorders or BPD even as late as the previous

decade but with the rapid growth in psychiatry there has been a change in people's understanding of BPD. Many writers like Atwood, Munro and Lessing have lately portrayed female protagonists who are BPD cases. Even pop culture has developed powerful images of female Super heroes with bpd such as the Black Widow. Movie adaptations like *The Girl, Interrupted* and *The Girl on the Train*. All of which indicates a transfiguration of the psychological resistance from commonplace and 'exclusive' madness to specific and inclusive forms of it like BPD. The women in these modern fiction and non-fiction are breaking free from the choice of either/or. They reject the norms of patriarchal exploitation and propose a constant threat to the legitimized and systematic oppression of women. But instead of using the much exhausted trope of madness they employ a new and more multifarious form of revolt and resistance that originates from the narratives of border line cases.

BPD, like Hysteria and madness, is also a gender biased disease both in pathological and literary sense. N. Ntshingila quotes in a paper titled *Experiences of Women Living with Borderline Personality Disorder* that, 'Under normal circumstances women are affected by life's major changes such as marital problems, job changes, assumptions of major social roles and the evolution of an adult self during early and middle adulthood.' (Holm, Berg, & Severinsson 561).

This gendered illness thus provides contemporary feminist writers to employ the trope of bpd as the new narrative of resistance and revolt replacing the all or nothing choices women embodied in the madness narratives. These women with bpd are not completely mad but they are not entirely normal too, thus they stand on the borders of

the society or social order. They are the functional residents at the fringes and peripheries unlike the silenced and marginalized *Other*, the mad woman. Instead of accepting their expulsion from this symbolic order or the world of narrative they combat it from the peripheries of the society. They do not leave the society or accept abandonment as the only alternate by being silent or confined to attics and rooms. These women problematize the very notion of madness by showing some symptoms of irrational and still holding onto the rational Self. They are women of questionable whims, embarrassing sizes and strange desires. These women with borderline personality disorders bpd are the 'Subjects', in Kristevian sense, of the society and in that capacity they constantly question, engage and threaten the order of the society and the norms of patriarchy. Thus they defuse the boundaries of male social order and challenging the reductive narrative of self/ other, subject/ object binaries by becoming Subjects themselves. In order to understand the role of Abjection through borderline cases, this paper makes use of Julia Kristeva's theory of Abjection proposed in her essay, *Powers of Horror*.

In her essay Julia Kristeva describes that abject is neither I, the subject nor is it object the Other it is not nothing too. '[t]he abject is not an object facing me, which I name or imagine ... The abject has only one quality of the object – that of being opposed to I. (1) It is 'a radically excluded' entity that 'draws me toward the place where meaning collapse'. (2) It is above all ambiguity. (9). 'Subjects are what disturbs identity, systems, orders.(4) This ambiguity and disturbance is not only a challenge to the I, that is the male narrative or law of father but also a powerful form of revolt and redress. In this context the mad woman is the witch, the outcast and exile whereas

women with borderline cases are anomalies existing within the order of society that are never fully complying with its system. Their bodies and behaviors disturb the idea of the 'normal' woman and yet they function as wives and mothers or 'females'.

In *Powers of Horror* Kristeva quotes Celine that '...these females can wreck the infinite...' (159) to point out the power of abjection in women such as a two-faced mother or a betraying beloved. Through the rejection of their stereotypical role these women can confuse even destroy the male ego even without an exclusive conflict. A woman who blatantly defies the norms becomes the Other, and one who subscribes to her gender role eventually loses her individuality whereas as an Abject woman deprives the male of his power to claim his own subjectivity since it is a correlative reality with respect to woman being the Object. The symbolic order, Subject/ object, remains suspended as long as she refuses to become part of the either one of the binaries. Kristeva postulates,

Owing to the ambiguous opposition I/Other, Inside/Out- side—an opposition that is vigorous but pervious, violent but uncertain—there are contents, “normally” unconscious in neurotics, that become explicit if not conscious in “borderline” patients’ speeches and behavior. Such contents are often openly manifested through symbolic practices, without by the same token being integrated into the judging consciousness of those particular subjects. Since they make the conscious/unconscious distinction irrelevant, borderline subjects and their speech constitute propitious ground for a sublimating discourse (“aesthetic” or “mystical,” etc.), rather than a scientific or rationalist one. (7)

Janet Wirth-Cauchon writes in, *Women and Borderline Personality Disorder: Symptoms and Stories*, that “the person diagnosed borderline is said to occupy: the ambiguous, vague and unstable region between sanity and madness.” (37) Like the Subjects they defy the power structures the right to name which is the “core element in social control” (37) thereby destroying the “taxonomic borderland” positioned between “reason and unreason” (38). Psychiatric discourse has been one of the main system through which women are “represented as Other” to the supposedly “rational human subject” (39) unlike madness which is constituted as “object”(40) in discourse, borderline personality disorder challenges “standardized definition” (78) signifying the existence of a shifting, uncertain and fragmented abjection. This “bewildering and irreconcilable” abject questions and breakdowns the hierarchical power structure. Therefore women with bpd are subjects who become powerful agents of change and challenge the limited and pre-defined roles in society.

*The Edible Woman (1969)* is a story of a young girl whose rational structured and conventional world starts to dissolve as she becomes extremely conscious of her Self-image. . Marian starts to display symptoms of food disorder, insomnia and nausea following her engagement to Peter who is a conventional man. She “consoled herself by getting drunk.” (3) Eventually she develops disgust with food and wonders “if I am getting anemia” (137), which is a key aspect of abjection as Kristeva points out, “Food loathing is perhaps the most elementary and most archaic form of abjection” (2) In psychiatry,

The term ‘eating disorder’ can refer to any abnormal eating pattern

that negatively affects a person's physical or mental health, usually involving either severe restriction of food intake or excessive overeating. Environmental factors such as parental interaction at an early age, child abuse, social isolation and peer pressure are all believed to play a role in the development of eating disorders." (Feldman, 2010)

She finds herself oscillating between the two worlds and therefore at this site of fear her abjection and bpd originates. One of the world is socially approved as it is based on the norms of patriarchal society to which she belongs and where she is engaged to Peter, a "conservative" man (77) who knows that women are "uncivilized" and a sin is "unforgivable" if it is "public".(85) Her idea of self is shaken as she starts realizing that she is leaving "the big decisions up to him" whereas she didn't expect this from the person she knew she was. It made her feel "exhausted" although she knows she has "to learn to compromise" (137). She is caught in web of utterances made by Clara "a bitter house wife" (40) who lets herself be treated like a "*thing!*" (39) and "had no practicality" or control over her "mundane aspects of life" and her own body" (37). Clara and Peter represents the orthodox values but it makes her feel "unsettled" (46) to comply with or appreciate their choices. She feels "caught, set down and shaken" (87) although she tries "to move" but she finds herself "stuck" (91). On the other side, people like Ainsley, Duncan and Len who resist the social norms seem to snub her for "rejecting" her femininity (95). Marian differentiates herself from Ainsley because she believes "Ainsley isn't respectable, whereas I am. It probably the way we dress" (8). Although she doesn't know how to "justify" her own "opposition" to Ainsley's ideologies yet

she shuns other “people’s prejudices” and society at large (44). Ainsley believes that “mother-child” relationship is natural and “birth is legitimate” (44), whereas marriage is a social norm. She begins to lose her sense of Self as she becomes more and more obsessed with her Self-image which is a pronounced feature of bpd in Peter’s world she is condemned for her “irresponsible gaiety”(71) whereas, in the other world she is considered “Prude” (44) . Eventually she reaches to a breaking point where her Self-image dissolves. She is an embodiment of abjection as she is stuck at the borderline of the two worlds. In an article *Letters*, Sarah K.Cahn informs that,

Borderline abjection also influences interpersonal and kinship relationships; it is common for borderlines to have patterns of unstable relationships and painful fallings-out, often informed by an inability to control powerful emotions. I contend that the abjection of the borderline does not render these affective knowledges useless or somehow less ‘valid’; rather, they encourage us to consider knowledge in different, more complex ways (84).

