



REVISITING RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER in Literature and Language

A Collection of A.B. Sri Mulyani, Ph.D.'s Articles



Editors:

Diksita Galuh Nirwinastu

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Penerbit:
Fakultas Sastra, Universitas Sanata Dharma



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Prodi Sastra Inggris, Fakultas Sastra

Universitas Sanata Dharma, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Diterbitkan oleh



Fakultas Sastra,

Universitas Sanata Dharma

Jl. Affandi, Mrican Yogyakarta 55281

Telp. (0274) 513301, 515253

Cetakan pertama 2020

xii, 303 pages; 148 x 210 mm

ISBN 978-623-7601-09-8

Hak cipta dilindungi Undang-Undang (UU No. 19 Tahun 2002)

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PREFACE

This book is a personal and professional record of my struggles as a young researcher in the 1990s to my recent works and research interests in the 2000s as a senior researcher at the English Department of Sanata Dharma University. In light of time, my academic journey does indeed span in two different centuries; accordingly, it also informs the diversity and dynamic of topics, genres, and critical theories employed in my works.

Throughout my research, I have explored different kinds of literary genres, particularly those three traditional ones: prose, drama, and verse; however, this book mainly displays only the prose selection. The prose analyzed in this book includes fiction prose such as short stories and novels as well as non-fiction prose such as letters, diaries, and autobiographies. In addition, it also has one selection of film that today has already become an acceptable research object in English Literature and Language studies.

This book provides two different perspectives in its development. On one hand in its early works, as the academic products of a young researcher and an absolute beginner, some articles in this book provide simple yet confident working theories with straightforward and uncomplicated applications in researching literature with sample discussions and analysis. On the other hand, as the works of a senior researcher who struggles with recent critical theories, some later articles have attempted to problematize the complexity of literature within its aesthetic and political dimension (although not without skeptical mind and eyes) by focusing on the intersectionality of race, class, and gender with its each specificity and heterogeneity. Therefore, upon the publication of this book, the readership I have in mind, is young and beginner researchers who struggle to do the academic research in language and literature, who will have to travel the long and winding roads but eventually will also discover their personal and

professional destinations. If I can do it as displayed in this book, they certainly will do better at it in their own pace and time.

Gratitude and thanks are due to all my senior and junior colleagues for their supports, contributions, feedbacks, and mentoring throughout my career at the English Department of Sanata Dharma. Particular thanks to Hirmawan Wijanarka, the Chair of our English Department, who also edits and initiates the publication of this book; and also Arina Istianah and Diksita Galuh Nirwastu as the co-editors of this book.

This book is dedicated to the loving memory of A. Aryanto and F.X. Siswadi.

INTRODUCTION: REVISITING RACE, CLASS AND GENDER

My first serious attempt at academic writing is undoubtedly my undergraduate thesis: *A Stylistic Study on Alfred Lord Tennyson's Selected Poems*. I completed it in 1993 to obtain my B.A. degree in English from Sebelas Maret University. It is a quite simple work, but to this day I still consider it as my academic masterpiece. It is a labour of love that also reflects my literary trainings and provides me with a space to negotiate two opposite literary perspectives that I have learned from the beginning to my recent research interests today: the traditional battle of intrinsic v. extrinsic approaches in literature. The stylistic approach that I employ in my undergraduate thesis also encourages me to have a better comprehensive linguistic knowledge to gain a more critical and insightful literary analysis. Today as a researcher, I still frequently confront this intrinsic-extrinsic dilemma in my works. As time goes by, fortunately, the dynamic of recent critical theories allow me more possibilities and flexibility to conduct literary research with its intertextuality and intersectionality into diverse research topics and areas. Hence, the title of this book "Revisiting Race, Class and Gender in Literature and Language" befits my struggles and academic journey to contextualize race, class and gender in its specificity and heterogeneity in researching language and literature.

My research interests in race, class, and gender are previously displayed through the simple traditional biographical approaches that often simplistically connect the text to the life and psychology of the authors and their socio-historical backgrounds. Even after more rigid trainings in practical criticism and structuralism of the day during my undergraduate study, I still frequently deploy these traditional biographical perspectives in somewhat covert strategies into the so-called genetic structuralism, attempting to connect the genesis of the text to the authorial aspects to include psychological, sociological, and historical backgrounds. This critical turn can be seen in the first article

of this book in the way I analyze E.M. Forster's "The Life to Come" in genetic structural views. In addition, at different stages of my study, I have also analyzed the same text by employing various perspectives such as Marxism, Post-Colonialism, and even addressing ecocritic concerns although not yet too pronounced.

Only after a long period of thinking and rethinking, now I care less about this intrinsic-extrinsic polarity, and instead I learn more about both the politic of language and the politic of writing. Not only researching literature and language in the Horatian *Ars Poetica* and its dulce et utile aspects, but I also intend to scrutinize it more in its relation to the aesthetic politic to articulate the voice and the struggles of minority groups (of race/ethnicity, class, and gender) in language and literature. In my later works, I pay more attention to the politic of language and identities in literature, unveiling the key role of literature and language as the arena of power struggles. In my works, I highlight the awareness and knowledge that language and literature are already ideological as Mikhail Bakhtin observed in "sociological poetics" that "narrative technique not simply as a product of ideology but ideology itself" (in Lanser, 1992: 5). Furthermore, Bakhtin also asserted that literary form itself or genre is a socio-historical and also a formal entity, therefore, transformations in genre must be considered in relation to social changes (in Todorov, 1984:80).

This notion of literature and its very form and language as ideology and ideological leads me to venture feminist theories and gender struggles. I begin to embark on the area of narratology, particularly the feminist narratology and feminist poetics in the light of gender and genre relation. Absorbing into the historical production of genres, I finally learn how literary genre is also the product of patriarchal domination that marginalizes women from participating in particular literary ventures. I learn to understand how traditionally women have to be "content" to express their ideas and experience in their assigned private spheres in epistolary genre before finally given the opportunity to write novel as their assigned feminine genre and writing space. Regardless of the limited sphere and writing

opportunities, women throughout the western literary history, still manage to speak their minds even in a very limited way and form such as illustrated by Woolf in narrating Osborne's struggle in articulating her voice.

Had she been born in 1827, Dorothy Osborne would have written novels; had she been born in 1527, she would never have written at all. But she was born in 1627, and at that date though writing books was ridiculous for a woman there was nothing unseemingly in writing a letter. And so by degrees the silence is broken ... (Virginia Woolf, 1935).

Osborne's letters do indeed display how a writing form and genre can be both the space of oppression and liberation. Women can eventually speak their minds and amplify their voice even in the very oppressive form and space. The resurrection of epistolary forms by modern authors such as Bell Hooks with her memoirs, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (1996) and *Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* (1997); Helen Fielding's novel *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1996); and Alice Walker's epistolary novel *The Color Purple* (1982) to name a few are a genre homage to their literary mothers who have paved the path for them into the established literary production under the patriarchal domination. Thus, it also follows Bakhtin and Lanser's views who observe that narrative voice, situated at the juncture of "social position and literary practice," embodies the social, economic, and literary conditions under which it has been produced (1992: 5). Befittingly, my preoccupation with feminist narratology enables me to exercise diverse strategies and various perspectives of Structuralism, Post-Structuralism, Marxism, Feminism, and Post-colonialism to explore the plurality and multiplicity of identities and its power interplay in language and literature.

In practising feminist theories, I begin to contextualize race, class, and gender intersectionality in the particular domain of "family" as seen in my graduate thesis at the University of South Florida that analyzes Langston Hughes's novel *Not Without Laughter* in its race, class, and gender relation. This work encourages me to a more critical study of "family" discourse in its complexity, non-fixity, heterogeneity, and

specificity. It strengthens the foundation of my research interest in gender and feminist theories, particularly, the focus on the production and its reproduction of public-private dichotomy and its fluidity. This focus ultimately also leads me to the completion of my dissertation at Ateneo de Manila University that problematizes the Discourse of “Family” in Selected Fiction in English by Southeast Asian Ethnic Chinese Women Writers. This work also reflects the widening scope of the English studies that no longer dwells on its Anglo-American center but already embraces both English and english literature without its capitals; thus, it also allows me more space and opportunities to revisit, rethink, and reflect the intersectionality of race, class, and gender in language and literature in its specific contexts.

Revisiting race, class, and gender in language and literature motivates me to continue my research interest in feminist theories, gender and its intersectionality because the voice and the experience of the marginal groups are still in the periphery and even violently attacked and silenced in language, literature, and the academia. Lately in academic circles, seminars, and conferences, I have often openly confronted these violent attacks even among my own dear fellow researchers and colleagues (notably male and privileged scholars), such as in a very simple utterance that seems “not harmful” yet it does serve as a patriarchal discourse that always attempts to put women in their “place” and role. This aforementioned utterance “jokingly” addresses feminisms as “promiscuous” because it openly embraces many other theories, hence the so-called Marxist feminism, post-colonial feminism, and so on and so forth. Such view is not only insensitive but it also eerily echoes the traditional patriarchal discourse of “woman” that genderizes and sexualizes women (hence, the diction “promiscuous”) even in their very struggle to assert their intellectual capacity and academic pursuits. Feminist perspective (s) is not all present and “promiscuous” as the insinuation but it has to be there purposefully to claim the rights and spaces denied for women as equal human being. Otherwise, the feminist voice will be muted and absent under the power of traditional patriarchal discourse and its modern ideological reproduction such as present in this derogatory term of seeing women

as “promiscuous”. As long as this sexist and oppressive view is still present and unchallenged, the marginalization and oppression will still be here to stay because language and literature are indeed ideology and ideological where power struggles constantly happen. It will still take constant struggles to achieve justice and equality for the marginalized groups in our societies. It will not be an easy task, but all of us are called to fight for it here and now, not as women or men but as human beings who strive to establish human and humane views of all people regardless of race, class, and gender.

Yogyakarta, the year of the Corona Virus Pandemic, 2020.

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A Genetic Structural Study on Ambiguity of Symbol, Allegory, and Allusion in E.M. Forster's "The Life to Come"

1. Introduction

We can classify fiction into many possible categories. One of them distinguishes essentially literal stories from essentially symbolic stories. Altenbernd and Lewis in their *Introduction to Literature* mark that the difference of these two kind stories is only on its method in presenting the subject matter.

Literal fiction's technique is necessarily selective, its details are chosen with a high regard for typicality. Through this typicality, rather than through symbolism, literal fiction achieves the broad or universal significance that is the hallmark of all literature (1980:36).

On the other hand, symbolic fiction acquires significance beyond its literal import by standing for - representing, symbolizing - abstract idea. This distinction between the literal and symbolic modes is legitimate and important, however in practice there is no purely symbolic or literal stories. Many stories blend them, and the existence of a variety of symbols in literary work is inescapable.

Symbolism or the use of symbols can appear almost anywhere in fiction: in characters, plots, natural objects, man-made objects, and situations. "*When a symbol is worked through an entire story, it can be used as integrating device by which many facts are fused and made meaningful in some basic and comprehensive ways*" (Knickerbocker & Reninger, 1963:98). Characters, for example, can be used to symbolize

abstract idea, or a psychological state. Symbol in short is the basic device of all imaginative literature.

Fiction writers themselves have different opinions concerning the use of symbols. Faulkner, for example, acted very modestly in his interview of the critic's opinions about symbolism in his works.

I am just a writer. Not literary man .. Maybe all sorts of symbols and images get in. I don't know. When a good carpenter builds something, he puts the nails where they belong. Maybe they make a fancy pattern when he's through, but that is not why he put them it that way (An Interview with William Faulkner).

While other writers such as E.M Forster believe that symbol is part of the aesthetic aspect of the novel that should be planned by the author to create beauty that sometimes becomes the shape of the book as what he expressed in *Aspects of the Novel*, one of his best-known critical works on the novel form. Forster was consistent with his ideas on the symbols as we can see in one of his short stories entitled "The Life to Come" which is very rich in its use of symbols. It is a story about the relation and conflicts of Paul Pinmay, a British missionary, and Vithobai or Barnabas, an inland chief in British colony that brings them into the unpredictable future and mystery of the life to come. The names of the two characters suggest the parallel with the names of the characters in the Bible or, in other words, Forster used the Bible as the source of allusions in his story. He also blended the allusion with highly complex symbol and allegory to extend his ideas on British colonialism. As the extension of ideas, these literary devices are also successfully employed by Forster to create beauty that becomes the aesthetic part of his story. However, the use of these devices also create ambiguity, the doubleness or multiplicity on the interpretation of the story. Why and how it can happen is a very interesting subject to study and becomes the emphasis of the discussion in this paper.

In this paper, the researcher is trying to see the sources of allusion, symbol, and allegory used by Forster, what aspects that influenced his choices of that devices, and how he used them to extend his ideas. Genetic structuralism will be helpful in answering these questions

because it studies the relation between the text and its author, and in short how the text comes into being. By using this genetic structural approach, the researcher hopes to have more knowledge and understanding of Forster's ideas in "The Life to Come" as well as to have more appreciation and enjoyment on Forster's art of writing in creating the beauty as the aesthetic part in the unity of his work. Somehow, the researcher agrees with Northrop Frye's opinion that "*In literature, what entertains is prior to what instructs, or, as we may say, the reality principle is subordinate to the pleasure-principle*" (1990:75).

2. Theoretical Ground

2.1. Genetic Structuralism

The Romanian-French critic Lucien Goldmann developed this approach based on Marxist literary theory. The traditional Marxist literary theory sees art and literature directly and unproblematically to mirror or reflect a society's class structure or economic base. Recently, there are so many critics who develop a number of variant and diversities of Marxist literary theory in modern world. Goldmann with the influence of the most influential and important Marxist literary critic of the 1930s (and after), the Hungarian George Lucacs, attempted a more sophisticated form by paying increasing attention to complex process of mediation between a society and its art and literature. Their ideas were also shared by a group of Russian theorists and critics such as Mikhail Bakhtin, P.N. Medvedev, and V.N. Volosinov. The result of their ideas refers to what we call genetic structuralism which has become one of the modern variants and diversities of the crude and vulgar Marxist forms.

Their writings unquestionably engage productively with Marxist ideas, seeing literature and art in its genetic socio-historical context, but paying close attention to matters of linguistic, cultural and aesthetic detail and often applying Marxist principles more rigorously than the watchdogs of Soviet art and culture were doing (Hawthorn, 1992: 100).

Goldmann points out that sociology and structuralism can work together to form a holistic study on literature and that the literary study must start from its structural analysis which in short includes unity, richness, and coherence. In addition, Goldmann also points out that genetic structural study should relate the work to the society where the author lives and the world-view of the author (*Vision du Monde*).

In short, the basic principle of literary analysis using this approach is on its origin and studies of the growth and the development of the work, its genesis from its sources. We also pay attention to the background of the work such as the manuscript of author during the stages of composition of the work, his notebooks, sources and analogues. If Goldmann called genetic structuralism as a holistic study, Kenneth Burke called it especially the genetics as a *high class kind of gossip* - for Burke describing part of what we are interested in--the "inspection of successive drafts, notebooks, the author's literary habits in general "(Guerin, et.al, 1979: 278). One more thing to remember is that source-studies are relevant to criticism "only if they illuminate meaning and thus deepen feeling---that the biography of elements---must follow the same rules as biological study of authors to be critically relevant"(Altick, 1975: 92).

2.2. Allusion, Symbol, Allegory, and Ambiguity

2.2.a. Allusion

Allusion (from Latin for "touching lightly upon a subject") in a literary work, a brief reference, implied or explicit, to a well-known character, event, or place, or to another artistic work. The purpose of using the device is to share knowledge in an economical way and to enrich the work at hand (Myers & Simms, 1985: 10).

We can divide extended allusions into five basic types. The topical allusion refers to recent events. The personal allusion refers to the author's own biography. The metaphorical allusion uses its reference as a vehicle for the poetic tenor it acquires in its new context. The imitative allusion parodies another work. The structural allusion

mirrors the structure of another work. From this division we see that most of allusions serve to expand upon or enhance a subject, but some are used in order to undercut it ironically by the discrepancy between the subject and the allusion (Abrams, 1981: 8).

In short, allusion is always indirect. It seeks, by tapping the knowledge and memory of the reader, to secure a resonant emotional effect from the associations already in the reader's mind. The effectiveness of allusion depends on a body of knowledge shared by the writer and reader. Complex literary allusion is characteristic of much modern writing, and discovering the meaning and value of the allusion is frequently essential to understanding the work (Holman & Harmon, 1986: 12). However, the meaning of the work will still be clear without the allusion, so if the reader does not recognize the allusion or does not know its source, nothing is lost except his pleasure in that recognition and clue to the tone (Carson, 1982: 290). Finally, it is important to distinguish carefully allusion from outright quotation, obvious echo, and direct or annotated reference.

2.2.b. Symbol

Symbol is derived from a Greek word meaning "*to throw together*" (*Syn*, together, and *ballein*, to throw). In literature a symbol pulls or draws together (1) a specific thing with (2) ideas, values, persons, or ways to life, in a direct relationship that otherwise would not be apparent. In short stories and other types of literature, a symbol is usually a person, thing, place, action, situations, or even thought. It possesses its own reality and meaning and may function at the normal level of reality within a story (Roberts & Jacobs, 1987: 279).

Generally speaking, there are three generic forms of symbols: (1) the archetypal or cultural symbol, in which a natural object refers a limited number of interpretations that transcend cultural barriers, as is sun representing energy, a source of life, and the male active principle; (2) the general symbol which appeals to a smaller audience but which contains more associative meanings, as in the Christian Cross and the

Nazi swastika; and (3) the private symbol or authorial or contextual symbol, created in an author's imagination and conveying any number of meanings in the guiding context (Myers & Simms, 1985: 297-8).

Of course, language is symbolic system in and of itself and has developed in order to communicate human experience symbolically. In this way, the term symbol can refer to any unit of any literary structure. But the term should be distinguished from sign in that the latter communicates only one meaning (e.g. a crosswalk) while the former embodies a complex of associative meaning (Myers & Simms, 1985:298).

Another important term to note concerning symbol is the term symbolism. Symbolism is the use of symbols or the practice of representing objects or ideas by symbols or giving things a symbolic (associated) character and meaning. Symbolism is also applied to nineteenth-century movement in the literature and art of France, a revolt against realism. Symbolist of this era tried to suggest life through the use of symbols and images. Among leaders of this movement were Baudelaire, Rimbaud, and Verlaine, who influenced the movements of impressionism and imagism (Concise, 1976: 266-7).

2.2.c. Allegory

Allegory is like symbolism in that both use one thing to refer to something else. The term is derived from the Greek word *allegorein*, which means "to speak so as to imply other than what it said". Allegory, however, tends to be more complex and sustained than symbolism. An allegory is to a symbol as a motion picture is to a still picture; allegory puts symbols into consistent and sustained action. Allegories and the allegorical method do not exist simply to enable authors to engage in mysterious literary exercises. Rather it was understood at some point in the past that people might more willingly listen to stories instead of moral lessons. Thus, the allegorical method evolved to entertain and instruct at the same time. In addition, the threat of reprisal or censorship sometimes caused authors to express their view indirectly in

the form of allegory rather than to write directly. The double meaning that you will find in allegory is hence quite real (Roberts & Jacobs, 1987: 281-2).

Shortly speaking, allegory is a way of representing thought and experience through images, by means of which (1) complex ideas may be simplified, or (2) abstract, spiritual, or mysterious ideas and experiences may be made immediate (but not necessarily simpler) by dramatization in fiction (Williams, 1992:94). Allegory usually has a very close relation with theme. It is essentially fiction dominated by theme.

A special case of the relation between theme and the other elements of fiction is the form we know as allegory characters and incidents in allegory exist to represent qualities and must be consistent with qualities they represent. Often, the characters are given the names of the qualities they represent (patience or friendship, for example). As a form, allegory does exist to express a theme, and if the story contains anything inconsistent with the theme, this may properly be considered a flaw (Kenney, 1966: 93).

From the quotation, we know that any elements of the work can be used as allegory, and those elements should be related to theme to express the meaning of the allegory.

2.2.d. Ambiguity

Ambiguity (from Latin for "to wander about, to waver") is a term describing those words, figures of speech, and also actions in literary work for which more than one meaning is possible. Ambiguity may result from the subtlety of an author's art, or it may stem from his confusion. Ambiguity is source of multiple interpretations, that is, different people can interpret the same words and events in opposite ways because of the suggestive power of the poem or story (Cohen, 1973: 174).

The unintentional use of ambiguity is seen as a stylistic defect characterized by imprecision and diffused reference. As an intentional

device, ambiguity has been used to impart choral richness and largeness to language (Myers & Simms, 1985:11). Ambiguity involves many important aspects of literary analysis: an author's style, his choice of words and his use of figures of speech, especially symbols; the motivations of characters, the implications, of settings, situations, and endings.

2.3. Outline of E.M. Forster's Life and Work

Edward Morgan Forster was born in London on 1 January 1879, attended Tobridge School as a day boy, and went to King's College, Cambridge, in 1897. He gained a second class degree in Classical Studies in 1900, and the same in History the following year. He traveled in Europe, lived in Italy and Egypt, and spent some years in India, where he was for a time secretary to a Rajah after World War I. He had honorary degrees conferred on him by many universities. During his life he had many various jobs and position: as a Red Cross voluntary worker in Alexandria in 1914 after the outbreak of World War I; as a literary editor of the Labor newspaper, Daily Herald, in London after the war, Rede lecturer in English at Cambridge in 1941; literature lecturer at Glasgow in 1944; in 1947 he was appointed a member of Government Committee to examine the law of defamatory libel. E.M. Forster spent most of the rest of his life in retirement as an honorary fellow of King's College, Cambridge. He died in June 1970.

Forster's novels are: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* (1905), *The Longest Journey* (1907); *A Room with a View* (1908); *Howards End* (1910); *A Passage to India* (1924): and *Maurice* (1971). The last of these, which has a homosexual theme, was published posthumously, as was "*The Life to Come*" (1972) a collection of stories, many of which treat the same theme. His other two collections of short stories are: *The Celestial Omnibus* (1914) and *The Eternal Moment* (1928). Forster also wrote the biography of his Cambridge friend Goldworthy Lowes Dickinson (1934), a Cambridge scholar who was an important leader of liberal political opinion, and also his great-aunt Marianne Thornton's biography (1956). Forster also wrote of his experience of living in India

in *The Hill of Devi* (1953). His essays are *Abinger Harvest* (1936) and *Two Cheers for Democracy* (1951) which include expressions of his opinions about politics, literature, and society. He also wrote the widely admired *Aspects of the Novel*, criticism based on the Clark Lectures that he delivered at Cambridge. Forster also co-operated with Eric Crozier on the Libretto for Benjamin Britten's opera *Billy Budd* (1951).

Forster was very modest about his achievements and declared that his life as a whole was not dramatic (although it is publicly known that during his life he was in conflict with his homosexuality, and later he began to make his gradual acceptance of himself as a homosexual). Interviewed by B.B.C on his eightieth birthday he said: "I have not written as much as I'd like to.. I write for two reasons: partly to make money and partly to win the respect of people whom I respect .. I better add that I am quite sure I am not a great novelist". Eminent critics and the general public have judged otherwise.

3. Analysis

3.1. The Socio-Historical Background of "The Life to Come"

The 1920s was the beginning of what we recognize as the most eventful and significant twenty-five years in modern history. During that time, the world witnessed, for example, the following cataclysmic development:

1. *Totalitarianism challenging democracy*
2. *Collectivism threatening Capitalism*
3. *A World-wide economic depression*
4. *A second and much greater world war*
5. *The atomic bomb and the revolution in science*
6. *The decline and dissolution of the British Empire*
7. *The emergence of the United States as the predominant world power*

8. *The technological revolution in communications, transportation, and industry*

9. *The emergence of new nations in Africa and Asia* (Beckoff, 1971: 178).

How did literature respond to all this? Imaginative literature in the twentieth century has tried to reflect the paradoxes of the modern world. It has often reflected a world in which progress and barbarism, civilization and savagery, seemed to exist side by side. On the one hand, scientific and technological progress helped to overcome problems and difficulties in life. Modern technology gradually put an end to the endless cycle of hard labor and bleak poverty that had been suffered by many working people for thousands of years. Modernized agriculture successfully overcame famine, and modern medical science had amazingly cured many diseases of the human race. Humanity seemed to reach its greatest triumph over nature. At the same time, however, humanity seemed unable to control the destructive or oppressive forces in the human mind. "*The twentieth century saw a succession of murderous wars. Ideologies of racial superiority or of class warfare seemed to make a religion of hatred for one's fellow human beings. Oppressive totalitarian regimes of unspeakable brutality flourished and threatened to stamp out the hard-won democratic and humanitarian traditions of the West!*" (Guth, 1981: 619-20).

During this century, writers and artists who believed in the human dignity and freedom have found themselves on the defensive. The modern age of literature and art has been called the "Age of Anxiety"--of fear for the future, or of helplessness in the face of powerful destructive forces, and this has often been followed by scepticism. Modern literature has often reflected the absence of clear direction or purpose. It has reflected our modern inability to find anything that we could believe.

The serious modern writer has often been a loner outsider-a critic of society, questioning its values. Where in earlier ages the poet or the artist may have often been alienated from the prevailing standards of their time (Guth, 1981:620).

In England, early twentieth century literature rebelled against the Victorian tradition. Novelist like E.M Forster and D.H. Lawrence became critics of traditional British society. They attacked the materialism of a crass business civilization. They challenged the inheritance of British imperialism, with its distrust for “*foreigners*” and its lack of understanding for other cultures around the world that European colonialism had ruled “*inferior*” (Guth, 1981:621).

3.2. E.M. Forster and the Publication of "The Life to Come"

“*The Life to Come*” written in 1922 by E.M. Forster also reflected some aspects of the events in this century. In the next part of this analysis, we will see how Forster expressed his ideas about those aspects by employing literary devices such as symbol, allegory, and allusion in this story. Although this story was written in 1922 as Forster's response toward the problem at that time, it was not published until 1972, two years after his death. This postponement was due to his own conflict with his homosexuality. Like his novel *Maurice*, his short story “*The Life to Come*” also involved a homosexual theme, and his reluctance to offer them to the publisher caused the works to remain unpublished for fifty-seven years. Relating to this problem, Forster wrote:

Have this moment burnt my indecent writings or as many as the fire will take. Not a moral repentance, but the believe that they clogged me artistically. They were written not to express myself but to excite myself, and when first --- 15 years back? --- I began them, I had a feeling that I was doing something positively dangerous to my career as a novelist. I am not ashamed of them... It is just that they were a wrong channel for my pen (Diary, April 8, 1922).

However, after years of doubts, he encouraged himself to show and to read his work to his friends.

A Short story ("The Life to Come") which is... violent and wholly unpublishable and I do not yet know whether it is good. I may

show it to Goldie, but there is more sensuality in my composition than in his, and it might distress him (A Letter to Florence Barger, July 1922).

Forster's friends who had the privilege to see and to hear Forster reading the story aloud had different opinions on the story.

Siegried Sassoon saw and appears to have liked "The Life to Come", as did Forrest Reid and--- to Forster's particular gratification - that "relentless judge of the emotional," Lytton Strachey. T.E. Lawrence, on the other hand, laughed at it---a reaction that puzzled Forster (A Letter to Sassoon, 20 December 1923).

The title-story -- the one admired by Sassoon, Strachey and Forrest Reid but mocked by T.E. Lawrence--- began as Forster told Sassoon "with a purely absent fancy of a missionary in difficulties". Hence it developed, via one of Forster's best malicious jokes (the conversion of Vithobai to a 'love of Christ' that he has totally misunderstood), into a powerful, bitter and beautifully proportioned four-act drama of passion and hypocrisy, played out by the native chieftain and the missionary to a bleakly ritualized offstage chorus of spiritual and commercial oppressors. This story embodied what Forster described as 'a great deal of sorrow and passion that I have myself experience' (Stallybrass, 1975: 19).

Critics, nowadays, try to see the aspects of his artistic writing more than the homosexual theme in it. Somehow, readers who do not have the understanding of Forster's homosexual background might have wrong interpretation on certain events in his stories as expressed in jokes among the critics.

Among the victims, probably, of this second 'purgation' were 'a jokey thing' about "a girl who thought that two young men were always fighting when in fact they were making love" (Letter from Isherwood to the editor, 28 November 1971).

Forster's delicate and artistic way in depicting the homosexual theme in his stories sometimes also caused this misinterpretation. For Forster himself, this homosexual theme is somewhat dilemmatic.

Suddenly remembered a short story I tore up a couple of years ago like a fool, called Adventure Week where 8 bored boys have to go into camp and are tricked by the only clever one into a delicious disaster. It was so gay and warm. It was a craftsman ('s) dissatisfaction that destroyed it (Diary, 16 July 1964).

His reason for destroying the work was not a moral repentance but a craftsman's dissatisfaction, and he was sincere when he expressed his reason. Indeed, this problem had become his painful conflict during his lifetime both as a person and a good writer, and he tried to look for the conflicting resolutions. Forster's view concerning "sexy stories" (Forster's own phrase) was expressed in a painful honest confession.

Having sat for an hour in vain trying to write a play, will analyze causes of my sterility... Weariness of the only subject that I both can and may treat--- the love of men for women & vice versa (Diary, 16 June 1911).

I shall never write another novel after it (A passage to India)--- my patience with ordinary people has given out. But I shall go on writing. I don't feel any decline in my "powers" (Letter to Siegfried Sassoon, 1 August 1923).

I want to love a strong young man of the lower classes and be loved by him and even hurt by him. That is my ticket, and then I have wanted to write respectable novels ... (Personal Memorandum, 1935).

I should have been a more famous writer if I had written or rather published more, but sex has prevented the latter (Diary, 31 December 1964).

Forster's deep inner honesty and artistic integrity, and his gradual acceptance of himself as a homosexual made him decide to abandon the writing of fiction for publication. During his retirement in his old age,

Forster could find more peace of mind, and the public continuously respect him until his death, and his books are still widely read and admired until today. Critics, to the memory of Forster, add "*Those who love his memory will surely rejoice to know that from time to time he could still write stories, whether extant or otherwise, whether good, bad or indifferent*" (Stallybrass, 1975:17).

3.3. The Genetic Structural Study on "The Life to Come"

In this part, the four basic elements of fiction will be discussed: plot, character, setting, theme. It does not mean that other elements are ignored, these will also be discussed to support the four elements since all of the elements in fiction have close relation to one another to create the unity of the work as a whole. However, the focus of this discussion is the relationship among the four essential basic elements "for it is only in the nice balance of all four elements that the characters and their story exist" (Ryan. 1963: 44). In accordance with the problem formulation, some literary devices such as allusion, allegory, and symbol will also be discussed for they reinforce some aspects of the four basic elements in "*The Life to Come*".

3.3.a The Summary of the Plot

Paul Pinmay, the young British missionary, was sent by his order to one of the British colonies to convert the inland chiefs especially Vithobai, the powerful inland chief, and the entire of his people. The Roman Catholics, far more expert than the missionaries of Pinmay's order had failed to convert this Vithobai, the wildest, strongest, most stubborn of all the inland chiefs. It was on purpose that Pinmay's order sent him to Vithobai so that Pinmay might discover his own limitation, and no success was expected from him.

Despite many difficulties and refusals, the young Pinmay did not easily give up to approach the unapproachable Vithobai. After many failures, Pinmay's attempt was rewarded by the eagerness of Vithobai to

hear more about Pinmay's God and Pinmay's teaching. Seeing this, Pinmay was so excited that he cried "*Come to Christ*" to Vithobai and read the marvelous chapter in the Bible at I Cor. 13 and spoke of the love of Christ and of our love for each other in Christ, Pinmay then imprinted a kiss on Vithobai's forehead and drew him to Abraham's bosom. Vithobai was so fascinated by it and unconsciously it continues to more intimate physical contact.

After this forbidden deed, Vithobai and his entire people embraced Christianity. He became a devout Christian and received the name of Barnabas at his baptism. Pinmay realized his mistake and was aware of Vithobai's misinterpretation on "*Come to Christ*" of being a Christian as the love making that he gladly enjoyed. Despite of his guilty feeling, Pinmay did not try to explain this wrong interpretation for he was afraid that Vithobai might change his mind and went back to his pagan belief.

Due to Pinmay's success in converting Vithobai and the whole tribe, the Bishop of his order granted him the new converted district. Pinmay tried to refuse this because he was afraid that his secret would be revealed and he would have daily encounter with Vithobai. Unfortunately, he had to accept the Bishop's command and was installed there for ten year services. Pinmay's fear came true, and the most disturbing and conflicting difficulty was Vithobai's invitation to "*Come to Christ*". So far, Pinmay's answer was "*not yet*" and then he finally had the courage to say "*never*".

Life went on, and they both lived their own lives. Vithobai married a girl from a neighboring tribe and had many children, while Pinmay married one of the British medical missionaries. During their lives, many changes happened to both of them, and then came a very crucial event: Vithobai was dying. Pinmay visited him and then told him the truth about what they had done, and comforted the dying Vithobai with the possibility of the life to come where and when they could be together in real and true love. Hearing this, the dying Vithobai became joyful and regained his strength. He then stabbed Pinmay through the heart so that Pinmay could be his messenger and would prepare him, the king, a place in the life to come where they could be together forever.

3.3.b. The Characters

3.3.b.1. Paul Pinmay

Paul Pinmay, the British missionary, was very young at the time he was sent by his order to the colony. He was inclined to be impatient and headstrong, and was very naive. He worked for this mission with great self-confidence and did not see the importance of understanding the language, culture, and psychology of the tribe that he tried to convert. He also declared in his naive way that human nature was the same all over the world.

In the beginning of the story, we have already seen him in a flashback as a young angry desperate man with unknown guilt that made him want to kill himself.

... the golden ruffled hair of a young man. He, calm and dignified, raised the wick of a lamp which had been beaten down flat, he smiled, lit it, and his surroundings trembled back into his sight.. where the young man's guilt had been spread. A stream sang outside, a firefly relit its lamp also. A remote, a romantic spot... lovely, lovable... then he caught sight of a book on the floor, and he dropped beside it with a dramatic moan as if it was a corpse and he the murderer. For the book in question was Holy Bible. "Thought I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not---"

A scarlet flower hid the next word, flowers were everywhere, even round his own neck. Losing his dignity, he sobbed "O, What have I done?" and not daring to answer the questions he hurled the flowers through the door of the hut and the Bible after them, then rushed retrieve the latter in an agony of grotesque remorse. All had fallen into the stream, all were carried away by the song. Darkness and beauty, darkness and beauty. "Only one end to this," he thought. And he scuttled back for his pistol. ("TLTC", p.94).

From this exposition in flashback, his guilt was still a mystery, but the readers get signs that it should be a great one since he was described as the murderer and the Holy Bible was his victim. In the next page the

readers find the recognition that the unknown guilt was the love-making that he and Vithobai had done in the forest. From the quotation, it was seen how sorry he was and how he blamed himself for what had happened.

Again and again Pinmay blamed himself but then after a time he changed his mind. He began, thought tardily, to meditate upon his sin. Each time he looked at it its aspect altered. At first he assumed that all the blame was his. because he should have set an example. But this was not the root of the matter, for Vithobai had shown no reluctance to be tempted. On the contrary and it was his hand that beat down the light. And why had he stolen up from the village if not to tempt? ... Yes, to tempt, to attack the new religion by corrupting its preacher, yes, yes, that was it ... ("TLTC", p.97).

He blamed Vithobai. He put all the blame on Vithobai and this discovery changed not only his view toward the tribes but also his way of teaching Christianity. He no longer spoke of love and mercy but the gloomy severity of the old law.

He who had been wont to lay such stress on the Gospel teaching, on love, kindness, and personal influence, he who had preached that the kingdom of Heaven is intimacy and emotion, now reacted with violence and treated the new converts and even Barnabas himself with the gloomy severity of the Old Law. He who had ignored the subject of the native psychology now became an expert there in, and often spoke more like a disillusioned official than a missionary. He would say: "These people are unlike ourselves that I much doubt whether they have really accepted Christ... I cannot wholly trust them." He paid no respect to local customs, suspecting them all to be evil, he undermined the tribal organization, and -- most risky of all--he appointed a number of native catechists of low type from the tribe in the adjoining valley. Trouble was expected, for this was an ancient and proud people, but their spirit seemed broken, or Barnabas broke it where necessary. At the end of the ten years the Church was to know more docile sons ("TLTC", p.99).

Pinmay ruled strictly, and he was very cruel to Vithobai but Vithobai tolerated all this and obeyed, even helped Pinmay in his trouble. Pinmay was always defensive and dictatorial when his injustices were questioned. He always used his power for his own advantage.

"How much of the timber is earmarked for the mines?" inquired Mr. Pinmay in the course of conversation"

"An increasing amount as the galleries extend deeper into the mountain, I am told that the heat down there is now so great that the miners work unclad. Are they to be fined for this?"

"No. It is impossible to be strict about mines. They constitute a special case."

"I understand. I am also told that disease among them increases."

"It does, but then so do our hospitals." "I do not understand."

"Can't you grasp, Barnabas, that under God's permission certain evils attend civilization, but that if men do God's will the remedies for the evils keep pace? Five years ago you had not a single hospital in this valley."

"Nor any disease. I understand. Then all my people were strong."

"There was abundant disease," corrected the missionary. "Vice and superstition, to mention no others. And inter-tribal war."

Could you have married a lady from another valley five years ago?"

"No. even as a concubine she would have disgraced me."

"All concubines are a disgrace."

"I understand ..." ("TLTC", p.103-104).

The hidden unknown guilt had changed Pinmay's character for the worse. He was no longer *"an open-hearted Christian knight but a hypocrite whom a false step would destroy"* ("TLTC", p.100).

3.3.b.2. Vithobai or Barnabas

Vithobai, the inland chief, was known as an impassive, unfriendly, and powerful leader of his people. Among the missionaries, Vithobai, the inland chief, he was known as *"Vithobai, the wildest, strongest, most stubborn* of all the inland chiefs...Vithobai the unapproachable" ("TLTC", p.95-96). While as a young boy he was very clever and attractive, "And he saw how intelligent the boy was and how handsome,

and determining to win him there ... ("TLTC", p.97). After becoming a Christian, he turned into Barnabas, the exemplary convert. He was so faithful and obedient to Pinmay, in short, he was Pinmay's humble servant. For ten years he had served Pinmay and bore all the humiliation from Pinmay, and in the end he determined to make Pinmay his servant in the life to come. "*I served you for ten years,*" he thought, "*and your yoke was hard, but mine will be harder and you shall serve me now for ever and ever*" ("TLTC", p.111).

3.3.c. The Setting

The setting of place in this story does not mention a certain name of place. It is told that the story happened in a British colony. Seeing from the custom and the name of the tribal character in the story, it is probably a British colony in Asia or the Pacific. The dominant aspect of the setting or place is the Forest.

The setting of time in this story is divided into: night, evening, day, and morning. In each division of the time, it contains certain events due to the development of the plot and the characters.

Night... Paul Pinmay and Vithobai did their unspeakable secret in the enchanted hut down in the deep forest due to the misinterpretation on "Come to Christ"

Evening... Paul Pinmay still kept the guilt and the secret, and did not try to tell the truth to Vithobai. Pinmay confronted with Vithobai's invitation to "Come to Christ" and Pinmay's reply was "Not yet".

Day.... Pinmay faced his next and more serious crisis concerning his guilt, and his reply for Vithobai's invitation was "never". In the mean-time the trees of the forest had been cut down for timber industries. School, hospital, and other aspects of civilization replaced the trees of the deep forest. Many diseases and difficulties came to Vithobai's people.

Morning... Pinmay ordered the enchanted hut in the last remaining forest to be pulled down to destroy the memory of his guilt. pinmay confessed his guilt and told the dying vithobai the truth about their guilt and spoke of the true love in Christ. Pinmay was dead, stabbed through the heart by Vithobai.

3.3.d. Allusion

The names of the characters in this story allude the names of the characters in the Bible: Paul and Barnabas. In the original source, here they are:

Paul (St. Paul) was the author of many New Testament, Epistles. He was known as the Apostle of the Gentiles, born CA.D 5-10 in a Jewish ghetto at Tarsus in Cilicia, a Roman colony in Asia minor in which Greek language was spoken. Taking as his trade that of making tents and cloaks, he studied in Jerusalem at the rabbinical school of the famous teacher Hillel. St. Paul first enters New Testament History when he was present around the year 36 at the stoning of the Deacon, Stephen, Saul, as he was then called, held the cloaks of some of those who martyred Stephen. It was after this that Paul was converted, when, on the road to Damascus, a sudden dazzling light shone about him and the Voice of Jesus asked the question, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou, persecute me ?" (Act 9: 3-9).

After his conversion Paul set out on a missionary life that took him all over Asia minor and to Rome. He went on three great missionary journeys from A.D. 45-49; A.D 50-52, and A.D 53- 58. While on these journeys he helped establish and strengthen local churches both by his presence and words, and by his Epistles to these churches. Fourteen Epistles are attributed to Paul. In A.D 67 Paul was beheaded in Rome. Barnabas, St (Aramaic, meaning "son of encouragement") was a levite from Cyprus who assisted the early Church in Jerusalem and Antioch. He was a relative, possibly the uncle, of St. Mark. he befriended the recently converted Paul

and introduced him to the Apostles. Paul and Barnabas were the first missionaries to Cyprus and central Asia Minor. His feast is on June 11. He is ranked as an Apostle.