This experience as an abject therefore, provides Marian an opportunity to re-address her ideologies and life. Although in the end, we do not see her as an unruly liberated woman but she does not succumb to the stereotypical femininity as she defies the confinement of being a traditional wife and stops “thinking in terms of either/or”, she embraces the fact that “the thing is wholeness” (43). She redefines her life which is a culminating moment where she bakes a cake with a female form on it. This changes her own self-image and she says “Now that I was thinking of myself in the first person singular

again. I found my own situation more interesting than his” (350). We see her stare at the “blank eyes” and feel “she was going to be sick” (325) of the woman on the cake. She realizes that “the image was completed” and then she questions “All that work had gone into the lady and now what would happen to her?”. She tells it to the lady that she looked “Very appetizing. And that’s what will happen to you; that’s what you get for being food’. Her fate had been decided” (342) but once she cuts the cake, she feels “her body had cut itself off” (325). Even Ainsley is left shocked by her action as she gulps “the full implication of what she saw” she exclaims in horror “You’re rejecting your femininity!” (345).

This leaves the room for a new system, a reform through claiming of the lost voice. By eating the face of the woman on the cake, she regains her Self, destroying the existing consumer production order. This symbolic act does not only mark her defiance of the male order but also obliterates the natural boundaries of self and other. Marian rejects the system of order that “demarcate ‘acceptable’ norms of femininity; while emotionality and dependency are normatively ‘feminine’ traits, the unstable emotionality and desperate dependence of the borderline create a line of transgression which is pathologized (Cahn 81)

Sandra Harding’s standpoint theory exists in relation to dominant epistemic modalities. That is, in a hierarchized society, those ‘at the top’ organize the world around them; as such, knowledge of and by marginalized groups can offer a more complete picture of the workings of any given social world because the experiences and knowledges of marginalized selves render visible new knowledges, new problems,

and new solutions (24). This effect of abjection creates “a place where the borderline’s knowledge can be held as valid, in spite, or perhaps because of, this abjection by ‘asserting BPD as the basis of a distinctive epistemology that constitutes a valuable form of counter-knowledge’ to dominant male narrative (85). Hence, this analysis pursue what Sarah Redikopp proposes that to register and record this borderline narrative is “a task fundamentally feminist, fundamentally radical and wholly necessary.”(73)

*The Vegetarian (2007)* is a South Korean novel authored by Han Kang. It traces the story of Yeong-hye, an averagely talented graphic artist and an ‘unremarkable’ wife to a well-established businessman. She decides to stop eating meat which proves a life changing experience for her as an individual but most of all as a woman belonging to a traditional Korean family. Although this seems like a very personal choice and yet the novel explores how it becomes a rejection of her culturally defined role as a Korean wife and daughter. This resolution of Yeong-hye is a result of a nightmarishly bloody dream she has but it complicates her relationships with her family and society at large. So much so, that she becomes an enigma for her parents and husband who seem to have no choice but to abandon her in the end. The novel raises questions about the stereotypical expectations from women like Yeong-hye and reassess the possibilities offered by the societies to such women. Yeong hye is a classic case of borderline personality disorder for she expresses many pronounced symptoms of bpd such as nausea, food repulsion and insomnia and in later stages even hallucinations.

Yeong hye has a very passive and docile personality that seems to suit Mr. Cheong, the man she gets married to. He proclaims at the very onset of the novel

that, “passive personality of this woman in whom I could detect neither freshness nor charm, or anything especially refined, suited me down to the ground” (9) although he found in her no “special attraction” but he was contented that there were no “particular drawbacks” (10). He had “inferiority complex” so he always intended to marry “the most run-of-the-mill woman in the world” because the “women who were pretty, intelligent, strikingly sensual, the daughters of rich families” threatened him as they may have proved disruptive for his “carefully ordered existence.” (ibid). In their five years “smooth marriage” she proves to be a woman of “few words” and no whims at all. This passivity of Yeong hye’s character is a conformity of her gender role in the social order and a guarantee of her husband’s superiority.

The narrative in the first part of the novel is ‘first person’ which further emphasize the Subject/object order and hierarchy of the patriarchal society. This order is in accordance with the psycholinguistic Symbolic order of meaning making, the law of father. Later however, she starts defying her role as an “ordinary wife” (10) by creating dysregulation in the pattern of narrative through her ‘dream’ narration interjected in between the first person narrative of Mr. Cheong. She repeatedly defines that her reason for becoming a vegetarian is a dream that confuses Mr. Cheong as an extremely irrational thing. He is haunted by the clarity of her voice and strangeness of her statement, “I had a dream—she’d said that twice now.” (14), and thus keeps on reverting to it. In psycholinguists dream, being part of subconscious, is the law of the mother. Therefore Mr. Cheong feels his reality stands challenged by this dream whereas he could have accepted any other rational and traditional reason such as “Health reason,

for example...or religious, perhaps?" (20), for her Vegetarianism. He is embarrassed and shocked by this 'unreasonable' 'other side' of his wives personality.

She becomes an ambiguous and complicated individual rather than a mechanical being by acting unpredictably. She wastes all the meat stored in the fridge on the pretext of her dream , she does not provide her husband the assistance in his day to day routine nor does she iron his clothes or sees him off to work. Her husband is thrown off balance by this irrational behavior and her serene expressions, clear voice and disheveled hair. (ibid). He is only able to snub her, in complete state of shock he says "Are you crazy?" and "Have you lost your mind?" (13). He is completely unable to perceive the situation as his otherwise conventional wife refuses to fit in her ordained role so he ends up announcing "You're insane! You've completely lost it."(14). This erratic pattern of behavioral changes symbolize Yeong-hye's growing bpd. She grows "thinner", "practically stopped sleeping" and is "actively avoiding sex", (16) all of which are seen as "obstinacy for a wife to go against her husband's wishes" (15) and rebellion against her social role as a woman. Whereas these are the most prominent features of borderline personality disorder.

Yeong hye's father, the most unapologetic "patriarchal man" tries "force feeding" her some meat whereupon she attempts suicide. (23) As deduced from the research Ntshingila states that among the borderline cases in women "it was evident that there were childhood experiences of living in an unsafe space, related to unhealthy family dynamics, boundary violations..." (1) The role of Yeong hye's father is that of an aggressive patriarch and she has been 'only victim of their father's beatings.' (89).

the novel shows several scenes of boundary violation including Yeong-hye's rape by her husband thereby establishing her case as a bpd. This marks as the tripping point for Yeong-hye. Despite her "hysteria, delusion, weak nerves" (17) Mr Cheong is reluctant to accept her mental abnormality and keeps on avoiding the truth. "There's nothing wrong with her, I told myself, this kind of thing isn't even a real illness. I resisted the temptation to indulge in introspection. This strange situation had nothing to do with me." (17) The most ordinary woman becomes utterly unknowable for him. (15) which scares him.

Yeong-Hye rediscovers herself at the verge of defilement of self. Food motive becomes central. She loses her role and status as wife, daughter and eventually as human being. Through this process of effacement of self, she engages with stereotype related to her mind, body and identity. The persistence dialogic exchange does not die with her, on the contrary, it seems to transmute itself into her sister's idea of self or subjectivity. Her sister starts to question her value, status and existence in the society. She lingers on the borders of abjection too. It also highlights the hidden patterns of hypocritical system and argue instead of escaping or debunking the existing violence of system.

To conclude both the text share the bpd in women signified through food disorder, insomnia and depression and anxiety through which both the texts provide a feminist critique of patriarchal society. But unlike mad women narrative, here the psychological aspect and narrative are not silenced instead they disrupt the language of power and stigmatization of mental illness. The two narrative insists on perpetual dialogic interaction between the identities, roles and norms by positioning the female

characters at the stand point of Abjection. Thus this narrative holds a chance of a positive reform thereby, making the revolt a powerful tool to bring about a revolutionary change. “While abjection originates as a psychic process it affects all aspects of social and cultural life; it ‘is not a stage “passed through” but a perpetual process that plays a central role within the project of subjectivity” (Tyler 2009, 80). Through this constantly shifting subjectivity women will be able to “expose”, rewrite and resist the patriarchal oppression. Catherine Clement in her book *The Newly Born Woman* (1975) acknowledges that bpd women are the abjects of the social order “And more than any others women bizarrely embody this group of anomalies showing the cracks in an over-all system” (7) but she also highlights the power invested in the women through this new madness as it threatens the restrictive and suppressive hierarchies structured in the correlative binaries. They do not have to choose between the two extremes, the mother and witch, instead their identities as bpd are more liberating albeit marginal. So to establish the relationship of the boundary with the center of system Clement cites Strauss, “Their peripheral position in relation to a local system does not prevent their being an integral part of the total system in the same way that this local system is.” (8) “Somewhere every culture has an imaginary zone for what it excludes and it is that zone we must try to remember today.”(6) This paper therefore is an attempt to explore and stress the importance of the representation of borderline personality disordered women in literature to open up new avenues of discussion regarding their status in society. It is high time that the more complex female subjectivity gets represented in art to combat the repression and stigmatization of female diversity.

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## **Postcolonial Masculinity, Precarious Power and Desire in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North***

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### **Abstract**

Multiple feminists and postcolonial theorists have explored the “female experience” in the history of colonization and the postcolonial life. However male experience within the same context has not been processed enough. Gender scholars have recently begun to draw attention to the gap within postcolonial scholarship that represents male identity in legendary or heroic manner, thus repudiating the masculine sexual anxieties fostered by colonialism in the first place and by Orientalism afterwards. Taking up Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, this article will explore how the protagonist in the novel deploys his sexuality to occupy a privileged subject position in the novel; delineating how the sexualized political control over women's bodies inspires the construction of his postcolonial subjectivity. In doing so it will address the obscure notions of masculinity, the male postcolonial experience and the sexual anxieties of the African male in postcolonial African novel in opposition to the unidimensional representation of hypermasculinity in Oriental discourse.

**Keywords:** Desire, Masculinity, Novel, Postcolonial, Power, Tayeb Salih

*Season of Migration to the North* is considered as magnum opus of post-colonial travel narratives. It is written by Sudanese writer Tayeb Salih and focuses on the experience of an immigrant from the East in the western world. Mustafa Sa'eed, the protagonist of the novel, counters colonial violence by subjugating white women to his sexual prowess. The novel is referred to as a parody of colonial narrative by Wail S. Hassan (2003) as it erodes and disrupts the authority of colonialist European discourse through its double-voiced intertextuality of the past European and Arabian texts that thematizes the cross-cultural encounter in Europe (84). Mustafa, a very bright student whose wanderlust and intelligence takes him to England forms a very complex and disturbing relationship with the West in the novel. His troubled relationship with the western intellectuals and his love affairs with British women lie at the center of the narrative. Mustafa seems to attract women by appealing to their Oriental fantasies and bonding with them in unconventional ways. All his relationships end in tragedy as three of his mistresses commit suicide while he murders the fourth one. Mustafa's sexuality and the havoc it creates on himself and others is the focal point of the novel.

Setting Mustafa's life story in the era of British rule, Salih wants his reader to understand how cultural history and international politics affect the formation of postcolonial gender identity. By the violent dramatization of these turbulent relations between master/slave, white/black, Orient/Occident, Salih compels the reader to ponder and scrutinize the extent to which the colonial classifications of race allow themselves to be confronted. Just like the colonizers penetrated the land of the colonized which he considers "The Rape of Africa", the protagonist in Salih's novel wants to harm

colonizer's culture and national integrity as a whole by infecting their women with the same germ. This argumentation gives us an insight into the male postcolonial experience and feelings by placing his predicament into a broader historical narrative. It would be wrong here to define him and his actions only in sociocultural perspective.

The sexual act in its metaphorical meaning within the novel signifies the power politics in interracial relationships. The text is skeptical of any possibility for black man and a white woman to escape the relations of power in which they are initially steeped whether sexual or otherwise.

The question posed is of special relevance in view of the recent changes in the Middle East that have come to redefine the region's relations with Europe.

The article "On Borderline between Shores: Space and Place in *Season of Migration to the North*," argues that for the colonial "taking" of his country, Saeed commits to pursue revenge by seducing the British women with the pretention of satisfying their "orientalist fantasies" (Velez 191). But according to critics like Davidson, Mustafa's ventures with ladies in England, speaks of the resentment of the colonized subject against the colonizer. In his opinion the response to this novel is quite often a go to "re-establish the dominance of the emasculated, colonized male by attacking the women of the colonizer" (Davidson 388).

It is important to note here that Salih's idea of masculinity draws inspiration from the sexual politics of Fanon's work and the character sketch of Mustafa Saeed holds resemblance in particular to his theory of "New Algerian man". One of the chief strategies of colonialism was the way it striped the black men of their authority over their

women as the protectors of the house. Consequently it stirred impotency and insecurity within the colonized man who according to Fanon, wanted to occupy settler's place by sleeping in his bed with his wife to regain his lost masculinity.

Exploiting English women by seducing and then betraying them can be seen as reverse form of colonization and means of Mustafa's anticolonial resistance while some critic hold the view that Mustafa launches a "racially centered sexual crusade against Britain" (Tran 2). On the contrary it can be said that Mustafa wages a war of vengeance against the West in the similar way in which it "penetrated", "possessed" and "emasculated" the East/South. So he adopts colonial mimicry as a strategy of defiance against colonial discourse. In this sense European woman's body is an emblem of western supremacy guaranteeing the feelings of power and possession to the colonized with each sexual triumph. Salih's postcolonial aesthetics does not stand isolated from the colonial memories of the past at least on the part of the African male, as in the interracial relationships race implies a larger meaning that is battle for self-respect. (Hodge & Mishra 285).

Mike Velez in his article, points out that "when Sa'eed arrives in England, his psychological topography of the North ends up conjoined with the feminized "Other". This Other he intends to conquer and conquer literally, woman by woman" (194). Mustafa declares himself as the "invader" who could not forget or forgive the cruelty and arrogance of the colonial occupation in the East and the South. Consequently, it spurs him to counter this brutality of the West. As "The west won the world not by the superiority of its ideas or values or religion but rather by its superiority in applying

organized violence. Westerners often forget this fact, non-Westerners never do” (Huntington 51).

In an interview Salih, in response to Mustafa's ‘violent female conquests,’ comments that Mustafa wants to bring, on Europe, the same humiliation which it had inflicted upon his people. He wants to rape Europe in an allegoric manner. (Berkley & Ahmed 15-16). To use Salih's own phrase from the novel, colonialism infected the colonized victims with “the germ of violence” who combat this disease in ways that is at once problematic and effective. The above- mentioned phrase refers to the colonial history of violence.

Instead of resisting the same institution that has invaded his masculinity, Mustafa mimics the sexual violation of the colonial master by reducing white women to sexual objects and positioning them as the objectified “Other”. In his excursion to the North, he is not propelled just by hatred towards the West, but also by ambition, the ambition to overpower the colonizer in his twisted ways. Rather than choosing to be a silent victim, Mustafa tries to affect the history of colonialism by launching his sexual campaign to throw back colonialism at the colonizers and avenge them in their ways. As colonization was a violent process so is decolonization, argues Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* (35), Mustafa uses “sexual violence” to wage a war of vengeance upon the West so that it helps the native (Mustafa here) to get rid of his inferiority complex and set himself free from despair and inaction, erase his fears and restores his self-respect. (Fanon 94).