The allusions from the source in "*The Life To Come*" were not only names but also the parallel with the original characters which referred to the structural allusion. Here are some evidence from the story:

He had the fortune to be called Paul After a great Apostle, and of course he was no god but a sinful man ("TLTC", p.96).

and the fact that like St. Paul, Pinmay was also a missionary, and from the chapter that he quoted, I Cor. 13, the most famous chapter from St. Paul's teaching. This chapter was the most widely admired but also the most misinterpreted since the word "*Charity*" is then translated in later version as "*love*" which meaning is highly ambiguous, unlike the Greek that has certain level for this word such as "*agape*", "*phileae*", and "*eros*". Due to the difference in interpreting the teaching of Jesus, in the end, the friendship between St. Paul and St. Barnabas was ended, so was the relation between Paul Pinmay and Barnabas.

The choice of E.M. Forster in choosing the Bible as the source of his allusions is partly because he was an Englishman nourished in western Christian society where the Bible was widely known as one of the books that influenced their aspects of life. In addition, the structural allusion from the relation of Paul and Barnabas was also very effective to express his ideas on the missionary life, and an East-West encounter.

3.3.e. Symbol

E.M. Forster employed many various symbols in this story. The characters themselves are used as symbol of the two different cultures: Paul represents the West, the civilised, the oppressor, the colonialist; and Vithobai represents the East, the uncivilised, the oppressed, the colonised.

The settings of time and place are also used as symbols. In the first sentence of the story, the setting of place has already been used as a symbol and as a foreshadowing to give signs of what will happen next:

Love had been born somewhere in the forest, of what quality only the future could decide. Trivial or immortal, it had been born to two human bodies as a midnight cry. Impossible to tell whence the cry had come, so dark was the forest. Or into what words it would echo, so vast was the forest. Love had been born for good or evil, for a long life or a short ("TLTC", p 94).

The forest as the dominant aspect of the setting of place is obviously used as a symbol with the additional evidence that this deep dark forest with the enchanted hut and a certain aged tree was full of huge and enigmatic masses of trees to which Pinmay kept his secret.

Looking back at the huge and enigmatic masses of the trees, he prayed them to keep his unspeakable secret, to conceal it even from God, and he felt it in his unhinged state that they had the power to do this, and that they were not ordinary trees ("TLTC", P.95).

It was in the forest that the characters did their sinful deed, and it was the cutting of the trees in the forest that also mark the development of the plot. The forest with its trees is sometimes used as a symbol in fiction such as Hawthorne's use of forest where Young Goodman Brown conducted his journey, here the forest is associated with the soul of human beings themselves. The tree as a cultural symbol in Western society denotes the life of the cosmos, its consistence, growth, proliferation, generative and regenerative processes. It stands for inexhaustible life, and is therefore equivalent to a symbol of immortality (Guerin, et. al, 1979: 161).

The use of the forest as a symbol in "*The Life To Come*" creates ambiguity since sometimes cultural symbol does not always have universal meaning, let alone in this story Forster employed it in very different cultures: the East and the West. The results in multiple interpretations of its positive or negative aspects or both Pinmay and

Vithobai. When the forest was still there Vithobai was the King with his power and glory; when it was cut down Pinmay took the power and civilization with its commercial industries replaced the existence of the forest. The forest in this story is highly complex symbol with its ambiguous multiple meanings, even its contextual meanings are also highly ambiguous.

The setting of time itself with its division (which also alludes to the repeated night, evening, day, and morning in the Acts concerning St. Paul's missionary journeys) is obviously a symbol refers to the development of plot, characters, and their conflicts. After the unspeakable euilt, the narrator associated the sinful deed and its consequence and purgation with the "light".

Yes, God saw and God sees. Go down into the depths of the woods and he beholds you, throw his holy book into the tream, and you destroy only print and paper, not the word. Sooner or later, God calls every deed to the light ("TLTC", p.97).

The word "Light" here then relates to the division of the setting of time: Night, Evening, Day, and Morning which signify the cycle of time or day approaching the coming of the sun or the "Light". This symbol also creates ambiguity of interpretation. At night when Vithobai was still a pagan king with his power and glory, he then embraced Christianity and gradually lost his power and glory during evening, day, and morning.

First the grapes of my body are pressed. Then I am silenced. Now I am punished. Night, evening, and a day. What remains?" ("TLTC", p.105).

O my lost brother. Mine are this little house instead of my old great one, this valley which other men own, this cough that kills me, those bastards that continue my race; and that deed in the hut, which you say caused all, and which now you call joy, now sin ("TLTC", p.109).

The setting of time signifies the progress of the character's conflict, but the question is whether it has positive or negative aspects to either

Vithobai or Paul. It is true that morning is closer to the "Light" when finally Paul told the truth and paid for his sinful deed with his death, still its significance is highly ambiguous. It can mean different things to the two characters.

The word love, "*Come to Christ*", and also the love-making done by Vithobai and Pinmay are used as symbol to represent the way convert and conquer the pagan tribe. It also signifies the close and intimate relation (whether good or bad) between the colonialist and colonized, the fusion between two different cultures and ways of life E.M. Forster depicted this scene delicately.

... Vithobai the unapproachable, coming into his hut out of the darkness and smiling at him. Oh how delighted he had been! Oh how surprised! He had scarcely recognized the sardonic chief in this gracious and bare-limbed boy, whose only ornaments were scarlet flowers. Vithobai had lain all formality aside. "I have come secretly," were his words. "I wish to hear more about this God whose name is love". How his heart had leapt after the despondency of the day! "Come to Christ!" he had cried, ... and they sat down together upon the couch that was almost a throne ... and spoke of the love of Christ and of our love for each other in Christ, very simply but more eloquently than ever before, while Vithobai said, "This is the first time I have heard such words, I like them," and drew closer, his body aglow and smelling sweetly of flowers. And he saw how intelligent the boy was and how handsome, and determining to win him there and then imprinted a kiss on his forehead and drew him to Abraham's bosom. And Vithobai had lain in it gladly-too gladly and too long---and had extinguished the lamp. And God alone saw them after that ("TLIC", p.97).

This sexual intercourse signifies the intimate relation (whether good or bad) of both sides of the colonialist and the colonized, and how every aspect of their lives is fused and mingled together during the colonialism. This expression is somehow effective to extend those ideas. The fact that Forster was a homosexual perhaps influenced this

expression or maybe it was partly the natural expression that came out of him as a gay. Still, from his confession in his diary and letters, we should see that this was not only vulgar sexy scene; he employed this as a symbol because it was effective and helpful to enrich his art of writing. Otherwise if it was only to excite him, he would possibly destroy it like he had often done.

The title itself is also a symbol which means different thing to both Vithobai and Pinmay. In their own cultures and believes there was the life to come and they both believed in it. For Pinmay, it was true life in God after death, however, for Vithobai it was time for him to regain his power and glory as an immortal king. This title closely related to the ending also signifies the future of the colonialist and the colonized after the colonialism ended.

Besides those major symbols, there are also so many other symbols such as the enchanted hut, the scarlet flower that hid the word "charity" when Pinmay quoted the teaching of St. Paul "*Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not--- "A scarlet flower hid the next word"*" ("TLTC", p.94). Unfortunately, the brevity of this paper does not allow the discussion of these minor symbols.

3.3.f. Allegorical Theme and Meaning

As what we have discussed in the theoretical ground that a subset system of symbols employed through the story can be used to create allegory that is closely related with the theme. After studying the three basic elements, allusion, and symbols and relation those aspects, we can see that they create the allegory of how the relation between the colonialist and colonialized can determine the good and bad future for if we see the socio-historical background of this story concerning the decline of British empire and the emergence of new nations in Asia and Africa, the allegorical theme of this story can extend E.M. Forster ideas on the relation and future of Britain and her colonies.

The allegorical theme and meaning in this story is also closely related with the ending and title of this story. In its process of writing

Forster created two versions of ending and at last he decided on this ending:

"The Life to Come", he shouted. "Life, life, eternal life, Wait for me in it." And he stabbed the missionary through the heart ... For love was conquered at last and he was again a king, he had sent a messenger before him to announce his arrival in the life to come, as a great chief should. "I served you for ten years," he thought, "and your yoke was hard, but mine will be harder and you shall serve me now for ever and ever." He dragged himself up, he looked over the parapet. Below him were a horse and cart, beyond, the valley which he had once ruled, the site of the hut, the ruins of his old stockade, the schools, the hospital, the cemetery, the stacks of timber, the polluted stream, all that he had been used to regard as signs of his disgrace. But they signified nothing this morning, they were flying like mist, and beneath them, solid and eternal, stretched the kingdom of the dead ... Mounting on the corpse, he climbed higher, raised his arms over his head, sunlit, naked, victorious, leaving all disease and humiliation behind him, and he swooped like a falcon from the parapet in pursuit of the terrified shade ("TLTC", p.111-112).

The ending is an open plot ending that reveals the death of Pinmay and the revelation of Vithobai's eternal power as a king in the life to come, and Pinmay as his messenger. This ending also alludes the acts (XIV, 12): *"And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker."* In Greek mythology, Jupiter or Zeus was the God of Gods, and Mercurius or Hermes was his messenger. This ending is possibly also an allegory that extends Forster's ideas on the decline of British Empire because of the injustice and exploitation of British colonialism toward her colonies, and how those colonies in the end could not stand this evil commercial oppressor and decided to free themselves, and in the future might become powerful nations that someday might also rule Britain as their inferior. These ideas were expressed in an open plot ending that allows many possible interpretations and this is very effective to express highly complex

problem such as colonialism in which Forster could not simply take sides because there is no easy resolution for it because it involves so many complex aspects of life on both sides. In addition, this story is also an allegory of how the West has misused the motto of Gospel, Gold, and Glory with its hypocrisy in using the Gospel as the way to search for gold and glory. However, we have to remember that allegory allows multiple interpretations and meanings, and that what allegory means or instructs is a secondary importance to its function as a literary device to create the beauty of the work.

4. Conclusion

After analyzing "*The Life To Come*" by using the genetic structural approach we see that this story is rich in its symbols, allusions, and allegories. Forster's choices of the symbol, allusion, and allegory were influenced by his personal, cultural, and also socio-historical background. He was able to employ those literary devices in effective and artistic way so that it could extend his ideas successfully. However, the use of those literary devices also created ambiguity that resulted in the multi-interpretation of the work. Through a unified analysis it was found out that the ambiguity in this story is not a flaw or uncontrolled effect. It was more as intentional devices that he could control to extend the highly complex ideas and problems such as colonialism in which he could not simply take sides because there was no easy resolution for it. It involved so many complex aspects of life that is why an open-plot ending and ambiguity became the effective and safer way to express these conflicting problems as the technique that he also employed in his famous novel *A Passage to India* which had a similar theme. In addition the ambiguity in this story could enrich the meaning and the enjoyment of this work. As a closing remark, the researcher of this paper would like to invite more and more papers or researches on "*The Life To Come*" to complete and develop the present paper and to have more appreciation on literary works especially Forster's "*The Life To Come*".

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Race, Class, and Gender Struggles in Langston Hughes's Novel *Not Without Laughter*

W.E.B. DuBois, one of the most prominent African American intellectuals, wrote that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color-line." Other African American writers also express the issue of racism in various genres; however, there are only a few African American writers who portray the life and experience of African American people beyond their racial problems, and Langston Hughes is one of those few writers. In addition, in his essays, stories, drama, and poetry, he also depicts black and white relations in terms of class and gender. When it was published, Hughes's *Not Without Laughter* with its realistic and stereotypical depiction of African American life invited mixed reactions. Many critics admired Hughes's realism in portraying African American lives. Other critics who could not recognize Hughes's poetic realism called *Not Without Laughter* a "propaganda novel", in short, those unhappy critics claimed that there was nothing "literary" about Hughes's novel. These critical debates on *Not Without Laughter* make this novel extremely interesting to study. This research intends to study *Not Without Laughter* by applying biographical, sociological, and historical approaches to reveal Hughes's literary qualities and it also attempts to uncover Hughes's social and political ideas as reflected in this novel.

In addition, this research examines race, class, and gender struggles in *Not Without Laughter*, and investigates the way Hughes employs literary devices to express those non-literary issues in his novel. This research considers Hughes's biography and its historical context very crucial to study the novel because originally *Not Without Laughter* was to be based on Hughes's own life and experience. Some critics even called *Not Without Laughter* an autobiographical novel. Other

important considerations in this study are the roles of women and black music is *Not Without Laughter*, therefore this study will analyze the way Hughes presents the characters of four very strikingly different women of the same family to express his ideas about African American experience in general and African American women's relationship with white Americans in particular. In addition, without ignoring the aesthetical unity of the novel, Black music will become the focus of interest in this analysis, particularly to reveal the use of black music as a literary device of central significance to express Hughes's social and political ideas.

Racism in the United States: from Slavery to Modern Day

One year before the arrival of the Mayflower brought the "Pilgrims" to North America to settle at Plymouth in 1620 and fulfill their destiny as the Founding Fathers of the United States, twenty Africans already landed in the English colony of Jamestown, Virginia on the Dutch warship in August 1619. In that year the English did not practice slavery but adopted the practice of indentured service, therefore those African people worked side by side with European settlers as indentured servants in the fields, building houses and roads. However, the death rate at Jamestown was very high and between the 1640 and 1680, the demand for workers at Jamestown was very high, and gradually the status of black servants changed and, marked the establishment of slavery in Virginia and other southern colonies until the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863.

Freedom for all slaves eventually came in 1865; however, black people were not free. The long suffering experienced by the blacks for centuries in the bonds of slavery did not automatically end the practice of racism; instead this racial discrimination became the foundation of black-white relations in the United States. After emancipation, most freed slaves had no alternative except to work as sharecroppers who depended on white landlords and who were burdened by debts (Takaki,1993:342). This sharecropping system was the new form of

slavery and economic enslavement. Even though the old system of black enslavement, the selling and whipping of slaves had been outlawed, a new system of racial caste and legal segregation had been born under the so-called Jim Crow Law in the South or what is sometimes referred to as the 'equal but separate' policy. In reality, there was no such thing as 'equality' because blacks only had restricted rights to vote and less good public facilities. Public facilities such as water fountains, housings, and transportation were separated for blacks and whites in many areas by signs termed for "colored" or "white". Churches, graveyards, and prisons were also segregated in many Southern areas like in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955 (Williams, 1999: 98). The inability to obey this law could end in lynching. To avoid this racial discrimination, a great number of Southern blacks fled to the northern territories in search of better lives.

The Publication of *Not Without Laughter*

Hughes's first novel, *Not Without Laughter* (1930), was published when he was already an established poet. According to Bontemps, this novel was long overdue. After his success in poetry writing, Hughes had another project to write prose as stated in a letter to Walter White: "My book of poems has gone to press. Now I'm working on my first book of prose which perhaps shall be called *Scarlet Flowers: The Autobiography of a Young Negro Poet*. You think it's a good title?" (Berry, 1983: 66). White who had corresponded about literary matters with Hughes did not like the title because it sounded like Louisa M. Alcott. Hughes agreed with White's opinion not to use his "Louisa Alcottish" title (Berry 1983:66). Instead of writing a sentimental autobiography, a year later Hughes began drafting his autobiographical novel which he eventually titled *Not Without Laughter*. In the same year, Hughes also attended Lincoln University where during the summers of 1928 and 1929 he worked hard writing the novel. After his graduation in 1929, he stayed at school to finish his novel. However, the novel remained unfinished at that time and Hughes had to leave for Canada. When he returned to Lincoln, he was not satisfied with the manuscript and decided to revise

it. Hughes finished the novel while he was in New York and finally it was published in 1930. Based on his own life experience, Hughes described a typical black family in the Mid West. Events in the novel mirrored Hughes's childhood experience in Kansas. However, Hughes's family was not a typical black family. Unlike Hager, the grandmother in the novel who worked as a domestic (washing and ironing) and spoke with a strong black accent, Hughes's grandmother was a college educated woman who spoke perfect English without a trace of regional and ethnic accent. In the end, Hughes wrote the novel based on many events and experiences, but not all necessarily connected to his own family. Some critics reviewed *Not Without Laughter* as autobiographical however it would be more accurate to call it a semi-autobiographical fiction or transposed autobiography.

Hughes was relieved when his novel was finally published. However, he confessed that *Not Without Laughter* was the least favorite of his books, never openly explaining his reasons (Hughes, 1996: xv). One possible reason that some critics suggested for his dislike of the book was that its year of publication coincided with his breakup with his white patron, Mrs. Mason, who supported his career but also criticized him for not being productive enough to finish the novel. Hughes himself would later explain his dissatisfaction in his autobiography, *The Big Sea*. Hughes felt his skill in prose was inadequate to depict realistically the people he knew. Meanwhile, critics provided divided responses to the novel. Some praised Hughes's realism, but others labeled it as social and political propaganda. Critics admired Hughes' storytelling, but there were also some who considered the novel structurally weak and inadequately developed. Despite the mixed critical and literary reception, *Not Without Laughter* was sold out soon after its publication and outsold Hughes's two volumes of poetry. It was also Hughes's first financial success and enabled him to travel more. In 1931 *Not Without Laughter* won the Hammond Gold Award for Literature (\$400) and became one of only two novels included in the American Library Association's 1931 list of forty outstanding American books of the year. The novel was ultimately rated along with Cart Van Vechten's *Nigger* American Library Association's 1931 list of forty

outstanding American books of the year. The novel was ultimately rated along with Carl Van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven* and Gertrude Stein's *Melanchta* as one of "the best fictional treatments of the Negro in American letters." Although *Not Without Laughter* is not as famous as Hughes's widely read poetry, it has remained in print for more than sixty years and has been translated into more than eight languages including Japanese and Chinese.

Race, Class, and Gender Struggles in *Not Without Laughter*

1. The Male and Female Characters with their Race, Class, and Gender Struggles

Not Without Laughter tells the story of an African American family living in Stanton, a small town in Kansas, during the early 20th century. The story is told from the third person point of view, evolving around the coming of age of Sandy Williams, a small child of five when the story begins, who turns sixteen at the end of the novel.

Sandy lives with his grandmother, Hager Williams, his mother Annjee, and his aunt Harriett. Meanwhile, his father Jimboy Rodgers is rarely present, and only comes home for short visits and finally joins the military and goes to war. The family lives in Hager's small house and has to work hard for their living. Sandy's grandmother has worked all her life, doing laundry for her white neighbors; his mother also has to work in a white family's kitchen to help support their family because his father does not make much money. Sandy's favorite aunt Harriett decides to quit school and to work in a hotel and restaurant while trying to fulfill her dream to be a blues singer. Sandy's other aunt, Tempy, has greater social status and economic stability. She is considered a "high brow black" who emulates white people's values and culture.

As Sandy grows up he learns different life lessons from each of his relatives. His grandmother teaches him to be diligent and she encourages him to obtain a higher education to have a better life for his family and also to become a credit to his race. Furthermore, she teaches

him to love others including their white neighbors. As a child and after his coming of age, Sandy has to decide for himself how to be a black person in racist society. He has to decide whether he will follow his grandmother's compassionate attitude toward racial relations, his parents' resentment, Harriett's hateful treatment of the whites or Tempy's attempts to embrace the white life. Growing up with his grandmother, then Tempy in Kansas, and finally moving in with his mother in Chicago makes Sandy constantly learn more about people. He has to struggle and face many obstacles, but with the help of his family, Sandy is determined to fight for a better future.

Hughes's depiction of race, class and gender struggles in the novel is in line with certain existing theories about the relationship between race, class, and gender in American society. In these theories, racism is viewed as a cultural and political phenomenon originating and deeply rooted in the merger of race and culture concepts. Race itself has been defined in a number of ways. One of the ways is to see race as 'a social construction predicated upon the recognition of difference-signifying the simultaneous distinguishing and positioning of groups vis-a-vis one another. More than this, race is a highly contained representation of relations of power between social categories by which individuals are identified and identify themselves' (James and Busia 1993: 17). Similar to the existence of racial demarcation that influences culture, laws, economy, and everyday customs in society, gender identity is also indirectly related to and even determined by racial identity, producing "the racialization of gender and class" (James and Busia, 1993: 17). This racial demarcation clearly explains the interaction and interrelationship between race, class, and gender. In *Not Without Laughter*, race, class, and gender are closely related.

Angela Davis in *Women, Race, and Class* (1983) states that twenty-five years after slavery ended, there were still great numbers of black women working as field hands. Meanwhile, black women who were former house servants usually worked as domestics at certain white families' houses unless they preferred, "for example, to wash clothes at home for a medley of white families as opposed to performing a medley

of household jobs for a single white family" (Davis, 85). Davis' description of black women resembles that of the female characters in *Not Without Laughter*. The grandmother of the novel was a former house servant during slavery, and after she became free heworked as a washer woman for her white neighbors. On the other hand, Sandy's mother had to go to her employer's house, a rich white lady named Mrs. J.J. Rice, early in the morning to work in kitchen and perform other housework chores. She went home late at night after she finished preparing dinner for Mrs. Rice's family. Being black and poor, both mother and daughter, had to work hard only for a low payment. However, their jobs were the best considering there were more jobs available for black women than for black men although those available were merely low paid domestic jobs:

Colored men couldn't get many jobs in Stanton, and foreigners were coming in, taking away what little work they did have. No wonder he didn't stay home. Hadn't Annjee's father been in Stanton forty years and hadn't he died with Aunt Hager still taking in washing to help keep up the house? There was no well-paid work for Negro men, so Annjee didn't blame Jimboy for going away looking for something better (Hughes, 1995: 45).

Hager's husband moved from Mississippi to Stanton to find a better life for his family, but he did not succeed in fulfilling his dream, and instead his wife had to help support their family. From the older generation to Sandy's generation, black men like Sandy's father Jimboy had to move from one place to another, to look for low-paid jobs available for them on the railroads and in construction. Harriett, Hager's youngest daughter, had a different ambition: she did not want the typical jobs available for black women. She was adequately educated but she refused to pursue higher education because she realized although she had a proper education, there would not be a decent job available for her. She wanted to escape the kitchen and wash tub, and instead she dreamed of becoming a successful blues singer.

Harriet's older sister Tempy had a different experience as a black woman. She tried to have a better life by assimilating into white society.

She worked, too, as a personal maid for Mrs. Barr-Grant, a white educated woman who spoke for women's suffrage. She obeyed her employer dutifully and her employer was pleased with Tempy, and taught her white manners and "Puritan intelligence" and even left a house and some inheritance to her. Tempy herself admired her white employer and viewed her as a role model. She had more attachment to her employer than her own mother. She aspired to be like her employer and to belong to her employer's social class although her mistress did openly acknowledge their racial difference: "You're so smart and such a good, clean, quick little worker, Tempy, that it's too bad you aren't white". And Tempy had taken this to heart, not as an insult but as a compliment" (Hughes, 237). With the house and the money that Mrs. Barr-Grant gave, Tempy decided to start a new life. She married a black man who worked in the railway postal service and together they determined to belong to members of a respectable social class. Her friends were black people with better education and social positions: doctors, schoolteachers, dentists, lawyers, and hairdressers. She felt that black people with better education had the rights and social positions equal to those of whites; however, at the same time, she despised her own people who lacked education and proper manners including her own mother and siblings. Being educated and trained by a white patron, Tempy thought that education and assimilation, particularly abandoning her own social and cultural roots and way of life could uplift her into a better social class. The third person narrator reveals Tempy's inner conflict, and cynically comments on Tempy's thoughts:

White people were forever picturing colored folks with huge slices of watermelons in their hands. Well, she was one colored woman who did not like them! Her favorite fruits were tangerines and grapefruits, for Mrs. Barr-Grant had always eaten those, and Tempy had admired Mrs. Barr-Grant more than anybody else---more, of course, than she had admired Aunt Hager, who spent her days at the wash-tub, and had loved watermelon (Hughes, 255).

Tempy refused the cultural stereotypes of blacks and adopted white culture. She and her husband believed that those stereotypes had indeed some truth. "Stop being lazy, stop singing all the time, stop attending revivals, and learn get dollars-because money buys everything, even the respect of white people" (Hughes, 255). Tempy rejected black values and culture in all aspects.

Blues and spirituals Tempy and her husband hated because they were too negro. In their house Sandy dared not sing a word Swing Low, Sweet Chariot, for what had darky slave songs to do with a respectable people? And rag-time belonged in the Bottom with the sinners (Hughes, 255).

Colored people certainly needed to come up in the world, Tempy thought, up to the level of white people-dress like white people, talk like with the people, think like white people-and then they would not no longer be called "niggers" (Hughes,255).

In order to climb into a better social class, Tempy embraced the more powerful dominant class, not only its economic status but also culturally. She explicitly admitted that her own African American culture was inferior to its white counterpart, therefore to be truly advanced she had to abandon her own race's culture and way of life. Tempy was already affluent enough by black standards but she was aware that wealth did not become the only determinant of acceptance into a respectable class. Accordingly, she began living the white way, following those white ways of life from everyday customs such as food dress, and music to speech patterns and even religious beliefs and denomination. Tempy loathed her own people for becoming exactly like the stereotypes the whites held of them—even her own mother whose name 'Aunt Hager' was commonly used to refer to a black woman in general. Tempy felt humiliated by her own poor mother who wore an apron to see Tempy at the Presbyterian Hospital and was unfortunately denied an entry at the front door, She blamed her own mother for this discriminatory treatment, and Tempy cynically did not know whether this rejected entry admittance was a reaction to Hager's skin color or the apron she wore (denoting poverty and low class). Not only did she

hate her mother's way of dressing but she also hated Aunt Hager's religious denomination, the Southern Baptist. Hager herself regretted Tempy's decision to leave the Baptist Church:

I hears from Reverend Berry that Tempy's done withdrawn from our church an' joined de Episcopal!.. That's right! She is. Last time I seed Tempy, she told me she couldn't stand the Baptist no mo'—too many low niggers belonging, she say, so she's gonna join Father Hill's church, where de best people go ... I told her I didn't think much o'joinin' a church so far from God that they didn't want nothin' but yaller niggers for members, an' so full o' forms an' fashions that a good Christian couldn't shout—but she went an' joined. It's de stylish temple, that's why, so I ain't said no 1710' (Hughes, 37).

Tempy moved to the Episcopalian Church to suit her new social class. Religion in this case involved race, class, and culture. She left the Baptist because for her it was a religion only for poor black people, and not respectable middle class women like her. The term 'yaller' or light-skin African Americans used by Hager to refer to the preferred members of the Episcopalian Church also denotes racism among the black communities. Watson listed various terms and vocabulary to identify the skin color gradation, and commonly the color skin was divided into three broad categories. Firstly, "Light-Skinned," secondly, "Middle Ranges of Skin Color" and finally, "Dark-skinned" (1995: 88). These "highly nuanced shades of pigmentation" of black people was also related to the class division and originally dated back to the tradition and legend of the Southern plantations.

"The slave," recalled Annie Laurie Broidrick of Vicksburg, Mississippi, in accordance with the plantation legend, "were of two classes; the bright [colored) darky who was trained for house service, and the 'corn-field nigger; the latter being usually the black, shiny darky who could sleep all day The dining-room servants or butlers were usually mulattoes, who were great dandies, having all the graces and mannerisms of their masters ..." (Genovese, 1974: 327).

This skin color discrimination was also continued after slavery with the existence of “Blue-vein Circle: an organization of mullatos that excluded blacks, an early version of color discrimination” (Watson, 1995:20). Besides practicing this color discrimination toward her own race, Tempy also scorned the Baptist Church for its religious ceremonial forms derived from black culture. She considered the Baptist faith inferior; therefore she did not want to participate in it. Among the black communities, Tempy is cynically mocked as the “lampblack whites” or blacks who aspire to white ways (Watson, 1995:19).

Moreover, in her aspiration to adapt to her new social class, Tempy also changed her speaking manners. When Sandy lived in Tempy's house, she demanded that he speak English properly because uneducated and poor blacks spoke in dialect. Tempy also addressed Sandy by his proper first name, James, because Sandy was a nickname for a light-haired black boy, and not a name for a respectable young man.

2. The Significance of Education to the Struggle for Race and Class Equality

In *Not Without Laughter*, education plays a very crucial role to fight for race and class betterment as seen from the struggle of the female characters to support the formal schooling and education of Sandy. However, unlike her two sisters and mother, Annjee did not really have a high ambition for her son Sandy, and she even demanded that he quit school to work and earn money for the family. In contrast, her old fashioned mother who had lived through slavery had a high ambition for her grandson, encouraged Sandy to pursue a higher education, reasoning “But they's one mo' got to go through school yet, an' that's ma little Sandy. If de Lwad lets me live, I's gwine make a edicated man out o' him (Hughes, 141). Sandy's grandmother told him, “You's a 'dustriouschile, shois!Gwine make a smart man even if yo' daddy warn't nothing.’ Gwine get ahead an' do good fo' yo'self an' de race, yes, sir!” (Hughes,194). Hager's high hope was not only a brighter

future for Sandy but also for sandy to become an exemplary black man, hence a credit to his race. For her, Jimboy was a failure; in contrast, Hager celebrated successful black figures such as Booker T. Washington, Frederick Douglass, and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, as role models for Sandy. Harriett was an enthusiastic as her mother, regarding Sandy's promising prospects, she exclaimed: "My. But you're smart! You'll be a great man someday, sure, Sandy" (Hughes, 166). At the end of the novel, it was Harriett who proudly declared that she would support Sandy's education. Education became a very important way in this novel for black people to struggle for social class, and race equality.

Hager, Tempy, and Harriett, insisted upon the importance of education for Sandy, remembering Frederick Douglass's successful experience in trying to escape slavery through education. Through this experience, Douglass had stated that "knowledge unfits a child to be a slave" (1987:79). Learning from Douglass who used education to escape slavery, Sandy was also expected to escape the "slavery" of class and race oppression through education. The attempts of Hager, Tempy, and Harriett, to help Sandy pursue higher education and become a credit to his race reflected the close relationship between gender struggles and race and class struggle. Gender struggle in this novel was more for race and class equality and emancipation rather than for the sake of feminism only. Black women's gender struggle in this novel also differed from white women's gender struggle which demanded gender equality from their male counterparts and from patriarchal society. Unlike white women, a great number of black women during the early twentieth century in the U.S. were not 'just housewives' but they were at the same time also breadwinners. They had to work inside as well outside the home to support and emancipate their men and also for the betterment of their race. Gender struggle was dedicated to race and class improvement as seen in the novel in the way Annjee worked hard to help her husband, and in the way all female members of Sandy's extended family struggled to help Sandy achieve a better life.

Through Tempy's life story the novel depicted the way education could help support a black family to move to a better social status. In

addition, the novel showed how skin color and race were determinants of social class. It was shown that Sandy's lighter-skinned friends experienced less racial prejudice; some light-skinned children with blue eyes could pass as white although they were still considered colored among the people who knew them. Being dark-skinned, Sandy experienced painful racial humiliation. As a child he was called 'niggers' by his little white neighbors. Harriet had a similar experience of being mocked as "Blackie" when her short kinky braids were pulled by mischievous boys at the age of five and she felt "uncomfortable in the presence of whiteness" (Hughes, 88). Growing up both Sandy and Harriett experienced racial injustice in their schools. Harriett was forbidden to sit in the same row as her white classmates when watching an educational film at theater. Sandy was ordered to sit in a Jim Crow row at his school although the students in his class were supposed to sit in alphabetical order by their last name. Another incident occurred on Children's Day when Sandy and his black friends were told to stay out of the amusement park, and were prohibited from enjoying the facilities although some of his light-skinned friends were allowed to play the games and to mingle with white children. For children, this incident was a very painful experience. Harriett became hateful of the whites because of such incidents. Later she experienced more humiliation for being poor, black, and female. When she worked for a white family, her mistress insulted her in anger: "Shut up you impudent little black wench! Talking back to me after breaking up my dishes. All you darkies are alike-careless sluts-and I wouldn't have any one of you in my house if I could get anybody else to work for me without paying a fortune. You're all impossible." (Hughes, 90). Insults with sexual and racial implications are commonly addressed to black people, both men and women, with their stereotypically over-sexualized or desexualized portrayals.

There is Jezebel (the seductive temptress), Sapphire (the evil, manipulative bitch), Aunt Jemima (the sexless, long-suffering nurturer). There is Bigger Thomas (the mad and mean predatory craver of white women), Jack Johnson, the super performer- be it in athletics, entertainment, or sex-who excels other naturally and

prefers women of a lighter hue), or uncle Tom (the spineless, sexless-or is it impotent?-sidekick of whites) (Rosenblum & Travis, 1996:225).

Harriett's mother, Hager, a former house slave was a loving figure for both blacks and whites. She was a typical Mammy well loved by her black and white neighbors such as the stereotype of Aunt Jemima, on the other hand her youngdaughter, Harriett, was frequently stereotyped as Jezebel or Sapphire and was often sexually and racially abused. When she started her singingcareer, Harriett faced sexual harassment from her white music managers and her black companions; moreover, she had to engage in prostitution to survive. The multiplieddiscriminations she endured made Harriett hate whites even more. Simillar to Harriett, Sandy pondered his childhood experience:

'He wondered sometimes whether if he washed and washed his face and hands, he would ever be white. Someone had told him once that blackness was only skin-deep ... And would he ever have a big house with electric lights in it, like his Aunt Tempy, but it was mostly white people who had such fine things, and they were mean to colored... Some white folks were nice, though (Hughes, 174).

The young Sandy understood Harriett's hatred of whites, but he was also influenced by his grandmother's loving and forgiving attitude, and he himself acknowledged that there were also good white people. Moreover, Sandy already recognized the relationship between race and class, associating prosperity with both class and race. As a child, he witnessed his mother being humiliated by her white mistress, and he himself often had to eat leftovers from the white kitchen. Early in his life he already saw the social disadvantages of being black and the social privileges of being white or even light-skinned. While the evidence showed that it was not true that all whites or light-skinned were middle class, it seemed that even poor whites had the privileges the blacks were denied. Despite their protest, Tempy's snobbish nouveau riche black friends were actually trying to promote themselves as respectable middle class people. These assimilated blacks hoped for preferred

treatment by connecting themselves to white people. On the other hand, for Tempy, her black family lineage was humiliating. She was ashamed of her Poor black family connections: a washer mother, a sister as a kitchen helper, a failed brother in law, and a sister running wild as a prostitute and a blues singer. Tempy's shame at her family background was the reason she rarely kept in touch with her own family. Her mother was tolerant and understanding of her disrespectful attitude but her sister rejected it angrily:

Tempy?" Harriett sneered suddenly, pricked by this comparison. "So respectable you can't touch her with a ten-foot-pole, that's Tempy!...Annjee's all right, working herself to death atMrs. Rice's, but don't tell me about Tempy. Just because she's married a mail-cerk with a little property, she won't even see her own family any more. When niggers get up in the world, they act just like white folks- don't pay you no mind. And Tempy's kind of a nigger-she's up in the world now! (Hughes, 54)

Harriett hated her sister for denying her roots and Sandy as a child was also resentful of Tempy. Sandy's preference for Harriett was clearly not accidental to Hughes plot. Hughesexplicitly favored Harriett who had a strongpride in her black heritage. To him, she was a hero representing future. Sandy also had already determined to escape race and class oppression by following the paths of the great black leaders that his grandmother wanted him to emulate.

I'm more like Harriett—not wanting to be a servant at the mercies of white people for ever. I want to do something for myself, by myself... Free... I want a house to live in, too, when I'm older-like Tempy's and Mr. Sile's ... But I wouldn't want to be like Tempy's friends-or her dull and colorless, putting all his money away in a white bank, ashamed of colored people (Hughes, 289).

One of Hughes's clear messages in this novel was his intention to make Sandy, a hard working black boy with a great compassion and racial pride, a good model for black youth. Because of the rich themes of race and class struggles, *New Masses* called *Not Without Laughter* a proletarian novel. Hughes himself as a writer agreed with Du Bois' idea

that "Literature must, first and foremost serve as a didactic and propagandistic tool for advancing African-American culture" (Watson, 1995: 93). Sandy's optimism and his hope for future and his racial pride provide clear examples of Hughes' social message. His depiction of Tempy as unfeeling, and on the other hand, Hager and Harriett as passionate and humanistic, are other examples of Hughes's preference for common black people. These idealistic social messages of hope and racial pride were also woven with realism as seen in Hughes' vivid depiction of sane aspects of black lives such as the dress, food, and speech in this novel. Hughes' aesthetic style can be seen in his presentation of characters in *Not Without Laughter* who not only stand for characters but also serve as symbol and metaphor. Hager, the older generation of the Williams family, represents the loving attitude of blacks, especially those of the house slaves for white people during slavery. Hager's loving attitude and the constant resentment of Jimboy, and their different view of white culture also shows traces of the conflict between 'house slaves' and 'field hand slaves,' evidence of racism between members of the black community itself during slavery.

3. Black Music: Race, Class, and Gender Struggles

In addition to the portrayal of the characters as a symbol for the generation gap and of the conflicting attitudes of the black family toward race relations, Hughes also depicts another symbolic presence that is the life of Harriett as a blues singer which represents the emergence of real mythic blues singers such as Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. Hughes also employed rich imagery in his depiction of black music as shown in the chapter "Dance". Simile, metaphor, and personification are dynamically utilized to produce five sensory images, from visual, auditory imagery to kinesthetic imagery, and even describing the bodily smell and odor of the dancers.

Whaw! Whaw! Whaw!" mocked the cornet—but the steady tomtom of the drums was no longer laughter now, no longer even pleasant: the drum-beats had become sharp with surly sound, like heavy

wavesthat beat angrily on a granite rock. And under the dissolute spell of its own; the sun-baked earth; violent and hard, like a giant standing over hisbleeding mate in the blazing sun. The odors of bodies, the stings of flesh, and the utter emptiness of soul when all is done—these things the piano and the drums, the cornet and the twanging banjo insisted on hoarsely to a beat that made the dancers moue, in that little hall, like pawns on a frenetic checker-board (Hughes, 100-101).

Music no longer just accompanies but is also as alive, dynamic, and moving as the dancers. Music is depicted as a natural emotional and physical force and an overflow of powerful feeling. Music is the expression of both the body and soul of the musicians and the dancers. The title, *Not Without Laughter*, is also taken from blues and jazz themes, reflecting the philosophical attitude, resistance, and endurance of blacks confronting oppression and suffering in life.

Hughes depicts music as an integral part of African American culture and lives. There are some interesting passages where Hughes presents stereotypes of black people as spirituals-blues-and-jazz-loving people and dancers. Tempy and her husband who had fared well as members of the middle days, tried to avoid these stereotypes by developing a love for Italian opera and European music. Their attitudes were similar to many better class blacks in the early 20th century who were reacting against racism and demeaning stereotypes by trying to abandon "almost all their black traits" (Jones,1963, 58). They despised black culture, considered it offensive and tried to distance themselves from it. In *Not Without Laughter*, Tempy's husband expressed the same attitude by referring to blacks as "A lot of minstrels—that's all niggers are! Clowns, jazzers, just a band of dancers—that's why they never have anything. Never be anything but servants to the white people"(Hughes, 289). Black people like Tempy and Mr. Siles were in fact trying to adopt white culture to change the attitudes of the white middle class toward them. While Sandy himself did not sympathize with his snobbish aunt and uncle, but he was in fact taking Mr. Siles' comments to heart when he perceived his family as

*A band of dancers ... Black dancers --captured in a white world--
Dancers of the spirit, too. Each black dreamers as a captured
dancers of the spirit ... Aunt Hager's dreams for Sandy dancing far
beyond the limitations of their poverty, of their humble station in
life, of their dark skins (Hughes, 289).*

Sandy associated his family's love of black culture with race and class struggles. Hughes explicitly used music and dance as a metaphor for black life. There were also stereotypes of blacks having a natural sense of rhythm, music, and dance. This stereotype was depicted in Harriett's natural talent to be a great singer and dancer. On the other hand, music was shown as problematic when a white customer forced Sandy to dance:

*Down where I live, folks, all our niggers can dance!... You Northern
Darkies are dumb as hell, anyhow!... Now, down in Mississippi,
whar I come from, if you offer a nigger a dime, he'll dance his can
off... an' they better dance, what I mean! (Hughes, 215)*

This white Southerner reinforced a stereotype using a black dance in a demeaning way to show his power as the member of superior race and privileged class and as a result Sandy is humiliated.

Hughes employed black music not only to comment on stereotype but also to contrast his characters. Tempy's and her husband's preference for European music clearly reflected their white middle class worldview. In contrast, Harriett's preference for black music reflected her racial and cultural pride. Hughes presented the theme of black racial and cultural pride in several ways. Hager the older generation had a great passion for spirituals meanwhile her two daughters and son-in-law loved blues and jazz. Hager did not approve of blues because blues was 'the devil's sinful tunes,' and those who played blues were 'the devil's musicianers.' She would exclaim, "Wha! Wha!... you chillen sho can sing! ... Minds me of de ole plantation times, honey! it sho do I – Unhuh! Bound straight for devil, that what they is" (Hughes, 61)

The association of blues with both plantation music and sinful devil is interesting. Palmer in *Deep Blues* discussed the origin of blues and

traced its development from the Mississippi Delta to Chicago's South Side and finally to the world (1981: 2-6). As Palmer shows, blues was rooted in slavery and plantation times, and it was actually connected with class division in the black community. Hager, a former house servant, did not like the blues and thought of it as a sinful music sung by field-hands or yard slaves. Her attitude showed that she thought herself better than field hands although both Hager and those field-hands were slaves to the whites. Interestingly, Hager's view resembles that of W.E.B. Du Bois who preferred spirituals to blues and jazz, and thought of spirituals as more refined. Hughes, on the other hand, loved all black music and considered its various forms equally valuable. He admired DuBois but at the same time sometimes disagreed with Du Bois' emphasis on the more educated and sophisticated blacks, and his lack of attention to the working and lower class. Hughes sympathized with the lower class, and most of his characters were poor and simple ordinary people: farmers, kitchen helpers, shoe shine boys, washers, elevator boys, and other common working class people. Hughes depicted them passionately as more human than those rich, refined, or educated people. His love for working class people could also be seen in his choice of Harriett as a hero for the black race, at the time when most black writers often portrayed elite black characters as heroes in their books. Hughes valued blues because for him blues was spiritualssecularizedand fittingly perfect to represent his love of the lower class.

The conflicts between blues and spirituals were also reflected in the conflicts between Hager and Harriett. Hager tared spirituals and was a very devout Christian; meanwhile, blues-loving Harriett rejected religion and claimed that Jesus was a white God who did not care a bit for the poor. In fact, Harriett despised her mother's religious views: "You old fool!" she cried. Lemme go! You old Christian fool!" (Hughes, 58). The allusion to blues as anti-christian was associated with its African folk origins, especially the Yoruba legend of Legba who was said to have met blues musicians on the crossroads, exchanging mortal souls for musical gifts (Floyd, 1995: 73). Legba was pictured as a devil in black Christian culture. The association of blues with the devil was

sometimes seen in its association with the red-light districts. Blues for most people, black and white, was a good-time-music that was of ten related with prostitution. Harriett performed in the Bottoms the red-light district in her town, and she was also a prostitute who sang and dance firstly in minstrel shows and finally in theaters.

Images of blues as sensual can also be seen in the "Dance" where Hughes depicted people dancing ecstatically to the tunes of blues and jazz with spontaneous, sensual, and sexual expression. Interestingly, however, blues resembled spirituals and religious music. Both had similar tunes, and to change a blues tune to spirituals was basically only to change its lyrics. In fact and in practice, the changing of blues to spirituals is not as simple as Hughes describes. Blues and spirituals have more complicated differences, both linguistically and stylistically. However, Hughes intended to show the similarities between blues and spirituals rather than their differences, such a comparison is also expressed in Le Roi Jones's Blues people:

It would be quite simple for an African melody that was known traditionally to most of the slaves to be used as a Christian song. All that would have to be done was change the words (which is also the only basic difference between a great many of the 'devil music' songs and the most devout of Christian religious songs) (1963: 45).

The interchangeable tunes of blues and spirituals can also be seen in the way Hager and Jimboy interacted musically. Hager hated Jimboy and his blues music, but whenever he changed the lyrics and sang in a spiritual lyric, Hager enthusiastically participated in singing and dancing, and suddenly forgot that Jimboy was her "enemy":

That was another reason why Aunt Hager didn't like Jimboy. The devil's musicianer, she called him, straight from hell, teaching Harriett buck-and-wingin'! But when he took his soft-playing guitar and picked out spirituals and old-time Christian hymns on its sweet strings, Hager forgot she was his enemy, and sang and rocked with the rest of them (Hughes, 46).

Hughes used black music as a literary vehicle to develop his characters and as a literary symbol and metaphor for black lives in American society. He related the history and the development of black music to the black Diaspora. Like black music that geographically moved from South to North, most characters in his novel also moved northward. Harriett became a manifestation of the emergence of the blues culture. Her career as a blues singer started in Kansas as a young girl taught by her brother-in-law to sing and dance; then she joined the black minstrelsy, and later successfully sang blues and jazz in Chicago. Hughes described her journey to become a blues singer so that it resembled the depiction of Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith, two of Hughes's favorite blues singers. Like mythical blues men and blues women, Harriett was also depicted as a 'cultural rebel' (Barlow, 1989: 113). Like those blues from borne experienced racial and sexual harassment; and she ran away from home to begin her singing career. Harriett's life story is comparable to Sandra Lieb's biography, *Mother of the Blues* (1981), describing the hardships of the blues career of Ma Rainey. Hughes also connects a biography which closely parallels the life of Harriett in *Not Without Laughter* of blues and jazz history to commercialization of blues and jazz in urban cities and in recordings. According to cultural historian William Barlow, "Once transplanted to an urban setting, (blues and jazz) were significantly influenced by two disparate cultural forces—the music industry and the right-light-districts (1989: 113). Harriett performed in the Bottoms in both Kansas and Chicago. She had to work as a prostitute and for a white manager in the Bottoms, and to deal with a Jewish manager for recording business in Chicago. Ironically, Hughes described the red-light-district such as the Bottoms passionately and in a rather positive light as a 'gay place' where white and black could mingle without racial boundaries (Hughes, 231). Hughes employed black music as a paradigm for black lives in the U.S. with both positive and negative implications: racial conflicts, pride, the black Diaspora, even the commercialization of black incur, all connected to black music. He used music to construct the form, content, style, and artistic beauty of his novel.

Hughes's detailing the history and culture of black music can also be seen in his use of blues and jazz motifs in the title of the novel. *Not Without Laughter* was derived from the tragicomic qualities of blues and jazz. "For Hughes blues is the music that laughs and cries at the same time" (Hughes, 1927). In jazz, there are dynamic rhythms and swing sounds which add to its melancholic and soulful expression. Hughes also said that blues had a mood of despondency, but when it was sung people laughed. Sandy, the central character of the novel, noticed this duality when he listened to blues at a carnival: "An' Ah can't be satisfied / 'Cause all Ah love has / Done laid down an' died (Hughes, 117). To Sandy, this song sounded very sad, but he saw white people around him laughing. For Hughes, blues was even sadder than the spirituals because the sadness of blues "is not softened with tears, but hardened with laughter. The absurd, incongruous laughter of a sadness without even a god to appeal to". (1979: 46). *Not Without Laughter* signifies this meaning. The characters experienced race and class injustices, but they kept strong and hopeful that someday they would finally prevail over the racial oppression. The pain was unbearable, but they laughed to keep surviving, in the novel, laughter was not only a temporary escape, but a stoic attitude and a determination not to be beaten by life's suffering. Hughes expressed this common use of laughter often in his works, and his intention to describe his people as 'Loud-Mouthed laughers in the hands of Fate' (1983: 91). Maybe is this very laughter that has kept us going all these years, from slavery denial of drought of freedom in to the Washington airport's denial of work. Maybe it a just a way of saying, 'to defeat us, you must defeat our laughter.' (1983: 40). Hughes used a blues motif to title his novel and to reflect the black philosophy of great endurance and hope. The novel presents this philosophy: beginning with the storm that blew away Hager's porch in Stanton and ending in Chicago where Sandy, Annjee, and Harriett listen to a beautiful spiritual tune, reflecting hope. Black musk is used as the background of the story, as an integral part of the novel's aesthetics and also to express Hughes' social themes.

Conclusion

This research studies Hughes' depiction of African American life within his novel *Not Without Laughter* and his use of black music as a paradigm for black experience in the United States, particularly their race, class, and gender struggles. The approach has been interdisciplinary, combining biographical, sociological, historical and literary research to analyze Hughes' literary qualities and his social political ideas. Women and black music play an important role in *Not Without Laughter*. Hughes presents four different women to express his ideas about black experiences. One interesting note on gender struggle in this novel is that women's struggle is connected to race and class equality. Interestingly, Hughes uses black music to characterize and to contrast the female characters. Despite their different preference for music, depicts these African Americans as people who have a great passion for music and dance. Hughes uses the development of black music to describe the settings in the novel and to reflect the black Diaspora during the Great Migration. Music becomes a crucial literary device to describe the characters, setting, and the title of the novel as derived from the tragicomic qualities of blues and jazz tradition. The title signifies an attitude toward life and the essential philosophy of black life that is the determination to be strong and hopeful, the refusal to be beaten and defeated.

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Women, Marriage, and Domesticity in Joyce Carol Oates' "Accomplished Desires" (A Feminist Approach)

1. Introduction

Joyce Carol Oates' short story "Accomplished Desires" (1963) depicts two women in love and marriage. Dorie Weinhenmer, a young beautiful college student, finds her desires accomplished when her married professor, Mark Arber, returns her love. She feels loved, happy, and free to be Arber's mistress. However, she becomes miserable and frustrated when she finally becomes Arber's wife. She feels under estimated and neglected as a wife, and unfit as a mother. Meanwhile, Mark Arber's wife, Barbara Arber, the Pulitzer prize poet, finds her life as a wife, mother, and homemaker depressing and alienating. Her life becomes unbearable when her husband brings his young mistress to live with the family as a helper and baby-sitter. Barbara then decides to end her life to make way for Dorie to be the new Mrs. Arber and to preserve the life of Dorie's expected baby.

In "Accomplished Desires" Oates portrays the miserable experience of women in love and marriage. The story describes the victimization in a patriarchal system. Oates's bleak and distressing portrayal of female characters such as those in "Accomplished Desires" was criticized by the early feminist critics. They condemned Oates' disappointing "portraits of women" and called the characters in her stories "unliberated women" (Wesley, 1993: xi). However, feminist literary critics today consider Oates' works as having the "feminist unconsciousness" and they read her works as "a feminist revolution in the making". As Marilyn Wesley observed:

Oates' disturbing portrayals of troubled families can and do address complex issues of power in contemporary society—economic dislocation, gender inequity, and violence—as they are experienced in intimate relationships. And if plot in Oates' work customarily deals with the family, theme always concerns complicated issues of personal, familial, and public power. Oates' characteristic stance toward the plot of family and the theme of power is challenging, interrogative, even revolutionary resistance (Wesley, 1993:xiv).

In her works, besides describing the female victimization and the stereotypes of women under patriarchy, Oates also questions patriarchy, women's role, and the future of marriage and family in American society. These issues will become the focus of discussion in my research. I will discuss them using a feminist approach and relate Oates' "Accomplished Desires" to the historical experience of American women since 1945.

2. Problem Formulation

After reading "Accomplished Desires" and relating it to the topic of American domesticity, I formulate these questions:

- a. What are Barbara's and Dorie's opinions of themselves as women, wives, mothers, and homemakers?
- b. What are Mark Arber's opinions of Barbara and Dorie as women, wives, mothers, and homemakers'?
- c. What feminine stereotypes and portrayals of women's lives in patriarchy are present in "Accomplished Desires"?
- d. What does Oates think about women, domesticity, housewives, and working women as seen through the characters and plot of her story?

3. Theoretical Base

3.a. Feminist Theory on Women's Lives in Patriarchal Society—"Women and Writing"

"Accomplished Desires" is a work written by a woman writer telling the story of two women in love and marriage. One of the female characters in the story is also interestingly a writer, a Pulitzer-prize winning poet. How does Oates, a woman writer herself, present the life of another woman writer? In her book *(Woman) Writer: Occasions and Opportunities*, Oates quotes Charlotte Bronte's "Letter to a Critic" to question the ontological status of the writer who is also a woman:

*To you I am neither man nor woman
I come before you as an author only.
It is the sole standard by which, you have
A right to judge me—the sole ground on
Which I accept your judgement.*

----- Jane Austen

(Oates. 1998:22).

Oates is in Bronte's spirit, in seeing writing as genderless. She also quotes French feminist Helen Cixous who proposes "L'écriture féminine" (feminine writing) closely related to the specifically female voice, but Oates criticizes Cixous's disregard for the fact that voice can only mean voice.

Oates emphasizes that there is no such thing as a distinctly female or male subject. Instead, she sees subject matters as "clearly culture-determined, not gender-determined. And the imagination, in itself genderless, allows us all things"(Oates,1998:25). However, during her 1960s and 1970s writing career and her pursuit of identity as a woman, she realized that the western culture in which she lived was also based on a gender system. It also applies that, "A woman who writes is a writer by her own definition, but she is a woman writer by others' definitions" (Oates, 1998: 27). The books written by a woman are thus not only a series of words but also reflections of her sexual identity.

Books are neuter objects, writers are he or she. "A woman writing is always feminine; it cannot help being feminine, at its best it is most feminine; the only difficulty lies in defining what we mean by feminine"—as Virginia Woolf has wittily said (Oates 1998:27).

On the other hand, Oates also sees the irony that while there is a "woman writer", there is not a "man write". "This is an empty category, a class without specimens, for the noun "writer"—the very verb writing—always implies masculinity" (Oates, 1998:27). Woman is basically the product of linguistic difference.

Oates began to see Cixous' points. In 1998 she stated that if a writer is disturbed by many different inspirations and demons, real or imagined, the (woman) writer certainly is also afflicted by her essential identity. Oates suggested that this paradox could be accommodated in numerous ways by writing with, resilience, a sense of humour, stubbornness, anger, and hope (Oates, 1998:32). In her essay "Sorties (1986), Cixous similarly encourages woman, to write "WRITE YOURSELF: YOU BODY MUST MAKE ITSELF HEARD" (Easthope&Gowan, 1998:156). She also argues that this feminine writing can challenge the Western logocentric and phallogocentric system with its hierarchical binary oppositions and negative female stereotypes. Cixous hopes that feminine writing will also facilitate the positive representation of women (Sarup, 1993: 109).

1.3.b. American Women Since 1945: Women's Place, Domesticity, and Marriage.

Experts have made different predictions about the future of marriage and family in the United States. In her book, *The Way We Really Are: Coming to Terms with America's Changing Families*, Stephanie Coontz revealed that John Watson, the most famous child psychiatrist of the early twentieth century, made his 1928 prediction that marriage would no longer exist by 1977; and Amitai Etzioni, the noted sociologist, made his 1977 announcement that by the mid-1990 there would not be one single American family left (Coontz, 1997: 2-3).

Joyce Carol Oates has expressed a similar opinion: the central character in her short story "Last Days 22" (1984) remarks that "Family is a vanishing animal in the United States. Doomed to extinction" (Wesley, 1993:3). Social experts, particularly conservatives, have blamed the "breakdown" of the American family on women's emancipation and the increase in the number of working mothers. Noticing all those pessimistic predictions and opinionated statements makes me curious to know what really has happened to the American family and marriage especially related to the life of American women since 1945.

Rochelle Gatlin asserted in 1987 that between 1945 and 1965 American women's lives and works changed faster than their consciousness (Gatlin, 1987:5). The number of women who worked outside the home increased after 1945, but this trend did not change thinking about gender roles. Most working women still considered themselves primarily wives, mothers, and housekeepers. Hollywood movies and sit-coms in the 1950s also romanticized the traditional roles of women, presenting female characters who stayed at home taking care of their husbands and children (Coontz, 1997:38-9). Dr. Benjamin Speck's *Baby and Child Care* (1946) moreover rested great responsibility of child-rearing on mothers. Dr. Spock assumed that "the mother had unlimited time and energy," and was therefore required her to watch her child's physical needs and emotional states carefully all the time. He expanded the role of the mother not only as a homemaker but also a home psychologist, arguing that by doing this she "would also find her own fulfillment, desiring no outside companionship or interests (Gatlin, 1987:18). Fortunately, seeing the real problems and situations of American families. Spock in his 1976 revision "finally included the father and assigned him equal responsibility" (Gatlin, 1987:19).

The norm of women at home and men as breadwinners was very influential. Women were expected to get married and to be mothers. To stay single or pursue a career was considered deviant (Breines, 1992: 50). Even during the 1960s, when women had more opportunities to pursue education and careers, female college students still retained marriage as a primary ambition: "Woman's future identity is largely

encompassed by the projected role of wife and mother... In the short term, many young women aspired to be the 'Sweetheart of Sigma Chi' rather than elected to Student Government" (Ward & Green, 1993:89). A survey in the 1960s showed that when they were asked to define "success," most women college graduates answered "to be the mother of several accomplished children, and to be the wife of a prominent man" (Gatlin, 1987:17). The traditional view of women's role and place was adopted not only by men but also most women.

In the 1960s, however, more American women worked outside the home and went to college. The Women's Movement and Women's Liberation led the struggle for equal rights for women, and made women realize that they had more options than just to be housewives. However, their struggle had not yet solved the problems of women with double roles at home as well as in the work place. Working women were discriminated against and paid far less than male workers. At home they still had to do their duties as the homemakers: "Society was now willing to condone a 'dual role' if women were individually willing and able to assume a double burden. When women experienced conflict between work and family responsibilities, they expected to solve them individually" (Gatlin, 1987:32). Men were also more willing to share the housekeeping duties than before, but they were only "helping out" and tended to share "the desirable ones" (Gatlin, 1987:69). According to the 1970 survey on married life, marriage gave better mental health and beneficial career effects for men. Married women who worked also had far better mental and emotional health than did full-time homemakers, but employed wives had far less leisure time than their husbands and full-time homemakers (Gatlin, 1987:57). Stephanie Coontz called these busy working wives "the blessedly stressed" (Coontz, 1997:65).

In the 1960s the "frustrated housewife" began to receive media attention, as Betty Friedan's "The Problem That Has No Name" became a popular term (Gatlin, 1987:49). Addressing the problems faced by women in the 1960s, Tillie Olson and Adrienne Rich in the 1970s asked the question "Can the Mother write?" They tried to find out if motherhood was the root cause of the trouble for women or not (Jouve,

1998:155). Rich had become a widely known feminist writer who had also succeeded in bringing up three children (Gatlin, 1987:13). The answer to Olson's and Rich's question is not simple. Even if housework, rather than mothering, was the main cause of women's depression, it was difficult for women to separate the two jobs. Motherhood was the reason for them to stay at home where they also, of course, did housework. "in spite of anxiety and self doubt, mothering was the most satisfying domestic job they did (Gatlin, 1987:63). Most women also did not separate the general role of 'housewife' into its constituent parts: wife, mother, housekeeper. In fact, each of the roles—wife, mother, housekeeper—should be considered as a job which changes over the course of a lifetime. In addition, the family itself and women's work and status within it "depends on class, race, and ethnicity" (Gatlin, 1987:50). Because of the complexity of family life, it is simplistic to blame working women and women's emancipation for the breakdown of family. It is the duty of all the family members to keep their family together and to pursue happiness collectively. This has been the great challenge for the American family in the past and will be in the future.

3.c. Outline of Joyce Carol Oates' Life and Works.

Joyce Carol Oates was born in Lockport, New York, in 1938. She began writing at 14 after receiving the gift of typewriter. She won a Mademoiselle fiction contest while at Syracuse University on scholarship. She graduated as valedictorian at Syracuse, and earned an M.A. in English at the University of Wisconsin, where she met and married her husband, Raymond J. Smith. They lived in Detroit in 1962, an experience which Oates often used as inspiration. Between 1968 and 1978, she taught at the University of Windsor in Canada, while maintaining her career as a writer. In 1978, she moved to Princeton, New Jersey, where she continued her teaching career as a Professor of Creative Writing at Princeton University. She and her husband also run a small press and publish *The Ontario Review*, a literary magazine.

Oates has been an extremely productive writer with numerous works to her credit, including essays, criticism, poems, short stories, novels, plays, and biographies. She will be remembered as one of the eminent American writers of her era; she writes about American obsessions such as love, money, evil, and fear. As a writer and a woman Oates has also succeeded in achieving the American dream aspired to by most feminists (Souther, 1998:1-5).

4. Analysis

4.a. Dorie Weinheinmen as a Young College Girl

Dorie is a rich beautiful twenty-one-year old girl who has the opportunity to go to an exclusive girls college. The institution offers the best facilities including skiing in winter and bicycling in good weather, and the best education with a faculty of distinguished professors from Harvard and Yale. Dorie reads newspapers and learns that lots of bad things happen in the world: poverty, starvation, and war; she does care about all those miserable things, but she realizes she cannot do anything about them. After all, she is safe and protected in her rich and beautiful world. Dorie considers herself very fortunate although she also knows that she is only an average college student of adequate intelligence". She is, however, notable for her "faithfulness to an obsession," Mark Arber, her married professor (Oates, 1994:163). She worships him as if he were the cleverest and most wonderful man she ever knew. She will do anything to have him—she plays tennis with him because it is his favorite sport, visits him in his office to talk about poetry, literature—anything to get close to him. She even follows his wife and children everywhere. She becomes obsessed with her dream to have the man and his children:

Dorie thought about the two of them all the time, awake or asleep, and she could feel the terrible sensation of blood flowing through her body, a flowing of desire that was not just for the man, but somehow for the woman as well, a desire for her accomplishment,

her fame, her children, her ugly house, her ugly body, her very life
(Oates, 1994:161).

Following Barbara's every step makes Dorie obsessed with her as well as Mark. Dorie's feeling toward his wife is a confusing mixture of hatred and jealousy. She hates Barbara but she also envies her "luck" at being Mark's wife and the mother of his children. Dorie criticizes everything that Barbara does—her bad choice of clothes, her common way in taking care of her husband and children. and her bad taste in furnishing her house. In Dorie's eyes, Barbara is ugly, a bad wife, an unfit mother, and an incapable homemaker, yet she envies her desperately. She thinks that she could be a far better wife, mother, and homemaker if she were in Barbara's position. Dorie, like other college girls, wants nothing but to be a mother of some lovely children and the wife of a prominent man: College for Dorie and those girls is just a four year leisure before they come to the real plan—marriage and motherhood. Dorie is actually just a common average girl, but her common dream is worse than others' because she wants another woman's husband and children.

4.b. Barbara Arber as a Wife, Mother and Poet

Barbara is a big stout woman in her forties. She is somewhat quiet, pensive and moody. She spends her time taking care of her husband and three children. In her spare time, she likes to hide in the dirty attic of her house and write poems. She is actually a very accomplished poet who has won Pulitzer Prize. However, she chooses to stay at home as a wife, mother, and homemaker; taking care of her family is her primary job and writing poetry is her secondary job.

She must do all the housekeeping and child-rearing because her husband is always busy with his teaching jobs and writing career. He is rarely at home to help her so she has to do it all by herself. Sometimes, when she is tired of doing all the housekeeping and her children do not behave, she wants not just to scream and to shout at them but also to slap and beat them. Fortunately, she is sane enough to control herself,

and she realizes that her children are not the only cause of her anger. Therefore, it is unfair to compensate the blame on them. She rationalizes her anger and frustration, and she understands that her mental and physical exhaustion are caused by many different things—her husband's authoritarian way of treating her, his frequent unavailability to support her domestic role, all the time-consuming and tiring house work and the children's needs toward her. She also has no time to see her friends to express her feelings. She has no one to confide in and she feels invisible and isolated. Sometimes, when she tries to analyze the situation she feels confused and begins to question: "Did she hate these children, or did she hate herself? Did she hate Mark? Or was her hysteria a form of love, or was it both love and hate together...?" (Oates, 1994:165). She goes into psychoanalysis and sees an analyst to help her solve the problems. Still, she feels unhappy and trapped in the conflicting situation and conflicting self-identity. Her confusion is shown in the choice of her pen name—she decides to write under her earlier name, Barbara Scott, as if she had a different kind of self and identity. She no longer feels sure whether she really wants to be a poet only or also her domestic identity as a wife, mother, and homemaker. She is still not convinced whether those two roles are totally separate or they can go together. When things get harder and harder, she takes all her helplessness and hopelessness to alcohol. Drinking becomes her habit to forget all her frustration and sorrows besides her poetry that she considers as a beautiful world that protects her from the harsh, cruel, and violent realities. She is completely miserable, lonely, and alone in her marriage, family, and home.

Her unhappy marriage and life become unbearable when her husband brings his young mistress to live with them as a housekeeper and baby-sitter. Barbara cannot refuse Mark's insistence in having Dorie in their house because he is the decision-maker and Barbara has to accept that. In her own peculiar way. Barbara tries to be more understanding toward her husband's needs and interests. His betrayal is not a new one, he had done it before. Barbara sees it as the compensation for his demanding leaching career and his frustration toward the failure of his writing career. Barbara even tries to protect his

reputation whenever neighbors and friends ask them about Dorie's presence in their house. She behaves like a dutiful and faithful wife despite Mark's cruel betrayal. She does not think of her own feelings and needs. She has great writing career but she is not ambitious. Barbara is very modest about her writing success so that her husband will not be offended and belittled by her great achievement. However, Mark often hurts and humiliates her, and she is just silent and obeys Mark's demands and orders. She keeps all her sadness to herself although she sometimes shows her anger at Dorie when Dorie tries to help her with the housekeeping. Barbara feels offended when Dorie does better work in taking care of Mark, the children, and house. She feels that Dorie has invaded her sphere. Barbara herself actually hates her domestic sphere and the roles that have frustrated and imprisoned her, but she is reluctant to give up all of them to Dorie. Her reluctance shows her confusion and ambiguity in perceiving and deciding on her roles and identities both as a poet and a domestic woman as well. Whenever she feels desperately low, she runs to poetry and alcohol as an escape.

Barbara tries to bear all her troubles and live a normal life despite the abnormal arrangement of relationships in her household. She treats Dorie as well as Mark and carefully explains the situation to her children. Then comes the event that changes her life completely. Mark tells her that Dorie has made herself pregnant on purpose, and he asks Barbara to help them arrange an abortion. Mark does not want to have anything to do with it because he has a meeting and a seminar waiting for him, therefore, he wants Barbara to go and to accompany Dorie to have the abortion. Barbara agrees to help, but first she offers to divorce Mark so he will be free to marry Dorie. Mark refuses her offer because he considers that their marriage is great and that it makes him perfectly happy so that he does not want to end it. He also considers his affair with Dorie as only an impulse, and he does not want to sacrifice their marriage for it. Barbara obediently does what Mark asks her to do. She takes Dorie to Boston. She comforts her not to be afraid and treats her like her old best friend. Dorie is very relieved and thankful, but she is also very surprised when she finds out Barbara has taken her own life

to give Dorie and her baby a chance to live with Mark. Barbara decides to end her sorrowful life heroically to save the life of others, and to help the woman that has stolen her husband. Dorie now also begins to see the good side of Barbara whom she had always criticized.

4.c. Dorie Arber as a Wife and Mother

Dorie has finally made her dream come true: she is now the wife of Mark Arber and the mother of his children a month after Barbara's death. She, however is not as happy as she thought she would be because she never expected everything to be this way, especially regarding the death of Barbara. She does not like the way Mark glorifies Barbara's death as a heroic sacrifice, an "infinite courage" to save the life of the others. It seems that Mark loves and appreciates Barbara more after she died. Dorie then decides to live her life the best she can. The baby is born and they name her Carolyn. Dorie is glad to have a baby girl because she now believes in "a kind of pact or understanding between women" (Oates. 1994:178). She is grateful enough for what she has. She spends her time caring for her husband, his children. and her baby, but she no longer has time to finish school or socialize with friends. Her place is now at home. When Mark's friends visit them, it is her duty to cook and play hostess. However, whenever they engage in serious conversation, she cannot keep up, let alone understand Barbara's poems or Mark's ideas.

Her understanding had dropped to lending the baby and the boys, fixing meals, cleaning up and shopping, and taking the station wagon to the garage perpetually ... and she had no time to go with others to the tennis courts, or to accompany Mark to New York ... and around her were human beings whose lives consisted of language, the grace of language, and she could no longer understand them. She felt strangely cheated, a part of her murdered, as if the abortion had taken place that day after all and something had been cut permanently out of her (Oates, 1994:178).

Dorie's life has been completely transformed. She is no longer a free, sociable, college student. She is just a housewife living in her isolated domestic sphere. She feels isolated, disconnected, and alienated. She now experiences what Barbara had faced before. Marriage and motherhood with all the domestic jobs turn out to be depressing and alienating for both Dorie and Barbara. Accomplishments in marriage and motherhood that Dorie had envied before become a prison that bars women from a career and social life. Dorie now has learned her lesson painfully well that her accomplished desires are the very beginning of her miseries.

4.d. Mark Arber as a Professor, Writer, Lover, Husband, Father

Mark was an idealistic student at Harvard, but he becomes a pragmatic as he gets older. He enjoys his teaching career at the exclusive girls' college where he earns a good salary and can express his genius. He is somewhat arrogant, irresponsible, and narcissistic. He is extremely proud of his intelligence, enjoying the fact that his students consider him a genius. He does not really care if he cannot come to class to teach because he is very busy producing great articles. He was absent several times during the winter and he took it for granted that his students would perfectly understand him. He seems very preoccupied with his ambition to be a great novelist, especially due to the fact that his wife Barbara is also a greatly accomplished poet winning the Pulitzer Prize while he has never won any award. He never discusses these inferior feelings that he has toward his wife. Instead, he spends his time developing his writing skills and lets his wife take all the responsibilities for family. He grows more frustrated as he fails to make notable progress in his writing career, and he compensates by becoming more authoritarian toward his wife and children. He likes to make decisions for his family without his wife's consent, and he enjoys the fact that he is the one who exercises power in the family. Maybe he is only a second-class writer compared to his wife, but at home he is obviously the superior. He is also authoritarian toward his children, and

helps educate them in a strict and demanding way. He has taught them French, Greek, and Latin at their early age and tested their every progress to make them perfect and cultivate their prodigious intelligence. He is very eager to turn his own failed obsession into his prodigious children. However, he is only willing to take charge of their education and not their other needs. He is the father and he thinks it is his duty to educate and it is his wife's duty to take care of them. He is an educated man but he still holds a traditional view of gender roles.

Mark sees his affair with Dorie only as an impulse. After all she is young, beautiful, and entertaining. He also likes the fact that Dorie worships him as a genius and does not compare him to his wife. His relationship with Dorie gives him a chance to be the strongest, best, cleverest and all the best things of him that this young, ignorant, and weak girl needs him to be. He is very selfish and inconsiderate when he brings her to his home. He does so for his own benefit, and deliberately humiliates his wife to show his authority. However, he feels disturbed when he finds out about Dorie's pregnancy. He wants the abortion because he does not want to take responsibility for another child. He also refuses to divorce Barbara because he sees his marriage as a secure place to maintain his power. He greatly benefits from his marriage physically and mentally. He would rather end the life of Dorie's baby. Mark Arber, in a way is the negative stereotyped of the authoritarian, sexist and selfish man who exploits women for his own advantage.

4.e. Joyce Carol Oates' View of Women's Lives in Marriage and Career in "Accomplished Desires"

In this story Oates uses three different points of view for her three main characters Dorie, Barbara, and Mark. Each of the characters has his or her own perspective in seeing other characters and his or her own character. However, Oates also uses the third person point of view, an omniscient narrator who is not one of the characters of the story but has all the knowledge and the authority to comment upon the characters. This omniscient narrator serves as the voice of the writer

toward the subject. Paying attention to this omniscient third person narrator will help us understand Oates's view of the problems faced by the characters in the story.

In Part I, the narrator looks down on Dorie and cynically calls her an ignorant, common, and average college girl whose primary concern is marriage and motherhood. In Part II, the narrator shows great sympathy to Barbara, seeing her as a genius trapped in marriage and motherhood. Part III reveals Mark Arber as an irresponsible, authoritarian, self-centered husband and father. In the Last Part, the narrator pities Dorie's life as a wife and then also shows great sympathy toward her. Therefore, what is the point of the narrators comment? What is this narrator trying to say? Does the narrator despise common girls like Dorie? Why? Does the narrator hate Mark? Yes, it seems so. Does the narrator sympathize with Barbara? Yes, but then why does the story end up with her death? I will try to answer all those questions.

By presenting Dorie as a common average girl desperately eager to have a husband and children. Oates describes the traditional view of gender roles. Women are forced to believe that their destiny is to be the wives and mothers, and most women even blindly believed it and made it their primary expectation. By accomplishing Dorie's desires, Oates tries to subvert this traditional view. If Dorie's desires are not accomplished, she will never learn the lesson of the real condition of married life. This is also a clear intention of the writer when she makes Dorie's life miserable in the end and how she regrets her accomplishments and longs for her happy days in college. This ending also strengthens the writer's view that the traditional gender roles are not necessarily good. If Dorie found a happy ending, it would only strengthen the idea that the traditional gender role is truly good. The writer has two possibilities in presenting this: she disagrees with the traditional gender role, or she may present this as a kind of reflection of the real condition that she sees in society and she wants to criticize it. One thing for sure is that the writer clearly shows in her story that traditional gender roles make women disadvantaged and suffer. This opinion is strengthened by the miserable life of Barbara—a clever

woman who is torn between her roles as wife/mother. Barbara's confusion about her roles is evidence that women still believed in traditional roles and felt guilty if they could not fulfill them although they might have excelled in their career. Barbara's death is possibly also the expression of the writer to free Barbara from this depressing and alienating gender role. It is clearly an expensive and painful way to finally reach freedom, and it is only to show how difficult it is for women to bear this double burden without the help and understanding of a supportive husband.

The most interesting thing is that the writer presents Mark as a flat character who still holds on to his authoritarian way of becoming a man, husband, and father. Suggesting that it will be difficult for a man to change or that it is difficult to challenge the patriarchal system in society. It is significant that Oates presents Mark as the same selfish husband toward both Barbara and Dorie. Although the story is very pessimistic, there is a faint hope when Dorie starts to analyze her situation and hopes for a better life for her baby girl. It is an open plot ending and the writer leaves it to the readers to decide on their own version. I hope that Dorie's baby girl will grow up smarter than her mother so that she will not make the same mistake.

5. Conclusion

In "Accomplished Desires" Joyce Carol Oates describes the life and marriage of two women. Both Dorie and Barbara face miserable experiences as a wife, mother, and homemaker. They find their domestic roles depressing and alienating because of the husband's authoritarian and traditional view of gender roles.

Oates's portrayal of women's victimization in her story is her way to express her objections to the traditional gender roles that disconnect and limit women from the social sphere and career opportunities. She also uses her story to reflect upon some aspects of women's life in American society, especially, since 1945. Her story also presents her social criticism toward the difficult situation that American women face

in trying to fulfill their domestic roles and their aspirations to pursue education and career. Oates reveals her ideas and messages that women should be given support in accomplishing their dual role, and that marriage and motherhood should not be forced upon women as a primary expectation. They should be given freedom to pursue their future and life whether it is marriage and motherhood or career or both.

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A Historical Analysis on the Dramatization of the Deaths of the Three Civil Rights Activists in Mississippi 1964 in Alan Parker's *Mississippi Burning*

Introduction: Background of the Study

The student movement, the civil rights movement, the race riots, the free speech movement, and the antiwar movement were the dominant events that colored the Sixties in the U.S., and made it one of the most complex, conflicting, and controversial decades. The generation of the Sixties had learnt much from the historical events in the Fifties and that made them more active towards and outspoken on civil rights issues than the previous generation had been. As Todd Gitlin wrote in *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*:

This generation was haunted by history. They had been taught that political failure or apathy can have the direst consequences; they had extracted the lesson that the fate of the world is not something automatically to be entrusted to authorities ... All wanted to redeem their parents' ideals in the face of their parents' failures (Gitlin, 1993:84).

The Sixties witnessed many unforgettable civil rights movements and struggles for equality. These activities spread widely throughout the cities and states in America: "Thus the decade of the 1960s began with sit-ins, freedom rides, and widespread demonstrations designed to quicken the pace of change"(Southern, 1996:233). These movements and struggles were conducted in various ways from "the strict Gandhian fashion and Thoreau's ideas of civil disobedience" (Gitlin, 1993:85) to a more militant way.

In the summer of 1963 and 1964, The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) conducted a so-called "Freedom Summer" which sent hundreds of civil rights workers and young volunteers to Mississippi to register black voters in the South. They had to endure many hardships and threats, and much terror, and violence from the angry white racist Southerners: "Northern activists were excruciatingly aware of the terror being inflicted by the white South wherever civil rights workers penetrated. It would take an entire book to describe the bombings, beatings, and tortures, the assassinations well known and obscure, of the early Sixties"(Gitlin, 1993:133). In June-July 1964, three of these Freedom Summer activists were reported missing and presumed dead. After 44 days their bodies were found in Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Yesterday while the Mississippi River was being dragged looking for the three missing civil rights workers, two bodies of Negroes were found—one cut in half and one without a head. Mississippi is the only state where you can drag a river any time and find bodies you were not expecting. Things are really much better for Rabbits—there's a closed season on rabbits (Bloom and Breines, 1995:38).

Mississippi in 1964 became the bloody scene of brutal terror in the face of heated racial conflicts. The mystery of the missing, and murdered civil rights activists, was made into a motion picture by the British director Allan Parker: "In 1964, three civil rights workers named Michael Schwerner, Andrew Goodman, and James Cheney were murdered in Mississippi—a crime that became the subject of investigation in Allan Parker's *Mississippi Burning*" (Belton, 1994:277).

As a film *Mississippi Burning* does have really excellent artistic and cinematic qualities. It even can be considered one of the best movies in 1988. However, as a film that is based on a real historical event, it raises many controversies for its so-called distortion of American history. As Toplin discussed in *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of the American Past*:

The manipulation of facts and fictionalizing in Mississippi Burning had angered many citizens, journalists, and professional historians, sparking lively debates about the degree to which filmmakers ought to feel obligated to produce reasonably authentic and representative pictures of the past. Mississippi Burning does not tell the true story of the Freedom Summer of 1964, said the critics; it tells Hollywood's distorted version. ..Popular objection appeared to taint the film. As expected, when the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences got around to delivering Oscars, Mississippi Burning did not receive the prize for the best picture (Toplin, 1996:26).

One of the distortions found in this movie is of the government involvement. For example, *Mississippi Burning* presents the FBI agents as the heroes in the murder case, while in the actual event what happened is the contrary to this. In reality, the FBI, also well known in the South as "The Federal Bureau of Integration", (Gitlin, 1993:141) was as racist and cruel as the local white Southerner officers. The FBI even made things worse and more difficult:

But in the face of everyday terror, spotty federal intervention seemed less than sufficient. The normal sight was of local FBI agents standing taking notes, while SNCC workers were being bashed bloody. The FBI was in the habit of working with local officials; personal attitudes aside—many were Southern Whites—they weren't about to antagonize their partners in law enforcement. Hoover, like a feudal chief, even refused to attend Robert Kennedy's staff luncheons. According to one civil rights lawyer, the FBI "would interrogate a black and scare him out of his pants." They'd interrogate a white Sheriff and then report his version straightfaced without "evaluation" it (Gitlin, 1993:140).

Parker's portrayal of the FBI agents as heroes really hurt many people who were involved in the real event. In Sixties history, the FBI's director was widely known as racist. He loathed civil rights workers. It was stated: "J. Edgar Hoover has done more harm to the freedoms of America than Joseph Stalin" (Mailer, 1995:145). It is no wonder that

Mississippi Burning became the most controversial movie in 1988 for its heroic portrayal of the FBI.

The controversies in *Mississippi Burning* are very interesting to discuss. This paper will compare and contrast the similarities and differences between the reality in the Mississippi 1964 event to the portrayal given in Parker's *Mississippi Burning* (1988).

Problem Formulation

Based on the discussion in the introduction, some problems are formulated as follow:

1. What was the evidence that could be found concerning the disappearance and murder of the three civil rights workers in Mississippi 1964 and how did the local and federal government respond this case?
2. What were the similarities and differences between the 1964 case and what was portrayed in Parker's *Mississippi Burning* (1988)
3. What are the possible reasons for and background to the dramatization of this case and the portrayal of the racial conflicts in the South in Parker's *Mississippi Burning* (1988)?

Theoretical Review

a. Civil Rights Movements in the 1960s

These movements were trying to end segregation, and to achieve racial equality. Gerald Howard in *The Sixties: Art, Altitudes, Politics, and Media of Our Most Explosive Decade* listed the complete chronology of events in 1960 to 1973 (Howard, 1995:505).

On February 1, 1960, four North Carolina A & T freshmen conducted a sit-in at the Lunch Counter of the local Woolworth and Kress stores in Greensboro, N.C. (Bloom and Breines, 1995:23). This sit-in then spread to cities throughout the South. Anne Moody, one of the

students who was involved in this sit-in described her experience in her memoir *The Jackson Sit-In*:

After the sit-in, all I could think of was how sick Mississippi whites were. They believed so much in the segregated Southern way of life, they would kill to preserve it. I sat there in the NAACP office and thought of how many times they had killed when this way of life was threatened. I knew that killing had just begun. "Many more will die before it is over with," I thought. Before the sit-in, I had always hated the Whites in Mississippi. Now I knew it was impossible for me to hate sickness. The Whites had a disease, an incurable disease in its final stage. What were our chances against such a disease? I thought of the students, the young Negroes who had just begun to protest, as young interns. When these young interns got older, I thought, they would be the best doctors in the world for social problems (Bloom and Breines, 1995:23).

Moody tried to deal with racial hatred face to face, and tried to understand it. The students who conducted this sit-in greatly believed in nonviolent way to protest against racial prejudice. They also strongly believed that peaceful action spoke louder than words, and these became their reasons to conduct the sit-in. "...in strict Gandhian fashion, they asserted that they had a right to sit at the counter by sitting at it, and threw the burden of the disruption onto the upholders of white supremacy. Instead of saying that segregation ought to stop, they acted as if segregation no longer existed (Gitlin, 1993:85).

On May 4, 1961, James Farmer, the national director of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) organized "Freedom Riders," and set out on two buses to travel to the South—from Washington south to Atlanta and then from Atlanta west to New Orleans (Bloom and Breines, 1995: 25). James Farmer and his fellow white and black activists strictly followed the non-violent Gandhian way, and wrote notices to the Justice Department, to the FBI, to the President, to the Greyhound and Trailway Bus Company. However, they still had to face many hardships, insults, threats, and even physical violence.

These sit-ins and Freedom Rides were then followed by numbers of civil rights demonstrations, and in the summer of 1964 the SNCC made a move to welcome the civil rights bill by sending hundreds of black and white activists and volunteers to register black voters in the South. This project was then known as the Freedom Summer.