The “germ of violence” was sowed by the colonizer for their colonizing mission a thousand years ago. The colonized is the recipient of this germ of violence. It gets

stimulated by the instigation of colonial memory through the use of stereotypic Oriental discourse by those women who he believes hold a fascination for him the same way their forefathers were fascinated by his homeland. The women's credulous acceptance of Mustafa's lies reassures this notion and illustrates broader perspective of race relations. This supports the argument that it is the essential nature of North to yearn for the South. Those women were not attracted to Mustafa Sa'eed as a person but as an "object" of fascination belonging to South; they were attracted to his luring stories and his primitive culture. In the same manner what tempted the North to colonize the South was their wealth of natural resources, the raw materials and the mines

Mustafa accepts and make use of the very colonial discourse he seeks to dismantle and to retain colonial classifications of race in his relations with the women of the colonizer. This helps him to identify his mistresses as women of oppressive former masters, against whom he plots a revenge. The figure of the English woman arouses a threatening fear in him (as argued by Wail S. Hassan 2003) because the British Empire extended under the regime of a mighty woman, Queen Victoria, whose name is suggestive of "Victory" over those she subdued. Also, throughout the novel the metropolitan space is constantly gendered in the feminine. Thus, wherever Mustafa goes in London, he gets haunted by Victorian images. The repeated phrase; "the train carried away me to the Victoria Station", is symbolic of his journey from South to North, to the same station from which the armed troops of Britain set on their journey to conquest South. So is can be said, that crime of raping Africa was committed by or for the sake of a woman, the Queen who assumes the masculine role in this regard and possesses the phallic traits of

colonial violence. Thus Queen Victoria becomes a ubiquitous image of a cruel mighty goddess for Mustafa and every British woman appears to him, her proxy. Mustafa's masculine suffering and sexual anxiety turns his resentment towards West into his wrath and fury and he plays a revenge upon his English mistresses by subjugating them sexually in an exertion of metaphoric rejection of the West and to purify Africa from its history of colonial violence and oppression.

Fanon's identification of female body as the principal target of power and the political implications of sexual pleasure and eroticism have helped in highlighting the intricate relationship between power politics and sexuality. The black man not only remained subjected to colonial oppression and injustice, but also treated as an "object" of sexual pleasure by the white woman. In this sense he is being as much used by the English women he sleeps with for their "exotic fantasies" as he uses their bodies to infect the colonizers' territory.

If we observe after the hegemony of imperialism, Orientalism emerged as an attempt to construct an image of western superiority. Colonial powers did not only invade the lands of the natives but also infringed their representative faculty through art and literature. By means of western consciousness, the imperial power set up a biased discursive Orientalist discourse based on stereotypes, prejudices and insults about the Orient. This is how the West endeavoured to represent the Orient as Other in order to maintain the hierarchy of power. This again made a segregation between the East and the West, the former as culturally and intellectually inferior while the latter as culturally and morally superior. For the sustainability of these beliefs, stereotypes were

made clichés by their daemonic repetition in such a realistic manner that they seemed to be true. Colonization interposed the Orient's identity, culture and the language and divided the world into East-West axis i.e. masters-slaves, barbaric-civilized, traditional-modern which would never be same again. Hence colonization resulted in fragmented postcolonial identities and hegemonic Orientalist discourse of western consciousness further reinforced this division and contributed to an identity crisis.

This brings us face to face with a dilemma of black man's life. His predicament is, he has no other way but to define himself against the white man. Assimilation or hybridity cannot help him in a society that forever casts him an 'outsider' as he doesn't belong to the 'white spaces' and is despised when speaks 'too white'. This adds to his bewilderment. In such a situation there are two ways for the Orient male to reclaim his identity and lost masculinity. One is the straight rejection of the imposed "otherness" and confrontation with the colonists' narrative and stereotypic discourse. Second is the negation of his "negation" through acceptance as a covert form of defiance which Mustafa adopts by becoming what the westerners expect him to be, the "exotic Other". The reductive colonial discourses, full of stereotypes, clichés, prejudices and degradation of the "Other", compel Mustafa to counter this humiliation with the same violent approach and strategy as a reflection of barbaric and deceitful colonial activities. Mustafa teasingly exploits European's incalculable fallacies about Arabs and Africans alike. He cannot help defining his identity in any other way possible because he has already been defined in a stereotypic manner by the Orientalist imagination of the western society (Cartelli 156).

Mustafa's European partners perceive him as an Oriental text. For his mistresses, Mustafa's body is metonymic encryption of fascinating landscapes, "exotic" like those portrayed in Orientalist paintings and sketches. It tends to evoke general associations with what is wild and primitive and speaks volumes about evil carnal desire and craving for black sexuality. Mustafa's deceitful representation of exotic kind of masculinity breeds and sustains its belief of cultural superiority. In this sense, Mustafa has a close resemblance to Othello, Europe's oldest literary depiction of the 'Other'. However unlike Othello, in Saleh's novel, Mustafa's resistance to hegemonic colonial discourse becomes operative as his postcolonial subjectivity comes to play a subversive role within the text.

In Salih's novel gender becomes the appropriate means of demonstration of the cultural clash between the East and the West. Mustafa's sexaholics "preys" and "victims" are driven by their figment of imagination to the sexual prowess of the African "Incubus". Isabella Seymour turns this myth into reality when she pleases to Sa'eed in her passion, "Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god. Let me twist and turn in your wild and impassioned rites" (Salih 106). And this is where Mustafa questions his identity. It is perplexing to him to see how a person born on the other side of the Equator is treated by some as a slave and by others as a god. Where lies the focal point? Where lies his true identity? (Salih 108)

Ann, Isabella and Jean are not mere characters of the novel, in fact they are archetypes and representative of their culture, which is obvious in the way, the narrator associates them with the European city; the city often transforms into a woman. For

example: In Sa'eed's first meeting with Isabella, he tells the narrator, "The city has changed into a woman" (39). The episode of sexual encounter between Mustafa and Jean Morris is rightly said to be a 'clash', because of the metaphoric warfare setting that is suggestive of a battle between the two, the woman again appears as a city. "The city was transformed into an extraordinary woman, with her symbols and her mysterious calls, towards whom I drove my camels till their entrails ached and I myself almost died for yearning for her" (34)

As a 'liberator' Mustafa's mission is to save Africa by the destruction of the aphrodisiac "germ" of imperialistic myths that has always lain in "these women" and the culture they belong to; the infection of the deadly disease that had plagued those women couple of years ago except that it has lain inactive for many years waiting for appropriate stimulation. But the West has made those accountable for this germ who merely "stirred" it from its centuries-long suppression, or slumber; "I had stirred up the latent depths of the disease until it had got out of control and had killed" (Salih 34) those women. The same logic works in Isabella's case when "she met him and discovered deep within herself dark areas that had previously been closed" (140) by the time.

The political aspect of the cultural conflict becomes evident when one reflects upon the idea that "politics not only ought to be but inevitably is the outcome of social interests and conflicts, and that it is in fact a superstructure upon society" (Canovan 66). In other words, politics is the framework of social beliefs, societal rules, regulations and philosophies upon which the social structure of any community rests. His Professor Maxwell Foster-Keen perceives Mustafa's symbolic trial in this sense of clash of

cultures; "Mustafa Sa'eed, gentlemen of the jury, is a noble person whose mind was able to absorb western civilization but it broke his heart." So he is actually a "victim" of the "struggle" of the "conflict between two worlds" (33). Subsequently along with Sa'eed, the western civilization is also put to trial. Mustafa in this regard is aware of the truth that it is the case which is important not "him" because, obviously he is "the best example of the fact that our civilizing mission in Africa is of no avail" (93). Therefore, the relation of love and affection between the West and Africa is as impossible as it is between Sa'eed and his western mistresses.

Jean Morris, a symbol of Britain itself, is ravished by the desire to possess Mustafa, the man who represents the Orient with all its fantasies intact. The all-consuming and destructive relationship between the two has all the bearings of a tragic end. The repeated references to "The train carried me to Victoria Station and to the world of Jean Morris (29, 31, 33) is a proof of Mustafa's infatuation with the woman who emerges powerful and out of reach, an intuitive image and symbol of Empire. To Mustafa, Jean is as unachievable as Victoria Station, the city of London, and the Empire. She, just like them, is beyond his reach, ungraspable like clouds, which he always desires to possess, "a mirage [that] shimmered before me in the wilderness of longing" (Salih 33).

Throughout the novel we observe that the colonial discourse distorts the notion of gender and sexuality and puts Mustafa's masculinity into question. As compared to Ann, Sheila and Isabella who were attracted to him due to his Oriental persona, Jean Morris relates to him more as a man than as an African. She is different from the rest of his mistresses in the way she arouses genuine violence and passion in him. She is

what he at once craves and despises. For Mustafa, Jean Morris is the spectre of haunting suspicions, fears, resentment and insecurities that he harbours towards the West.