Trained in nonviolence in Oxford, Ohio, these volunteers—men and women, black and white, northern and southern—traveled to Mississippi to register voters, teach illiterate adults and children to read, and established the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (Bloom and Breines, 1995:34).

As usual these civil rights workers also faced terror and violence including the murder of three of them.

b. Responses of the Local and Federal Government toward the Racial Conflicts and the Civil Rights Movement In the 1960s

The adverbs "belatedly, slowly, halfheartedly, unwillingly, reluctantly" were frequently used to describe the government responses toward problems. John Kennedy, who was greatly admired for his courage and liked to quote from Dante that "the hottest places in hell is for those who remained neutral in a moral crisis," (Southern, 1996:249) also showed doubts and less courage in overcoming these racial conflicts until many events had forced him to move resolutely in 1963. The Kennedy administration was strongly criticized for its slow and late responses toward racial conflicts. Some of the criticisms even came from those who had great sympathy for Kenned. Ironically, in the years to come, "blacks in sharecropper shacks and tenements apartments throughout America would adorn their walls with portraits of the martyred John F. Kennedy" (Gitlin, 1993:133). However, Kennedy also made a brave move by introducing the civil rights bill.

An examples of the late, slow, and reluctant response of the government toward racial conflicts and the civil rights movements in

the 1960s might be clearly seen in the way the government handled the Freedom Rides.

At the time of the 1961 Freedom Rides, for example, when civil rights crusades were having their skull cracked, their clothes set afire, their teeth kicked in, their bus blown up, all daring to take seriously a Supreme Court decision banning segregation in bus terminals, the administration's response was late and ambivalent (Gitlin, 1993:136-1377).

Such a late and ambivalent response was also evidently shown in the actions and attitudes of the local and federal government in helping and protecting the civil rights activists.

With no local police in sight, the waiting mob ran amok, bashing Freedom Riders and reporters with fists, sticks, metal pipes, and baseball bats, setting one person afire. Seigenthaler, on the scene, saw two women slapped around and tried to help them into his car. He was jumped, beaten unconscious, and left lying on the ground by the police for twenty minutes before they drove him to a hospital. FBI agents stood around taking notes. Rioters took turns smashing one Freedom Rider in the head while others chanted "kick the nigger-loving son of a bitch;" he lay bleeding, in shock with a damaged spinal cord, for more than two hours before he was taken to the hospital. The police commissioner of Montgomery declared: "We have no intention of standing guard for a bunch of troublemakers coming into our city" (Gitlin, 1993:137-8).

James Farmer and his fellow volunteers had well understood the danger and the consequences of their action. They tried to anticipate this mob terror by sending advance notices to the government, but they never received any response: "We got no reply from Justice. Bobby Kennedy, no reply. We got no reply from the FBI. We got no reply from the White House, from President Kennedy. We got no reply from Greyhound or Trailways. . . (Farmer, 1995:26). When the Press and the civil rights activists questioned this advance notice, the government gave them a typical answer: Robert Kennedy said later that the information never got to his desk (Gitlin, 1993:137). The local officials

and the FBI who actually had known about the advance notice pretended not to know anything about it.

When a second bus reached Birmingham later that day, it was met by a mob led by Ku Klux Klansmen carrying pipes, chains, and baseball bats. Not a single policeman appeared. One of the Klansmen was a paid FBI informant who had briefed his "handler" about the Klan's plans, whereupon the Birmingham FBI office had sent a teletype to J. Edgar Hoover about the impending ambush. Hoover therefore knew that police chief Bull Connor had promised the Klan enough time to attack the Freedom Riders, whom Connor wanted beaten until "it looked like a bulldog got a hold of them." Hoover notified no one and did nothing. A sixty-one-year-old Freedom Rider was left permanently brain-damaged by the beating he suffered (Gitlin, 1993:137).

When the situation became worse, finally the President himself felt compelled to send federal marshals to protect the battered Freedom Riders (Gitlin, 1993:137). There were times when the civil rights workers tried to convince themselves that the government was with them, the Justice Department was with them, but the facts always showed the opposite. "Between 1961 and 1964, SNCC repeatedly, doggedly, sometimes desperately appealed for federal help. Their appeals were usually unavailing. Until the Voting Rights Act of 1965, the Justice Department only twice took legal action on behalf of assaulted civil rights workers—Organizers who had planned their strategy on promises of protection felt betrayed" (Gitlin, 1993:142). They even felt more betrayed when their fellow civil rights activists were treated unfairly in the court.

Then, in the midst of a long series of disappointments, the Justice Department committed one absolute betrayal. In August 1963, a federal grand jury indicted nine civil rights activists in Albany, Georgia, charging them with obstructing justice and perjury for picketing a supermarket owned by a white man who had recently served on a federal jury. That jury, all white, had acquitted a rural

sheriff who had been charged with shooting a handcuffed Negro prisoner four times (Gitlin, 1993:143).

This kind of treatment made civil rights workers question government credibility. They grew more disappointed and frustrated. One of them described this frustration by quoting from his friend, "He wrote but didn't say: 'I want to know—which side is the federal government on?" (Gitlin, 1993:146).

Analysis

a. Historical Records on Freedom Summer in Mississippi 1964

Those involved in the Freedom Summer in 1964 faced many hardships, and much terror, and physical violence. The death of three of the civil rights activists was only one of these misfortunes.

Even before the three bodies were unearthed from a dam on August 4, the summer project was shadowed by violence. By one tally, there were three other civil rights murders in Mississippi that summer, as well as eighty people beaten, thirty-five shot at (with three injured), thirty-five churches burned down, thirty homes and other buildings bombed (seventeen in McComb alone), and a thousand arrested (Gitlin, 1993:151).

The death of Michael Schwerner, James Cheney, and Andrew Goodman received great attention and wide publication, made national headlines, and finally even led to the passing of the civil rights bill into law. This made the Southern racists angry because they hoped that the murders would scare civil rights activists, not give them greater publicity and an easier way to end segregation (Gitlin, 1993:151). There was much speculation concerning the three civil rights activists before their bodies found. There was moreover a rumor that these three people had hidden somewhere on purpose to get attention and publication.

We have heard rumors twice to the effect of that the three men were found weighted down in that river. Both stories, though the same, were later completely dropped in an hour or so. How did you like that guy Gov. Johnson saying that they might be hiding in the North or maybe Cuba for all he knew... (Bloom and Breines, 1995:38).

There was much racial hatred, prejudice, and injustice concerning the case. The documentary record in Letters from Mississippi, and the remarks of Mrs. Schwemer, the widow of the dead Schwerner, described the details:

My husband was very active in the formation of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party. As the two of us became more well-known to the people in Meridian, we received many threats upon our lives. We eventually had to get an unlisted phone number because the threats became too terrifying late at night... Late in the spring, my husband was jailed in Meridian on a phony traffic charge. When he got out of jail, he told me that the officials of the jails attempted to have him beaten by other whit prisoners. The prisoners refused to beat him... The two men with a third, Andrew Goodman, disappeared on June 21 of this year (Bloom and Breines, 1995:43).

The Southern officials hated them from the very beginning. Injustice, threats and terror haunted their everyday lives. Mrs. Schwerner also described how she faced many difficulties and received bad treatment from the government when she tried to inquire about the disappearance of her husband and his friends.

In the course of this search, I went to Jackson. I was accompanied by Reverend Edwin King, whom you heard speak before you today. We went to the State Capitol building to attempt to see Governor Johnson of Mississippi. The door was slammed in my face by several unidentified men. When they finally agreed to let me into the Governor's office, a Senator Barber of the State Senate spoke with me very rudely, and said I could not see the Governor, then or at any other time ... The moment Governor Johnson heard my

name and who I was, he turned on his heel and with the Governor of Alabama they walked into the mansion and slammed the door in my face, and I was surrounded by State Highway patrolmen. A Highway patrolman by the name of Harbor told me that I could not see the Governor. They refused to relay my message, and they refused to relay my pleas (Bloom and Breines, 1995:43-4).

When the bodies of these missing civil rights activists were found, the local government still treated Mrs. Schwerner in the same rude way, and her rights as a citizen and a wife were obviously denied by the authorities.

When the bodies of my husband and the other two men were discovered some 2-1/2 weeks ago, I was informed of the discovery by the Federal authorities. The State authorities had in no way tried to do anything to help me. I have not been allowed to see any official report on the condition on the bodies of my husband or the other two men. No official report has been released for anyone else to see, and I would like you to know that to this day the state of Mississippi and the County of Neshoba has not even sent me a copy of the death certificate of my husband (Bloom and Breines, 1995:44).

Racial prejudice and injustice were greatly developed; all black people as well as the civil rights activists had to face severe terror and violence. This made them frustrated, angry, and tired. As David Dennis of CORE expressed at James Chaney's funeral and memorial service in Meridian:

...I am not here to memorialize James Chaney, I am not here to pay tribute—I am too sick and tired. Do YOU hear me, I am S-I-C-K and T-I-R-E-D. I have attended many memorials, too many funerals. This has got to stop... and the list goes on and on. But the trouble is that YOU are NOT sick and tired and for that reason YOU, yes You, are to blame. Everyone of your damned souls. And if you are going to let this continue now then you are to blame, yes YOU. Just as much as the monsters of hate who pulled trigger or brought down the club; just as much to blame as the sheriff and the chief of

police, as the governor in Jackson who said that he "did not have time" for Mrs. Schwerner when she went to see him, just as much as to blame as the President and Attorney General in Washington who wouldn't provide protection for Chaney, Goodman, and Schwerner when we told them that protection was necessary in Neshoba County... Yes, I am angry, I AM. And it's a high time that you got angry too, angry enough to go up to the courthouse Monday and register—every one of you. Angry enough to take five or ten other people with you. Then and only then can these brutal killings be stopped. Remember it is your sons and your daughters who have been killed all these years and you have done nothing about it, and if you don't do nothing NOW baby, I say God Damn Your Souls... (Bloom and Breines, 1995:38-9).

All these quotations show how Mississippi was burning with racial hatred and injustice, and those conflicts became even more complex.

b. Mississippi 1964 in Alan Parker's *Mississippi Burning*

b.1. Setting of Place and Time

The opening scene of this movie shows segregation very clearly using the two separate and different signs with the signs for white and colored in a close-up shot. This scene is then followed by the fire and flame of the burning church, accompanied by the soulful tune of Negro spirituals, lamenting the suffering of black people and hoping for their deliverance from the Lord, and the title of the movie appears in a big size caption, MISSISSIPPI BURNING. After this scene, a car moved in the dark of the long and winding road with the three passengers in it, two white men in the front seat and a black man in the back seat. This car was then followed by other cars, one of them was an official car. People from these cars then stopped the three people in the first car. The two white men thought that it was a joke when those cars bumped into their car, but the black man told them "They ain't playing, you better believe me." It seemed that the black man knew what would happen, and things like this were familiar to him. When they faced these people, some

turned out to be police officers. Their conversation shows clearly the racial hatred among these people. Words such as "Jew boy, nigger lover, smell like nigger" were used to address these three men, and showed the racial conflicts existing in the deep South. What happened then was the brutal murder of these three people, and the portrayal of how these country folks enjoyed the murder. After this scene the words MISSISSIPPI 1964 appear. Once again it clearly shows the setting of time and place in this movie, and the issues of segregation, racial hatred, and the bloody violence of racial conflicts.

From the opening scene alone, viewers who have no knowledge about the racial conflicts in the 1960s would be aware that this movie is about the murder of the three civil rights workers in Mississippi 1964. The details are clear, and the time is obviously pointed. However, Alan Parker had a different opinion about it when critics questioned him about the distortion of historical events in this movie. Parker as director of the movie at one time boasted about the clarity of historical details in the movie, but when he was challenged, he simply said that it was only fiction.

Toplin in *History by Hollywood: The Use and Abuse of the American Past* also discussed Parker's ambiguous defenses (Toplin, 1990:41). Parker is evidently not consistent in his defense, and he is not truly fair because by seeing the opening scene alone viewers cannot help or avoid connecting the scene with the historical events in Mississippi 1964. Parker in perfect detail utilizes the actual murder case of the three civil rights activists in Mississippi 1964, and yet he completely changes the plot and the actual process of the case, by eliminating the role of the three men's families in trying to find information and justice for the disappearance and murder of their relatives. Parker also undermines the role of the black community in the struggle for racial justice in the South. Instead, Parker puts great emphasis on the efforts of FBI agents in trying to solve the case, and portrays clearly their heroic deeds and role in finding justice for these three murdered activists. While in reality, the FBI and the federal government did nothing much to solve the case, let alone contributing

in a heroic way. This emphasis becomes Parker's weakest point in his argument for the clarity of historical details concerning the case. However, if he claimed the film was merely fiction, he should not use the actual name, location, and case for his movie, and he could have created a fictionalized name and place for it to avoid the distortion of the historical events and to end the continual argument about his movie either being a historical movie or merely a work of fiction and a Hollywood popular entertainment product.

b. 2. The Characterization of the Characters

Parker presents many different groups of people in the movie, such as, the Southern Officials whom he characterizes as lazy, abusive, unfriendly to strangers, and racists; the blacks in the South are characterized as passive and frightened; finally he presents the hard working and dedicated FBI agents, particularly, Ward and Anderson. It seems that Parker's portrayal of these characters are stereotypical. Similarly, he also gives a stereotypical rendition of black as well as white women in the South.

The main characters in this movie, Ward and Anderson were the FBI agents from Washington on a special assignment to solve the case of the three missing civil rights activists in Mississippi. These two men were supposed to be partners for their duty in Mississippi; however, they had completely different attitudes and personalities. From the very beginning of this movie, while they were in their car headed to Mississippi, these two men are portrayed as different from each other. Inside their car, Anderson examined the pictures of the people and activists beaten by the cops, the picture of the KKK in their costumes, the burning churches and houses, and also the copies of the newspapers on NAACP Committee and the racial conflicts in the South, and the musical notes of the KKK that he sang. His joke about Mississippi which has "41s" but can not see when they saw the sign "WELCOME TO MISSISSIPPI, THE MAGNOLIA STATE" clearly showed the satirical aspect of his character.

On the other hand, Ward the younger agent, was more serious and remote, not to mention that his background was from the Justice Department, and the fact that he was Anderson's boss. Their different characters are also shown in the way they handle the local officials. Ward was more polite and conventional, but then he received very impolite and frivolous responses such as the cynical description of the FBI as the Federal Bureau of Integration or the way they addressed him as 'boy.' Anderson seemed to know better how to deal with these people because he himself was from Mississippi and he exactly knew the life there from the inside. Experience had taught him to play the hardest way and in return he received better respect and response than his young and inexperienced boss. However, these two different men in the end could work together, hand in hand, to solve the case. The portrayal of the success of the FBI agents in this movie is really unrealistic in light of the historical documents, and the difficult experience suffered by the family members of the murdered activists in trying to seek help from the FBI and the government in solving the case. It is obviously a distortion of American History. This distorted portrayal is a kind of an ideal concept of Parker's expressing his utopian view on how the law should act with heroism and courage in the dedicated struggle to see justice done. Another reason is possibly also his comment that he had to make it that way in order to make this movie a box office hit that would bring in much money, a simply economic and pragmatic reason, very essential for the Hollywood entertainment industry. Also he was born and raised in England, and thus lacked empathy for the racial conflicts of the 1960s in the U.S. Therefore, Parker uses a very crucial part of a true story only to satisfy his artistic and pragmatic demands without considering the factual history itself, and this creates a great debate and controversy.

Another characterization is the portrayal of the white community in the South. Parker successfully portrays Southern racists as cruel and brutal characters who can be recognized by their words as well as facial expressions and actions. The battered wife of the police officer who helped Anderson is depicted as more human, compassionate, and sympathetic than her monstrous husband. While the black people are

simply described as stock characters: stereotypically fatalistic victims. Such kinds of rendition of the blacks also raise controversies. The documentary videos of *Eyes on the Prize* shows that the blacks were really playing active roles in struggling for their equality. Historical documents such as *Letters from Mississippi*, and the remarks of Mrs. Rita Schwerner, also showed how greatly the blacks struggled for their lives. Parker seems to ignore these facts. No doubt, many people involved in the real events felt hurt seeing this distorted portrayal.

Conclusion

The Sixties is definitely the most explosive and turbulent decade in the history of racial conflicts and the civil rights movements in the U.S. The 1960s witnessed many brave men and women, black and white, who struggled to fight for civil rights and racial equality. The history of America will never forget those people despite the fact that the decade also become a silent witness to the irony of the slow and pragmatic responses of the government toward these great humanitarian movements. *Mississippi Burning* (1988) directed by Alan Parker tries to portray one small part of these historical events by using the disappearance and murder of the three civil rights activists of Freedom Summer in Mississippi 1964. As popular media and art, Parker's movie can be considered as having good artistic and cinematic qualities, and to be a great success in the box office. However, as a movie based on an actual historical event, it also raises great controversy for its distortion of American History.

Despite the controversy, in some parts *Mississippi Burning* has successfully depicted the condition and the mindset of the Deep South with its racial conflicts, and it has an added value in that those descriptions are aesthetically presented in the movie, particularly through beautifully cinematic shots, the soulful and gripping soundtrack and the acting caliber of the actors. Meanwhile, the distortion of American history in this movie, especially, the portrayal of the heroic FBI agents is Parker's own personal and ideal expression of his utopian

concept that in a time of crisis, the FBI as upholders of the law should act with heroism and courage to see justice done and to show great dedication for justice and humanity. Ultimately, the real evidence of history highlighted the fact that what really happened in the disappearance and murder of the three civil rights activists in Mississippi 1964 was different to Parker's distorted portrayal.

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Narrating and Gendering Stories/Histories in Marina Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* (2005)

*Peasants in the field, folk songs at harvest, the motherland:
what has all this got to do with me? I am a post-modern
woman. I know about structuralism.*

*Now that Mother has died, Big Sis has become the guardian of
the family archive, the spinner of stories, the custodian of the
narrative that defines who we are. This role above all others,
is the one I envy and resent. It is time, I think, to find out the
whole story, and to tell it in my own way.*

*That is the story of how my family left Ukraine – two
different stories, my mother's and my father's.*

(Marina Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*)

Marina Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukraine* (2005) displays a postmodern narrative of different life-stories to reflect different history (histories) of the individuals, the family, and the nation; and that narrated histories are explicitly gendered. The intertextuality of narrative and history has been highly theorized and problematized since the 1980s and 1990s. History no longer means "the event of the past" but only "telling a story about the events of the past;" thus in poststructuralist notion history is "always narrated" (Selden et al. 1997, 188). In this light, according to Hayden White "history is no less a form of fiction than the novel is a form of historical representation" (Cobley 2001, 31). Postmodern novel serves as a good example to illustrate the historicity of fiction and the fictionality of history because of its ability to post and problematize different principles and ideas of histories. Linda Hutcheon termed such

quality “historiographical metafictionality” that also characterizes the postmodern fiction (Currie 2004, 75). Lewycka’s *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*, in essence, is a postmodern novel because it does not only display this postmodern historiographical metafictionality but also other quintessential postmodern characteristics such as self-reflexivity, intertextuality, parody, irony, and the mixing of genre and references. These postmodern characteristics of Lewycka’s novel will be revealed through the perspectives of the main characters, particularly, NadezhdaMayevska, her sister Vera, and their father and the way they narrate their life-stories and their family histories.

Different Histories: in Pursuit of Meaning

Lewycka’s *A Short History of Tractors in Ukraine* employs first-person/homodiegetic narrative through the point of view of Nadia or Nadezhda, narrating her family stories/histories. Nadezhda does not narrate her family history from the beginning; instead, her narration starts with the present, that is, a phone call from her father informing Nadia about his marriage plan to thirty-six year old Ukrainian divorcee. The marriage plan bothers her not only because her father is already eighty-four years old but also because her mourning time is not yet over. Her mother had just passed away two years ago and Nadia does not want to accept the fact that a blonde woman with gigantic breasts is about replace her mother’s place. The presence of her father’s prospective bride will shatter the ghosts of her family and taint the memories of her beloved mother. She wants to preserve the memories of her mother, her life-stories and her own stories as well, the way she did on her mother’s death bed “I recite the stories of her and our childhood over and over again” (Lewycka 2005, 6).

This merging of mother-daughter stories is a recurrent pattern/motif in female autobiography (Warhol and Herndl 1997, 1100). In attempt to preserve the memories and life stories of her mother Ludmilla, Nadia the first person narrator voices her mother’s life “bearing witness” to her deceased/absent/silenced mother. However,

the typical feminist motif of “bearing witness” in their self-writing can not be simply enacted without any complication. In fact, this typical mother-daughter bondage of life-stories is profoundly complicated and problematized in Lewycka’s *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*. Lewycka’s postmodern novel refuses to simplify the telling of the mother-daughter stories/histories through a continuous enactment of sibling rivalry between Nadia and Vera, in their battle to express their own version of their family histories and to possess their mother’s inheritance as well as her belonging: “The daughters, Vera and Nadezhda, Faith and Hope, my sister and I, prepared to do battle over our mother’s will” (Lewycka 2005, 8). The mother-daughter stories/histories can not be single-handedly accomplished because Ludmilla has two daughters, Vera the oldest and Nadia the younger. Each daughter has different experience/life-stories; hence, it is not possible to have a single unified story/history of their mother and their family. Both daughters/sisters have different stories/histories frequently contradict and estrange one another. The presence of their father’s new wife Valentina brings the two estranged sisters together to get rid of her, “their common enemy,” and to save their aging father from humiliation and financial exploitation. Vera and Nadia form a conspiracy to separate Valentina from their father. Vera who had experienced divorce will inquire any possibility to divorce the odd couple; meanwhile, Nadia will acquire the means to deport Valentina. Both are suitably paired as Mrs. Divorce Expert and Mrs. Flog-‘em-and-send-‘em-home. Their teamwork, however, cannot bridge the old feud over their family history.

Through the eyes of Nadia, in their continuous battle to be the sole authoritative family historian, Nadia compares herself with Vera as resembling the coupling of the binary opposition: Vera, the Big Sis, is the War Baby, and Nadia is the Peacetime Baby. Both have the same family and parents, yet both have the different stories to tell. Vera and her parents have survived through famine, dictatorship, war, and concentration camp. Vera chooses to keep some stories secret and lives only to tell her own selected stories. She wants to live in the presence and tries to forget the dark past. On the contrary, Nadia who does not

have the first hand encounter with their family history is preoccupied with the past and curious to know the whole story of their family.

I sit on the bench under the wild cherry tree in the cemetery and sort through my memories, but the harder I try to remember, the more I get confused about which are memories and which are stories (Lewycka 2005, 47).

Now that Mother has died, Big Sis has become the guardian of the family archive, the spinner of stories, the custodian of the narrative that defines who we are. This role above all others, is the one I envy and resent. It is time, I think, to find out the whole story, and to tell it in my own way (Lewycka 2005, 49).

I have started to challenge Big Sis's self-appointed guardianship of the family story. She doesn't like it (Lewycka 2005, 62).

Really, Nadia, why must you take such a downbeat view of everything? Do you think you are some kind of handmaid of history? (Lewycka 2005, 62).

'No, but ...' (Of course this is exactly what I think.)

'But this is all in the past, Nadia. Why you have such bourgeois preoccupation with all personal history?' (Lewycka 2005, 62)

'Because it's important ... it defines ... it helps us understand ... because we can learn ... Oh, I don't know.' (Lewycka, 2005, 174)

Unlike her sister, Nadia does not participate in the past experience of their family; she only learned about their family history through patches of events and stories from her mother, father, and sister. When her family members refuse to tell some parts of their life-stories, Nadia feels denied the access to their family history. Therefore, she attempts to gather those patches to find out the whole knowledge of their family history. She believes in the idea of the real history of her family, yet at the same she is also confused to differentiate the 'reality' from the 'fiction' in her family history. Ironically, when she is determined 'to find out the whole story and to tell it in her own way,' Nadia already contradicts her own belief in the 'reality' and debunks the 'myth of

reality' because both reality and fiction are narrated ("to tell it") and involved certain subject positioning ("in my own way"). Similarly, she is also perplexed with her idea that 'history defines identity/subjectivity.' Nadia longs to find meaning from her family history to define her identity/subjectivity but at the end she is only confronted with confusion and frustration because what remains is only an 'interpretation and re-presentation,' and ended with her own unresolved statement "Oh, I don't know". At the end of the day, each sister is the narrator and author of her own story/history; and each is the creator/constructor of her own stories' meaning.

The postmodern narrative strategy to question and textualize history and fiction present in *A Short History of Tractors in Ukraniamis* also followed by frequent occurrences of self-reflexivity either directly presented or placed in brackets. Nadia constantly comments and reflects on her own ideas and actions.

'You bullied and tricked her into signing that codicil, Vera. You stole her locket.' (Is this really me, saying such horrible things to my sister?) (Lewycka 2005, 21).

Saying it should make me feel grown up, but it doesn't. It makes me feel four years old again. (Lewycka 2005, 22).

(And how I am enjoying my bitch-fest! What has happened to me? I used to be a feminist. Now I seem to be turning into Mrs. Daily Mail.) (Lewycka 2005, 82).

Through this self-reflexivity, Nadia often contradicts and criticizes herself as a result she is able to post 'self-awareness and self-criticism.' Hilary Lawson in *Reflexivity: The Post-Modern Predicament* views reflexivity essentially as 'a truning back upon oneself' that is also a reflection of the so-called the "more general ('postmodern') crisis in 'our truths, our values, our most cherished beliefs". (Raddeker 2007, 34). According to Hutcheon,

This self-reflexivity does not weaken, but on the contrary, strengthens and points to the direct level of historical engagement and reference of the text. Like many postmodern novels, this

provisionality and uncertainty (and the willful and overt construction of meaning too) do not 'cast doubt upon their seriousness', but rather define the new postmodern seriousness that acknowledges the limits and powers of reporting or writing the past, recent or remote (Currie 2004, 76-77).

The opposing pairing of Nadia and Vera as the past-present also facilitates this process of self-reflexivity and provides the space to rethink and reconstruct the past as a dialogue between the 'pastness and the presentness.' Intertextuality also plays a very important role in the self-reflexivity, not only as 'backgrounds' but it also functions as 'foregrounds' as well. Lewycka's postmodern novel exhibits various different intertextual references from historical, philosophical, cultural, political, and theoretical texts and ideas, to arts, science, and popular cultures as well. Marxism, structuralism, postmodernism, feminism, tractors, aviation, World Wars, Civil Wars and Revolution, Pythagoras, well-known scientists, Leibniz, Nietzsche, Bentham, Schopenhauer, Lenin, Stalin, Constructivist art, neo-classicism, Botticelli, Boyzone, and Lady Di are all mixed and merged with other texts and subtexts, playfully displayed and discussed along side with tractors and boobs. This element of parody is indeed very crucial for the postmodern self-reflexivity and intertextuality. According to Hutcheon,

Parody is a perfect postmodern form, in some sense, for it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies. It also forces a reconsideration of the idea of origin or originality that is compatible with other postmodern interrogations of liberal humanist assumptions (Allen 2000, 189)

Hutcheon's *The Politics of Postmodernism* links parody closely to intertextuality, at times interchangeably used yet not without any complication (Allen 2000, 189-190). Hutcheon also considers that the definitive qualities of historiographical metafictionality, self-reflexivity, and intertextuality/parody make postmodern novels contemporary relevant (Currie 2004, 76). Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* shows such postmodern qualities as well; hence, her novel and its production period in some sense also reflect the postmodern

condition of the twentieth-first century. Besides the strong postmodern condition and characteristics, Lewyck's postmodern novel also displayed a gendered narrative structure as shown through different storytelling and histories expressed by Nadia, her mother and sister, and her father that will be discussed in the next section.

Her Stories and His Stories: the Gendered History

The title of Lewycka's novel is taken from the writing project by Nadia's father; however, the novel itself is not only about the history of tractors and her father's life-stories only. In fact, the novel encompasses the life-stories of both the major and minor characters, male and female in which one's story cannot exist without others' stories, reflecting the post-structural notion of the sign, signifier, and signified. The novels also reveals the post-structural notion that the primary can be the secondary and vice versa, that is, that the novel is not as much about the life-story of Nadia's father but in fact, it is much more about the life-stories of Nadia, Vera, their mother, their grandparents, and also Valentina. Despite its range of coverage or importance between the life-stories of major and minor fe/male characters in this novel, there is also visible evidence that their gender also dictates their narrative structure although not without contradiction and complications as seen in the opening quotes presented in this paper: "That is the story of how my family left Ukraine – two different stories, my mother's and my father's" and some other examples that will be discussed in this section.

Nadia does not share a common perspective of their family histories with her sister Vera but in terms of the narrative structure of their storytelling/history, she includes her sister and her mother into a common alliance.

When I was little, my mother used to tell me family stories – but only the ones that had a happy ending. My sister also told me stories: her stories were strongly formulaic, with goodies (Mother, Cossacks) and baddies (Father, communists). Vera's stories always had a beginning, a middle, an end, and a moral. Sometimes my

father told me stories, too, but his stories were complicated in structure, ambiguous in meaning and unsatisfactory in outcome, with lengthy digressions and packed with obscure facts. I preferred my mother's and my sister's tales (Lewycka 2005, 48).

On the surface, Nadia's preference of her mother's and sister's stories and narrative that alienates her father's stories and narrative suggests a gender alliance and identification of certain narrative strategy used by women. However, through a close examination of narrative theories, it is not the case. On the contrary, Vera's formulaic narrative practice depicted by Nadia is the very masculine/patriarchal narrative features identified in narratology. Vera's strong formula of order in plot and the binary opposition of good and bad (although she subverts 'male for female' code) is the reminiscence of Aristotelian and Horace's narrative theories. Feminist literary critics have tried to reformulate the presumed male narrative formula that only facilitates 'mode of action' of the masculine stories but alienates the more 'mode of waiting' of the feminine stories/experience. Thus such narrative strategies are purposively gendered or in other words, borrowing Susan Lanser's statement "narratology itself is ideological" (McQuillan 2000, 198-201).

In Lewycka's novel, this prescribed gendered narrative formula is subverted and contradicted through the narrative structure of Vera and the father. Vera's male/masculine/phallogocentric use of formulaic and binary opposition structure is contrasted with her father's fluid/feminine writing as suggested by Helene Cixous' '*écriture féminine*' (Easthope and McGowan 1998, 146-157). The father, practicing the feminine writing; and Vera, practicing the masculine writing and at the same time depicted by Nadia as "the guardian of the family archive ... the custodian of the narrative that defines who we are" (representing male/patriarchal/patronizing figure) and at the same "the spinner of the stories (representing female/feminine imagery of spinning/thread/embroidering). This subversion of gendered theoretical narratives in Lewycka's novel can be read in two ways. Firstly, it is a feminist attempt to appropriate, challenge, redefine, and

revise the dichotomy of gendered prescribed female and male writings or in the words of Gilbert and Gubar “a military gesture but a strategy born of fear and dis-ease” (Leitch et al. 2001, 2021-2034). A strategy which comes into existence as a result of fear, disease, and dis-ease experienced by women because their lives have been infected by the patriarchal norms and language. Secondly, this gendered narrative subversion is a reflection of postmodern conditions and the centered and de-centered post-structural notion, reflecting the unfixed ground and instability of constructions, signification, and meaning (Childers and Hentzi 1995, 72).

In addition to the gender bender and subversion of narrative theories, Lewycka also presents a more direct and clear-cut gendered narrative through the father’ storytelling and the mother’s storytelling (that will also be voiced through Nadia’s narrative) as shown in this series of narrative sequences and disruptions.

When Mother described her early childhood it was always as an idyll – long summers when the sun was hot and they ran barefoot in the fields and skinny-dipped in the Sula River ...

My father has positioned himself in front of the map of Ukraine, and is delivering an intense two-hour lecture to his captive one-man (Mike) audience about the history, politics, culture, economics, agriculture and aviation industry of Ukraine.

‘It is often forgotten that the Civil War was more than a simple matter of whites against reds. No fewer than four foreign armies were in battle for control over Ukrania: Red Army of Soviets, White Russian Imperial Army, Polish army mounting opportunistic invasion, and German army propping up puppet regime of Skoropadski.’

I am the kitchen cutting up vegetables for soup, listening with half an ear.

‘The Ukranians were led by former Cossack atmans, or grouped under the anarchist banner of Makhno. Their aim, at once both simple and impossible, was to free Ukrania of all occupying forces.

The secret of my mother's fabulous soup was plenty of salt (they both suffered from high blood pressure), a big knob of butter (they didn't worry about cholesterol), and vegetables, garlic and herbs fresh from the garden. I cannot make soup like this.

'Nadezhda's grandfather, Mitrofan Ocheretko, joined a band under the leadership of Atman 'Tiutiunik, to whom he became second-in-command. They were fighting in a loose alliance with the "Ukrainian Directoire" of Simon Petlura. Ocheretko, by the way, was a very remarkable type with sweeping moustaches and eyes black like coal. I have seen his picture, though of course I have never met him.'

Into the soup, when it was simmering, she dolloped teaspoons of 'halushki' – a paste of raw egg and semolina, beaten together with salt and herbs – which fluffed up into dumplings that crumbled on your tongue.

'At end of the Civil War this Ocheretko fled to Turkey. Now Sonia's brother Pavel – he by the way was a very remarkable type, railway engineer who built first rail line from Kiev to Odessa – he was friend of Lenin. Because of this, some letters were written and Mitrofan Ocheretko was rehabilitated under amnesty, and obtained a job teaching sword-fencing in the military academy in Kiev. And it was here in Kiev that Ludmilla and I first met.'

His voice has gone all croaky.

'Come on, Papa, Mike, lunch is ready!' (Lewycka 2005, 52-54)

This narrative sequence displays the traditionally prescribed gendered narrative for male and female life-stories. The binary oppositions of the lightness and seriousness as well as the discursive private/public level of fe/male life-stories/histories is bluntly posted and contrasted. Ludmilla's life-story is in an idyll and takes place in the nature itself, the domestic and natural world of women. Meanwhile, Nikolai, Ludmilla's husband placed himself in front of the map of Ukraine, narrating the history of the family and nation through wars and mentioning the accomplishment of the male family members when

in fact the initial intention is only to show the place where he and Ludmilla first met. Nikolai's way of telling the story reveals the male public sphere and the male discursive hegemony that alienates women from the stories/histories, privileging the male roles only. This male discursive hegemony is juxtaposed with the female sphere: the kitchen and domesticity. Nikolai's public male level discursive narrative is disrupted and disjointed by Nadia's narration that at the same time also narrates her mother's private/domestic sphere. These contradictions, disruption, disjunction serve as a conscious act of parody/intertextuality to playfully mock the father's male discursive hegemony (his voice is croaky and at the end his narration is stopped by Nadia, announcing their lunch time!). At the same time, this act is also an attempt/strategy to find a space for the mother so that her mother will not disappear from the family story/history.

Another example of the male public discursive hegemony practiced by Nikolai is his very own project in writing "A Short History of Tractors in Ukranian." Nikolai, an engineer and poet, celebrating the triumph of tractors in human history, connecting its history to the best and greatest minds of the world: "Marx's idea of the relation of production in the machinery of production," "the theory of the relationship between mechanical engineering as applied to tractors and the psychological engineering as advocated by Stalin" (Lewycka 2005, 56 and 156) and all great male scientists and inventors all over the planet, the history of Ukraine, and finally the history of the world and the mankind. This male public/universal discursive level is a typical pattern/motif in the history and autobiography/biography produced and narrated by male authors/speakers.

Great deeds of great men; chronological accounts of battles and borders, treaties and territories: this is what "history" connoted through much of the twentieth century, but recently the term has come to embrace much more. Historiography has departed from the diachronic narrative of political and military "event," moving into more synchronic accounts of such matters as courtship conventions, attitudes toward smell and personal hygiene, and

even patterns of weather in the past. The “new history” tries, among other things, to scrutinize the experience of those who have inhabited the margins of culture and society, whose voices had previously been silenced because of their race, class, gender, or nationality denied them access to power and self-expression in the world of ‘events’ (Warhol and Herndl 1997, 855)

The series of the previous narrative sequence and the history of tractors written by Nikolai display this dominant concept of “history” criticized and challenged by the post-structural perspectives. Lewycka’s novel exhibits these two opposing historical practices and perspectives to question the place of women in history, the separation of the public and private spheres, and the gender difference in the light of feminist criticism and as a reflection of the postmodern conditions as well. Other examples of practicing these feminist and postmodern perspectives in addition to the binary oppositions of public/private, culture/nature, serious/light, man/woman are the binary oppositions of gender difference inside the construction of women through the way Nadia depicts her fellow ‘womenfolk’. Nadia sees herself and her sister in the coupling of binary oppositions: the peacetime baby/the wartime baby, the past/the present. Similarly, she also depicts Valentina as opposed to her own mother: the prostitute/the good mother, the golddigger/the thrifty, the beautiful/not beautiful, the wicked/kindhearted but in the process of knowing Valentina longer and better, Nadia also finds her as loving, kind, and a good mother. She herself does not also fit into a certain prescribed gender stereotype as well

It is my father’s great regret that both his children were daughters. Inferior intellectually, yet not, flirtatious and feminine, as women should be, but strident, self-willed, disrespectful creatures. What a misfortune for a man. He has never tried to conceal his disappointment (Lewycka 2005, 15).

These binary oppositions in many sense and ways are questioned and challenged in Lewycka’s novel to give space for gender differences not only between different gender constructions but also in side the similar gender difference. Thus, such awareness also reveals the

plurality in the construction of 'woman' and post-structural/postmodern perspectives make such awareness possible. Fraser and Nicholson argue that "feminist theory must become postmodernist" and should not universalize the gender difference. Accordingly, this kind of postmodern feminist theory "would replace unitary notions of 'woman' with plural complexly constructed conceptions of social identity, treating gender as one relevant strand among others such as class, 'race,' ethnicity, age and sexual orientation" (Sarup1988, 158).

In attempt to question the gendered binary oppositions and to reflect the postmodern condition, in the final analysis, Lewycka's novel has displayed the postmodern feminist criticism as well. The plurality of difference (thus also 'difference') is well exhibited in Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukraine* because her novels encompasses a vast range of these difference such as race/ethnicity (Eastern and Western Europeans, Indians, Gambian, and other ethnics, different social classes, age, languages, different religious and political affiliations). This awareness and inclusion of the marginalized differences are also followed by the collapsing boundary of 'fact/history' and 'fiction/story' and 'primary-secondary' sources as well. At the end of the novel, Lewycka includes Website acknowledgements to refer to referential sources that she used for texts, subtexts, and intertextuality in writing the novel. This deliberate use of the non-traditional sources is in itself an act of postmodern practices because it already departs from the fixation on the primary and archival sources hence challenging/playing with "the traditional status of documents or (primary) 'sources'" (Raddeker 2007, 40). Finally, the ending of the novel also shows a strong postmodern practice of narrative experiments. The last chapter of the novel "I salute the sun" ends with the naked body of Nadia's father performing "suryanamaskara," a yoga pose that means "saluting the sun." What does the ending of the novel signify? In postmodern perspective, it can mean many different things or nothing at all because postmodern perspective would facilitate multiple and plural interpretations of meaning. Some possible readings are firstly in the view of narratology, the ending of the novel suggests a

deliberate and sudden disjunction of event that disrupts the previous events can function as a postmodern narrative experiment to liberate the novel from the conventional narrative structure. The second reading, there are also different readings/interpretations on this ending, semiotically readers can question the signification of the aging naked body saluting the sun: What does it mean? What does it signify? Does it represent a longing for redemption? The answer will depend on the reading position as well, and resolution is not necessary because postmodernism would leave the signs open for any interpretation.

Finally, to conclude the discussion, Marina Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* (2005) is a postmodern novel that also displays the postmodern feminist criticism. Among other features exhibited in the novel are the postmodern characteristics of the merging of the genre because this work can be read as a novel, autobiography, biography, and historical fiction thus also the crossing of boundary of history and fiction as well; self reflexivity, intertextuality and parody, and the narrative experiment. Lewycka's novel also reveals a postmodern feminist criticism in its recognition and inclusion of pluracity and multiplicity of differences, particularly in its attempt to voice the life-stories of women and to include women in history. Thus, Lewycka's novel is relevant to both the gender concern of the writer and the zeitgeist of the postmodern twentieth-first century.

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Liberating Female Voice in Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior*

I permit no woman to teach ... She is to keep silent

—St. Paul

To find a voice (voix) is to find a way (voie)

—Luce Irigaray

In recent critical theory and literary criticism, “voice” has become a frequently discussed critical term, undergoing extension and revision as well. Postcolonial theorists have adopted the discourse of voice and silence to challenge the colonial power; likewise many other groups have also done similar practice:

Other silenced communities—peoples of colors, peoples struggling against colonial rule, gay men and lesbians—have also written and spoken about the urgency of “coming to voice” (Lanser, 1992: 3).

In such notion, both implicitly and explicitly, it has established “voice” as a trope of identity and power. Likewise, feminists have used the discourse of “voice” in such approach to struggle against patriarchal rule and dominance such as their practice of revisiting and resurrecting the “lost voices” of women writers and pioneers, voicing the muted fictional and real female figures in the past. Many women writers have exercised this discourse of voice in their works, and have also been aware that the narrative voice and the narrated world are interdependent and closely related. Therefore, in line with the approach of Mikhail Bakhtin’s “sociological poetics,” they view “narrative technique not simply as a product of ideology but ideology itself”:

narrative voice, situated at the juncture of “social position and literary practice,” embodies the social, economic, and literary conditions under which it has been produced (in Lanser, 1992: 5).