Her insults that are directed at his masculinity render him impotent in his mind. He wants to conquer the white civilization by possessing their women but Jean Morris is unconquerable. He fails to defeat and discard her like the rest of his mistresses, so he kills her. As soon as Mustafa meets Jean Morris, his avenger game and victorious crusade against his colonizers begins to show the signs of defeat. This keeps him awake all night and in the morning, he feels that he has lost the combat once again. “When I grasped her it was like grasping at clouds” (Salih 34). She is an “object” he can never possess, instead, he is “possessed” by her. “I was the invader who had come from the South, and this was the icy battlefield from which I would not make a safe return. I was the pirate sailor and Jean Morris the shore of destruction” (Salih 160). He enters North as a “pirate sailor” to invade but “hath boarded a land carrack” (1.2.50) that threatens to wreck him and leave him in shambles.

Mustafa’s efforts to possess her are futile. He realizes that he has been defeated by Jean Morris in this battle. So, the only way left to get triumph over her is to murder her. His triumph is not complete, even after killing her as she refuses to die alone. In her last words to him, she desires to die with him: “Come with me Come with me. Don’t let me go alone” (165). Jean’s call to die with her haunts him, “the train will always carry him to Victoria Station and to the world of Jean Morris” until he answers it. He states, “Everything which happened before my meeting her was a premonition; everything I did after I killed her was an apology; not for killing her, but for the lie that was my life” (Salih 29).

Jean at once accepts and challenges socially assigned gender and racial roles in her own way. She does not question Mustafa's misogyny, engrained in the rhetoric of colonial discourse. Like Mustafa conforming to Africanist and Orientalist stereotypes she too complies with gender stereotypes in an effort to challenge Mustafa's notions of masculinity. In Hassan's words if he acts like Shahrayar, she becomes Sheherazade, (the characters from *The Arabian Nights*) and if he claims to be Othello, she acts out Desdemona (the characters from Shakespearean play *Othello*). However, Jean presents a rendition of these roles, distinguishing herself from her female prototypes, without overtly contesting them.

If Sheherazade and Desdemona are paragon of male desire, Jean refuses to be its embodiment, instead acting out its antithesis. Like Sheherazade who ends Shahrayar's daily crucifixion of women as some distorted form of revenge on the other sex, Jean puts an end to Mustafa's crusade against the English women. And like Sheherazade, she does so by complying with patriarchal gender discourse. They are similar despite the fact that they exemplify completely opposite paradigms of femininity in masculine imagination. Sheherazade is ever the submissive and devoted wife, and even her crafty handling of the king through storytelling leads to his ethical and spiritual reform while Jean remains the dominant and controlling wife.

Standing in contrast to Sheherazade, Jean is the 'femme fatale' who lures her husband into dangerous or troubled situations. Instead of Sheherazade's artistic tales, Jean tells self-fabricated and exaggerated unbelievable stories about the common incidents that occur to her and about the people she meets; her tales parallels Mustafa's

role playing of Othello and parodies his seductive lies. This undermines the audacity with which he plays his various assumed roles. She constantly emasculates him by destroying the objects of self-exoticism in his house. In one episode of the novel, she smacks down an antique vase, pulls into pieces an old Arabic script, and burns a prayer mat and kicks him right between his thighs (156-57) which is a metaphoric castration in a sense that she reduces him to a dephallicized, emasculated man. Such role reversals converts the masquerading Shahrayar (Mustafa) from king to slave and his great Sassanian capital, an analogy to Mustafa's Oriental bedroom, a harem where sexual fantasies are woven, into a destroyed city afflicted by an epidemic.

The 'murder scene' in the novel is quite significant in its connection to Mustafa's sexual crusade and his anti-colonial mission. However, colonial stereotypes of a savage black man killing a white woman, let say Othello's killing of Desdemona is portrayed quite graphically. Yet Salih manipulates it in such a way that it gives the impression of white woman craving to die with his lover in the throes of sexual ecstasy. By deconstructing the stereotypical image of a racialized murder, Salih enables both Mustafa and Jean to set themselves free from the burden of former stereotypical roles of a superior westerner and treacherous native. This scene is an annihilation of racial stereotypes as their interracial marriage is no longer constrained by bars of racial differences.

However, it is important to take into account that after Jean's frequent call to die with her, Mustafa does not die with her. Despite his genuine love for Jean, the tragedy is that he fails to view her as anything other than a white woman. It is the reflection of

same struggle within Isabella to view him as anything other than a black man and this thing is the cause of their destruction. Even when he admires Jean's beauty the selection of his words is like; she seems more beautiful than "anything" rather than "anyone" in the universe.

After joining the University of London and committing to spend his life in an effort to symbolically "reverse" the British history of colonialism that exists in the binaries of master/salve, Mustafa launches a psychological war of vengeance upon the colonizers. (Makdisi 811). However, Mustafa's intense battle with the Occident takes place when Jean Morris comes in his life. She intercedes his colonizing mission by serious confrontation. She seems to be the emblem of Queen Victoria or Britishers ready to recolonize Sa'eed, the East. She is aware of his weaknesses and humiliates him differently from his other mistresses. She is different from Isabella Seymour, who begs him to take her. "Ravish me, you African demon. Burn me in the fire of your temple, you black god" (Salih 106) and Sheila Greenwood who exclaims: "how marvelous your black color is! (...) the color of magic and mystery and obscenities" (Salih 139), and Ann who wants to be her sex slave: "you are Mustafa, my master and my lord....and I am Sausan (name of one of Abu Nuwas' lover), your slave girl" (Salih 146).

On the other hand, Jean doesn't get trapped in Mustafa's tricks and instead she confronts him and dares him when she is told that he will kill her: "My sweet, you're not the kind of man that kills." (Salih 159) This burns in him "a feeling of ignominy, loneliness, and loss" (Salih 159). Jean vows to hate him until death and this hatred of her makes him feel the slave and the prey of the West again. Regardless of his

“civilized” appearance and social status, this English society will despise him forever. Jean concludes Mustafa’s conquest that becomes the cause of his destruction. Mustafa clearly admits: “having been a hunter, I had become the quarry” (Salih 159). This blow of misfortune leads to his downfall as a tragic hero who came to West as an invader, but returns to his home town defeated.

Mustafa in his relations with his European lovers views them essentially alike and places them in same category of oppressive West as for him all his English mistresses, due to their race are directly or indirectly responsible for the continuation of the norm of colonial oppression. Jean appears to be the symbol of the colonial forces and Mustafa’s killing her could thus be inferred as an unconscious act of retaliation, cleansing Africa’s history to level the scores. In this way, Mustafa’s act of killing demonstrates a desire to “strategically reorganize the racially isolated to a place where violence ought to be seen as a purgative force so as to set the colonized free from permanent suffering” (Fanon 73-4). As for him violence proves to be a catharsis or cleansing force for the oppressed ones. In his theory of “liberatory mediation”, Lewis Gordon claims that the colonizer tries to achieve psychological freedom by mistreating his oppressor (71).

Irrepressible violence is not anger or ferocity which is a general meaning implied to violence, neither the reviving of violent instincts nor even the result of hatred: on a deeper level it is man recreating himself. Through violence the oppressed finds an outlet for his boiling rage and anger that cures him of colonial neurosis. In this way he rediscovers his lost innocence and he comes to know himself (Sartre 18). But one should take into account that violence here is used in its wider meaning, it does not only

stands for bullets, knives and stones. Violence basically is a form of “taking” which will not be willingly surrendered. (Gordon 80). To Mustafa Saeed, an invader reclaiming his masculinity and lost identity, a European woman's body appears as an emblem of western sovereignty; he wants her under his subservience; the idea of power, authority and ownership reverberates after each sexual conquest. The notion of race in cross-cultural relations becomes integrated with a greater struggle for self-respect. Fanon's idea of freedom entails psychological liberation in such a way that it brings creation of a new man. In his conviction through violence the colonized individual can transform from his earlier existence as a “thing” into his new existence as a “human being”. However, Salih's novel brings the understanding of the dilemma of Mustafa's life to his readers. In the creation of “new” him, he inevitably perpetuates racial stereotypes as he cannot divorce himself from colonial consciousness. A detachment from the colonial memory is quite necessary for this purpose. To our surprise Mustafa's most cherished relationship, the one with Jean Morris culminates in her demise as she keeps on pleading Mustafa to murder her during sexual intercourse and with that his ships sail towards the shores of destruction.