In general, women writing and the way women writer structure their narrative; therefore, have been utilized to facilitate liberating the female voice.

In narratology, the relation between the narrator and narratee determines **the narrative level** and the **reliability** of the narrator. In general, the narrative of male writers involve **public level**, meanwhile, female writers limit their narrative to **private level**. However, there are women writers who employed a public level, such as in the case of Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, when Jane, the main character of the novel, greets the readers by using **Dear Reader**, and not **Dear Friend** or **Dear Diary** or any other personal way of addressing the narratee generally used by most women writers to some extents. In the past, women were allowed to write, however, they were only permitted to write for personal and private interests only, and not for public readership. Previously, letters and diaries were considered private, therefore, did not necessarily threaten the “**malediscursive hegemony**.” However, when letter and diaries gained a wide popularity among women as their writing medium; consequently, such kind of writings was regarded as a lesser genre in the men dominated literary system.

Some examples of the fe/male self-writings with their private/public narrative level are Herodotus’s *Letters*, *The Letters of St. Paul*, *The Confession of St. Augustine*, Rousseau’s *Confession*, *The Dairy of Samuel Pepys*, and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* as opposed to the female self-writing addressed to certain friends. In Asian History, this kind of genre was also familiar in Japanese Literature during the Heian period (794–1185) such as in SeiShonagon’s *The Pillow Book* (1002), *Sarashina Nikki* or *The Diary of Sarashina* (1037), and *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki* (978–1015): the diary of the writer who wrote the famous novel *Genji Monogatari*. All those Japanese writers are mostly women. In Indonesian history, we recognize Kartini who

confided her minds and ideas on women emancipation in *Letters to Her Friends* in the Netherlands because as a woman, a Javanese, and a Moslem, she was not allowed to voice such ideas let alone speaking her liberated minds openly in public setting.

In the 18th century American and English literature, this self/confessional genre reached its peak of popularity, and “about one fifth of the total of eighteenth century fiction” were written in the form of letters and diaries (Wurzbach, 1969:ix). This genre also gave birth to the early form of modern novel, the so-called Epistolary Novel, which employed letters as important elements in characterization and plot. Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740) is usually considered the first epistolary novel or the first novel in English. Aphra Benn actually already wrote her work *Love Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* in this genre in 1683. However, it is Richardson, who is often hailed as the father of the English novel. After 1800 when epistolary form had already been in decline, letters were still frequently used as a narrative technique as a minor element and no longer played a crucial role as in the early epistolary novels.

The term **epistolary** originated from “**Epistle**” in the tradition of letters written by St. Paul to the New Testament Churches. Similar to the Japanese women writers who used self/confessional writing during the Heian period, the 18th century American and English writers who utilized this genre were mostly also women. Due to its frequent use by women writers, epistolary novel and later also novel were regarded as a feminine genre, following children’s book, letters, and diaries included in the category of “lesser genre,” or what George Elliot called “silly novels by silly lady novelists.” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979). This genre is also perceived as a suitable and appropriate medium to express female emotion and fantasy as stated by the American popular novelist, Fanny Fern:

women had been granted access to the novel as a sort of Repressive de Sublimation, a harmless channel for frustrations and drivers that might otherwise threaten the family, the church, and the state. Fern recommended that women write as therapy as a

release from the stifling silence of the drawing room, and as a rebellion against the indifference and insensitivity of the men closest to them (Showalter, 1989).

Regardless of its quality as a lesser genre, many contemporary woman writers on purpose have utilized and also revised the self/confessional writing in the form of epistolary novel, autobiography, and diary as their resistance and challenge toward the literary system that they view as operating patriarchal system which emphasizes male writer's interests and, on the other hand, marginalizes female writer's role and neglects her interests in the literary system. The famous contemporary African American writer, bell hooks, has published her two autobiographies, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (1996) and *Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* (1997) in an experimental style, combining imagination and memory and blending fiction and non fiction narrative technique in her works. Alice Walker, another African American author, employs an extended epistolary style in her novel, *The Color Purple* (1983), through her main character, Celie, who writes letters to God and later to her sister, Nettie. The modern example of self/confessional writing in the form of diary is Helen Fielding's best selling novel, *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1995) which not only becomes a big hit in Britain but has also received a worldwide popularity.

In addition to pay homage to this self-expression writing genre of their literary female pioneers, many of women writers wrote their works to voice the muted women in their family and society. bell hooks dedicated her autobiographies and memoirs to her grandmother and mother, and "to pay homage to the unheard voice of black women of past and present." hooks admits that she not only talks about the past, she does worse, "I write about it." We write about it so we will not disappear and we write about it so we will not choose to disappear" (hooks, 1994:59). Gloria Steinem's autobiography, *Ruth's Song (Because She Could Not Sing It)* written in 1983, is one example of woman's autobiographies that the daughter becomes the narrator of her parent's story, focusing on the point of view of her mother (Conway, 1999:124). Similar view on this narrative approach is also shared by Maxine Hong

Kingston who confessed that “she did not believe she would be a “real” novelist until she had written a book in the authorial voice” (in Lanser, 1992: 20), and her memoir *The Woman Warrior* also illustrated this perspective well.

Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior: Memoir of a Girlhood among Ghosts* juxtaposed voice and silence of various female figures in her life both real and fictional, echoing this voice/silence discourse through fantasy and reality experienced by women in the past and present. Her memoir opens with the life story of her muted aunt, “No Name Woman” whose existence could only be spoken in silence and whisper through the storytelling of the narrator’s mother. This unnamed aunt’s life had already been wiped out of her family history, vanished and left no trace, yet this life story of this unnamed and silenced woman had conjured up countless different images and haunted the memory of the narrator so that she decided to write about it, and no longer participated in silence, punishing this unfortunate woman who drawn herself and her baby into the well to end her unbearable misery. Meanwhile, the narrator’s mother who passed this story to her in silence was more fortunate and managed to survive through hardships and long journeys away from her homeland to the United States, yet in many ways, this mother had also been silenced and unable to voice her own minds except in storytelling that she told her daughter whether it was the unspeakable story of their family secrets or the story of the female warrior, Fa Mu Lan. This woman had to borrow life story of others in order to voice her minds because she could not tell her own story. Through such ventriloquist’ storytellings, this woman had decided to break up this tradition of silence and encouraged her daughter to speak up, defying the Chinese proverb of “a ready tongue is an evil” as narrated in “A Song For a Barbarian Reed Pipe” when the narrator asked her mother why she sliced the daughter’s frenum:

I cut it so that you would not be tongue-tied. Your tongue would be able to move in any language. You’ll be able to speak languages that are completely different from one another. You’ll be to

pronounce anything. Your frenum looked too tight to do those things, so I cut it (Kingston, 1976: 164).

Unfortunately, the narrator turned into a complete silence, “a dumbness—a shame” when she struggled to learn to speak English and was constantly forced to speak up. At first she enjoyed the silence and when silence became misery, she equated silence to being a Chinese girl; and then she finally realized that silence was also the lot of Chinese immigrants in the United States:

But when I saw Father’s occupations I exclaimed, “Hey, he wasn’t a farmer, he was a ...” He had been a gambler. My throat cut off the word—silence in front of the most understanding teacher. There were secrets never to be said in front of the ghosts, immigration secrets whose telling could get us sent back to China ... Sometimes I hated the ghosts for not letting us talk; sometimes I hated the secrecy of the Chinese. “Don’t tell,” said my parents, though we couldn’t tell if we wanted to because we didn’t know (Kingston, 1976: 183).

Experiencing the burden of silence and being silenced for being a woman and a Chinese, she resolved to struggle for voice of her own as well as for others; therefore, desperately she tried so hard to encourage her unfortunate Chinese classmate to speak up as if they both were bound for one entity, not of an individual power to speak up but a communal voice, one for all; similar to the way the narrator put the hope for voice in Brave Orchid or the songs of Ts’ai Yen, the Chinese poetess among the Barbarians whose voice and songs trespassed the understanding of race and language boundaries, voicing and lamenting the human lot and life.

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A Simplified Reading on Tsao Hsueh-chin's Narratology in *Dream of the Red Chamber* (A Feminist-Structural Perspective)

Introduction

a. The Birth of Novel in Chinese Literary History

In the history of Chinese literature, the origin of novel as a literary genre can be traced back in the tradition of prose and dramatic narratives under the term *xiaoshou* or “lesser discourses” that include “minor philosophical and other informal writings.” The term ‘lesser’ attached to this early form of novel reflects Confucian poetics that regards fiction as a not serious writing (Schellinger, 1998:205). The earlier evidence of the existence of Chinese novel is *pinghua* or “plain[ly-told] tales” printed between 1321 and 1323 written in the form of historical narratives concerning “exciting periods of Chinese history or the remarkable careers of specific individuals” (Schellinger, 205). Historical novel was very popular and well loved by the Chinese readers, and in response to its popularity of this genre, Chinese writers prolifically produced historical novels, and among the most famous ones are *Sanguozhiyan* or better known as *The Three Kingdoms* or *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* (its prefaces dated 1494 and 1522), *Shuihuzhuan* (1550) or well known in English as *Water Margin* or in other translated versions as *All Men Are Brothers* and *Outlaws of the Marsh*, and *Xiyouji* or *The Journey to the West* (1580). In general, scholars agree that “the Chinese novel is a product of the Ming period (1368-1644)” and reached its peak by the 17th century (Schellinger, 206). In its development Chinese novels underwent various literary experiments not limited to its origin as a historical fiction; and one of its experiments was in the form of romances, a new favorite genre of the 18th century Chinese literature. The first Chinese novel/ romance to be translated into a European language is *The Fortunate Union* or *The*

Pleasing History (*HauKiouChooan* 1761) by James Wilkinson and Bishop Thomas Percy (Schellinger, 207).

b. Tsao Hsueh-chin's *Hung Lou Meng*, the Most Famous Chinese Novel

Among the prolific production of Chinese novels, however, only few novels are generally known among contemporary readers; and undoubtedly the most famous one is the mid-18th century Chinese novel of the Ching dynasty, *Hung Lou Meng*. Tsao Hsueh-chin's novel is popularly known by English readers as *Dream of the Red Chamber* or *Dream of the Red Mansion* although the best translation is the one that uses the novel's first title, *Shitoujior Story of the Stone*. *The Longman Anthology of World Literature* (2004) also lists this work under the title *The Story of the Stone*. There are many speculations and debates concerning the authorship of this novel. Chi-Chen Wang, the translator of the adapted version of *Hung Lou Meng* (the Anchor Book abridged edition of 1958) used in this study has explicitly stated in the table of contents that the first 33 chapters of Part I is written by Tsao (1715?–c. 1764), meanwhile, the rest of the chapters in Part II is its continuation by Kao Ou. In addition, Wang also reveals the obscure authorship of the complete version of the novel with the evidence that Tsao left this novel unfinished before his death, not to mention the notes and commentaries by “Chih Yen Chai,” and also different versions and editions found and provided by different editors and publishers. Finally Kou's edition and rewriting and completion of the novel was critically attacked because his version of the happy ending of the novel contradicted Tsao's initial intention to make this novel a tragedy and moreover Kao's artistic quality was regarded inferior compared to the superiority of Tsao's aesthetic mastery, however at the same time Kao was credited for handing out this novel to modern readers, thus preserving and securing the existence of the novel as one of Chinese and world masterpieces.

c. Aim and Limit of the Study

In addition to the debates of *Hung Lou Meng's* authorship that has led to various speculation and findings of Tsao's family background and history; there are also controversies in the scope of reception and critical study of this novel. Two prominent oppositions are firstly, scholars and critics prompted by the authorship aspects, focusing the importance of the biographical backgrounds in studying this so-called 'biographical novel' and other relevant aspects that relate the novel's mimetic quality to its historical, social, political, and cultural realities. The other reception and perspective are scholars and critics who consider *Hung Lou Meng* as a fiction, therefore, it should be judged by its aesthetic merit only. The example of the first group is the Red Inkstone circle, and the latter in its recent instance can be found in the work of Anthony C. Yu's *Rereading the Stone: Desire and the Making of Fiction in Dream of the Red Chamber* (1997) and Lucien Miller's *Masks of Fiction in Dream of the Red Chamber: Myth, Mimesis, and Persona* (1975).

Those two opposing perspectives in approaching *Hung Lou Meng* are in fact rooted in the old theoretical battle of viewing literature. One views literature mimetically as a representation of reality that also reflects particular historical, social, and cultural aspects, meanwhile, the other views it as a non-referential system or a mere linguistic construct. Both views have their own weakness and strength. However, both can actually complete one another. Susan Lanser attempted to bridge these opposing views by practicing the so called feminist narratology or structural feminist perspective to critically analyze the aesthetic quality as well as the social, political, historical ideas explicitly and implicitly conveyed in the narrative of the work. Following Lanser's attempt, I would like to use such perspective to analyze the narrative discourse of Tsao's *Hung Lou Meng*. This structural feminist perspective will help me study how and why the novel uses certain kind of narrative technique and also relate each element of its narrative into a feminist (preferably gender discourse to maintain its 'balance and neutrality' in discussing the gender role and position depicted in the novel), therefore, the life and experience of the fe/male characters of the novel

can be revealed, recognized, and well acknowledged, and will not only be drawn in diagrams, categories, and taxonomies of the pure structural narratology, but appropriately set in their own social, cultural, political, and historical experience and context. In its actual practice, the feminist structural perspective involves a detailed and elaborate study of all elements of the work, however, due to the limited time, space, and the knowledge provided, I would focus on the relationship of Chia Pao- Yu, the central character of the novel and the story experienced by the Stone. Evidently, Pao-Yu and the Stone are two visible elements of the novel, that is, actually only a small part of the novel's entire elements, yet in my opinion it is already adequately useful and crucial in understanding the integral unity of the novel, therefore, I call my study "a simplified reading on Tsao's narratology."

Narrative Discourse in Tsao's *Hung Lou Meng*

The term narratology originated from the French word, "narratologie," introduced by Tzvetan Todorov in his book *Grammaire du Decameron* (1969). Narratology and its methodology have its root in the tradition of Russian Formalism and French Structuralism. The narratologists in their methodology put more emphasis on the "narrative discourse" (HOW) than the "narrative content" (WHAT). Narratology as a structural discipline is no longer popular after the emergence of Deconstruction and Post-Structuralism. However, many experts have tried to revise the limit and weakness of Formalism and Structuralism and have applied and developed them into their own discipline and expertise. In its development, narratology is not seen as a literary phenomenon only which devotes itself solely to literary criticism, but it has developed into a more interdisciplinary study which includes myths, films, paintings, history books, comic strips, philosophical systems, any great number of numerous other narrative forms both literary and non-literary as well as verbal and non verbal. In its true discipline, a narratological analysis requires an in-depth discussion of all its intrinsic elements including its detail linguistic use such as diction and tone. However, due to some practical reasons and

limitation of the study, this paper will only discuss certain intrinsic elements like point of view, character and characterization, and plot in Tsao's *Hung Lou Meng*

a. Point of View/Focalization and Characterization in *Hung Lou Meng*

The novel has already summed up its main idea of the story in the beginning of each chapter, and it applies Third Person Point of View. The opening of the novel begins with the story of Goddess Nugua who repairs the Dome of Heaven and plans to use 36,501 taken from the Great Mythical Mountain, however, she finally uses only 36,500 stones, thus there is one unused 'Stone'. Further, the story and the journey of this magical, rejected Stone from Heaven to the Red Dust (earthly life) will weave and link all the elements of the novel into its integral unity. Nugua or also known as Nu-kua/Kua Huang/Nu Huang is "Goddess of Go-betweenes ... a mythic source for marriage and courtship regulations" (Werner in Miller, 1975:17).

There are some possible reasons of using and blending this mythology with the realistic depiction of the characters, the setting, and the culture and tradition of Chinese society at that time. Firstly, the literary trend and fashion of the day that tended to adopt anti-realism style, therefore, the use of Nugua myth in the beginning of the novel has already established Tsao's conformity to the demand of literary style and convention of his time. However, at the same time readers, scholars and critics as well also recognize and praise Tsao's vividly accurate rendition, and account of Chinese life and history depicted realistically in his novel such as commented in *The Longman Anthology*,

The Story of the Stone also serves as a veritable encyclopedia of the late imperial Chinese society and culture. Over four hundred characters enter its pages, hailing from all walks of life and involved in subplots of often considerable intricacy. Detailed descriptions of buildings, gardens, furniture, medicines, food, and drink are matched by exquisitely described structure, rituals,

etiquette, games, performances, and other pastimes of the aristocracy, as well as the extraordinary complexity of running such vast domains (Damrosch, 2004:79).

This precise and detailed depiction is also followed by some similar resemblances of events happened in the novel and in Tsao's own life and family history; and it is quite reasonable to make such connection and claim this work as an autobiographical novel and regards Tsao as the first major writer who based grounded his novel on his own personal history. Yet, at the same time this very sense and evidence of realism is also juxtaposed with the fantasy widely know by the Chinese readers, and many scholars have debated on these two opposing styles. However, with the light of Chinese philosophy and religions, these two modes of narrating the story is not really contradictory at all but in fact both narrative modes reflect the essence of Chinese philosophy and religions (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Shamanism) in viewing life and all thing in its duality, different yet complement to one another, the idea that the Divine life and the earthly life is indeed one unity as expressed repeatedly by the quotes, poems, and songs in the novel

When the unreal is taken for the real, then the real becomes unreal;

Where non-existence is taken for existence, then existence become non-existence (*Dream of the Red Chamber*, p.p. 7 and 42).

Another possible reason to blend the fantasy and realism might not be aesthetical nor philosophical but grounded more on political reason and censorship. If this novel indeed is autobiographical and "truly realistic," then it is quite understandable for Tsao' to protect himself from the possibility of making enemies and censorship due to his realistic depiction of corruption, violence, injustice, and his criticism toward such practices, therefore, he masked his social and political intention in the elaborate myth and gave his novel the title "Dream" to avoid offense and censorship.

Chapter I of Part I also introduces the genesis of the novel, of how the novel comes into its existence, explaining how the material of the story comes into being, different people of different time who know this

story, its possibilities of planning different titles for the story: *Transcribed by a Priest*, *Dream of the Red Chamber*, *Precious Mirror of Breeze and Moonlight*, *The Twelve Maidens of Chinling*, and finally *The Story of the Stone*. The name of Tsao Hsueh-chin and “Chih Yen Chai” are mentioned in third person point of view to include the important figures that have the opportunity to know, to study, and finally tell the story of the Stone. However, there is a different narrative discourse presented in the novel due to the translation problems and versions. In Wang’s translated version, all chapters are narrated in third person in general, meanwhile, David Hawkes’s translated version of Chapter I of Part I contains a direct address to the readers from the unnamed narrator “Gentle Reader” and in narratology the shift of point of view in practice will determine the relation between the narrator and narrate, furthermore it will also determine **the narrative level** and the **reliability** of the narrator. However, since this study uses Wang’s translation, therefore such difference will no longer be problematized further.

Interestingly, this kind of introduction in this Tsao’s mid-18th century novel resembles the post-modernism idea of “writing about writing” where and when the work itself theorizes the process of creating the work. Not to mention the similar notion of the ending is already in the beginning, the concept that the writing itself has already existed before it is actually being written, the idea of the (pre)existence of “the Grand Idea” and that the endless possibilities of writing and rewriting it and yet all of those are actually merely a copy of the pre-existent idea. However, the similar notion of post-modern characteristics in Tsao’s work is evidently not related to idea and concept of recent post-modernism, such technique is in fact one of the characteristics of Asian literature , and in this case, Chinese literary tradition and the Chinese philosophical and religious influence. In *Hung Lou Meng*, such notion is embodied in the concept that all things have already been predestined in Heaven and human beings actually can have the knowledge to understand such destiny if only they can see their “true self.” Such knowledge is expressed through songs, poems, the wisdom of Goddesses and monks that function as the foreshadowing

of many events not yet happened but will finally come true in the end of the novel, a knowledge that Pao-you, the hero of the novel, has the privilege to see it for himself in the "Great Void Illusion Land" under the guidance of the Goddess of Disillusionment, and yet he fails to see it and thus is ignorant of the fate of the women dearly close to his life contained in the cabinet marked "The Twelve Maidens of the Chinling" and as revealed in the series of twelve songs entitled "the Dream of the Red Chamber." (pp. 41-43). In my opinion this post-modern aspect found in Tsao's writing adds the greatness of his writing aesthetic and literary reputation.

b. Gendering the Characters in *Hung Lou Meng*

In addition to the point of view used in narrating the novel and the material of the story, that is, the story of the Stone itself, characters play important roles in the unity of the novel. This novel depicts hundreds of characters, crowding its entire novels with the life and the story of different members of the extended families. The large number of characters in this novel signifies the importance of family and its family connection with its filial duty and responsibility. In addition, Confucian's Zhengming (rectification of names) is also present here, not only that all things should be called by their proper names with verbal precision but also the name stands for and represents its entity in line with its meaning and function in the real world. Therefore, it is important to reveal who connects to whom through their proper last name/family name as well as what the name itself means such as in the case of Cardinal Spring/the Imperial Concubine/Pao-yu sister, whose name signifies the time of her birth. In many cases, names in this novel also already signifies and foreshadows the destiny of the bearer as seen in Black Jade and Pao-yu.

From a great number of characters depicted in the novel, this study only selects some characters, particularly, Pao-yu, the central character of the novel whose name and destiny are evidently closely related the rejected Magical Stone and its wish and desire to experience

the life in the Red Dust is evidently. The importance and urgency to tell and write the story of the Stone is expressed in the quatrain in Chapter I of Part I:

*Without merits that would entitle me to a place in the blue sky,
In vain have I lived in the Red Dust for so many years.
These are the events before my birth and after my death—
Who will transcribe them and give the world my story?*

Pao-you is evidently revealed as the earthly manifestation of the Stone, and through him the destiny of the Stone will be fulfilled as it was written in Heaven. The Birth of Pao-you is the evidence of this incarnation, he was born with a jade in his mouth which he will wear on his neck through his life, it is his soul and his life, therefore, when he was separated from it he was in the state of complete loss and near death before being reunited with the Jade Stone. The bond of Pao-yu and the Magical Stone is also another example of opposing yet harmonious coupling of the Divine and the Earthly being. Pao-you in addition to his extraordinary birth is also depicted uniquely compared to other male characters in the novel. He was depicted as rather effeminate and androgynous, eagerly sharing cosmetics and other feminine things with his female cousins and maids. Lucien Miller also comments on this attitude,

One of the most important motifs is Pao-yu's preference for women over men. Women are made of water and men of mud. At an early age his feminism shows in his fondness for cosmetics, such as rouge and powder, both of which he relishes eating (Miller, 1975:281).

There is indeed a sound possibility to regard Pao-yu a feminist, however Miller needs a more elaborate evidence to support his argument. In relation to gender and feminism in particular, there is one striking point to be noted in Tsao's narrative discourse. It is a truth universally acknowledged that patriarchy is a very strong system of the Chinese society, and accordingly this sense of patriarchy is also powerfully present in Tsao's novel with its rigid gender roles and practices.

However, readers are also aware of strong and powerful images of women in this novel such as the presence and concept of Goddesses as builder, ruler, and divine guide, and in the Chia family itself the presence of the powerful Matriarch, the mother of all Chias. Despite their unspeakable plights and unfortunate destiny, many of women of different social classes in the novel have unsurprisingly some educated and cultivated minds. Tsao also reveals this superior literacy of the female characters in many occasions. Female figures also dominates this novel and influences the central character's coming of age, his physical and spiritual maturity as well because Pao-yu undoubtedly the central male character of the novel who inhabits the feminine world of the Garden surrounded by his female cousins, maids, aunts, mother, and grandmother, the dearest and influential figures in his life.

The title "Dream of the Red Chamber selected and used by Wang in his translation is actually in line with Tsao's narrative technique that gives some space for "the female voice" because the "Red Chamber" as noted by Wang refers to where young lady lives. Meanwhile the "Dream of the Red Chamber" in the novel also refers to the title of a series of twelve songs composed by the order of The Goddess of Disillusionment to foreshadow the destiny of the Twelve Maidens of the Chinling, the women in Pao-yu's life. Therefore, the selected title of Wang's translation is more feminist in its narrative discourse and parallel with Tsao's narrative discourse as well compared to Hawkes's selected title for his translated version, "The Story of the Stone" that gives more emphasis on the Magical Stone and Pao-yu the central male character of the novel. In the tradition of Western literary history, novel as a literary genre is often related with feminism and female voice, and such relation is also present in Tsao's narrative discourse. Another similar characteristic of Tsao's novel and the Western novel tradition is its quality of *heteroglossia* or polyphonic or dialogical aspect (a term coined by Bakhtin) that enables novel to liberate different "voices" and to be analyzed in many different levels of reading. In this sense, it is explicitly evident that Tsao's novel is the story about the Stone and Pao-yu, the central character; however, the narrative discourse of *Hung Lou Meng* also facilitates multiple reading of different voices at work in the

novel. The novel indeed is the story of the Stone and Poa-yu, but at the same time, it is also the story of the twelve maidens of the Chinling, the story of the Chia family, the record of Chinese ‘history’ and ‘herstory’ as well.

c. Plot and the Focus on Didacticism in *Hung Lou Meng*

The setting of place of the novel is in various different places in China, particularly, Ningkuofu and Yungkuofu, two big houses/mansions of the extended Chia family during the last Imperial Chinese power. However, there are also some references to mythical places in Heaven in different eras and periods. The story is narrated in a series of **flashbacks** in the style of **stream of consciousness** recalling past and present events randomly. Chronologically, the setting of time and the logical order of setting of place in this novel are not conventionally organized according to the Western poetics. Seen from its plot, Tsao’s novel can be regarded more as **a novel of character rather than a novel of action**. In terms of **Aristotle’s definition of plot (384-322 B.C.)** concerning **a single action with beginning, middle, and ending**, this novel certainly seems **plotless**, only a strain of endless slow and monotonous storytelling.

The definition of plot by Aristotle evidently was constructed from the Western style of writing that is definitely designed to express the life in the view of Western culture and philosophy and, not necessarily proper for Oriental writing style nor appropriate for revealing the life of Oriental people with their different culture and philosophy. Pao-yu’s life experience as the hero of the novel is the example of this different perspective of plot that reveals the heroic deed and action of the hero. Compared and contrasted to such Western hero in Western narrative, the depiction of Pao-yu and his life would seem more like in the **“mode of idling, waiting, and contemplating”** and not really of action, and this effeminate, androgynous Pao-yu’s way of life precisely will not match the masculine plot definition of Aristotle. Besides Aristotle, another classic writer like **Horace (35-29 B.C.)** actually has already had

a more flexible definition of plot. Horace adopts the “**in medias res**” concept or “in the middle of the thing” that differentiates a single action from the real event when it actually takes place and its chronological order in which the story is told, therefore, the real event should not necessarily happen in the beginning, but may take place in the middle. The detective story serves as the concrete example of this “in medias res” concept: the story begins with a murder that has already taken place, and then a detective enters “in medias res” and has to investigate this murder and what has already happened. This detective has to reconstruct the plot and the story is actually about this murder reconstruction. Similar to this concept, **Deleuze and Guattari** in their book, *A Thousand Plateaus* also develop the term “**Rhizome.**”

the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states ... It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills (1997:21).

E.M. Forster also introduces a more inclusive concept that can be applied to many different narratives written by both male and female writers. Similar to Propp who differentiates **fabula** and **suzjet**, Forster also differentiate **story** as a series of events that take place chronologically, and **plot** that focuses the causal relationship. In Forster concept of plot, Tsao's novel indeed does have a plot, even more than one plot in the form of sub-plots, focusing on the journey of the Magical Stone and its education in the Red Dust, the coming of age of Pao-yu as the hero of the novel, the tragic love story of Pao-you and his cousin Lin, the decline of the Chia family, and many other plots and sub-plots that can be deduced from this novel framework. In fact, in this novel the concept of the **main plot**, and the **sub-plots** is also blurred yet open to more possibilities of story line depending on our focus of reading this novel, and not to mention its post-modern notion of the ending is the beginning make the narrative discourse and its poetics more flexible and fluid compared to the Western tradition. In addition, there is also different view on the use of literature. The perspective of Dulce et Utile

and didacticism are in fact familiar in the Western tradition of critical and literary studies, however, didactic literature tends to be regarded inferior in Western perspective. On the contrary, didacticism is an integral and crucial part of Chinese poetics, particularly from the Confucian point of view, that is, literature should serve for the betterment of morality and ethics of the community and society.

Beside the dichotomy of Eastern and Western poetics that has been revealed in analyzing the plot of *Hung Lou Meng*, there is also a problem of gender in critical and literary studies in general. Many feminists are reluctant to use structural narratology in their research for many different reasons. Firstly, feminism and structuralism have different theoretical framework in seeing literature. Feminists (particularly the Anglo-American feminists) view literature **mimetically** as a representation of reality that also reflects **gender role**, meanwhile, the French feminists are more interested in linguistic and psychological aspects of narratives; on the other hand, structuralists view narratives **semiotically** as a **non-referential system** or a mere **linguistic construct**. Secondly, structuralists usually use narratives written by men as their research model and theoretical formulation. The third reason is that structuralists tend to analyze variously different narratives from different cultures mechanically regardless of their contextual aspects; therefore, many feminists disagree with their theoretical ground because context plays a very important role in feminist perspective. Many different groups and schools are actually interested in structuralism and they try to revise this structural theoretical limitation by developing the structural methodology into a more awareness toward the cultural and social context. Not only feminists who try to do this revision effort, **Bakhtin**, a well-known early formalist-structuralist, has developed his theory on “**sociological poetics**.” Similar to many revisions and redefinitions that have occurred in the literary history, it seems unavoidable to start revisions and redefinitions on the literary theories and literary canons as well to be more inclusive and not necessarily exclusive for certain writers of certain gender, race, class, or culture.

Conclusion

The birth and the development of novel as a literary genre in Chinese literary history are older and earlier than its Western counterpart. Chinese novel is the product of the Ming period (1368-1644)” and reached its peak by the 17th century. Despite of its prolific novel production, only a few Chinese novels are widely known to the general readers, and among the famous ones is *Hung Lou Meng*, also known as *Dream of the Red Chamber* or *The Story of the Stone*. Regardless of the debates and controversies of authorship and critical theory of its reception, Tsao Hsueh-Chin's novel is widely acclaimed as the greatest and most famous Chinese novel, following and continuing the tradition of historical novel and romance in Chinese literary history.

Through the study of Tsao's narratology, particularly in the perspective of feminist structuralism, it is revealed that the narrative discourse of his novel possesses flexibility, fluidity, polyphony, and dialogical qualities that enable to liberate different voices present at the same time in his novel. These qualities similar qualities that are present and discussed in the Western critical and literary theories yet having different artistic and theoretical ground in Tsao's case because such qualities and characteristics present in *Hung Lou Meng* are deeply rooted in Chinese aesthetics, philosophy, and religions, reflecting Tsao's aesthetic mastery of writing as well as his in-depth and complex insights of Chinese social, political, economical, cultural, and historical backgrounds. This study of Tsao's narratology has in some aspects uncovered more aesthetical qualities and integral unity of *Hung Lou Meng*, thus adds Tsao's excellent literary reputation that is still highly proven today such as in the case of the formation of *Hongxue* or *Redology* (Dr. Tope's class note on “Constructs of Identity in Asian Literature”), a scholarship solely devoted to the study of *Dream of the Red Chamber*, that started with its Chinese members in the beginning and today its member are from various parts of the world. Thus *Hung Lou Meng* does not only earn the reputation as the greatest and most famous Chinese novel only but indeed also a world masterpiece.

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Form and Content in bell hooks's Autobiographies, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood and Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* (A Gender Perspective)

I permit no woman to teach ...she is to keep silent.

St. Paul

Introduction

We live in a society of patriarchy where the rights to formal public decision and policy making are held by men. People in contemporary western culture inhabit a patriarchy, both in the anthropological and philosophical sense, and because of this condition promote the idea that “Patriarchy, then has determined in very large part the nature quality of our society, its values and priorities, the place and image of women within it, and the relation between the sexes...” (Ruth, 1980:44 & 87). These facts evidently reflect that western society is a male-dominated world, and we see many realities that women often experience gender discrimination and misogyny in society. For black women, the case is even worse because black women experience the multiple discrimination and oppression of gender, class, and race. Angela Davis in her book *Women, Race, and Class* (1981) had comprehensively conducted a historical study of these sufferings and injustices experienced by black women in the U.S. Moreover, in the American history of women's movements, black women were also misunderstood and left behind.

At a time in American history when black women in every area of the country who might have joined together to demand social equality for women and a recognition of the impact of sexism on our social status, were by and large silent. Our silence was not merely a reaction against white woman liberationists or a gesture of solidarity with black male patriarchs. It was the silence of the oppressed--that profound silence engendered by resignation and acceptance of one's lot (hooks, 1981:1-1).

This multiple oppression and discrimination has limited and denied the freedom of African American women to voice and articulate their thoughts and aspirations. If once black men were slaves, the condition of black women was certainly worse than that: "Let me state here and now that the black woman in America can justly be described as a slave of a slave" (Bloom and Breines, 1995:527).

Gloria Watkins as a member of new generation of black women wants to break the tradition of silence that had been deeply rooted in the life of black women. She is a distinguished professor of English, an active feminist activist, and an outspoken social critic. She writes extensively about the topics of and the life of African American women under the name of her great-grandmother, bell hooks (uncapitalized) "to pay homage to the unheard voice of black women of past and present" (Valade, 1996:177). As a feminist, activist, and a writer she wants to speak out and reveal the painful experience, and the multiple oppression and discrimination suffered by black women in society. hooks also wants to voice and articulate the aspirations and contributions of African American women that had been denied and omitted from the long record of historical achievements handed down by men. She dedicates many of her books personally to the women of her family in particular, and in general to black women of past and present. Her book, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, is dedicated to her mother.

*For Rosa Bell, my, mother ---
Who told me when I was a child
That she had once written poems ---*

*That I had inherited my love of reading
And my longing to write from her* (hooks, 1981 vi).

She dedicates the book to her mother, who did not have the opportunity to express her talent and ability, and who did not have the privilege and freedom to pursue her ideals and aspirations. As one of a new generation different to silenced black women like her mother, hooks wants to break the tradition of silence by becoming a critically outspoken feminist activist, social critic, and a daring writer. She openly and bravely struggles to end the sexual, social and racial injustices suffered by black women. She strongly criticizes the devaluation of the fetishization of women within films and film industries (hooks, 1997:555 & 558). In her televised lecture on *Cultural Criticism and Transformation* (1997), she also gives strong criticism the abuse of woman represented in RAP music and popular culture. Hooks thinks and talks about these subject critically, and she refuses to be silenced although she receives many attacks and much discouragement. When she was still young, she had already been articulate and outspoken, even her own mother often complained about it: “You talk too much about the past. You don't just listen,” and hooks admits that she not only talks about the past, she does worse. “I write about it.” We write about it so we will not disappear and we write about it so we will not choose to disappear” (hooks, 1994:59).

As a writer hooks is still very critical and outspoken, and her works are often considered radical by critics and the public, even by black women and feminists themselves to whom she has already given great dedication and commitment.

Many of us live in circumstances and environments where we must engage in feminist struggle alone with only occasional support and affirmation. It was my hope that the publication of this work would draw me closer to feminist activists, especially black women. Ironically, some of the most outspoken women active in feminist movement responded by trashing both it and me. While I expected serious rigorous evaluation of my work I was totally unprepared for the hostility, and contempt shown me by

women whom I did not see as enemies. Despite their responses I share with them an ongoing commitment to feminist struggle (hooks, 1984.- vii).

Since the beginning hooks often confronts criticism, challenge, and obstacles in her struggle as a new black feminist and critically honest writer. However, those difficulties do not discourage her struggle to achieve humanity and justice for black women in the male white dominated world.

hooks is not only a prolific writer, writing many volumes of critical essays, but she is also pioneering an innovative style in her writings. Her autobiography, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (1996) is by definition leaving behind the traditional style and characteristics of autobiography as a distinctively rigid genre.

While readers from diverse backgrounds celebrated Bone Black, embracing both its experimental style and the absence of the kind of "tell all" tabloidlike revelations that folks often want from autobiographical narratives, individual reviewers were the most disappointed that they were not getting the "scoop" on bell hooks. They wanted traditional autobiography and as a consequence were unable to accept the book on its own terms (hooks, 1997: xx).

hooks starts her experimental style by not chronologically exploring her life narratives, and instead drawing randomly certain events in her life in a stream of consciousness fashion. She also uses both first and third person points of view in her autobiography. While the "I" tells her life story, the third person narrator as a distanced observer gives comments. Her new and second autobiography, *Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* (1997) also follows a similar experimental style, and she even goes further by revealing the topics of sexuality honestly and daringly, one subject that apparently has not been openly discussed in the lives of black women, let alone through books written by black women. This paper will discuss those two autobiographical works, studying them not only specifically through their form as a genre but also through their content. By employing the gender perspective, this paper intends to examine how hooks pictures her life experience as

a black woman, and also the way she thinks about black men and women in her life in terms of gender and race relations. More importantly, this study will also aim to reveal hooks's concept and vision of the 'ideal' black woman portrayed in modern society.

A Glance at Autobiography Studies

The word autobiography has a relatively recent origin and beginning. It is only about 200 years old, however, there are similar terms that are closely related to its meaning such as “confession”, “apology”, “memoir”, “diary”, “letter”, “journal”, and “narratives”. Simply defined it is not biographical writing, “which is written about someone else, but “autobiographical writing” --- written by one's self” (Sayre, 1994:3). Autobiographical writing is abundantly available in many diverse fields, and written by many people from different races genders, and cultures as well as religious and political positions. Its abundant availability, however, is not followed by its popularity.

This kind of writing, which many readers and writers once scorned because they thought it was “easy “- or dull or egotistical or too historical and not imaginative, or vice-versa --- has included some of the best and most varied and exciting literature of the last twenty-five years...We also can see (if we had not seen before) that many of the American classics are autobiographies (Sayre, 1994:4).

In line with the recent progress of literary and cultural studies, autobiography, nowadays, becomes more popular and well-liked. There are increasingly wide interests in autobiographical studies not only in the Western world but also in non-Western culture as far as Japan, India, and Africa (Conway, 1999:3). One reason for this growing interest in the study of autobiographies is that people expected that autobiography could “reveal things to them that they might not find elsewhere” (Sayre, 1994:3-4).

Well-known for their oral tradition and culture, African Americans as marginal members of American society, have also made use of this kind of autobiographical writing as early as their white counterparts.

This can be seen through their personal accounts of Slave Narratives, "The history of Afro-American autobiography is long and frill. A recent bibliography of black American autobiographies, for example, lists 417 works written between 1865 and 1973" (Stone, 1981:109). More works have been published in these present days, and those publications are an indication that African Americans continue to think of autobiography as an effective tool to convey and reveal their perspective on their relationship with society. Autobiography studies conducted by Elizabeth Schultz in *To Be Black and Blue: The BluesGenre in Black American Autobiography* and Arna Bontemps in *The Slave Narrative: An American Genre* have elaborated LeRoi Jones's idea of making a comparison between black autobiography development and the development of the Blues. Jones noted that "traditional African songs deal with the exploits of the social unit...that in America the African begins to sing songs concerned with his own personal exploits" (Stone, 1981: 111). Bontemps furthermore also comments on this shift from African social expression toward African American personal expression, and on the process of how this personal account also represents the expression of society's experience in return.

Black autobiography in general, however, like the blues, expands the solo, the voice of the single individual retains the tone, of the tribe. Of Richard Wright autobiography, Black Boy (1945), Ralph Ellison says that it is, like the blues, "an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically," but that is in it thousands of Negroes will for the first time see their destiny in public print (Bontemps, 1969: xviii).

bell hooks as a younger generation of black writers also continues the black literary tradition of using autobiography as self-revelation. In line with the observation of Bontemps and Schultz on black autobiography that shift from individual experience to social experience, this paper also views hooks's autobiographies *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* and *Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* as a singular personal account that tries to represent the voices of those women who have similar experiences in her community as well.

Analysis

Sayre's studies on *American Lives: An Anthology of Autobiographical Writing*, consider autobiographies “a very revealing kind of writing in many different ways” (1994:4) that would include revelation of secrets, confessions, apologies, and even lies, and many other things. In studying hooks’s autobiographies, this article will use one of Sayre’s points that sees autobiography and the autobiographer as expressing “the hopes and fears, and common experiences of their time and culture” (1994:5) and also to see how hooks tries to develop and reveal her concept of self. In accordance with the gender perspective used in this study, this paper will also employ some typical feminist motifs commonly used in studying autobiographies written by women.

1. Bearing Witness: Mother and Daughter Bond

Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood and Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life reveal that hooks had learned about patriarchy and the male-dominated world early in her life from her own family. As a child she had seen her own mother suffering under the control of her domineering father.

In her dark place on the stairs she is seeing over and over again the still body of the woman pleading, crying, the moving body of the man angry, yelling...the woman does not protest...She says nothing to the man. He is still screaming, muttering. When she tries to say to him he is wrong, so wrong, he is more angry, threatening...She is seeing that the man owns everything, that the woman has only her clothes, her shoes, and other personal belongings. She is seeing that the woman can be told to go, can he sent away in the silent, bug hours of the night (Bone Black: 148-9).