Indeed in this game of deceits and lies the truth is spoken for the very first time during the murder episode: this scene in the novel acts as critical phase of progress towards the possible destruction of racism within the novel, as before this incident Mustafa wasn't willing to show any kind of compassion or kindness towards his lovers. The display of mixed emotions of affection and hostility towards Jean in the murder scene is thus the finest expression of ‘love’ which the readers also witness. The desired

insertion of knife in Jean's chest is symbolic of a moment of 'ecstasy'. Thus the sadistic act of murder highlights Jean's yearning for death in the hands of her lover as some form of sexual gratification.

However, as Mustafa leans over to kiss her, he expresses his genuine love towards his wife. This delayed moment of intimacy between the two sets the pace for the murder, the climax of sex, yet an act of 'love' which suggests that the relation of love between a migrant and a former colonists is possible if it's free from the burden of memories of the past and every sort of gender and racial stereotypes. Subjecting the white women to his sexual prowess is the only way for him to assert his dominance over the West and in doing so, he mimics the very power structures he seeks to dismantle. Through his sexual encounters he avenges the penetration of the East by the West and "liberate Africa with [his] penis" (120). By enticing the English women he reclaims his "masculinity" a metonymic equivalent of annihilating the territory and playing the revenge in the ways of his enemies (Hassan 92). Hence the novel deals with the dilemma of his masculinity linked to the sexualization of colonial politics. In his remorseless struggle of survival and pursuit for a true identity he suffers disillusionment in the end. He suffers masculine and sexual anxiety.

After Mustafa's sudden disappearance, the narrator of the novel starts to question his own existence and in this nervousness he too jumps into the Nile, but all of sudden he prefers life over death. He swims to the shore with this excuse: "I choose life. I shall live because there are a few people I want to stay with for the longest possible time and because I have duties to discharge...If I am unable to forgive, then I shall try to forget"

(169). The words “forgive” and “forget” here are noteworthy. Perhaps it's Salih's appeal to forgive and forget the colonial memories of the past and start living in a new world of peace and acceptance. Mustafa's autobiography on its first page has this dedication: “To those who see with one eye, speak with one tongue and see things as either black or White, either Eastern or Western.” (151). Indeed this statement is heart wrenching and is evocative of his struggle to live in a society devoid of individual freedom, racial and cultural equality and justice.

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## **Revolution in Depiction of Female Gender in Fairy Tales and Walt Disney Films: An Exploration**

Dr Amara Khan

### **Abstract**

Children's literature demands serious consideration because it promotes and invites critical theory, especially in the scholarship of the texts relative to children's development as readers. The article documents certain moves in this approach so as to establish the progress of a discipline related to scholastic response and contemporary exploration. Thus, conspicuous areas of my focus in feminist theory will contain discernment in sex/gender, subjugation, economic bias, control and dominance, gender roles, and stereotypes. I have observed the dual opinions about the female character, presented by the patriarchal fairy tale, delivering mainly recognisable consideration to the absence of care to the traditional inactive princess, and the consequent presentation of the resilient horrific woman character. In the article, I realise the girl in the text of the fairy tale in relation to its depiction in Walt Disney adaptations in order to ascertain an assortment of perspectives on girlhood across borders.

**Keywords:** Dominance, Fairy tales, Gender roles, Patriarchy, Stereotypes, Subjugation, Walt Disney

It is through social interaction that we attain gender. For several people, the activity is initiated already prior to their birth, with the parents choosing names when they know the sex of the unborn baby, and by embellishing the new baby's chamber and picking her/his playthings and garments in specific colours that denote social expectancies and orthodox attitudes. In patriarchal societies it has been observed that from childhood onwards, it is specifically the girls who are visibly controlled by family, peer groups, media, and the society at large, who explicate to the girls what is normally expected from them in terms of their looks and the way they must live their lives. I here discuss fairy tale narratives to realise how gender depiction in the fairy tales suits the cultural experience of the society in which they are communicated. Besides, the purpose of the study is to explore how and why many of the texts published in recent years along with their film adaptations should be judiciously compared with their precursors to define the scope to which their content and their style of exhibiting specifically female gender adapt to the norms into the twenty first century.

The archetypal conclusion of majority of the fairy tales is that the virtuous girl gallops away with a prince, who averts her gloom and she weds him to be the royalty in his palace with the delighted approval of the Prince's parents. What does such conclusion communicate to a little girl-reader? Perhaps that it is only when the prince marries a girl, she starts to live a satisfied life.

The purpose of this analysis is to highlight that children's literature demands serious academic concern and that children's literature promotes and invites critical theory, especially in the study of the relation of texts to children's maturity as readers.

The article documents some contemporary moves in this mode so as to establish the progress of a discipline apt for academic response and contemporary study.

Fairy tales have presented the female in her miscellaneous aspects: virtuous and disagreeable. While numerous of the woman figures in fairy tales are inactive, for example Snow White and Cinderella, there are women who endeavour to complete their social ambitions. But, we see that such striving females in the fairy tales are constantly considered as vindictive, terrible, conniving, and scheming other females and males. Nowadays that our current society is becoming more progressive of various exhibitions in life, do we genuinely need to specify to our offsprings that women are soft and delicate and survive when a male intercedes?

Even when we have made a lot of progress in science and challenge the existence of truth in all aspects, the fairy tales are nevertheless a gratification to read. We like the characters we grow up learning from the books and movies. There are stories that support the notion that intelligent women are often not the desired ones. If women want to modify the stereotype, then the tales of castles and princesses require a little change.

### **Research Methodology**

Patriarchy's important elements specifically in the 20th century onwards are the male domination and male identification persona. For the sake of accuracy, it should be observed that the expression *patriarchy* is used in three distinguishing meanings in modern English. Firstly it can be used in the clerical sense, affirming the authority of men as Christian heads. Secondly, patriarchy is used to state the authorities of the husband/father over his spouse and children (Ruth 1998: 57). Thirdly the expression is

used in feminist critiques to discuss the male authority over women. In the article, it is second and third inference of the expression that is executed. Some researchers use other terms in discoursing the same idea; for instance, Holter (2005) prefers the expression “structural gender inequality” to “patriarchy”. It is similarly of importance that the theory of patriarchy is only one of the numerous theories describing the propagation of power between men and women. We can say that patriarchy is cherishing masculinity and downgrading femininity. Thus, striking areas of my attention in feminist theory will comprise of bias on the base of sex and gender, fiscal disparity, authority and suppression, gender roles, and stereotypes.

The questions of masculinity and authority are normally expected as supplementary; thus, male authority is also of concern in the article. Primarily I have perceived to what level the male authority becomes manifest through the actions of the male characters in the fairy tales and their adaptations; do they really set their authority into action? Or, are men only the projections of women’s points of view? The character of the father of the family represents daunting power over women; nevertheless, the character can correspondingly be considered more than this – a challenging analysis is whether his actions are explained somehow. My other purpose is to treasure examples how women themselves are (even without being aware of it) involved in assisting patriarchal structures.

I comprehend the artfulness of the adapted female through the study of the twin opinions about the female character, presented by the patriarchal fairy tale, giving chiefly close deliberation to the scarcity of support fundamental to the traditional inactive

princess embodiment, and the ensuing villainy of the determined outrageous female disposition. I study these representations through distinctive patriarchal accounts of the fairy tales.

How are girls portrayed in scripted and graphic texts, and how do these representations evaluate our consideration of girlhood? In the article, I see the girl in the transcript of the fairy tale in relation to its representation in Walt Disney adaptations in order to discover a series of perspectives on girlhood across borders and in relation to their place in society. In academic texts, there are girls who are presented as dependents on male gender yet simultaneously we see girls who empower themselves and others with long-lasting influence.

### **Literature Review**

There is no contesting the information that Brother Grimm's fairy tales are acclaimed across the earth. They are the select tales for children and have been adapted to films as well as TV dramas. I here perceive the trends in the elucidation of female gender in fairy tales and their film adaptations as vehicles for considering how gender construction has advanced and developed, and to focus on the gaps in knowledge and analysis. My motive is to encourage new directions in the field of female gender representation in academic texts and film adaptations to assure true female portrayal in the succeeding years.

The fairy tales are connected with beliefs, values, and experiences of people. As a model, the story of 'Sleeping Beauty' suggests a recognisable fairy tale that describes a gorgeous sleeping princess, a tremendous witch, and a gracious prince

who saves the princess. The well-known story has its origins in verbal accounts that date back to uncountable times. The fact that this account has lasted countless times, joined with the seriousness of the fairy tale crux due to which it is generally available and hence extremely consistent, is possibly why current researchers assert that the academic fairy tale personification can be observed as a plan that frames the character of society and performs as a depiction for pointing out common social experiences (Zipes 7). Nevertheless, this proof of the fairy tale understanding is perplexing as the key noteworthy situation we have to the initial developing fairy tales are the academic tales that have continued in scripted practice; a distinctiveness that was saved for the accomplished and lucky men for disseminating visibly patriarchal ideals of supremacy through a re-articulation of woman character and a domination of the female attitude. The fairy tales normally place the female as the miserable target whom a witch threatens and who desires to be freed by a patriarchal prince.

The patriarchal academic fairy tales expose gender discords through the exhibited depiction of gender fundamental to the fairy tale standard, and particularly through the depiction of females; what Max Luthi considers the ‘stylised, starkly structured’ (Luthi 53), way of the ‘tendency to the extremes’ (Luthi 43), that displays through the analysis of female character in the characters of respectable and corrupt, dutiful and influential, flawless princess, and a witch. These splits postulate that the conformist, virtuous female is a non-violent wife and mother whereas the female who discards this description would be seen as unconventional and, thus, malicious.

Unpacking the twin woman figures exposes that the women are not as diverse

as the patriarchal fairy tale plot recommends, and an analysis into the various fairy tales discloses that female trouble may be recognised by understanding the gender discords that ally 'masculine' with 'active' and 'feminine' with 'passive'.

We see that in a fairy tale, the protagonist is normally flawless. She is gorgeous, concerned, cooperative, and sociable. But simultaneously she is consistently helpless, lacks brain, and is passive. She has no motivation in life as well. Alternatively we see female characters who show signs of cleverness and determination but they are considered as vindictive and terrible. I believe that the females portrayed as passive and delicate in the initial account of fairy tales was perhaps for the women's social standing. Women were shown as accessories to men. However, fortunately the social standing of women has elevated with time.

Marie Catherine d' Aulnoy's fairy tales praise the everlasting attractiveness, bigheartedness, and affection for the fairies. It was in 1750, that the expression "fairy tale" was used in English for the first time and afterwards the fairy tales have advanced much in importance and are more common and intricate. According to Mason there is a discernment that Disney films are child-friendly (not to indicate childish) entertainments that are absolutely suitable to appreciate when young, but are not of substance for more sensitive adults who have a wealth of more fitting, mature amusement choices accessible to them. (3)

Most of the girls take delight in reading fairy tales. Normally three of the select fairy tales are *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White* and that is perhaps because of Walt Disney. There are chances that a girl reading these fairy tales would fancy

marrying a gorgeous “prince” when she is mature. Nevertheless an accomplished and emancipated girl can consider that why does she have to wed a “prince”? Why does she have to economically depend on her husband? Why cannot she survive alone? The relationships among the characters, especially the ones disturbing the female characters may sway adolescents’ understanding. They may conclude that a girl ought to depend on her husband and obey his commands.

Disney has always been led by White men and the princess movies have been produced by White men. This provides a rationale for why every princess movie includes some form of gender and racial stereotyping and why “seven of the eleven official Disney Princesses are white” (Cordwell, 2016, p. 15); and, those that are not have been adopted from fairytales that depict women through racist European views. (Laemle)

However, in times, Disney films transformed from the males safeguarding the females, to the females safeguarding the males. Let us prod into the concealed messages that the stories convey. Initial Disney fairy tales showed the means the patriarchal cultures silenced and oppressed women and made them passive. In the sociology of gender, conflict theory focuses on how gender and expectations and partialities about gender disparities identify independence of males, suppression of females, and the simple discrimination of females in relation to males. The gendered power dynamics are established into the social structure, and thus revealed through all the aspects of a patriarchal society.

In the fairy tales we see that it is compulsory for women to sacrifice their lives for their families. Significant fairy tale literature in patriarchal societies supports the

view that females must be married, mothers, passive, and selfless. A virtuous woman in stories is to be soft, inactive, controlled in her wants, gorgeous, and keen to marry. Such a woman is the flawless character of virtue, brilliance, and youth and is here the individual to study her character, social connection, authority, and dominance.

Red Riding Hood is an apt model of a little girl attracting her target, the wolf, after she goes out of her home. In all times family is ultimate and the bravest journeys are undeniably not taken alone. While, Red Riding Hood is self-sufficient, bold, and goes to the jungle independently to get to her granny's home but she becomes a target of a wolf foreboding young girls that they must not go out alone. The first fairy tales are perplexing for a young girl as the fairy tales on one hand exhibit that submissiveness is the main respected characteristic a woman can possess in life but on the other hand, despite all virtues, it is definitely not the female who can protect herself from exploitation or an objectionable state; but always the male that must guard her.

### **Discussion: Cinderella**

Cinderella is a fairy tale printed in 1950 and scripted by the Brothers Grimm. *Giambattista Basile* was the initial composed European account of *Cinderella* that was printed in Napoli (Naples) in Italian. In Basile's tale, the sewing instructor of the protagonist, called *Zezenia*, encourages *Zezenia* to murder her stepmother by striking an enormous trunk on the stepmother's head. *Zezenia*'s father thenceforth weds the sewing instructor, who demonstrates that she is even eviler in comparison to the first stepmother, decreasing *Zezenia* to the position of servant and calling her "Cinderella cat" (Bazzi, 2015).

We have a pertinent model of Cinderella in the initial version of the story who

is happy at the conclusion of the fairy tale as the prince marries her. She is presented as a virtuous girl who has all the commendable virtues to be courted by the prince; she works for the family and endures all whilst staying quiet. The story shows that such women are always compensated in the long run. However, along with the guarantee of compensation are also the forewarnings to little girls of what will occur to them if they would decide to become a rebel. The 1950's film, *Cinderella*, also uses that stereotype. In the story it seems as if women are commodities for men to choose and buy. The woman figures in the original fairy tale are poles apart. One set of females is gorgeous, affable, dutiful, and well-behaved. This is revealed through the character of Cinderella as she attends to her mother's commands, prays to God, and submits to her stepmother and stepsisters. Alternatively are the stepmother and two stepsisters of Cinderella. They are vindictive, terrible, and jealous of Cinderella's attractiveness.

The Brothers Grimm in their fairy tale took a reformist amendment in the story by displaying that Cinderella regularly complained about her circumstances, sobbed and made demands, and Charles Perrault later restated the story. On 13 March 2015, a film of *Cinderella* produced the 1950 live-film. In the current account of *Cinderella*, produced in 2015, the stepmother is also gorgeous like Cinderella. Branagh who directed *Cinderella* said, "the film features an evolution that affects all the characters, reminding us that existence can't just be seen in black and white" (Bazzi). The production endorses Radical feminism where being a woman is perceived as an encouraging thing in itself and believes that patriarchy can be astounded if women realise their own standing and power, start a sisterhood of self-confidence with other women, oppose suppression

judiciously, and set female-based campaigner networks in the inaccessible and local spheres.

### **Sleeping Beauty**

*Sleeping Beauty* is an archetypal fairy tale composed by Charles Perrault. Brothers Grimm printed a verbally communicated account of the tale in 1697. In the initial account, the Queen Leah had no dialogues in *Sleeping Beauty*. In the tale, the writer unveiled that when the princess (Aurora) was born, three fairies give her the gift of beauty, expression, and long life. The prince in the tale also falls in love with Aurora at the first sight. The witch in the story, who was vindictive, damned Aurora. But in the animated movie: the birth of Aurora and her appearance do not match the initial version. Till 1959 with the fairy tale, *Sleeping Beauty*, we are fixated on women waiting for their “Prince charming” to come take them away.