Witnessing her parents’ life, observing the relation of her mother and father, as a child she already understood the gender position in a family. As a writer, hooks recalled and wrote that childhood event, using diction that certainly reflected the man-woman relation not only

in the smaller unit of society, the family, but also in society in general. "the still body of the woman"---"the moving body of the man": those choice of words, "still/ moving" refer to the binary oppositions of passivity/activity (Cixous, 1998:146) that dictate the gender position in society. In her second autobiography, moreover, she reveals how she saw the suffering of her mother very closely and clearly.

She could hear the angry voice of their father, yelling at their mother... and as he yelled, and hit, he kept screaming I will kill you. It was not the yelling, not even the hitting that hurt them, it was the pleading voice of their mama telling him that she did not know what he was talking about, it was the sound of her crying. They had never seen her crying. It was this sound that momentarily broke their hearts (Wounds of Passion: 9)

Domestic violence also colors the life of her family. As a child she could only be the witness of all her mother's miseries without having any power to help her. Her childhood memories of her parent's turbulent relationship have a great influence on the way she views male-female relation. She sees her mother as an obedient wife who spent her life to serve, to love, and to sacrifice for her husband and children. Yet, she was still abused and completely controlled by her domineering husband. Witnessing her mother's miserable life under her father's dominant power, hooks comments:

Maybe because I had a daddy who provided, who was head of the household, who was always church going, hardworking, much of a man daddy and I understood the meaning of domination in patriarchal society up close and personal. I saw early on that there was a price to be paid for being taken care (Wounds of Passion: 100).

hooks's family is of those typically traditional families that also follow the traditional gender role in which the wife's main concern is domesticity: the traditional female role as a dependent housewife, and full-time mother and homemaker, while the father is the sole provider. Her parents' relationship in terms of traditionally prescribed gender roles and binary oppositions as passivity/activity in Cixous's perspective

can also lead to further coupling of repression/violence, inferior/superior, mother/ father and finally to hierarchical oppositions of woman/man (Cixous, 1998:146-7). Raised in such a kind of traditional family and with strong awareness of the traditional gender role, hooks grew up becoming a rebellious and independent woman who pursues knowledge above all passions in her life to escape this traditional gender role. Becoming a writer in a way is also an act of determination to break this traditional gender role and altogether also a triumphant effort to break the hierarchical oppositions of woman and man because in the binary system the act of writing or *écriture* is associated with man while word, speaking, and parole are with woman (Cixous, 1998:146-7). In her family, her grandmother is a very strong affirmative woman who loves telling hooks' stories about their family. Her grandmother excelled in any kind of domestic duties as a homemaker, yet she, the old woman also believed in gender equality.

I always wanted to be more of the kinda girl Baba could have taken to heart and called her own...But she does not read or write and these are my words--the worlds I share with Daddy Gus. Baba and I are in the same world when it comes to telling stories, wanting to surround ourselves with beauty, that there is nothing a woman cannot do that a man can. Baba teaches me these things. Mama is more concerned that we know a woman's place. I like it that Baba sees every place as a woman's place (Wounds of Passion: 93-94).

hooks admires Baba, her old grandmother, who has a more modern view of gender roles than her own mother, Baba's daughter, younger yet still holding traditional views of women. She learned from her Baba the long line of "fierce and brave country women who know what they need to do in this world and who know how to do it" (Wounds of Passion: 93) in her family. She learned of her heritage orally through her grandmother's storytelling, and at the same time it was from her grandfather that she learned literacy and the love of reading and writing books. As a member of the younger generation at last she finally achieves the male role, "to write". Therefore, she sees it as a "power", and she determines to use that power to preserve the

legacy of her family life, to reveal the unheard voice of her mother. As hooks mentioned in her essay *Class and Education*, "We write about it so we will not disappear and we write about it so we will not choose to disappear" (1994:59). As the daughter of a miserable and dependent woman who was abused and dominated by a man, hooks as a child has already felt and understood these sufferings.

that night it was as though she and mama were one. Every hurt she suffered wounded me. When she wiped away the small trick of bright red blood from her cheek, I searched for a tissue. When her heart broke, I felt mine was breaking (Wounds of Passion: 9).

She has already experienced the common bond with her mother not only as mother-daughter but also in their positions as women, sharing a similar gender position in society. As a child she could only be a witness to this, and becoming a teenager, she struggled not to be as domesticated and dominated as her mother. As a writer, she determined not to be a silent witness, but an active witness who helps voice her mother's suffering through her writing power. This mother-daughter bond and the struggle to become the voice of the female parent are common motifs seen in autobiographies written by women. Gloria Steinem's autobiography, *Ruth's Song (Because She Could Not Sing It)* written in 1983, is one example of women's autobiographies that reveals these motifs in which Steinem becomes the narrator of her parent's story, focusing on the point of view of her mother (Conway, 1999:124). hooks in her two autobiographies also employs these typically female motifs and functions as the narrator who voices her mother's life through her mother's point of view. However, unlike Steinem who only uses the first-person point of view, hooks makes a breakthrough in the art of autobiographical writing with her experiment of using both first and third person points of view, hooks's autobiographies do not only succeed in revealing the voice of her silenced mother, but also in telling it beautifully through the art of writing which used to be considered a "power" belonging to men only. She is eventually not only bearing witness but also capable of breaking the traditional gender roles by becoming her own kind of woman.

2. The Initiation Journey: Facing the Music of Gender and Race Relations

Discussing the life of bell hooks as a black woman living in the U.S., it is difficult to avoid race relations as well. Her two autobiographies reveal her experience of being a woman and also black citizen in American society. Growing up as a girl in rural Kentucky, young hooks was already aware of the racial apartheid system of the South. She experienced racial discrimination in school, society, and even amongst her own relatives.

She and the other children want to understand Race but no one explains it. They learn without understanding that the world is more a home for the white folks than it is for anyone else, that black people who most resembles white folks will live better in that world...They cannot wait to get away from this grandmother's house when she calls one of them blackie in a hating voice, in a voice that seems to say I cannot stand the sight of you...They know their place. They are children. They black. They are next to nothing (Bone Black: 31-32).

At home, her parents not only taught her to follow all the traditional virtues and values of good girls but also reminded her constantly of how to behave in relation to whites, and then especially being warned her about the danger of white men.

In her imagination race and sex are intimately bound. Like two hands, two feet, two eyes---one did not exist without the other. Young black girls in the south learn it early--learn sex by being told to stay away from men. There is a silence about sex in every house but not when it comes to warning black girls to stay away from strange white men with strange desires no one black could understand (Wounds of Passion: 40).

When she finally left Kentucky for California to continue her study, she became more confused seeing a different kind of social system and of race relations. She went to Stanford University where most of the students and the professors were white, and she was only one of a few

black students there. She felt misunderstood, no one seemed to understand her or Kentucky. She did not mind having both black and white friends around her, however, she felt disturbed because "Everyone in California acted as if race did not matter. It was hard for her" (Wounds of Passion: 50). Her friends did not have the experience of living under Jim Crow law, nor awareness of the Ku Klux Klan or the Confederate flag. They lived in a different world than her own, and they could not understand her fears and restlessness concerning race relations. She had left the South but she still brought all those racial past and memories with her that also haunted her whenever she confronted her white friends, "You can take what white folks have to offer but you don't have to love them" (Wounds of Passion:47). She would also take the suggestion of her black female friends not to let her white female friends turn her into their "mammy" nor any other black stereotypes. It was not only her relationship with her white friends that bothered her, she also felt uncomfortable relating to many of her black Californian friends who did not have any understanding of the Southern racial apartheid experience.

Her new life was in all-white world. The black people who surrounded her were different...They were the cream of the crop, E. Franklin Frazier's black bourgeoisie. They had traveled the world. They were the children of black diplomats, black professionals. They had no use for the black poor. They despised the south without ever having been there. She went straight to the heart of the matter, shared race did not mean shared intimacy. She was often alone (Wounds of Passion: 50).

I content myself with the knowledge that they know nothing about my world. Not even the black folks; they don't have the same ways or speak the same language. They are as foreign to me as the white folks I meet here and often more unaccepting. Neither group mores me. I am so desperately seeking to understand who I am. I cannot belong to any group (Wounds of Passion: 60).

She felt alienated racially and culturally. She felt more at home having friends from foreign countries like students from Mexico,

Jamaica, or Spain because in a way they shared the same experience of being a minority living in a new place and culture different from their own. She tried to adapt to her social and racial circles. Living her new life in the new place she had made efforts to break all the racial and social barriers, and tried to see that her anger and resentment toward whites were more out of historical reasons.

There is nothing about white folks she wants to know. They have been tried in the courts of black folks' justice and found guilty as charged. They have been found guilty because the blood of the slaughtered is still on their hands...I can never really love anyone white with my whole heart. It is not the fact of whiteness that keeps me from this love, it's the fact of history (Wounds of Passion:45 & 46).

She kept telling herself that it was not the white race that she hated but racism. She had overcome all her southern white hatred through books and education. She loves poetry, she loves Emily Dickinson, Rilke, Langston Hughes, Hopkins, and all those English romantic poets. Through poetry, she was able to look past beyond race and color, moreover, her first boyfriend was white, "The first man I chose was white---not a pretty man on the outside but his soul was pretty" (Wounds' of Passion: 41).

However, when she finally met her longtime life partner who was also black, she in some ways still suffered from racial and gender discrimination. hooks and her boyfriend, Mack, had different notions of race and social relations. Mack related his black race and heritage more black music and culture, and at the same time he also felt content with white culture and education, and was willing to play by white rules. On the other hand, she was more racially sensitive, and socially rebellious.

We do not see white folks in the same way. He has no sense of Jim Crow. Racial apartheid is for him a term that is just too strong. He has never had to think about the Ku Klux Klan. To him while people are just like everybody else--maybe better. He does not even question whiteness. It is not about white people. It is about the better things in life, culture, education, enlightenment. He does not

aspire to be the white, he longs for access and acceptance ... he learns to enjoy being the object of a desiring white gaze (Wounds of Passion: 51).

Shared black skin does not draw them closer. Her kinda blackness is strange to him... he can love white people as himself... These different understandings of whiteness separate them. She sees the politics of race in the everyday. Race politics for him are a matter of ideas He sees race as a fact of life to forget, to move past (Wounds of Passion: 52).

We can't agree on whiteness. I always stand at a distance. The gaze of white folks disturbs me. It is always for me the would-be-colonizing look. I hate being the smart black person in the cage (Wounds of Passion:54).

White people are always choosing which one of its they like. Usually, they choose him. In their imaginations he is the ultimate exotic Negro--one who looks black, real black, yet personifies white notions of rationality, decorum, civilization. I am in their eyes the primitive. I talk about being black, curse, talk loudly, speak bluntly (Wounds of Passion: 127).

Despite their different views toward blackness and whiteness, hooks and Mack seemed to find an almost perfect soulmate in each other, they shared their love of poetry with one another, and mutually encouraged their professional work and their pursuit of academic excellence. Most people saw their relationship mostly as a political bond as the union of two young, talented, black students who longed to assimilate into the white mainstream although this was not really the case. However, they did have many problems in their togetherness despite their shared blackness. Both of them agreed to have an open relationship, permitting one another to have other lovers, any other lover, whether black or white. Mack had had some white lovers before, and their friends (white and black) did not mind seeing him sexually involved with white women. On the other hand, most of their friends felt uncomfortable with hooks's sexual relations with white men. Her

Muslim friends were some of those blacks who openly did not approve of black girl-white man relationships.

They would rant and rave about a sister who would do it with a white man. That sister was a traitor to the race. Of course the brother doing it with a white woman was not betraying the race in their eyes, he was just getting some pussy. Pussy had no power, no color, but dick now that was tied to meaningful manhood, to notions of privilege and choice and power. Manhood was manhood precisely because it could not be told what to do. It could not be shaped and formed like clay. But pussy was pussy: it had no color and no allegiance. I listened to these raps but I always do what I want to--flick whomever I want to fuck just like the boys do. That does not mean that I sleep around (Wounds of Passion: 164-5).

She did not mind interracial dating, after all her first lover was a white man, and she had had relations with other white men also. She saw her friends' disagreement as race and gender bias. She resented it, and determined to struggle for gender equality in all aspects of life.

Moreover, she also experienced this kind of gender and race discrimination in the worlds of art and academia. There were only a few woman writers in the anthology of literature compared to male writers, let alone black woman writers. More importantly she considered black women as the most unfortunate and the most misunderstood group. Most whites, even educated white people, still believed in the stereotypical depictions of black women. When it came to gender solidarity, white women also had the misconception of seeing black women as already achieving gender equality, of having freedom and independence to work, therefore, white women excluded black women from the women's movement. Sadly, there were not enough books on black women provided in the library, and if there were any, those were mostly myths or stereotypical perceptions of black women as either mummies or sexual savages. As a student who tried to pursue her Ph.D., hooks longed to write and talk about black women. She was a busy student who also had to do difficult part-time jobs, but she determined to finish her planned book, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and*

Feminism to provide the world of academia with a valuable reference work on black women. Not many authors had done that, only a few black female writers had done it. Audre Lorde and Toni Morrison are among the few black female writers who have had the courage to write about black women in all their aspects including their widely misinterpreted sexuality, demystifying them either as sexless mummies or nymphomaniac whores. People in the 1950s and 60s were evidently not ready reading Lorde's biomythography, *Zami*, which revealed Lorde's experience about being black and lesbian because most people at that time considered lesbianism and homosexuality a "white problem". hooks herself could easily identify with those misunderstood black women because personally she often suffered from this race and gender injustice, not to mention her relation with her long time black boyfriend, Mack.

During the first months of living together we took the same class in medieval literature. Though we frequently copied each other's homework, he always received a higher grade. The white-haired male professor always treated me as though I was stupid. As a quiet intellectual black male he always received approval from academic while folks. Not one to challenge the system, he was more accepted (Wounds of Passion: 74).

Mack himself actually had been very good, understanding, and supportive of hook's ideas and educational progress. It was Mack who introduced her to a widely diverse school of arts and contemporary poets. He also encouraged her to get her Ph.D., however, there were times when he could not help becoming sexist and oppressive of her freedom and achievement, in their love life, Mack did not mind her being bisexual, but he would show his anger and violence whenever she fell in love with other men, whereas, he wanted freedom to love other women and at home talked openly about it to her. In their professional and academic life, they also experienced gender problems, the two worked together in establishing a literary magazine, however, they had different views concerning writing and gender. She would tend to see the work and not the writer she loved both male and female writers,

meanwhile, he had his own literary hierarchy where he would list only mostly male writers that he admired. When their literary magazine was already established and well accepted, Mack was the one who got the credit, and he did not publicly acknowledge her contribution, and claimed their hardwork only as his own. The gender and race discrimination did not stop in those fields, she also had to suffer financial injustice, "I work the same amount of time as he does and am getting paid less. It pisses me off every time I think about anyone thinking that work will liberate" (Wounds of Passion: 119). Most of the time, she felt ignored and invisible, and when they finally noticed her, she would become visible for all the wrong reasons, they made her the scapegoat.

Anytime one black student has difficulties or fails, every black student that comes after will be seen as flawed and looked at with suspicion. No matter how many white students frill for whatever reason they will still be looked at as individuals. This is racism in America. It never stops (Wounds of Passion: 202)

When she tried to get a part-time job in a phone company, she had to pretend not to be too stupid and too smart or else she would not get the job. She worked with many other female workers, mostly black women in a very bad working situation without any windows, and she also had to begin with the graveyard shift and low payment. Her experience working with these black women and interviewing them would help her write a more accurate life of black women in her finally finished and published book, *Ain't I A Woman*, after meeting various obstacles and many rejections from publishers.

In *Bone Black* and *Wounds of Passion*, hooks retells her experience of gender and race relations in a stream of consciousness style. She wrote from both the first and third person point of view, she fused past and present events and sometimes also linked those events to her futuristic conceptions of what she would like her life to be. Whenever, she encountered any race and gender troubles in her present life, she then relates reflect those problems to her childhood memories both the good and bad ones. Her fear of any intimate commitment would bring

her back to the suffering of her mother's life under her father's violent and domineering power, and she would restlessly connect race problems with her fear of blood. Her authorial voice would also move from a specific to a more general point of view. From her experience as a witness of her mother's domestic suffering and her own personal ordeals, hooks would then expand and relate those ordeals and sufferings to a wider group, the black women. She did not only reveal her own voice and that of her female relatives but also the voice of her race. Amiri Baraka/ LeRoi Jones and ArnaBontemps identified the blues motif of the black autobiography that shifted from personal to social exploits. To examine this motif further, hooks might not only be influenced by the blues tradition only in regards to her black heritage, but also because she was well read in arts and letters. Her other influence and inspiration would certainly come also from her most admired poet, Emily Dickinson who loves to speak loudly to the world in all her poems and also from Walt Whitman in his "One's-self I Sing" that begins from oneself and moves to 'En-Masse' and finally to the modern man. This shift of point of view from 'I' to 'We' is evidently a familiar motif in literature, especially poetry, not only Dickinson and Whitman alone but can also be traced to Milton's "Lycidas" whose narrator mourns for the dying Lycidas and finally invites the whole universe to weep for the dead Lycidas. This kind of motif influence is certainly possible in hooks's works, considering her great love for poetry and the way she repeatedly said that "Poetry is the place of transcendence" (Wounds of Passion: 109).

Not everyone goes to poetry readings to find love. She did. Growing up, poetry had been the sanctuary...She spent many, a night sitting in a freezing kitchen before a plate of cold food held together by congealed fat reciting softly to herself sweet words—Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson, William Wordsworth. Poems were the way to leave behind --- to forget...Poetry made childhood bearable (Wounds of Passion:3).

For hooks poetry has become a refuge and salvation from her earlier life to her present day experience, it is not too difficult to see if

she also turns to poetry for her artistic inspiration, after all it is the place of transcendence where there is no barrier between race and nation, and evidently no barrier to literary influence.

3. Finding Self-Recovery

After succeeding in overcoming her personal and social problems, hooks eventually can make peace with herself. She has found healing to all her wounds in life through poetry and writing. This self-recovery does not come easily for she has to endure great sufferings both psychologically and socially, however, the reward is worth having because through it she finally can also find herself and her life's calling. The flashbacks to her childhood memories enabled her to forgive her father, to get rid of her patricide thoughts and find reasons to claim her life back as a woman without any hatred of her father's guilt and as a free black human being who had been able to forgive all the sins committed by the whites without forgetting the race history of her nation.

She had been able to forgive and to forget all her painful memories of how her parents tried to force her to obey all the social rules about being a decent black southern girl. Her family especially her father considered her too loud and rebellious as a girl. He did not support her wish to pursue education. He just wanted her to become an obedient girl who would only honor marriage and domesticity for the sake of her future husband and children. Being smart would only endanger her future as a socially acceptable woman. As a child she tried to break all those pressures and oppressions by identifying herself with a cowboy or an Indian warrior because those figures gave her a sense of freedom and independence. In her childhood they also condemned her curiosity to learn about sexuality, she would then learn it secretly from books. Finally she grew up as a woman who was conscious of her sexuality and viewed it not according to her parents' oppressively traditional values.

“When you reach whenever you are going eat this mago and think of me--remember our life together. “I don't forget the taste of that

mago. Its juices linger like sweat dripping from the body, of a man who flicks me in a fever, who wets me with desire through and through --- a man who in the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost takes me in the heartbreak church. He holds me underwater. The choir sings "Who's that yonder dressed in white" and the preacher's voice shatters the dark stillness with light--speaks in hushed tones "I baptize this my sister in the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost". The taste of mago on my tongue. Wet rocks pierce my flesh. I am standing in the gap---covered in the blood of the lamb. The gift he gave me to remember him by---the taste of mango on my tongue like raw flesh (Wounds of Passion:6).

Sex was sweet communion. It was my body. Sometimes in the midst of all-consuming desire I could hear the words from communion. Take, eat, this is my body. I could hear Gary Snyder reading the words from a poem is this our body. It was a poem about seeing nakedness for the first time and being renewed (Wounds of Passion: 68).

She has overcome all the traditional taboos on sexuality, and it is no longer perceived as a dangerous and improper thing they way her parents tried to teach her. She viewed her body and sexuality in a more religious way as a celebration of life. She did not only relate sexuality with the allusions of Christianity, but she also viewed all aspects of her life in a more accepting and religious way similar to her point of view about poetry as something that has given her refuge, sanctuary, and salvation.

In my teenage years I hear voices I am writing poetry. My mythic mother is Emily Dickinson. Her womb is a space of words where seeds of me enter and grow. I am horn again --- lost to the father, the son and the holy ghost (Wounds of Passion: 39).

hooks has left her faith in an institutional religion, yet she finds herself more religious, by finding God in poetry and in all religions that she has learned, Christianity, Sufism, Hinduism, and Zen Buddhism. Her religiosity has helped her accept herself the way she is and, she

courageously determined to leave and forgive her boyfriend's treachery and accept him the way he was. She has found herself and her life calling as a writer and a teacher, starting her new life on her own, fulfilling her dreams of becoming a woman of her own. Her acceptance of herself and others, her willingness to forgive all the painful memories are also revealed in her choice of words that are more proper and solemn by relating those words to Christian allusions as contrasted to the informal and improper dictions (the frequently 'F' words) that she used previously when she revealed her anger and hatred. These proper and solemn dictions she recently used also reflect her religiosity and acceptance toward her determination to follow her dreams as well as her destiny in life.

Now I too am a "high plains drifter" searching the road for my destiny, intent upon living in a world where there is no looking back. No matter that I have a field of shattered dreams behind me. I am carrying my one true dream inside...I am the silent stranger who enters a town and leaves it changed---a trail of bodies in my wake. The bodies he leaves behind like stigmata (Wounds of Passion:258).

Driving toward the desert I enter a landscape of wounds. When I was a child I heard again and again how our savior went into the desert to find his life again into the desert he fled with his heartache and his unrequited love. When he reappeared from his longest journey, to the desert only he had seen, the wasteland of the cross and death hanging there, he was recognized, known only by the wounds of passion imprinted on his hands. My favorite saint, Teresa of Avila, wanted to share his wounds, for him to give her what she called a taste of this love, so he pierced her with a golden dart. Stigmata were her witness and her testimony...The story was written so that it could stand alone, two hands raised to glory, that the spirit may descend among us, one hand raised to glory, that the spirit has come---touched me and left my body whole (Wounds of Pa&s'ion:260).

She knew that her new life would not be easy, but she determined to pursue it because she has found herself and embraced her true self, a woman she has become. Through her books, she has revealed her self-concept and she has made her self-concept and ideas on black women a reality through her activism in the world of academia as well as society. Fulfilling and realizing her ideas, she has set herself as an example of the new heroine of the black feminists, "Fully feminist, frilly self-actualized, I wanted to care for the soul and to let my heart speak" (*Wounds of Passion*: xxii).

Conclusion

After analyzing the content and the form of hooks's two works by using a gender perspective, this paper comes to these following results.

bell hooks's autobiographical writings, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood and Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* have given a crucial contribution to the autobiography genre in American literature both in content and style. In her two autobiographies, not only does she write about her life in all aspects including her sexuality as a black woman in a predominantly white patriarchal society in a more honestly revealing way than her earlier fellow black writers, but she also uses both first person and third person narration which is rarely used in the form of autobiography genre. Her two works also show a widely diverse literary influence from both black and white literary tradition ranging from the blues tradition to a familiar literary motif frequently used by the world's best and most respectable poets such as Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, and John Milton.

As a feminist writer, hooks also utilizes common styles and motifs widely used by women's autobiographers such as the motif of *Mother and Daughter Bond* where she was bearing witness to her mother's suffering living as a black woman, housewife, and mother. As a result, hooks determined to articulate the voice of that muted group who lived under oppression and discrimination like her own mother. In addition, she also employs common motif in autobiographical plots such as the

Initiation Journey where she undergoes painful experiences in dealing with race and gender problems. Finally, she uses the motif of *Self Recovery* through which despite the reality and knowledge that black women are most misunderstood group, hooks finally finds the way to liberate herself and others, healing for all her wounds in life through poetry and her life is calling as a writer, a teacher, an activist, and a fully self-actualized feminist.

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Mesmerism and Reforms in Nathaniel Hawthorne's "The Birthmark", "Rappaccini's Daughter", and "Ethan Brand"

Introduction

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) is one of the great American short story writers and novelists of the 19th century. In most of his works, Hawthorne often presents many different kinds of extraordinary scientists as the main characters in his stories. Hawthorne's themes and depictions of strange men of science and mysterious scientific experiments are evidently influenced by the socio-cultural conditions of his time. He employs those themes to express his ideas about and responses toward the socio-cultural problems of nineteenth century America. The nineteenth century America had great interests in science and technology. Science at that time more resembled what we now recognize as "pseudo-sciences". These pseudo-sciences in their progress and development made way for and brought about other branches of knowledge and finally also "Reforms" such as Social Science, Phrenology, Psychography, Hydropathy, Chirography, Homoeopathy, Feminism, Abolition, and Temperance (Stoehr, 1978: 27). The nineteenth century America's eagerness and enthusiasm for these pseudo-sciences were strong and tremendous, people at that time used them to understand nature, human life, and human nature. The publication and establishment of *Book of Nature* was one of the examples of these interests and practices.

Hawthorne as one of the 19th century men of letters also had a great interest in the pseudo-sciences and reforms. His interest can be seen in his involvement in a cooperative community called Brook Farm (1841-1847) in West Roxbury. Hawthorne spent some months at Brook

Farm and used his experience in this place as inspiration to write his novel *The Blithedale Romance*. In this novel, Hawthorne also used Mesmerism, one form of pseudo-science, as a theme, the most dominant theme that colored almost the whole plot of the novel. He seemed to have a real great interest in Mesmerism, he frequently employed it in his other works, and also in the three short stories that will be discussed in this paper: “The Birthmark”, “Rappaccini’s Daughter”, and “Ethan Brand”. In addition, Samuel Chase Coale in his book *Mesmerism and Hawthorne: Mediums of American Romance* stated that Hawthorne did not only use Mesmerism as subject and theme in his stories but also stylistically. Hawthorne’s process and technique in writing and structuring his stories were similar to the descriptions of the mesmerist’s trances and performances. Following Coales’s statement, this paper will also study the influence of Mesmerism as an integral part of Hawthorne’s style in his three short stories, furthermore, it will also analyze the influence of a nineteenth century American culture on those three works. In short, this paper employs stylistic and sociological perspective to study Hawthorne’s three short stories concerning Science, Mesmerism, Reforms, and nineteenth century American culture.

Mesmerism and Nineteenth Century America

The term Mesmerism originated from the Austrian physician Franz Mesmer (1734-1815): “... his theory of “animal magnetism” in the late 18th century, and the term mesmerism is associated with other forms of spiritualism, hypnotic experiments and cures, and séances” (Cain, 1996: 22). In his dissertation at the University of Vienna Mesmer formulated the theory of animal magnetism, identifying the invisible fluid in the human body as acting according to the laws of magnetism, and claiming it could be activated and manipulated by any magnetized object and trained person. According to Mesmer: “Disease was the result of obstacle” in the fluid’s flow through the body, and these obstacles could be broken by “crises” (trances states often ending in delirium or convulsions) in order to restore the harmony of personal fluid flow.

Mesmer devised various therapeutic treatments to achieve harmonious fluid flow, and in many of these treatments he was a forceful and rather dramatic personal participant (Britannica Online, 1999). Mesmer's theory was also used as an early form of anesthesia. His hypnotic method also became the root of psychotherapy. Sigmund Freud furthermore continued Mesmer's theory and practice, and gave it a new name, Psychoanalysis, which is now widely accepted. However, at that time, Mesmer could not prove his theory scientifically and his craft was considered a hoax.

Mesmerism came to America in two waves. The first came before Hawthorne was born, it was not popular, left without a trace, and was forgotten. The second began in the mid-1830s, blending with phrenology and being known as Phrenomagnetism in the early 1840s. This phrenomagnetism then gradually merged into spiritualism during the 1850s (Stoehr, 1978: 32). The great popularity of mesmerism in 19th century America partly coincided with the enthusiasm for science and technology. To the question "What was it about America that made it so susceptible to mesmerism?" some answers are as follows:

...between 1800 and 1850 Americans (displayed) susceptibility to a wide assortment of religious sects and utopian social movements. People were eager to believe in gold tablets, lost Indian tribes, prophetic angels, revivalism and conversion, personal salvation, optimism for its own sake, progress of any kind, a zealous ultraism, experimental communities, and prophetic mesmerists. The Second Great Awakening erupted between 1795 and 1835, and in its midst "mesmerism offered a new faith". Such a faith was supposed to help generate personal redemption, the necessary "conversion" that had to precede all mode of social reform (Coale, 1998: 9).

Mesmerism was given more recognition and a better place by many respectable intellectuals in nineteenth century America than by the Europeans who gave Mesmer a bad reputation in France and Vienna in the 18th century.

Many reformers, writers, and intellectuals---among them William Lloyd Garrison, the newspaper editor Horace Greeley, the abolitionist minister and author Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and the historian George Bancroft---took spiritualism seriously and observed or even participated in such practices as seance, spirit rappings, and communions with the dead (Cain, 1996: 300).

For the Americans at that time mesmerism was not only a kind of spiritualism but also a form of entertainment and commercialism. Many mesmerists not only used it to cure disease, but sometimes also as a show and an entertainment in order to get money. No wonder, some skeptics began to question its truth and benefits. Hawthorne was one of those skeptics. His interests in reforms, science, and mesmerism were also followed by his skepticism toward them. Hawthorne saw the dangerous potential of reforms and particularly mesmerism. He thought about “the seizure of control over one person by another, a form of control undertaken in the self-deluded expectation that transcendent good would be the result” (Cain, 1996: 23). For Hawthorne, both reforms and mesmerism implied the destructive master slave relationship.

Analysis

Hawthorne frequently also expresses his skepticism toward science and mesmerism in his stories by presenting tragic figures of scientists who possess a great excellence in their science. Those tragic scientists also lack human compassion, and in the end they have to face failure and misfortune as seen also through these three short stories.

a. “The Birthmark”

“The Birthmark” as a short story appeared for the first time in the *Pioneer* for March 1843, and was published in a collection of stories in *Mosses from an Old Manse* in 1846. In “The Birthmark”, Hawthorne

presents a renowned and eminent scientist-philosopher named Aylmer who had mastered almost all the knowledge and discoveries of his time.

...he had made discoveries in the elemental powers of Nature that had roused the admiration of all learned societies in Europe. Seated calmly in this laboratory, the pale philosopher had investigated the secrets of the highest cloud region and of the profoundest mines; he had satisfied himself of the causes that kindled and kept alive the fires of the volcano; and had explained the mystery of fountains, and how it is that they gush forth, some so bright and pure, and others with such rich medicinal virtues from the dark bosom of the earth. Here, too, at an earlier period, he had studied the wonders of the human frame, and attempted to fathom the very process by which Nature assimilates all her precious influences from earth and air, and from the spiritual world, to create and foster man, her masterpiece (Hawthorne, 1976: 501-502).

The science that Aylmer professed was of course in the form of “pseudo-science”, especially the Alchemy that sought a solvent to transmute base substance into gold. The depiction of Aylmer as a scientist-philosopher was more closely associated with those pioneers of science who were sometimes also regarded as “magicians”, such as St. Albertus Magnus, Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and Roger Bacon. These figures like Aylmer were also famous for their occult writings and magical devices (Bradley, 1962: 506). Aylmer had a great reputation and fame because of his science but he was willing to abandon his laboratory and live a new life with his new wife as a dedicated husband. However, the narrator of the story from the very beginning had already questioned Aylmer's decision to quit his science.

The higher intellect, the imagination, the spirit, and even the heart might all find their congenial aliment in pursuits which, as some of their ardent votaries believed, would ascend from one step of powerful intelligence to another, until the philosopher should lay his hand on the secret of creative force and perhaps make new worlds for himself. We know not whether Aylmer possessed this

degree of faith in man's ultimate control over Nature. He had devoted himself, however, too unreservedly to scientific studies ever to be weaned from them by any second passion. His love for his young wife might prove the stronger of the two; but it could only be by intertwining itself with his love of science, and uniting the strength of the latter to his own (Hawthorne, 1976: 498).

This third person narrator's foreshadowing then comes true. Georgiana, Aylmer's wife, who is the very reason for him to abandon his scientific career turns out also to be the one who leads him even more deeply into his pursuit of science. Georgiana is a very beautiful woman whose beauty for Aylmer is almost perfect except for one tiny thing that makes Aylmer feel obsessed and disgusted. She has a birthmark on her left cheek in the shape of a tiny hand, a very tiny one it is almost invisible. Some people think of it as a special mark, some do not think so:

Many a desperate swain would have risked life for the privilege of pressing his lips to the mysterious hand. It must not be concealed, however, that the impression wrought by this fairy sign manual varied exceedingly, according to the difference of temperament in the beholders (Hawthorne, 1976: 499).

Before Aylmer married Georgiana, he did not pay much attention to her birthmark, however, after the marriage, he noticed it closely and frequently. Whenever, he gazed on it, it made him horrified, and in turn his horrified gaze at his wife made her disturbed and horrified as well. The birthmark haunts him and is even in his dreams. He had a terrible dream about it, he dreamed of conducting a terrifying operation to remove it with the help of his assistant, Aminadab. In his dream, he saw the birthmark deeply sinking into his wife's heart, but he continued attempting to cut it away in all his might. This image remains deep in his memory. His calculating gaze at his wife's birthmark has mesmerized him, and, raised an obsession in his mind to remove it. For Aylmer, the tiny hand on his wife's cheek is a defect, "the fatal flaw of humanity", "the symbol of his wife's liability to sin, sorrow, decay, and

death". It is the symbol of imperfection, and he wants a perfect wife with her perfect beauty.

Georgiana feels hurt and disturbed, but she volunteers to undergo the operation, to be perfected by her husband's science in order to meet his ideal and need. Aylmer is relieved to hear her decision, and he promises her to do his best because in his opinion this operation will be simple and he has an exceedingly qualified power and vast experience in order to conduct it. Marriage has brought him into his wife's domestic sphere, and now once again he returns into his own domain and territory: his science laboratory, the world of eminent men like him.

As he led over the threshold of the laboratory, Georgiana was cold and tremulous. Aylmer looked cheerfully into her face, with intent to reassure her, but was so startled with the intense glow of the birthmark upon the whiteness of her cheek that he could not restrain a strong convulsive shudder. His wife fainted (Hawthorne, 1976: 502).

From this quote, Hawthorne describes a clear division of spheres according to gender roles. Aylmer proudly and confidently leads his wife into his work place while she feels afraid and confused, and finally loses her consciousness; her husband's laboratory is definitely not a comfortable place for her. Georgiana does not belong to this sphere of science. Aylmer has utilized all his craft and power to create a magical and mesmerizing atmosphere to soothe his wife's fear.

He now knelt by his wife's side watching her earnestly, but without alarm; for he was confident in his science, and felt that he could draw a magic circle round her within which no evil might intrude...The scenery and the figures of actual life were perfectly represented, but with that bewitching, yet indescribable difference which always makes a picture, an image, or a shadow so much more attractive than the original. When wearied of this, Aylmer bade her cast her eyes upon a vessel containing a quantity of earth (Hawthorne, 1976: 503).

In this quote, Hawthorne perfectly describes the practice of pseudo-science through Aylmer's science that blends hypnotism, mesmerism, occult, and magical devices. The practice of Aylmer's science is not only the subject matter of this story, but it also becomes an integral part of Hawthorne's style of writing that reveals the quality of the character (Aylmer), the important event that triggers the movement and progress of the plot, and also determines the atmosphere and tone of the story. In his insistence to operate on his wife's birthmark, Aylmer is blinded by his pride in his excellent science and by his obsession with perfection; and he does not pay attention to and have consideration for his wife's condition and needs. Through Georgiana's birthmark and finally Aylmer's desire to remove it by his science, the true quality of Aylmer is revealed, that is, he is indeed a more faithful scientist than a loving husband despite his early vow to abandon Science for Love and Marriage. The result is eventually fatal and lethal, Georgiana is dying, uttering her husband's vanity and flaw:

"My poor Aylmer..." "Poor? Nay, richest, happiest, most favored!" exclaimed he. "My peerless bride, it is successful! You are perfect!"
(Hawthorne, 1976: 511).

Aylmer is too preoccupied with the success of his science, he ignores his wife's wisdom and finally his pride moves the plot to its tragic ending, the death of his wife despite the ultimate elimination of her birthmark. The slow, hazy, and dream-like atmosphere of the story is mingled with Aylmer's exuberant joy and creates the ironic tone of the story. The story ends with the third person narrator commenting on Aylmer's inability to reach a profounder wisdom which leads to his wife's tragic death by the destructive power of his Science. The tone of the story reveals Hawthorne's authorial voice and view toward science: Hawthorne condemned the use of science without any regard for human and moral values. Moreover, science should not only cure physical illness but also moral illness.

In addition to his view on science, in this story, Hawthorne implicitly and ambiguously also reveals his view on reforms especially reforms concerning women. Hawthorne seems to have sympathy for

Georgiana, the good, submissive, and dedicated wife, however, in the end he does not spare her life and makes her a tragic victim. Is Hawthorne a woman hater? A misogynist? The answer is not simply yes or no. I would rather relate him to his social and cultural background. As a man who lived and wrote in nineteenth century America, Hawthorne was unavoidably a product of his time. His view on women's place and role was influenced by the values and female stereotypes of his time and society. As a man of letters and an individual who was capable of free thought, he might also have had doubts about those values and stereotypes. With his own life experience in combination with the social and cultural values of the nineteenth century, he developed sympathy for as well as restraint and antipathy toward women and their reforms. His story is a good medium for expressing his ambiguity and confusion about this problem, and this ambiguity also permits his readers to hold their own positions on this problem regardless of the closed-plot ending of this story.

b. "Rappaccini's Daughter"

"Rappaccini's Daughter" was first published in the Democratic Review for December 1844, and was collected in *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). Similar to "The Birthmark", in *Rappaccini's Daughter*, Hawthorne also depicts the eminent figure of a scientist. Dr. Giacomo Rappaccini is an older and more ambitious scientist than Aylmer. Like Aylmer, Rappaccini also has a great devotion for and obsession with science. Unlike Aylmer, who has personal and emotional responses for his science, Rappaccini has more secular and universal aims. He wants to develop a formula that can make humans resistant to illness and death. His ambition is to create a race of superhumans, and to do so he is willing to sacrifice anything not to mention his own flesh and blood: his own daughter as the object of his experiment. He brought up his daughter amongst poisonous plants from the time she was a baby and as a result she became a poisonous being, too. Even though she had powerful resistance to diseases, she and even her breath were lethal to other common human beings.

The life of Beatrice, the daughter of Rappaccini, changed when a young man named Giovanni Guasconti saw her and immediately fell in love with her. Giovanni lived near the house of Rappaccini, and he was interested in their amazing garden where Rappaccini cultivated his plants and conducted his experiment. Everyday Giovanni looked down on the garden from his window, admiring it and wondering about it. One fine day, he gazed on the lovely garden, and his eyes also gazed on a beautiful girl who tended the plants there, the lovely Beatrice. It was the beginning of love at first sight for both of them. When he found out the truth about Beatrice's poisonous upbringing, Giovanni was confused and angry, but he decided to restore her condition with the help of his scientist-professor friend, Dr. Pietro Baglioni, who was also Rappaccini's rival in science. Meanwhile, Beatrice herself was a passive and submissive woman, her father's experiment had caused her great suffering and had alienated her from her fellow beings, "There was an awful doom", she continued, "the effect of my father's fatal love of science, which estranged me from all society of my kind" (Hawthorne, 1976: 532). However, she was a faithful and devoted daughter to her father and to his science experiment, and in turn now she also had to submit to the will and love of her beloved Giovanni. Beatrice suffered alienation and misery. For her father, she was the living triumph of his experiment, and similarly, Beatrice was willing to drink the antidote that Giovanni and Baglioni gave her. She died miserably because of that antidote. Baglioni blamed Rappaccini for her death although it was his potion that killed her. In the end, like Georgiana, Beatrice was only an innocent victim of men's ambition and obsession with science and perfection.

"Rappaccini's Daughter" is set in Padua, Italy. However, the subject matter and the theme of the story clearly reflect nineteenth century America's preoccupation with and interests in pseudo-science. Similar to "The Birthmark", Hawthorne also employs science and mesmerism in "Rappaccini's Daughter" not only as the subject matter but also as the integral part of the style. Hawthorne's depiction of the setting of place, especially, Rappaccini's garden resembles a mesmerism process and

effect. The beauty of the garden is depicted as magical, mysterious, and as intoxicating as the Garden of Eden.

In the midst, by the shattered fountain, grew the magnificent shrub, with its purple gems clustering all over it; they glowed in the air, and gleamed back again out of the depths of the pool, which thus seemed to overflow with colored radiance from the rich reflection that was stepped in it... Soon, however, --as Giovanni had half hoped, half feared, would be the case---a figure appeared beneath the antique portal, and came down between the rows of plants, inhaling their various perfumes as if she was one of those beings of classic fable that lived upon sweet odors. On again beholding Beatrice, the young man was even startled to perceive how much her beauty exceeded his recollection of it; so light, and, as Giovanni whispered to himself, positively illuminated the more shadowy intervals of the garden path. Her face being now more revealed than on the former occasion, he was struck by its expression of simplicity and sweetness (Hawthorne, 1976: 517).