In 2014, the latest movie entitled *Maleficent* was adapted from the *Sleeping Beauty*. The storyline of this movie is strongly innovative. The basis why Maleficent in the movie is “evil” is elucidated: Stephan, who is the king of human kingdom, harms her to propagate his own power. Maleficent, therefore, resolves to reprimand the king when she knows that Stephan and the queen are blessed with a daughter, Aurora, the Princess. Superficially Maleficent curses Aurora but she also takes after Aurora and guards her surreptitiously. With time, Maleficent discovers that she in fact is fond of Aurora and she distresses for troubling her. She attempts all she is capable of to eliminate the spell, but is disappointed. When Aurora sleeps because of the curse, the prince’s kiss has no worth which is different from the initial story. Only Maleficent’s kiss can make Aurora

conscious. At the conclusion of the tale, Maleficent wipes away the conflict between human kingdom and Moors, and Aurora is made the queen of human kingdom. In the latest tale, Maleficent is not vindictive at all as she is in the initial account.

### **Snow White**

*Snow White* is a renowned German fairy tale. The Brothers Grimm printed it in 1812 in the main issue of their compilation, *Grimms' Fairy Tales*. In 1854, they produced the eventual account of the tale. There is the distinction between the vigorous female and quiet in the original story. The Queen and Snow White may be compatibly gorgeous, but they are unique considering their levels of veracity.

In *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, it is the dwarfs who safeguard Snow White. But it is vital to note that the dwarfs, the males, are clear concerning the circumstances in which Snow White is permitted to stay with them. Snow White, a female, on the other hand is reliant on the dwarfs and does all the house chores truly and, thus, the universal kind of females doing the housekeeping occurs. Snow White says, "Because they are the superior group, white men do not have to do the 'dirty work', such as housework; the most inferior group does it..." thus stressing the birth of the social creation of gender. It is, nevertheless, Snow White's simplicity and curiosity that make her unlock the door and allow the witch inside the house, notwithstanding the fact that the clever dwarfs have alerted her to be watchful. She ultimately endures her condition till a prince rescues her. In *Snow White*, the attention is on a woman waiting for a gentleman to discover her and fulfill her desires which in reality is a "codependency" as the prince similarly requires a companion to live a comfortable life.

In 1937, Disney prepared the *Snow White* as a film. The film shows that the eventual glory is living harmless and submissive, and this fetches Snow White prevalent rewards: the jovial care of wood creatures, the shelter by the dwarfs, and ultimately an attractive and proper suitor (Wilson). The TV movie *Snow White: the Fairest of Them All* ran in 2001. A live-action was created in 2012. In the tale, the Snow White governs the state rather than expecting to take it as a gift for her veracity. In *Mirror Mirror*, a movie that was produced in 2012, the Snow White is clever. She protects the prince when he is under the queen's curse. She kills the giant and also protects her father. At the marriage of Snow White and the prince, an old woman, who is the Queen, offers Snow White an apple, but she does not eat it. Another film is *Snow White and Huntsman*. The huntsman, who could have killed Snow White in the wood, performs the leading character in the film. He transforms Snow White into a rebel and with the aid of the huntsman, the dwarfs, and the prince, Snow White fights with the Queen.

### **Findings/Conclusion: Reasons of Transformation**

In the initial account of the three fairy tales, the biological mothers have no manifestation; princes forever succeed in the conclusion; striving females are considered as vindictive and terrible, and virtuous females are gorgeous, quiet, enthusiastic to marry, and constrained of any motivation. Karen Rowe (1986) claims, "Fairy tales prescribe restrictive social roles for women and perpetuate 'alluring fantasies' of punishment and reward: passivity, beauty, and helplessness lead to marriage, conferring wealth and status, whereas self-aware, 'aggressive', and powerful women experience social censure and are either ostracized or killed" (237-57). Feminists believe that the reality behind the notion presented in the fairy tales that the beautiful and prosperous females should

be inactive is in reality the story of subordinating women under patriarchy. Before 20th century, the chief purpose behind the elucidation of women as fragile and inactive was the females' social standing at the time. The women were economically reliant on men. They were, thus, inhibited in household tasks. Men, on the other hand, "move in the public domain where they are in possession of economic resources to fund the domestic expenses" (Siddiqui, 2010:1).

The findings of the study clearly show that in the current films, the responsibilities of active females in the fairy tales are being transformed. Fairy tales are starting to identify the modification in communal morals, being advanced and changed to reflect the prevailing culture and their current morals. The responsibilities of females are nowadays varying in today's society and females acquire upper societal standing as compared to early times. However, gender discrimination still occurs in certain patriarchal societies. Allowing the modern adaptation of the fairy tales, the directors modify the feminine duty in their films. The "good" women no longer merely retain physical attraction. They are more progressive and smart. Similarly, the villainous women are no longer only terrible. They are more intricate and conscious.

As several people observe males and females as counterparts, it is vital that the tales young boys and girls are offered represent the choice of conduits presented to them in actual life. Therefore, it is central for the woman to be considered in miscellaneous responsibilities than what were regarded as conventional. The additional responsibilities can incorporate entrepreneurs, single, fighter, and widows to denote the possibilities that females now face. Fairy tales are vital pieces of children's literature that have had a never-ending impression on our culture. The archetypal accounts have been reiterated

over generations and now have been adapted into main film productions loved by not only children but by people of every age. Fairy tales are starting to incorporate the modification in societal ethics, being innovative and changed to impersonate the existing society and their current ethics. Nowadays the responsibilities of women are shifting towards positivity. They have more sovereignty to make choices and more variations in their lives as they use their extraordinarily enunciated ideas.

The previous Walt Disney films exhibit that perhaps Disney considered that America is a nation run by males, and females are subordinate. Fortuitously, as we advanced to current era, this view was discarded. Walt Disney has recently developed tales such as *The Little Mermaid* (1989), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991), *Pocahontas* (1995), *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1996), *Hercules* (1997), *Mulan* (1998), *Princess and the Frog* (2009), *Tangled* (2010), and *Brave* (2012) where the female protagonists are not inactive characters but they struggle to make their dreams come true.

In Disney's tempting thriller, *The Little Mermaid*, a defiant 16-year-old mermaid, Ariel, is delighted with life on land. On one of her visits to the surface, which are barred by her dominant father, King Triton, she falls in love with a human prince. Correspondingly Belle is a fanciful character who performs in Walt Disney Pictures' feature film *Beauty and the Beast*. Belle is the non-conforming daughter who longs to desert her village life for endeavour. When a horrid beast traps her father, Maurice, Belle offers the beast her personal independence as an exchange for her father's, and ultimately falls in love with the Beast though he has horrible looks. Belle's determination shows that she has her own idea of how she wants to live her life, henceforth, declaring "Independence".

*Pocahontas* is a great movie for women freedom. The princess follows her heart

and stands up for herself and others. In *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, Esmerelda is a free-spirited woman who refuses to admit being fragile. In the 1997 film, *Hercules*, Meg is a goddess who speaks her mind, and has an exclusive belief in falling in love. In *Mulan*, there is a woman protagonist confronting the chauvinisms her nation practices.

In 2009, with the issue of *Princess and the Frog*, Tiana is presented as a hard working girl, who works hard to accomplish her aspiration. In the 2010 film, *Tangled*, Rapunzel is a blessed girl, who leaves her life behind to follow her fantasy which gives her determination and independence. And in 2012, *Brave* was released and brought us a strange kind of princess. Merida will rest at nothing to design a fresh life for herself. Such an exciting variation in the nature of fairy tales confirms how society can progress.

Individuals must struggle to support the modification in social ethics and imitate these variations in its prevailing works of art (Nanda 2014: 246-250). In doing so the traditional display of the female gender as shown in Fairy tales may be assumed from diverse perspectives, and modern readers might be keener to take them. Researchers having concern in the particular field may embrace oral and written folk fairy tale narrative with reference to its societal, historic, and religious backdrop and to the relationship between literature and oral narrative. The historians' rigorous appraisal of folk and fairy tales as historic documents may have the probability to enlarge the folk narrative scholar's acute awareness of the layers of information given by folk and fairy tales.

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