Moreover, the presence of the beautiful Beatrice, also adds the mesmerizing effect that finally mesmerizes Giovanni and leads him into Beatrice's love and her father's experiment. The depiction of two ambitious scientists, Rappaccini and Baglioni, who pursue the perfection of their Science is also used to reflect the theme of intellectual arrogance, and finally also to reveal Hawthorne's rejection of the nineteenth century American strictly scientific view of life that in his opinion had destroyed human values.

c. "Ethan Brand"

"Ethan Brand" was first published in the Boston Museum for January 5, 1850, and was reprinted in the Dollar Magazine for May, 1850; and it was collected in *The Snow-Image and Other Tales*. Like his two previous stories, "The Birthmark" and "Rappaccini's Daughter", Hawthorne also describes a man's obsession with knowledge and perfection in "Ethan Brand". However, unlike Aylmer, Rappaccini, and

Baglioni, Ethan professes another kind of knowledge and science. His science is a kind of knowledge that lets him study and manipulate human minds, and finally he is obsessed with searching for the ultimate evil: the Unpardonable Sin. As a man of great knowledge, Ethan feels superior to his other fellow human beings. He wants to separate himself from them, the common human beings, and manipulates and utilizes them as objects of his mind exploration and exploitation or in short as subjects of his psychological experiments.

He had lost his hold of the magnetic chain of humanity. He was no longer a brother-man, opening the chambers of the dungeons of our common nature by the key of holy sympathy, which gave him a right to share in all its secrets; he was now a cold observer, looking on mankind as the subject of his experiment, and at length, converting man and woman to be his puppets, and pulling the wires that moved them to such degrees of crime as were demanded for his study (Hawthorne, 1976: 546).

Similar to Aylmer's experiment in "the Birthmark" that takes the life of his wife as the object of his science, and also to the experiments of Rappaccini and Baglioni in "Rappaccini's Daughter" that take Beatrice as the victim of their science, Ethan's experiments have also taken the life of a woman.

Ethan Brand's eye quailed beneath the old man's. That daughter, from whom he so earnestly desired a word of greeting, was the Esther of our tale, the very girt whom, with such cold and remorseless purpose, Ethan Brand had made the subject of a psychological experiment, and wasted, absorbed, and perhaps annihilated her soul, in the process (Hawthorne, 1976: 546).

Ethan Brand has made Esther the object of his science, the medium of his mesmerism; he controlled and manipulated her mind and soul, and finally she was dead after serving his purpose. Ethan does not care about Esther. His utmost desire is to be united with the Devil himself, to merge with the Unpardonable Sin, and in the end he committed suicide to fulfill his desire.

Conclusion

Nathaniel Hawthorne has clearly portrayed the tragic figures of scientists who bring calamities and suffering upon their fellow human beings in his three short stories, "The Birthmark", "Rappaccini's Daughter", and "Ethan Brand". Those three stories reveal that science is useless and destructive when it is used without any human or moral purpose. In Hawthorne's three short stories, mesmerism becomes an important medium to express this idea and is also an integral part of his writing aesthetic. Hawthorne employs mesmerism to set the depiction of setting of place, plot, atmosphere, and tone as well as to reveal the characters of his stories. Hawthorne displays the use and technique of the mesmeric gaze which makes the characters obsessed with science and inhuman ambitions, and which also victimizes female characters. Mesmerism is used as an artistic vehicle and discourse to voice his ideas and views on the socio-cultural condition of his nineteenth century America. He is particularly concerned with the phenomena of the pseudo-sciences and with intellectual arrogance, and also with the growing reform of women's role in the society during his lifetime.

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Language and Gender: Toward A Critical Feminist Linguistics

Language and Gender

Current theories in critical thinking and feminist perspectives have informed recent research and studies on language and gender, shifting from an essentialist perspective to a non-essentialist perspective that enables critical feminist linguistics to include heterogeneity, non-fixity, specificity, and reflexivity in its perspectives. Research and studies on language and gender are not necessarily affiliated with feminist linguistics such as seen in Otto Jespersen's research on language and gender. Jespersen's "The Woman," the most frequently quoted and anthologized article from his book *Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin* (1922) is considered to be one of the early and 'classic' texts in language and gender. In his study, Jespersen reveals that men and women use language differently, for example, in terms of phonetics, grammar, diction, vocabulary, and adverbs. Women are seen as less capable language users than men: "In language we see this very clearly: the highest linguistic genius and the lowest degree of linguistic imbecility are rarely found among women" (quoted in Cameron, 1998: 240).

Women's language is also considered to be inferior to men's language, and is appropriately fit enough for their gender domestic roles. Jespersen views language from an essentialist perspective; that is, seeing men-women language difference as the result of sex and gender differences. Thus, from this perspective, people use language in particular ways because of who they are. Jespersen's essentialist view of language and sexist judgment on women's language have been challenged by many feminist scholars, inviting various different scholars, both male and female, across the disciplines to redefine and rethink language and gender.

Feminist Perspectives on Language and Gender

There are many different responses among feminist scholars in their attempts to challenge Jespersen's sexist commentaries on women's language; and these different feminist responses are grouped into two major approaches/perspectives: the "dominance" and "difference" frameworks. The "dominance perspective" sees the man-woman differences in language use as a reflection of their power relation, the dominant and the subordinate. Meanwhile, the "difference perspective," on the contrary, sees this different linguistic usage as the result of the different "sub-cultures" of their social environment (Coates, 2000: 413 and also Litosseliti, 2006:27).

Two famous responses among feminist scholars are the works of Lakoff and Fishman; and along with Jespersen's work, their works are also "classic" texts in language and gender studies. Lakoff's *Language and Woman's Place* (1975) is considered to be the first work of feminist linguistics (Cameron, 1998: 216). Lakoff's study shows a similar result to Jespersen's conclusion that women's language was indeed "inferior/deficient" compared to men's language; but they have different interpretations of their similar findings. Jespersen sees the difference as essentially sprung from biological determinant; on the other hand, Lakoff sees women's linguistic deficiency as the result of the power-gender relation assigned to men and women in society in which men frequently dominate and are more privileged such as in the field of education. Despite her negative result on women's language in her study, Lakoff has an explicitly positive and sympathetic attitude toward women. Nonetheless, Lakoff's study has been widely criticized as lacking empirical data because she based her research on her intuition, on casual and personal observations, and on cultural stereotypes when studying the language-gender relation.

Lakoff has re-released her book, annotating it and responding to past and current issues and debates on language and gender, and sharing her ideas with other researchers in this book (Litosseliti, 2006: 31). Lakoff's study on gendered language is usually categorized into the dominance perspective. Fishman with a similar

perspective in “Conversational Insecurity” (1983) has re-examined Lakoff’s research finding, arguing that women’s language is not deficient and that women are competent language users and the women-men linguistic difference is not only gender-related but also a matter of hierarchy. Employing the same dominant perspective as Lakoff and Fishman, Spender in her seminal work, *Man-Made Language* (1980), criticized Lakoff for using men’s language as the norm for evaluating women’s language, arguing that patriarchy privileges men to dominate and to define meaning. Thus, the problem is not the “deficient” language of women but rather the deficiency of the social order (Spender, 1980 in Litosseliti, 2006: 32). The works of Lakoff, Fishman, and Spender are prominent examples of the “dominance perspective/ approach” in language and gender studies.

Meanwhile, the “difference perspective/ approach” can be found in the works of Tannen, Maltz and Borcker, and Gumperz, attempting to see that women’s language is not only different but also positive in its respect. Such a view follows the theoretical assumption that ‘differences’ are the product of participation and socialization of “different male and female “sub-cultures” (Litosseliti, 2006: 37). Both the “dominance” and “difference” perspectives/approaches have been criticized for their simple conceptualization of gender; however, both perspectives have a great contribution to make and a significant role to play in the development of critical feminist linguistics.

Women’s Movement and Critical Feminist Linguistics

The different perspectives/approaches, choice of topic and focus in language and gender studies show that there is no singular perspective among feminists in spite of the patriarchal oppression that they experience in society. As a result, language and gender is indeed a widely varied field of study. The visible similarity that these different feminist perspectives/approaches have in common is that all of those perspectives are informed and influenced by the development of critical

theories in linguistics and feminism as well. This fact also reflects the inseparable connection between the historical development of feminism and the development of feminist linguistics although feminist linguistics emerged from within the linguistics discipline itself.

Mills has mapped three chronological waves in the history of feminism. The “first-wave feminism” is generally related to the suffragette movement in the 19th and 20th centuries. The “second-wave” feminism is linked to the women’s movement in the 1960s, resisting sex discrimination and struggling for equal opportunity and the emancipation of women. This second-wave feminist influence can also be seen in language and gender studies and research that have more focus on sexist language, issues of dominance and difference in interaction, and a positive re-evaluation of women’s language. Finally, “third-wave” feminism moves toward “more critical, constructivist, and poststructuralist theoretical paradigms” (Litosseliti, 2006: 23). Critical feminist linguistics also moves towards this “third-wave” feminist influence, taking a more interdisciplinary approach, shifting from the concern of how women and men use language differently to the concern of how language constructs both men and women in their social interaction.

The connection of feminist linguistics and the post-structural approach can be seen through Weedon’s main argument on feminist post-structural concepts in her book *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (1987) and Talbot’s *Concept of Feminist Linguistics* (1998). Weedon maps different strands of poststructuralist frameworks from different theories of various scholars such as the structural linguistics of Saussure, Althusser’s theory of ideology, the psychoanalysis of Freud and Lacan, Derrida’s theory of “difference”, and Foucault’s theory of discourse and power (Weedon, 1987). Weedon encourages feminist scholars to employ a pragmatic and eclectic approach to appropriate these widely varied post- structural theories to serve feminist needs and interests, facilitating heterogeneity, non-fixity, specificity, and reflexivity. Meanwhile, according to Talbot

“Feminist linguistics is interested in identifying, demystifying, and resisting the ways in which language is used, together with other social practices, to reflect, create and sustain gender divisions and inequalities in society” (Talbot, 1998 in Litosseliti, 2006: 23).

Following the perspectives of feminist post-structuralism outlined by Cameron (1992, 1997), Luke and Gore (1992a), Weedon (1987), and Pennycook’s *Critical Inquiry in Applied Linguistics* (2001), Pavlenko defines feminist post-structuralism

as approaches to language study that strive (a) to understand the relationship between power and knowledge; (b) to theorize the role of language in production and reproduction of power, difference, and symbolic domination; and (c) to deconstruct master narratives that oppress certain groups – be it immigrants, women, or minority members – and devalue their linguistic practices (in Norton & Toohey, 2004: 53).

In essence, feminist post-structural linguistics/critical feminist linguistics attempts to investigate how women and men are constructed from a wider perspective through language, and sees gender not as a unitary category but as heterogeneous: diverse and multiple, shifting/not-fixed, and sometimes conflicting. Thus, gender as a category should be examined from a wider perspective in its specific relationship with other categories such as race, ethnicity, class, age, and sexual orientation (Weedon, 1987).

In accordance with the “third-wave” feminist influence on critical feminist linguistics, the writer of this paper attempts to show that currently, critical feminist linguistics with its critical and constructivist, post-structural approach that facilitates heterogeneity, non-fixity, specificity, and reflexivity in language and gender studies has also penetrated EFL and ESL studies and research as seen in the works of Daly (2000), Micciche (2001), Peirce (1995), Pavlenko, Aneta (2004), Sunderland (1992 and 2004), and Lin (2004).

The feminist post-structural take on heterogeneity, non-fixity, specificity can be clearly seen in Peirce’s “Social Identity, Investment,

and Language Learning” that attempts to show that second language acquisition (SLA) is closely related to the motivation, gender and ethnic identity of learners in a particular/specific social-power relation. The poststructuralist feminist linguistic agenda (as identified/defined by Pavlenko) is clearly seen in Peirce’s choice of subjects/topic/focus: immigrant women in Canada in their attempt to learn English and to fit to their new social environment. Peirce’s focus on immigrant women also reveals her attempt to challenge the view of gender as a universal category.

The major theorization of women is undoubtedly centered on white middle class heterosexual women; and is generally deemed to be universal and applicable to all women. Peirce rejects such universality in gender categories and her work shows that specificity is crucial in doing gender studies. Her work displays how women of different ethnicity and class are constructed differently in society through language. The specificity of women’s class and ethnic identity also needs to be properly situated in their specific social setting. The immigrant women in Peirce’s study may experience different gender-power relationships in their attempt to master English if they are situated in different places other than Canada. The point here is that specific location or locality does matter. The concept of the “community of practice” by Lave and Wenger and also the ideas of Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, stated that it is not only a matter of location and people that is important but also day to day linguistic, social, and cultural interactions of the people within the community.

Peirce’s work also reveals the feminist poststructuralist concept of heterogeneity, showing that one immigrant woman does not only have ethnic and gender identities but also multiple, changing, and shifting/not-fixed as a woman, immigrant, mother, wife, worker, and other identities attached to this immigrant woman that influence her second language acquisition. Peirce also extends the concept of motivation to “investment” that includes larger socio-cultural-historical relationship involving the learners. Peirce’s study is a critical examination of the interplay of gender, ethnicity, age, class, capital, and language in SLA.

Meanwhile, Lin's "Introducing a Critical Pedagogical Curriculum: A feminist Reflexive Account" (2004) displays the feminist post-structural attempt to be more critical and involved by continuously self-questioning and self-examining feminist practice. Lin re-examines and re-evaluates her teaching strategies and interaction with her students to better understand the problems, needs, and interests of both teacher and students and to negotiate those concerns so as to come up with a more successful learning teaching experience.

Self-reflexivity in terms of learning strategy, interaction, and teaching materials are also main concerns in Pavlenko's "Gender and Sexuality in Foreign and Second Language Education: Critical and Feminist Approaches" (2004). Pavlenko's article discusses the relation of gender and second (L2) and foreign language (FL) learning inside and outside the classroom, particularly by using a feminist poststructuralist approach. Pavlenko emphasizes the various different perspectives on and responses to language and gender within feminism itself. Her decision to select a feminist poststructuralist critical linguistic perspective in her study is because this feminist poststructuralist theoretical framework not only pays attention to gender difference but also includes other differences such as gender in relation to race, ethnicity, class, and other differences. This perspective views subject as a full individual with her/his multiple social cultural identities.

Pavlenko critically examines FL/L2 education where gender plays a key role in language learning and teaching; and by applying feminist post-structuralism in this research, she analyzes (a) gendered inequalities in access to material and symbolic resources, (b) the gendered nature of linguistic interaction, and (c) sexual harassment as a discursive and social practice. To capture this multiplicity and plurality of identities and differences in language and gender research and studies, Pavlenko also suggests the use of postcolonial theories. Similar to Micceche's study, Pavlenko's article is an interdisciplinary study on gender and language.

The attempt not to isolate gender in education from a larger social perspective is seen in Daly's "Gender Differences in Achievement in English: a Sign of the Times?" (2000). Daly's article critically examines the intervention of political and economic interests, and media reports in appropriating and contextualizing gender differences. It points to the British government's campaign in the 1990s to improve literacy "standards" by focusing on gender, particularly based on the different performance between male and female students in English classrooms as deeply rooted in the political and economic discourse to maintain "male dominance within educational success."

Daly also reveals the key role of the media in reporting the different performance in English classrooms in terms of the binary opposition of gender performance in which girls perform better than boys. This media articulation polarizes a further interpretation of gender differences and gender performance and invites governmental and national initiatives to help male students achieve better literacy than female students. The article further reports that the national intervention and initiatives to improve male students' educational success have been done through the "revision" of teaching materials and strategies, and of the curriculum as well as by testing and evaluation. Those efforts have also been challenged and criticized because of the overtly intended programs to benefit only male students which will disadvantage female students.

Some research and recent studies have debunked the misperception that "girls have a greater natural aptitude for English" and reveal that "there is no essential difference in ability. The difference is in attitude". In her conclusion, Daly invites readers to examine and rethink current gender issues more critically, and to "understand them within a history of male privilege in educational discourse, which is always politically and economically determined". In its essence, this article does indeed offer a critical perspective on the interplay of political, economical concerns, the media, education, and gender.

Meanwhile, Micciche's "Contrastive Rhetoric and the Possibility of Feminism" (2001) invites us to examine teacher-student interactions in the classroom in relation to gender and race. Micciche offers feminist principles and perspectives as a theoretical model to elaborate and expand research on the contrastive rhetoric theory (CRT). Contrastive rhetoric (CR) has its roots in the United States as a response to traditional composition teachers who tended to have the assumption that their students are monolingual and monocultural (Kaplan, 1966). CR comes into being to help learners keep up with the discourse structure of Standard American Schooled English (SASE). Thus, in its original intention, CR addressed "the need of individuals for whom English was not a first language—specifically, foreign students in U.S. tertiary institutions," not only in terms of language difference in phonological, morphological, and grammatical features but also in discourse and rhetorical features such as seen in writing and reading classes. CRT focus on culture and cultural difference and has also influenced the recent politicization of second- language teaching. According to Micciche CRT is significant for L1 and L2 classrooms, however, it has frequently been applied in the L2 classroom contexts only, and focusing on students' linguistic and cultural differences.

Micciche offers feminist perspectives to extend CRT to facilitate the concept of teaching as "a cultural phenomenon affected by social identifications and representations"; thus, teaching is also "a politics of representation and scholarship as a form of cultural work". The combination of feminist perspectives and CRT will enable researcher to see how students perceive their teachers as a "racial/gendered subject" and how teachers conduct learning/teaching strategies as well because in this view pedagogy is not only concerned with the interaction of students and teachers in the classrooms but also with "the process of socialization that instruct teachers on how to position themselves in the classrooms" (Micciche, 2001:82). This article is a challenging invitation to undertake research on the dynamics of student/teacher linguistic and cultural backgrounds and on their gender and social identities.

Similar to the studies conducted by Micciche and Pavlenko, Sunderland's "Gender in the EFL Classroom" (1992) also examines gender and gender construction in a prominent and salient setting: the EFL classroom. Sunderland focuses particularly on, the English language itself; on materials that include grammars, textbooks, dictionaries, and teacher's guides; and finally on processes such as learning styles and strategies, and teacher-learner and learner-learner interaction. In addition, Sunderland attempts to unveil "some implications of gender in materials and classroom interaction for language acquisition". Sunderland's findings are in line with Daly's result in the attempt to show the myth and misinterpretation that females perform better in language achievement. On the contrary, both Sunderland and Daly's studies reveal the disadvantaged position of female students in the classroom process, in materials, and within the English language itself, not to mention their further disadvantages in the social world at large outside the classrooms. Both researchers see that the assessment of language learning in terms of gender differences (superiority/inferiority) is indeed not productive at all. Instead, they urge people to examine this gender difference in a wider and more complex perspective; for Daly, it should be seen in political and economical contexts, and for Sunderland, this complex context must also include the influence of the environment, attitudes, expectations, social values and norms, and career opportunities as suggested by scholars such as Loulidi (1990). Sunderland's applied study of gender and language is critical for scholars, teachers, and students who are interested in the subject of gender and language.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the shift of the view of language from essentialist to non-essentialist perspectives has become the current trend and issue in language and gender studies and research. Poststructuralist frameworks that emphasize heterogeneity, non-fixity, specificity, and reflexivity have also been adopted and appropriated by the critical feminist linguistics in redefining and rethinking gender and language.

This perspective of poststructuralist critical feminist linguistics has also entered into EFL and ESL studies and research in terms of learning teaching strategies, interactions, motivation, teaching materials, and other aspects as seen in the works of Peirce, Pavlenko, Sunderland, Daly, Lin, and Micciche. It is evident that language and gender studies and research have moved towards a critical feminist linguistic perspective that includes heterogeneity, non- fixity, specificity, and reflexivity in the search for a better understanding of gender and language interplay.

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Languages and Ethnic Identities in Malacca During The Colonial Era in Loh's *Breaking The Tongue* (2004): A Southeast Asian Chinese Case

Introduction

Language plays a key role in our social life and we constantly have to represent ourselves in language. Therefore, in our society and communication with others, we are also constantly placed in different positions by geography, nationality, race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other social, political, cultural, historical aspects. Voloshinov argues that language is laden with “dialogic overtones, echoing the voices of different social experiences and interest groups” (Coupland&Jaworski, 1997: 7). In its essence, language is dialogic and polyphonic: a site of continuous struggles of “competing voices and competing interest” (Hodge & Kress, 1988 in Coupland&Jaworski, 1997: 83). This complexity of language as a sign of identity and subjectivity becomes a highly complicated reality in a nation with multilingual and multicultural backgrounds. To bridge these different languages and cultures, certain multilingual and multicultural nations adopt certain language policy in an attempt to maintain ‘harmonious’ ethnic relations and to unify their national identities. This certain adoption of language policy does not only directly apply to national and regional levels but also within the individual and family domains. This language problem becomes more complicated when people of certain race, ethnicity, and nationality adopt and use language which is not their own but the language of their former colonizers, such as in the case of Malaysia and Singapore’s relation with English and their various ‘vernacular languages.’

Using VyvyanLoh’s novel *Breaking the Tongue* (2004), this short paper attempts to reveal and argue that the linguistic issues in Malaysia

and Singapore do not only include language, race, and ethnicity, but also class, education, and power relations. Thus, language choice even in the most basic scope level such as in the family is evidently very complex and intricately interwoven with its micro and macro relation. This choice of language becomes more complicated when it is used to mark certain identity of people who already migrate to and live in a multilingual society other than their own. To reveal the interplay of language, race, ethnicity, class, education, and power relation, this paper formulates these following problems:

1. What kind of languages are used in Malacca during the colonial era in Loh's *Breaking the Tongue*?
2. Why do certain families choose or prioritize certain language use for their children at home and in school as seen through the characters in Loh's *Breaking the Tongue*?
3. How does the language use/choice relate to the construction of national, ethnic, and class identities as seen in Loh's *Breaking the Tongue*?

To answer these problems, this paper employs the structural historical approach, and poststructuralist perspectives on language and identity/subjectivity.

Problematizing Language, Identity, and Language Policy

The inseparable connection between language and nation as seen in the expression of 'language is the soul of the nation' is generated from European root of constructing language as national identity. The German scholar J.G. Herder (1744-1803) stated that "each language, each people, expressed a *Volksgeist*, a national spirit; the diversity of language, custom, belief was unambiguous good" (Bauman & Briggs, 2000 in Jourdan & Tuite, 2006: 49). Other German scholars like Leibniz and Humboldt also shared this essentialist and romantic view on the reflexivity and plurality of language with Herder. However, other European scholars like Locke and Kant undermined the linguistic diversities. Locke even viewed the linguistic differences as problems and insisted upon the need to 'discipline' these different languages if

necessary. Another scholar who considered the necessary existence of one language to unify the national identities was Fichte with his concept of “the German nation is a living community of language” (Cheah, 2003: 116). According to Cheah, through mediation of Marxism, Fichte’s concept of nation and language also has a strong influence on the “practical logics for radical Third World decolonizing nationalism: a cultural nationalism that takes language as fundamental to the nations” (Cheah, 2003: 116). The new emerging nations of the 1940s in Asia and Africa such as Indonesia and Kenya eagerly adopted Fichte’s view to bind the national identities into one unified bond through language.

The emergence of poststructuralist/postmodern and postcolonial perspectives has enabled us to rethink and re-evaluate this transplantation of this European concept of nation-language relation in a specific European context into Asian and African contexts, allowing us to examine how the locally European context has gained its hegemony in other parts of the world in shaping the way people view nation and language. The poststructuralist/postmodern approach allows us to think critically and “to develop an anti-foundationalist view of language as emergent property of social interaction and not a prior system tied to ethnicity, territory, birth, or nation” (Pennycook in Ricento, 2006: 67). Such critical rethinking and re-evaluation also provide us with the view that “considerations of language allegiance, linguistic identity, and linguistic attitudes are not necessarily rational, pragmatic, or objective. They are ideological” (Canagarajah in Ricento, 2006: 154). Similarly, we also have to redefine and rethink other categories such as race, ethnicity, identity, gender, and class not as a fixed and stable entity but as always ‘becoming,’ shifting, and conflicting. However, there is still a strong belief in ‘linguistically anchored ethnic identities’ that attempts to simplistically connect language, ethnicity, and identity and intentionally ignores “the multiplicity and complexity” of these categories in their actual social practices (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 156 and Blommaert in Ricento, 2006: 245-246).

One of the intricately political efforts to ‘execute’ this simplistic connection between language and identity is language planning/policy.

Language planning/policy is generally introduced/applied through a 'visible and sensible' rationale for various purposes such as maintaining national unity, peaceful ethnic relation, and revitalization of minority language. Regardless of the rationales and purposes, language planning and policy is not ideologically disinterested (Tollefson, 1991; Blommaert, 2006; Pennycook, 2006). Meanwhile, Spolsky (2004) identifies several important domains of language planning/policy: families, school, religion and religious organizations, the workplace, local government, supra-national groupings, nations and states (polities). These different level of domains interact with one another; and according to Spolsky, the policy at the family level is the most crucial domain in determining language maintenance and loss. Without considering this basic domain, and focusing only to the nation state and public domain of language planning, language policy studies will fail to capture many important features (Spolsky, 2004: 55-56). This paper will follow Spolsky's concept of the importance of the family domain in language planning/policy to examine language choice/planning/policy in Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004).

Situating Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) in the Socio-cultural-historical Backgrounds of Malacca/Malaya during the Colonial Era

The previous discussion has revealed that the term 'ethnicity' itself is problematic and has been theorized differently. Many scholars use the term 'ethnicity' to substitute 'race' as an attempt to reflect "the mutability and constructedness of race" (Loomba, 2005: 106). Meanwhile, in Malaysia and Singapore, the term 'race' and 'ethnicity' are often used interchangeably. This already 'difficult' category becomes more problematic in Malaysian context because this ethnic category will also include religious practices. Being a Malay, for example, is defined as "a Malay(si)an citizen born to a Malay(si)an citizen who profess to be a Muslim, habitually speaks the Malay language, adheres to Malay customs, and is domiciled in Malay(si)a" (Abbott & Franks, 2007: 342).

In general, the term 'ethnicity' has been predominantly used to signal fixed/stable biological and cultural identities such as defined by Van den Berghe's sociobiological view:

My central thesis is that both ethnicity and "race" (in the social sense) are, in fact, extensions of the idiom of kinship, and that, therefore, ethnic and race sentiments are to be understood as an extended and attenuated form of kin selection. (1978: 403 in Wang and Wang, Vol. II, 2003: 3)

Van den Berghe's perspective of ethnicity' is evidently ethnocentric and primordialistic, focusing on the stability of the ethnic membership and subjectivity. In contrast, scholars like Nagata (1974) and Foster (1977) formulate the "ethnic oscillation" model by which individuals without any "single or fixed reference group interpret situational requirements, adjust and display themselves for, among other reasons, social affinity, expediency and concern with social status and mobility" (in Wang and Wang, Vol. II, 2003: 4). Similarly, Stuart Hall in "New Ethnicity" also invites us to clearly point out 'ethnicity' as "a constructed process rather than a given essence" (1996 in Loomba, 2005: 148). This study will also view 'ethnicity' as a construction process and not a given essence.

To provide the theoretical framework of Chinese identities in this study, the researcher is in agreement with the argument of Wang and Wang that the Chinese everywhere do not form an 'ethnicity' or 'a 'race' and that:

Transnationally, they relate to each other as Chinese of different nationalities. Ultimately, identity is a matter of subjective identification which is shaped by the experience of living in a national society. Even the Chinese in Southeast Asia do not form a single identity despite so much that has been written about them.(Wang and Wang, Vol. I, 2003: 54)

Among scholars in Sinology, particularly, the Chinese studies in Southeast Asia and also the ethnic Chinese themselves, there are two distinctive terms to refer to ethnic Chinese, 'Zhonggouren' and 'Huaren'. The former is used to address the Chinese citizens from the

People's Republic of China, the later refers to the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. There is also an attempt to identify the Southeast Asian Chinese identities through their mastery of Chinese language and cultural literacy. In this literacy and linguistic manner, there are 4 types Chinese identities ranging from Type A (the highest literacy) to D (the lowest Chinese literacy and the highest Chinese acculturation)(Beng in Wang & Wang, 2003, Vol. I: 56). In Malaya/Malacca during the colonial period and currently also in modern-day Malaysia and Singapore, language continues to be the issues of ethnic and political conflicts. Many different ethnic groups speak several different languages: Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochow, Hainanese, and English. The attempt to unify these different ethnic groups through language policy has been challenged, and the hegemony of English has made this language issues more problematic and continues to be 'the divide' not only in ethnicity but also class and education as well (Pennycook, 1994).

Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) set in the colonial period, and particularly, during the British colonial government and Japanese occupation, also reveals this language issues and ethnic conflicts. Through, the central character of the novel, Claude Lim, the narrator depicts the three generational struggles of the Lims to search for a better life through different colonial powers. Colonialism, migrations, and the search for a better life have brought people of different ethnicity and nationalities to Malaya. These different groups of people also speak various different languages. In their relation with others, their language also marks their different identities that also divide their social class and status. Safely sheltered in his English upper-middle class upbringing in the beginning of the novel, Claude Lim, at the end of the novel, finally comes full circle, confronting the conflicting problems of his multilingual/multicultural society.

Unveiling Family Language Choice in Relation to Race, Ethnicity, Class, Education, and Power in Loh's *Breaking the Tongue*

Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* displays language choice and language policy in the family domain and the education domain are closely related to ethnicity, class, and power relations. The family language choice/policy can clearly be seen through the experience of the Lim family. For three generations, the Lims have worked hard to maintain their upper-middle class status by working in the British colonial financial establishment by adopting the English language, education, and proper English life styles. Realizing that the way they speak English will determine their 'proper' status in their social circle; they attempted to keep up with the standardized English mastery.

His own father also admired the English but by the time he recognized their superiority it was already too late for him. He could never conquer the consonants of the language, the precise, full vowels, and his English was mocked. Humphrey, however, went to an English school, and now his own son has been raised at home in the English language. With each succeeding generation the family will become more Anglicized. Humphrey believes, and with luck and diligence, they will eventually be accepted by the British themselves as their equals. (Loh, 2004: 63)

Learning from his father's experience of dealing with the English language mastery; Humphrey decides that his son, Claude, will not only learn English but also 'acquire' English at early age. Humphrey's determination is carried out by planning English as his family language choice. This language choice is not on a voluntarily basis but it is also regulative as seen in his intervention to ensure that English is the only language spoken in his household so that his son will only hear and speak English.

Claude the Body speaks English as a first language. It is this that his Japanese interrogators can't stand ...The amah (simply called Amah by everyone), Rahman and Phatcharat are all talking among

themselves in Malay. The boy has never spoken to them in anything other than English, the only language he knows. As required by his father, all servants speak basic, albeit appalling, English. (Loh, 2004: 28- 29)

This family language choice is not only a subtle regulation but also a forced regulation that affect all people living in Humphrey Lim's house including his domestic helpers. The Lim family servants have to obey the policy of one person-one language and one household/family-one language in the presence of their master and his son. Their linguistic obedience is evidently class-based relation signifying the master-servant power relation. However, in the absence of their master (even with the presence of his son), they speak Malay to each other although Rahman is the only ethnic Malay; meanwhile, Amah is 'pure' Chinese, and Phatcharat is Thais. Through their language practice, certain language is not necessarily connected to certain ethnic identity because Amah the Chinese women is a Hokkien speaker, and Phatcharat speaks Thais but they share Rahman's Malay as their everyday language. Meanwhile, the Lims although Chinese by 'ethnicity' speak English not only any English but the standardized British English. In this context, Malay can be seen as the lingua franca among these different ethnic members; however, it can also be seen as class-based language because it is used by the poor working class like the Lim's servants. Meanwhile, the Lims' English is the language of the upper-middle class.

From the essentialist perspective on language and ethnic identity connection, Humphrey's family language choice and practice can be interpreted as a denial/betrayal to their ethnic identity; however, the poststructuralist/postmodern perspective would situate Humhrey's family language choice and practice in a larger socio-cultural-historical background. His family language choice is not a marker of ethnic identity but it is a means to convey his class status (social goals) and his educational aspirations for his son as well.

And that is the last lesson. He doesn't hear the heated words between his parents and his grandmother, but he guesses at them. "We will educate our children the way we see fit," his father says...

“It’s our duty, and our right,” Cynthia adds just before Grandma Siok can open her mouth ... “And what is wrong with them learning their mother tongue?”... “It’s archaic,” says Humphrey. “A waste of time. It won’t get Claude into Oxford.” (Loh, 2004: 42)

He forbids his mother in law’s Chinese lesson on Claude because it violates his family language choice/policy of one person-one language. He sees this language policy as his right and duty as the father and the head of the household. He views English as a tool to achieve his social goal and his educational aspiration for Claude. Humphrey’s view of Chinese as an archaic language also implicitly signifies his view of English as the language of modernization, social mobility, and education. His determination to provide a conducive environment for his son to acquire ‘pure English’ is seen in his intervention not to allow code-mixing and code-switching of languages in his family. He also prevents his son from interacting with Chinese speaking children from ‘lower class.’

The trick, Humphrey knows, is to avoid any contamination from the “hard-core” Chinese—especially the flag-touting, fund-raising ones with Communist leanings, he thinks as he sees yet another batch of these zealots singing and selling flowers at the corner of his office building. (Loh, 2004: 63)

In this manner, Humphrey also associates language with attitudes, values, and political stance. His family language choice of standardized British English can be interpreted to convey his desire to identify with the English colonial rulers as the dominant power at that time. Thus, he uses language to construct his identity; and he performs his identity through language. More properly put in poststructuralist notion, language constructs and produces identities.

This ‘chosen’ identity is also supported by Humphrey’s decision to send Claude to English school. There is a great divide between English school and Chinese school in terms of ethnicity, class, curriculum and language. The English school consists of students from different ethnicities but share the similar upper-middle class status. English is the only medium of instruction and the curriculum is English based to

prepare them to enter schools and universities in England. Meanwhile, Chinese school consists of only ethnic Chinese students with China-based curriculum although using both Chinese and English as the medium of instruction. Language and education are indeed stratified and hierarchical as seen from the way Claude's friend Hugh, perceives the Chinese-educated students:

Hugh's favorite after-school activity is to have his chauffeur drive him to Orchard Road for tea at Robinson's and to pick out the Chinese-educated students thronging the streets from the English-educated ones, an activity that requires minimal skill. (Loh, 2004: 65)

"Thank God we're nothing like them," says Hugh, a look of disgust on his face. "They're a disgrace—the way they speak, the way they dress." (Loh, 2004: 66)

Littleton boys are always on their guard and at their best—there is always the feeling of being watch, of being afraid to be disgraced with a mispronounced word or gauche behaviour. They boy almost wishes he were one of them, but then they walk by Littleton's gates and he realizes they are speaking to each other, not in Chinese, but in patois... "Alamak! How can?" one says ... "Can-can, lah. After all, he total bodoh!" replies his friends...

Hugh's turns to the boy and mimes a gagging gesture, and he laughs back loudly, almost meanly. His father and Hugh are right; he doesn't envy them at all, no matter how carefree they may seem. (Loh, 2004: 67)

The quotes display the view that language is not seen as language per se but also as a marker of class identity, signifying different attitudes and values. Claude's upbringing also shapes his view on other languages as patois, a lesser language than his own prestigious language.

The Lims's language choice/policy, however, does not have a fixed and stable meaning or currency. All the language planning and policy

that Humphrey has carefully designed for the better future of his son turns to be lethal to his son's life and future when the Japanese starts to occupy Malaya. English is no longer seen as privilege but a danger that sends Claude to prison and a curse that destroys the life of Humphrey who ended up as a poor and cripple man. Claude without the control of his father finally encounters different languages and experience. Through his friend, Ling-li, who grew up speaking Hokkien at home and learning Mandarin and English at Chinese school, Claude, learns about his Chinese root and heritage. His Chinese lesson (Mandarin) from his educated grandmother that was stopped by his father is finally continued through Ling-li's uneducated uncle who teaches him Hokkien. Thus, his effort of his father to break his 'Chinese tongue' is also finally broken by his Chinese/Hokkien learning. Claude for the first time in his life feels at home with himself by 'reclaiming' his Chinese 'identity.' However, at the end of the novel his concept of connecting language to ethnic identity is also ironically contradicted by his desire to tell Ling-li's stories and the need of 'another language' to tell it. The story of a girl with a strong Chinese identity who gives her life to her homeland China as a spy, a girl who has taught her about the glory of Chinese language and culture, yet Chinese language might not be able to convey her stories. This contradiction and conflicting problems of connecting language to ethnic and national identities are shared by all of other characters in this novel from different class and ethnic groups. This problematic construction of language, and national/ethnic identities also foreshadows the continuous debate on the national language issues experienced by Malaysia and Singapore as nations after and before the independence as expressed through this following quote,

"Malaya is my country," says Rahman, his chin tilting. "I don't mind the British. We Malays get along with everybody, but it's true that whenever I pass through the Unfederated Malay States, it feels—different, good. To be able to walk around without the British controlling everything—but realistically Malay cannot have self-rule. Too mixed up—Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian, altogether in one big rojak! Only the Malays will want to obey the sultans." ... "And who says the sultans will rule if the British

leave?" Muthu asks. ... "Ah, you! You just go back to India and leave us in peace! What's it to you anyway? After all, India is your country, not Malaya." (Loh, 2004: 32)

Rahman is particularly honest in his vision of seeing the potential problems faced by the multicultural society of Malaya compared to the epigraph of this novel by Lee the former prime minister of Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew's speech on language and culture on National Day Rally in 1978 attempts to view language as a merely neutral tool of communication and education is indeed a very simplistic view to depoliticize the use of English in Singapore. Pennycook has problematized this speech in a lengthy and comprehensive commentary in his book (1994: 246-250). Similarly, Loh's novel that seems to reclaim language as ethnic heritage has also confronted with this conflicting problems. Through self-reflexivity, however, at the end the central character finally embraces this difficulty of constructing national and ethnic identities through language.

Conclusion

In depicting the colonial experience of Malaya/Malacca during the British colonial administration and Japanese occupation, Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) also reveals that language issues plays a very significant role in ethnic and class struggles. Despite of the fact that migration and hybridity of their cultures pose difficulties in marking their ethnic identities; yet language functions as one of the identity markers. Language constructs the class and ethnic identities of the people; their language is also stratified and hierarchical to match their social orders. Language becomes the site of struggles of different interests; and the family as the basic domain of language choice/planning/policy plays a very significant role in establishing the language dominance or suppression. In conclusion, the linguistic issues in Malaysia and Singapore do not only include language, race, and ethnicity, but also class, education, and power relations. Thus, language choice even in the most basic scope level such as in the family is

evidently very complex and intricately interwoven with its micro and macro relation. As a locus of struggles, language has no fixed and stable meanings and currency; the interplay of language, race, ethnic, class, and education is dynamic, shifting, and conflicting.

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(Re)Constructing Ethnic Identities in Malaya/Malacca During the Colonial Era: Class, Language, and the Southeast Asian Chinese Family in Vyvyane Loh's *Breaking The Tongue* (2004)

A person who gets deculturalised—and I nearly was, so I know this danger—loses his self-confidence. He suffers from a sense of deprivation. For optimum performance a man must know himself and the world. He must know where he stands. I may speak the English language better than the Chinese language because I learnt English early in life. But I will never be an Englishman in a thousand generations and I have not got the Western value system inside; mine is an Eastern value system. Nevertheless, I use Western concepts, Western words because I understand them. But I also have a different system in my mind.

Lee Kuan Yew

Former Prime Minister of Singapore

Introduction

Vyvyane Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) displays a postmodern narrative of different life-stories/histories of the individuals, the family, and the nation in Malaya/Malacca during the colonial era to reflect different constructions/re-constructions of ethnic identities, particularly the Chinese ethnic identities; and that narrated life-stories/histories are explicitly class-based. The

intertextuality of narrative and history has been highly theorized and problematized since the 1980s and 1990s. History no longer means “the event of the past” but only “telling a story about the events of the past;” thus in poststructuralist notion history is “always narrated” (Selden, et al. 1997: 188). In this light, according to Hayden White “history is no less a form of fiction than the novel is a form of historical representation” (in Cobley, 2001: 31). Postmodern novel serves as a good example to illustrate the historicity of fiction and the fictionality of history because of its ability to post and problematize different principles and ideas of histories. Linda Hutcheon termed such quality “historiographical metafictionality” that also characterizes the postmodern fiction (in Currie, 2004: 75).

Vyvyane Loh’s *Breaking the Tongue* (2004), in essence, is a postmodern novel because it does not only display this postmodern historiographical metafictionality but also other quintessential postmodern characteristics such as self-reflexivity, intertextuality, heterogeneity, non-fixity, irony, and the mixing of genre and references. These postmodern characteristics of Loh’s novel will be revealed through the perspectives of the main characters, particularly, the Lim family members, their servants, friends, Ling-li, and their language use/choice and the way they narrate their life-stories and their family histories. To conduct such analysis, this paper employs structural-historical approach and postmodern/post-structural “anti-essentialist” view in redefining and rethinking the complexity and multiplicity of identity constructions and their social practices.

Problem Formulation

This study analyzes the different life-stories/histories of the individuals, the family, and the nation, different constructions/reconstructions of ethnic identities, particularly the Chinese ethnic identities in Malaya/Malacca during the colonial era. The family, class, and language choice play crucial roles in the dynamics of those history/story/ethnic identity (re)constructions. As stated in the

background, the researcher believes that those issues are also class-based. In addition, following the postmodern/post-structural anti-essentialist perspective, the researcher also views such categories and constructions as complex, multiple, fluid, and conflicting. Accordingly, the encounter of the ethnic Chinese family with the diversity of ethnicity, class, gender, and religion across Southeast Asia has evidently influenced/shaped the views and the constructions of class and ethnic identities in the family and the society at large as well. To analyze the dynamics of such encounter and diversity, this study has formulated the following problems:

1. What kind of the family does Vyvyane Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) portray? How are the main characters/the family members depicted?
2. How do the characters view themselves and their family in relation to their ethnic and class backgrounds? Why do those characters hold such a view?
3. How do language, class, and the family relate to those ethnic and class (re)constructions? What does such relation signify?

Problematizing Language, Language Policy, and the Construction of Ethnic and Class Identities

The inseparable connection between language and nation as seen in the expression of 'language is the soul of the nation' is generated from European root of constructing language as national identity. The German scholar J.G. Herder (1744-1803) stated that "each language, each people, expressed a *Volksgeist*, a national spirit; the diversity of language, custom, belief was unambiguous good" (Bauman & Briggs, 2000 in Jourdan & Tuite, 2006: 49). Other German scholars like Leibniz and Humboldt also shared this essentialist and romantic view on the reflexivity and plurality of language with Herder. However, other European scholars like Locke and Kant undermined the linguistic diversities. Locke even viewed the linguistic differences as problems and insisted upon the need to 'discipline' these different languages if necessary. Another scholar who considered the necessary existence of

one language to unify the national identities was Fichte with his concept of “the German nation is a living community of language” (Cheah, 2003: 116). According to Cheah, through mediation of Marxism, Fichte’s concept of nation and language also has a strong influence on the “practical logics for radical Third World decolonizing nationalism: a cultural nationalism that takes language as fundamental to the nations” (Cheah, 2003: 116). The new emerging nations of the 1940s in Asia and Africa such as Indonesia and Kenya eagerly adopted Fichte’s view to bind the national identities into one unified bond through language.

The emergence of poststructuralist/postmodern and postcolonial perspectives has enabled us to rethink and re-evaluate this transplantation of this European concept of nation-language relation in a specific European context into Asian and African contexts, allowing us to examine how the locally European context has gained its hegemony in other parts of the world in shaping the way people view nation and language. The poststructuralist/postmodern approach allows us to think critically and “to develop an anti-foundationalist view of language as emergent property of social interaction and not a prior system tied to ethnicity, territory, birth, or nation” (Pennycook in Ricento, 2006: 67). Such critical rethinking and re-evaluation also provide us with the view that “considerations of language allegiance, linguistic identity, and linguistic attitudes are not necessarily rational, pragmatic, or objective. They are ideological” (Canagarajah in Ricento, 2006: 154). Similarly, we also have to redefine and rethink other categories such as race, ethnicity, identity, gender, and class not as a fixed and stable entity but as always ‘becoming,’ shifting, and conflicting. However, there is still a strong belief in ‘linguistically anchored ethnic identities’ that attempts to simplistically connect language, ethnicity, and identity and intentionally ignores “the multiplicity and complexity” of these categories in their actual social practices (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000: 156 and Blommaert in Ricento, 2006: 245-246).

One of the intricately political efforts to ‘execute’ this simplistic connection between language and identity is language planning/policy. Language planning/policy is generally introduced/applied through a

'visible and sensible' rationale for various purposes such as maintaining national unity, peaceful ethnic relation, and revitalization of minority language. Regardless of the rationales and purposes, language planning and policy is not ideologically disinterested (Tollefson, 1991; Blommaert, 2006; Pennycook, 2006). Meanwhile, Spolsky (2004) identifies several important domains of language planning/policy: families, school, religion and religious organizations, the workplace, local government, supra-national groupings, nations and states (polities). These different level of domains interact with one another; and according to Spolsky, the policy at the family level is the most crucial domain in determining language maintenance and loss. Without considering this basic domain, and focusing only to the nation state and public domain of language planning, language policy studies will fail to capture many important features (Spolsky, 2004: 55-56). This paper will follow Spolsky's concept of the importance of the family domain in language planning/policy to examine language choice/planning/policy and the construction of ethnic and class identities in Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004).

The previous discussion has revealed that the term 'ethnicity' itself is problematic and has been theorized differently. Many scholars use the term 'ethnicity' to substitute 'race' as an attempt to reflect "the mutability and constructedness of race" (Lomba, 2005: 106). Meanwhile, in Malaysia and Singapore, the term 'race' and 'ethnicity' are often used interchangeably. This already 'difficult' category becomes more problematic in Malaysian context because this ethnic category will also include religious practices. Being a Malay, for example, is defined as "a Malay(si)an citizen born to a Malay(si)an citizen who profess to be a Muslim, habitually speaks the Malay language, adheres to Malay customs, and is domiciled in Malay(si)a" (Abbott & Franks, 2007: 342).

In general, the term 'ethnicity' has been predominantly used to signal fixed/stable biological and cultural identities such as defined by Van den Berghe's sociobiological view:

My central thesis is that both ethnicity and "race" (in the social sense) are, in fact, extensions of the idiom of kinship, and that,

therefore, ethnic and race sentiments are to be understood as an extended and attenuated form of kin selection. (1978: 403 in Wang and Wang, Vol. II, 2003: 3)

Van den Berghe's perspective of ethnicity' is evidently ethnocentric and primordialistic, focusing on the stability of the ethnic membership and subjectivity. In contrast, scholars like Nagata (1974) and Foster (1977) formulate the "ethnic oscillation" model by which individuals without any "single or fixed reference group interpret situational requirements, adjust and display themselves for, among other reasons, social affinity, expediency and concern with social status and mobility" (in Wang and Wang, Vol. II, 2003: 4). Similarly, Stuart Hall in "New Ethnicity" also invites us to clearly point out 'ethnicity' as "a constructed process rather than a given essence" (1996 in Loomba, 2005: 148). This study will also view 'ethnicity' as a construction process and not a given essence.

To provide the theoretical framework of Chinese identities in this study, the researcher is in agreement with the argument of Wang and Wang that the Chinese everywhere do not form an 'ethnicity' or 'a 'race' and that:

Transnationally, they relate to each other as Chinese of different nationalities. Ultimately, identity is a matter of subjective identification which is shaped by the experience of living in a national society. Even the Chinese in Southeast Asia do not form a single identity despite so much that has been written about them. (Wang and Wang, Vol. I, 2003: 54)

Among scholars in Sinology, particularly, the Chinese studies in Southeast Asia and also the ethnic Chinese themselves, there are two distinctive terms to refer to ethnic Chinese, 'Zhonggouren' and 'Huaren'. The former is used to address the Chinese citizens from the People's Republic of China, the later refers to the ethnic Chinese in Southeast Asia. There is also an attempt to identify the Southeast Asian Chinese identities through their mastery of Chinese language and cultural literacy. In this literacy and linguistic manner, there are 4 types Chinese identities ranging from Type A (the highest literacy) to D (the lowest Chinese literacy and the highest Chinese acculturation) (Beng in

Wang & Wang, 2003, Vol. I: 56). In Malaya/Malacca during the colonial period and currently also in modern-day Malaysia and Singapore, language continues to be the issues of ethnic and political conflicts. Many different ethnic groups speak several different languages: Malay, Mandarin, Tamil, Hokkien, Cantonese, Teochow, Hainanese, and English. The attempt to unify these different ethnic groups through language policy has been challenged, and the hegemony of English has made this language issues more problematic and continues to be 'the divide' not only in ethnicity but also class and education as well (Pennycook, 1994).

Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) set in the colonial period, and particularly, during the British colonial government and Japanese occupation, also reveals this language issues, ethnic and class conflicts. Through, the central character of the novel, Claude Lim, the narrator depicts the three generational struggles of the Lims to search for a better life through different colonial powers. Colonialism, migrations, and the search for a better life have brought people of different ethnicity and nationalities to Malaya. These different groups of people also speak various different languages. In their relation with others, their language also marks their different identities that also divide their social class and status. Safely sheltered in his English upper-middle class upbringing in the beginning of the novel, Claude Lim, at the end of the novel, finally comes full circle, confronting the conflicting problems of his multilingual/multicultural society.

A Brief History of Malacca/Malaya during the Early Colonial Era and 1940s-1950s

Malaya situated in what is known today as the western part of Malaysia had already become the main object of various colonial conquests by the Portuguese, the Dutch, British, and Japanese because its main port, Malacca, was strategically crucial in maritime trade route throughout China, India, and Southeast Asia. In 1515, the Portuguese traveler, Tome Pires had already acknowledged Malacca's globally

significant role as a colonial port: “He who holds Malacca has his hands at the throat of Venice” (Rothermund, 2006: 90). This place was crucial because it was strategically, seasonally and geographically well-positioned as a place of distribution for fresh goods and products and transit for traders while waiting for western and eastern monsoons (Hussin, 2007:3-4). As a central trade transit, historically, Malaya/Malacca was a meeting point for diverse groups of people, and as a colonial port-town, Malaya/Malacca had also been populated by diverse population with different racial, ethnic, class, and religious backgrounds (Hussin, 2007: 124-7).

The diversity of the Malayan population also continued going strongly under the European colonialism (Portuguese, Dutch, and British colonial controls) with the European colonizers as the dominant elites who held control and power although they were a minority in number. The majority was the Malay natives and the intervening groups that consisted of two groups resulted from the interracial mixing and from immigrant settlers as described by Ronald J. Horvart:

The intermingling of Europeans and indigenous peoples produced a group called the Eurasians, while intermarriage between Asian immigrants and natives created new groups collectively called the mestizos (offspring of Chinese immigrants and natives) and Jawi Pekans (a mixture between Chulias with Malays). Besides the mixed groups of mestizos, Jawi Pekans, Eurasians and Anglo-Indians, there were the migrants from a third country. In most of the Southeast Asian colonial towns, these migrants were Indians and Chinese, some of whom were active in commerce and trade while others worked as semi-skilled and unskilled labourers in the towns (in Hussin, 2007:128).

Similar to other colonial towns in those days, the presence and the practice of race and ethnic segregation and discrimination were also rigidly maintained in the Malay colonial society as seen in their separated domiciles designated by their skin colours: different areas for the white and coloured population and inhabitants. This segregation, however, was not initially a colonial influence but a traditional practice

originated from the earlier Malay Sultanate communities and rules such as seen in the presence of “Kampung Melayu, Kampung Keling, Kampung Jawa, Bukit Cina” where different ethnic groups inhabited a “separate quarter” and their residential entity was frequently “named after the groups residing in it” (Hussin, 2007: 272). These segregated areas however were not necessarily dictated by specific ethnicity or race but also by class and social status where the powerful colonists lived along the side with the rich Asian elites regardless of their ethnic origin (Hussin, 2007: 273). These Asian elites were mainly wealthy Chinese and Indian merchants, and the educated Chinese and Indian groups that worked as officials for the colonial administration and banking institutions.

The Chinese immigrants eventually outnumbered other Malay settlers. The presence of the Chinese settler in Malaya/Malacca had already been started since the days of the Malay kingdom.

According to the Sejarah Melayu or Malay Annals, a Chinese princess was given in marriage to a sultan of Melaka and she lived on Bukit Cina. Although the truth of this claim cannot be proven, the fact that China went through a phase of open engagement with the outside world, as seen from the naval expeditions of Admiral Zheng He, and that Melaka developed into an important port meant that Chinese traders would have been attracted to settle in the port-town right from the start (Hussin, 2007: 283)

The arrival of the Chinese traders and immigrants was also encouraged by the European colonizers, particularly the British colonial rule that preferred the Chinese to the Malay natives as workers. The Chinese would then emerge not only as labourers but also as “investors and financiers” (Hussin, 2007: 5). The overflow of the Chinese migrants and their dominant economic role continued increasing between the 1740 and 1840 in Southeast Asia, and the period has been widely recognized as the “Chinese century” by the scholars (Reid and Trocki in Hussin, 2007: 12). The Chinese as a group, however, was not homogenous, but heterogeneous and pluralistic as seen through their diverse cultural and religious practice as well as their class, occupation, education, and

language backgrounds. In fact, as a group the Chinese was complex and diverse, forming separated and divided communities based on their sub-ethnic divisions, for example, “the Cantonese came from Macao and the Chinchiew from Fukien. Each spoke its own dialect and showed a strong loyalty to its own group. Each also developed certain specialities and monopolized particular trades” (Hussin, 2007: 309). Language also plays a key role in the grouping of the Chinese population as well as other Malay settlers.

As it is well documented, traditionally, the Chinese population has been socially differentiated according to language groups, mainly Hokkien, Teochew, Cantonese, Hakka, Hainanese, Foocho, Malay (Straits Chinese) and English. Although there are regional variations among the Malay community, the mother tongue of Malays can be taken as Malay. The Indian population includes a large Tamil-speaking community and also smaller communities' speaking Malayalam, Punjabi, Telegu, Hindi, Bengali, Gujerati or English as their mother tongue. Those who fall into the category "Other" are made up Europeans, Eurasians (of mixed European and Asian origin) and other minor ethnic groups which do not fit into the core CMI categories. One such group is the Baba (Peranakan) or the Straits Chinese community who consider themselves to be Chinese but favour the Malay language instead of Chinese (Velayutham, 2007: 49).

The growing number of Chinese population and their vital influence in the economic and colonial administrative activities in Malaya in effect also made the native Malays “a minority in their own country which later became of great political importance as the Malays insisted on their right as ‘son of the soil’ (*bumiputra*)” (Rothermund, 2006: 91). In addition to the Chinese majority, the Indian became the second largest and influential settlers in Malaya.

According to Rothermund, this heterogeneity and diversity of Malay's population became the cause of delay in the process to decolonize Malaya (2006: 92). Malay's settlers and inhabitants found it difficult to share common identities except in colonial experience and

economic interests. In this conflict of multi-ethnic problems as well as political and economic interests, Singapore was finally separated from Malaya. This separation allowed the further process of decolonization of Singapore and Malaya (Rothermund, 2006: 92). To build a unifying foundation for their new city-state, the Singaporean attempted to construct shared united identity as written in their history, yet the writing of their history was not without any complication because this new nation state is now and then still an immigrant society with a plural and heterogeneous population. The complication of their historical construction can be seen in many different versions of the history of Singapore, from its mythical history and legend of Temasek (sea-town) of the pre-colonial period to its colonial experience and independence. The legend traces the Sanskrit origin of the name of Singapore which means Lion City and its founder, the Hindu prince by the name of Sang Nila Utama as recorded in Javanese *Nagarakretagama* (1365) and the *Sejarah Melayu* or *Malay Annals* (1600) (Velayutham, 2007:47). However, this ancient legend is generally widely accepted as a myth only. Whereas,

Singapore's "official history" as it is taught in schools begins with the founding of Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles, a representative of the British East India Company. It is a modern and modernist in history because it is coincided with the age of European colonial expansion in the East (see Turnbull 1989; Lee 1986). The year 1819 which marks the arrival of the British is a turning point and significant point of reference for the nation. It also represents a symbolic moment that allowed for the generation of nationalistic discourses that reject colonial rule (Velayutham, 2007: 47).

Despite these different versions of Singapore historical construction, there is an indisputable fact that the multi-ethnic immigrants play a very important role in building the Singapore nation of today.

Vyvyane Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) also depicts this multi-ethnic composition of Malay/Malacca and Singapore's population with their diverse cultural and social backgrounds. Loh particularly focuses on the life and experience of Malay/Malacca and Singapore's settlers

during the end of British colonization and the Japanese Occupation in the 1940s. Loh vividly portrays different family histories and experience of the Malay's people as conveyed through their ethnic and class identity, their education and family language policy.

Loh's *Breaking The Tongue* As a Postmodern Novel to Narrate Different Stories/Histories of the Individuals, the Family, Malayan Community/Nation in the Making during the Colonial Era

Vyvyane Loh's novel *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) is told from the third omniscient point of view through the eyes of its main character, Claude Lim. The story begins with Claude narrating the story of his life from his childhood to his adulthood, his family experience, his friend Ling-Li, and other characters. Claude, in essence, becomes the voice that narrates the lives and experience of all characters, and the history of Malaya under the British colonization and the Japanese Occupation in the novel. Such omniscient quality of the narrator is usually questioned in the conventional narrative technique, that is, whether the narrator is indeed reliable or not. This reliability is crucial in conventional narrative that will determine the plausibility of the narrative, its weakness and strength.

The beginning of the story as a matter of fact has actually set up the tone and narrative style of the novel, that is, Claude Lim tells all the stories in half conscious/unconscious condition under the torture of the Japanese interrogators who accuse him of being an English spy/agent. The torture is very unbearably painful that Claude experiences mind and body split. In Loh's novel, the conventional question of narrator's reliability is no longer a question of narrative plausibility, weakness or strength, but on purpose is effectively employed to express the postmodern/post-structural narrative style such as historiographical metafictionality, reflexivity, non-fixity, irony, intertextuality, and the mixing of the genre. The separation of "Claude the Mind" and "Claude the Body" facilitates these postmodern/post-structural qualities in Loh's

novel as a postmodern narrative that will be revealed one by one in the following discussion.

First of all, the separation of Claude's Body and Mind facilitates the postmodern concept of reflexivity. This reflexivity is repeatedly emphasized whenever the Claude the Mind questions Claude the Body, initiating a dialogical conversation, referring to each other using first person and second person address, such as I, You, Me, and also third person address, *He* and *Him* in italics:

And what is your part in all this? What do they want with him? Claude the Body, the solid matter ten feet below, groans and lifts his head, only to be dealt a blow with the horsewhip. Tell me, you want to say. Tell me why they're doing this, why this urge to hurt, to maim. Why are the walls so white? How many others are suffering? the Body gives no answers (Loh, 2004: 22)

This Mind-Body dialogical conversation will then be followed by the third person point of view, narrating Claude Lim's boyhood, the life history of the Lims and other characters. Such Mind-Body dialogical conversation at the end of the novel enables Claude to better understand himself, his family, and others. Finally, he is able to make peace with himself and to embrace his reversal of fortune as an English speaking child who grew up in a middle upper class Chinese family in Malaya into a poor sickly young man who attempts to build a new future in Malaya after the war. This constant reflexivity also enables Claude to make sense of his identity transformation as an individual, a family member of a certain class, ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds. Early in his life, he had already been exposed to English education and cultural upbringing: English as the only language spoken in his family, English foods and table manner. In short, his family was deeply anglicized that he did not feel as Chinese, instead he identified himself as "English" by education, social class, and life style.

His goal for his future was to go to top universities in England and would serve the British Empire as her loyal servant. His family lived in a very wealthy neighborhood with other anglicized Chinese families, rich Eurasian families, and European families. This depiction of Malay's

population and their living which was not necessarily divided by ethnic only but also by class in this novel reflected the social life in Malaya as documented by the historians and scholars (Hussin, 2007: 49, 272). Claude went to top English school in Malaya and only mingled with friends and people of his own class and social status. Claude considered Chinese students and people who did not belong to his social class as “Other.” When he accompanied his English friend to go to China town, Claude was shocked to see the way the Chinese people there speak, behave, and live; and he viewed them as “dirty, poor, uncivilized, and disgusting.”

Ironically, Claude himself was actually also discriminated by the European society in Malaya such as the evidence that he was not allowed to have a first class ticket concert despite of his wealth and sophisticated English education and manner. Brought up in English formal manner and life style, as a child Claude used to envy the Chinese children who were carefree, laughing, playing together outside their Chinese school, but when he heard the language they spoke he was very surprised and disgusted knowing that those Chinese school students spoke a mixture of Malay, Chinese, and English which he considered as “patois,” and at that time he realized that he and those kids came from two different worlds, and he viewed them as “inferior”. Claude’s awareness of his individual and social identity and his act of “Othering” Chinese children who shared similar ethnic heritage are of class and language based. Language and class become very crucial in constructing this social identity. When his family became poor and homeless because of the Japanese occupation, his parents refused to give up this sense of identity as a superior member of the society despite of their present social class and status; instead they still held on tight to their English education and upbringing as their mark of superiority that separated them from the “Other.”

However, Claude experienced a different process of identity transformation through his friend Ling-Li who had both English and Chinese education backgrounds but viewed herself as a Chinese and a citizen of China although she was born and raised in Malaya and had

never been to China. As a child, Claude learned Chinese characters from his maternal grandmother but his parents stopped this Chinese learning because they strongly applied a family policy of English language and education.

During the Japanese occupation when he was no longer under his parents' supervision, he learned Mandarin and Chinese culture and history from Ling-Li. After Ling-Li's death for being British spy and agent for the sake to help China her "country", Claude then learned Hokkien from Ling-Li's uncle. This Chinese learning of language, culture, and history had made Claude aware of his "Chineseness" and he wanted to "reclaim" this ethnic identity as a Chinese. This awareness was repeatedly symbolically depicted in Claude's dream of breaking his tongue, cutting the root of his tongue that he considered as being corrupted by his English education and upbringing. The image of tongue as a symbol of voice is familiar in literature such as expressed in the work of Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior: Memoir of a Girlhood among Ghosts* (1989). Kingston's memoir juxtaposed voice and silence of various female figures in her life both real and fictional, echoing this voice/silence discourse through fantasy and reality experienced by women in the past and present. The mother of the narrator in Kingston's memoir had decided to break up this tradition of silence and encouraged her daughter to speak up, defying the Chinese proverb of "a ready tongue is an evil" as narrated in "A Song For a Barbarian Reed Pipe" when the narrator asked her mother why she sliced the daughter's frenum:

I cut it so that you would not be tongue-tied. Your tongue would be able to move in any language. You'll be able to speak languages that are completely different from one another. You'll be to pronounce anything. Your frenum looked too tight to do those things, so I cut it (Kingston, 1989: 164).

In recent critical theory and literary criticism, "voice" has become a frequently discussed critical term, undergoing extension and revision as well. Postcolonial theorists have adopted the discourse of voice and silence to challenge the colonial power; likewise many other groups

such as the minority scholars, the feminists and the queer theorists have also done similar practice:

Other silenced communities—peoples of colors, peoples struggling against colonial rule, gay men and lesbians—have also written and spoken about the urgency of “coming to voice” (Lanser, 1992: 3).

In such notion, both implicitly and explicitly, it has established “voice” as a trope of identity and power. In Loh’s novel, the concept of breaking the tongue as a trope of voice is indeed clearly and explicitly applicable and very crucial that it also becomes the title of the novel that sets the unifying tone and theme of the novel although not without any complication. Thus the dream of Claude’s intention of breaking and cutting the root of his tongue to cut of his identity of “Englishness” and to reclaim and to voice his “Chineseness” is an effort to break the English colonial influence in his individual and social identities. This effort of viewing identity as essentially based on ethnic heritage is however contradicted at the end of the novel by his own acknowledgement that English not even Chinese but another language would be needed to tell their stories as Chinese.

This process of identity transformation experienced by Claude Lim suggests the postmodern/post-structural non-essentialist perspective of identity construction as complex, non-unitary, multiple, plural, unfixed, and conflicting. Loh’s novel also shows that language plays a very important role in this identity formation and transformation. Loh’s novel does not only depict how different group of people use different language, but more importantly, the novel reveals how language constructs these different groups of people in Malaya in their social interaction, how language deeply intertwined with power and knowledge, the novel unveils the key role of language in “production and reproduction of power, difference, and symbolic domination;” thus reflecting the postmodern/post-structural view of language.

In addition to the crucial role of language, Loh’s novel also displays the heterogeneous and diverse population of Malaya with their plural practices of language, religion, culture, and tradition, this depiction also mirrors the depiction of life in Malaya as written in history books,

documentary and archival materials. The historical, social, and cultural backgrounds that dominate and color Loh's novel also prompt critics and scholars to consider Loh's novel as historical novel or fictional history about Malaya. The allusions to historical events and people are not the only intertextuality displayed in Loh's novel. Loh also used letters and correspondences of the British military officials in Malaya, Chinese poems, Malay and Chinese legends and myth, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Conrad's other works, National Archives of Singapore, and other sources as intertextuality in her novel, merging and mixing different genres into one thus breaking the boundary of fact/history and fiction, reflecting the postmodern/post-structural concept of historiographical metafictionality.

This perspective of history as not merely a fact but a narrative and a construct is not only seen in the mixing of genres but also the way the main character (Claude Lim) views history. In many different occasions, Claude contemplated the story of "Temasek", the origin of Singapore and its Founder Sang Nila Utama with many different versions. He imagined different possibilities of the finding and founder of Singapore, contradicting and disrupting one version against another. Claude's way of retelling and rewriting history of Malaya and Singapore serves as a conscious act of parody/intertextuality to playfully mock the construction of the so-called "official/unofficial history of Malaya and Singapore.

This act, however, at the same time also facilitates the process of self-reflexivity and provides the space to rethink and reconstruct the past as a dialogue between the 'pastness and the presentness.' Intertextuality also plays a very important role in the self-reflexivity, not only as 'backgrounds' but it also functions as 'foregrounds' as well. This problem of conveying the 'truth' of history is not only a fictional problem but also a real problem faced by the scholars and historians in their attempt to provide the so-called "official history" of Singapore as stated by Velayutham (2007:47). Loh herself also expressed this problem of factual and fictional history:

Until I began research for Breaking the Tongue, my sense of the fall of Singapore and World War II was far different from what really happened. In history class the details we were given were sketchy, and some of the basic “facts” were totally inaccurate. It was the Japanese who bombed the Causeway in 1945, we were told, to cut off the water supply from Malaysia. In reality, the British ordered the bombing to prevent the Japanese from marching across the Causeway and taking Singapore. During my schooling, I was shamefully ignorant of this, as are many Singaporean students today. In the novel I wanted to explore how history is made up of many narratives, and how one version comes to be selected over all others as the “official” record (Loh, 2004)

Therefore, in conjunction to Loh’s view of history, the novel also problematizes the boundary of fact and fiction/history and story, “The point of convergence: of history and fiction, of one mind and another, of what’s real and what’s imagined” (Loh, 2004: 389), thus also expresses the postmodern/post-structural notion of history, novel, fiction, and text at large as equally a narrative and construct. As response to such a perspective of history, Claude the Mind repeatedly encouraged Claude the Body to finally become the active writer of history as shown in many quotes in this novel:

To record history, you say with a sudden, unexpected burst of hilarity. You too can make history, write it down, the thought is so clarifying, so renewing that you hardly feel the slap. Too busy with possibilities, too delighted by options... You too have a creative task; you too have an opportunity too perform (Loh, 2004: 33)

What have you learned? If nothing else, this: That Ling-Li is not dead. Words, history, narrative can all be manipulated. And if you don’t want her dead, then it’s time to resurrect her, time to defy and outdo the construct once again, but this time you have to be patient. This time you will have to out-write death, and for that you will require a lifetime. You will require another language (Loh, 2004:489).

Since the act of writing needs language, once again the importance of language is inescapable and emphasized. In the case of Claude's process of realization and formation of his individual and social identity and history, language indeed is the key-role, and the language choice had even been decided early in his life by his family. Therefore, the following part will discuss the language choice/ the family language policy in Claude Lim's family to explain and unveil the identity construction of Claude Lim, and how this family language choice is related to race, ethnicity, class, education, and power. In short, the discussion will reveal how language constructs the people and their social interaction in Malaya, and this process of construction has already started in the family, the smallest unit of the society at large.

Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* displays language choice and language policy in the family domain and the education domain are closely related to ethnicity, class, and power relations. The family language choice/policy can clearly be seen through the experience of the Lim family. For three generations, the Lims have worked hard to maintain their upper-middle class status by working in the British colonial financial establishment by adopting the English language, education, and proper English life styles. Realizing that the way they speak English will determine their 'proper' status in their social circle; they attempted to keep up with the standardized English mastery.

His own father also admired the English but by the time he recognized their superiority it was already too late for him. He could never conquer the consonants of the language, the precise, full vowels, and his English was mocked. Humphrey, however, went to an English school, and now his own son has been raised at home in the English language. with each succeeding generation the family will become more Anglicized. Humphrey believes, and with luck and diligence, they will eventually be accepted by the British themselves as their equals. (Loh, 2004: 63)

Learning from his father's experience of dealing with the English language mastery; Humphrey decides that his son, Claude, will not only learn English but also 'acquire' English at early age. Humphrey's

determination is carried out by planning English as his family language choice. This language choice is not on voluntarily basis but it is also regulative as seen in his intervention to ensure that English is the only language spoken in his household so that his son will only hear and speak English.

Claude the Body speaks English as a first language. It is this that his Japanese interrogators can't stand ...The amah (simply called Amah by everyone), Rahman and Phatcharat are all talking among themselves in Malay. The boy has never spoken to them in anything other than English, the only language he knows. As required by his father, all servants speak basic, albeit appalling, English. (Loh, 2004: 28- 29)

This family language choice is not only a subtle regulation but also a forced regulation that affect all people living in Humphrey Lim's house including his domestic helpers. The Lim family servants have to obey the policy of one person-one language and one household/family-one language in the presence of their master and his son. Their linguistic obedience is evidently class-based relation signifying the master-servant power relation. However, in the absence of their master (even with the presence of his son), they speak Malay to each other although Rahman is the only ethnic Malay; meanwhile, Amah is 'pure' Chinese, and Phatcharat is Thais. Through their language practice, certain language is not necessarily connected to certain ethnic identity because Amah the Chinese women is a Hokkien speaker, and Phatcharat speaks Thais but they share Rahman's Malay as their everyday language. Meanwhile, the Lims although Chinese by 'ethnicity' speak English not only any English but the standardized British English. In this context, Malay can be seen as the lingua franca among these different ethnic members; however, it can also be seen as class-based language because it is used by the poor working class like the Lim's servants. Meanwhile, the Lims' English is the language of the upper-middle class.

From the essentialist perspective on language and ethnic identity connection, Humphrey's family language choice and practice can be interpreted as a denial/betrayal to their ethnic identity; however, the

poststructuralist/postmodern perspective would situate Humhrey's family language choice and practice in a larger socio-cultural-historical background. His family language choice is not a marker of ethnic identity but it is a means to convey his class status (social goals) and his educational aspirations for his son as well.

And that is the last lesson. He doesn't hear the heated words between his parents and his grandmother, but he guesses at them. "We will educate our children the way we see fit," his father says... "It's our duty, and our right," Cynthia adds just before Grandma Siok can open her mouth ... "And what is wrong with them learning their mother tongue?"... "It's archaic," says Humphrey. "A waste of time. It won't get Claude into Oxford." (Loh, 2004: 42)

He forbids his mother in law's Chinese lesson on Claude because it violates his family language choice/policy of one person-one language. He sees this language policy as his right and duty as the father and the head of the household. He views English as a tool to achieve his social goal and his educational aspiration for Claude. Humphrey's view of Chinese as an archaic language also implicitly signifies his view of English as the language of modernization, social mobility, and education. His determination to provide a conducive environment for his son to acquire 'pure English' is seen in his intervention not to allow code-mixing and code-switching of languages in his family. He also prevents his son from interacting with Chinese speaking children from 'lower class.'

The trick, Humphrey knows, is to avoid any contamination from the "hard-core" Chinese—especially the flag-touting, fund-raising ones with Communist leanings, he thinks as he sees yet another batch of these zealots singing and selling flowers at the corner of his office building. (Loh, 2004: 63)

In this manner, Humphrey also associates language with attitudes, values, and political stance. His family language choice of standardized British English can be interpreted to convey his desire to identify with the English colonial rulers as the dominant power at that time. Thus, he uses language to construct his identity; and he performs his identity

through language. More properly put in poststructuralist notion, language constructs and produces identities.

This 'chosen' identity is also supported by Humphrey's decision to send Claude to English school. There is a great divide between English school and Chinese school in terms of ethnicity, class, curriculum and language. The English school consists of students from different ethnicities but share the similar upper-middle class status. English is the only medium of instruction and the curriculum is English based to prepare them to enter schools and universities in England. Meanwhile, Chinese school consists of only ethnic Chinese students with China-based curriculum although using both Chinese and English as the medium of instruction. Language and education are indeed stratified and hierarchical as seen from the way Claude's friend Hugh, perceives the Chinese-educated students:

Hugh's favorite after-school activity is to have his chauffeur drive him to Orchard Road for tea at Robinson's and to pick out the Chinese-educated students thronging the streets from the English-educated ones, an activity that requires minimal skill. (Loh, 2004: 65)

"Thank God we're nothing like them," says Hugh, a look of disgust on his face. "They're a disgrace—the way they speak, the way they dress." (Loh, 2004: 66)

Littleton boys are always on their guard and at their best—there is always the feeling of being watch, of being afraid to be disgraced with a mispronounced word or gauche behaviour. They boy almost wishes he were one of them, but then they walk by Littleton's gates and he realizes they are speaking to each other, not in Chinese, but in patois... "Alamak! How can?" one says ... "Can-can, lah. After all, he total bodoh!" replies his friends...

Hugh's turns to the boy and mimes a gagging gesture, and he laughs back loudly, almost meanly. His father and Hugh are right; he doesn't envy them at all, no matter how carefree they may seem. (Loh, 2004: 67)

The quotes display the view that language is not seen as language per se but also as a marker of class identity, signifying different attitudes and values. Claude's upbringing also shapes his view on other languages as patois, a lesser language than his own prestigious language.

The Lims's language choice/policy, however, does not have a fixed and stable meaning or currency. All the language planning and policy that Humphrey has carefully designed for the better future of his son turns to be lethal to his son's life and future when the Japanese starts to occupy Malaya. English is no longer seen as privilege but a danger that sends Claude to prison and a curse that destroys the life of Humphrey who ended up as a poor and cripple man. Claude without the control of his father finally encounters different languages and experience. Through his friend, Ling-li, who grew up speaking Hokkien at home and learning Mandarin and English at Chinese school, Claude, learns about his Chinese root and heritage. His Chinese lesson (Mandarin) from his educated grandmother that was stopped by his father is finally continued through Ling-li's uneducated uncle who teaches him Hokkien. Thus, his effort of his father to break his 'Chinese tongue' is also finally broken by his Chinese/Hokkien learning.

Claude for the first time in his life feels at home with himself by 'reclaiming' his Chinese 'identity.' However, at the end of the novel his concept of connecting language to ethnic identity is also ironically contradicted by his desire to tell Ling-li's stories and the need of 'another language' to tell it. The story of a girl with a strong Chinese identity who gives her life to her homeland China as a spy, a girl who has taught her about the glory of Chinese language and culture, yet Chinese language might not be able to convey her stories. This contradiction and conflicting problems of connecting language to ethnic and national identities are shared by all of other characters in this novel from different class and ethnic groups. This problematic construction of language, and national/ethnic identities also foreshadows the continuous debate on the national language issues experienced by Malaysia and Singapore as nations after and before the independence as expressed through this following quote,

“Malaya is my country,” says Rahman, his chin tilting. “I don’t mind the British. We Malays get along with everybody, but it’s true that whenever I pass through the Unfederated Malay States, it feels—different, good. To be able to walk around without the British controlling everything—but realistically Malay cannot have self-rule. Too mixed up—Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian, altogether in one big rojak! Only the Malays will want to obey the sultans.” ... “And who says the sultans will rule if the British leave?” Muthu asks. ... “Ah, you! You just go back to India and leave us in peace! What’s it to you anyway? After all, India is your country, not Malaya.” (Loh, 2004: 32)

Rahman is particularly honest in his vision of seeing the potential problems faced by the multicultural society of Malaya compared to the epigraph of this novel by Lee the former prime minister of Singapore. Lee Kuan Yew’s speech on language and culture on National Day Rally in 1978 attempts to view language as a merely neutral tool of communication and education is indeed a very simplistic view to depoliticize the use of English in Singapore. Pennycook has problematized this speech in a lengthy and comprehensive commentary in his book. (1994: 246-250) Similarly, Loh’s novel that seems to reclaim language as ethnic heritage has also confronted with this conflicting problems. Through self-reflexivity, however, at the end the central character finally embraces this difficulty of constructing national and ethnic identities through language.

Conclusion

Finally, to conclude the discussion, Vyvyane Loh’s *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) is a postmodern novel that also displays different stories/histories of individuals and families in Malaya/Malacca during the colonial period. Among other features exhibited in the novel are the postmodern characteristics of the merging of the genre because this work can be read as a novel, autobiography, biography, fictional history, and historical fiction thus also the crossing of boundary of history and

fiction as well; self reflexivity, intertextuality and parody, heterogeneity, and non-fixity. Loh's novel also reveals a postmodern perspective in its recognition and inclusion of pluracity and multiplicity of differences and identity constructions such as seen in the main character, Claude Lim's transformation of individual and social identities. This novel also attempts to voice the life-stories/histories of different group of people from different class and ethnic backgrounds.

In depicting the colonial experience of Malaya/Malacca during the British colonial administration and Japanese occupation, Loh's *Breaking the Tongue* (2004) also reveals that language issues plays a very significant role in ethnic and class struggles. Despite of the fact that migration and hybridity of their cultures pose difficulties in marking their ethnic identities; yet language functions as one of the identity markers. Language constructs the class and ethnic identities of the people; their language is also stratified and hierarchical to match their social orders. Language becomes the site of struggles of different interests; and the family as the basic domain of language choice/planning/policy plays a very significant role in establishing the language dominance or suppression. In conclusion, the identity construction of Malaya's population does not only include language, race, and ethnicity, but also class, education, and power relations. One crucial element of this identity construct such as language choice even in the most basic scope level such as in the family is evidently very complex and intricately interwoven with its micro and macro relation. As a locus of struggles, language has no fixed and stable meanings and currency; the interplay of language, race, ethnic, class, and education is dynamic, shifting, and conflicting in the process of identity formation and construction.

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Voice and Gender in Literature

If the Queen's looking glass speaks with the King's voice, how do its perpetual kingly admonitions affect the Queen's own voice? Since his is the chief voice she hears, does the Queen try to sound like the King, imitating his tone, his inflections, his phrasing, his point of view? Or does she "talk back" to him in her own vocabulary, her own timbre, insisting on her own viewpoint? We believe these are the basic questions feminist literary criticism – both theoretical and practical – must answer...

(Gilbert and Gubar, *Madwoman*, p. 46)

In recent critical theory and literary criticism, “voice” has become a frequently discussed critical term, undergoing extension and revision as well. Postcolonialism, for example, has adopted the discourse of voice and silence to challenge the colonial power. Likewise, many other groups have shared a similar practice: “Other silenced communities—peoples of colors, peoples struggling against colonial rule, gay men and lesbians—have also written and spoken about the urgency of “coming to voice” (Lanser, 1992: 3). In such notion, both implicitly and explicitly, it has established “voice” as a trope of identity and power that also relates to race, class, gender, and sexuality. This paper aims to investigate the complexity of the narrative voice(s) present in the selected works of my research to unveil its plurality, multiplicity, and complexity. Furthermore, this research analyzes how those voices often speak against one another in the Bakhtinian polyphonic manner to represent (to speak out for and against) particular groups of diverse racial, class, gender, sex identities.

In defining voice, various dictionaries offer a wide range of meanings. Etymologically, voice can be understood from its literal

phonological association such as sounds made by persons or animal to any other vocal utterance forms and even “singing” to the idea of metaphorical “conscience.” Furthermore, different scholars also offer different interpretations this so-called metaphorical conscience. For example, in *Oxford English Dictionary*, Walter Ong believes that voice equals presences; meanwhile, for Derrida, voice in its literal or metaphorical sense is just a type of writing similar to any scripting or thinking (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Firstly, the term “voice” employed in this article is not only limited to the Romantic school’s concept of authorial presence but also includes the Bakhtinian concept of *heteroglossia* and Barthes’ *polyphony*. Secondly, this article also views “voice” as the marginalized individual or group’s inalienable right to speak, particularly highlighting the voice of women in their writings. The emphasis on women and their writing is indeed important because traditionally women are barred to articulate their voice particularly in the public domain as famously expressed by St. Paul: “I permit no woman to teach ... She is to keep silent.”

The patriarchal attempt to silence women to articulate their ideas and voice has always been challenged by women even in a very limited space and opportunity available for them. The letter writings produced by Osborne display such challenge to patriarchal oppression; even only by writing in the form of letters but this “private” writing genre has enabled her to speak out her muted voice because in her time women were not supposed to write for publication or in particular literary genres assigned exclusively for men only.

Had she been born in 1827, Dorothy Osborne would have written novels; had she been born in 1527, she would never have written at all. But she was born in 1627, and at that date though writing books was ridiculous for a woman there was nothing unseemingly in writing a letter. And so by degrees the silence is broken ...
(*Woolf, 1967: 60*)

Patriarchal domination and this fe/male writing domain have undergone challenges and changes as observed by Woolf in portraying the life of Osborne and her possible writing career and struggles, and

particular genres available for women from time to time. Even one of the greatest humanists in the West, Sir Thomas More, had also acknowledged this segregated fe/male writing domain to his own daughter.

Content with the profit and the pleasure of your conscience, in your modesty do not seek for the praise of the public, nor value it overmuch even if you receive it, but because of the great love you bear us, you regard us - your husband and myself - as a sufficiently large circle of readers for all that you write (in Krontiris, 1992: 6).

In the effort for not only being the literary consumer but also producers, many of the 19th century women writers in the West also had to employ the “cross-gender” strategy articulate their voice in writing particularly in the literary genre previously only employed by men. For example, in the case of the Bronte sisters who had to adopt male pseudonym to write women’s lives and experience in their novels. It was also not uncommon for women writers at that time to articulate their voice through male characters so that readers and the public would not judge them “improper” for crossing over the private-public/female-male domains in literary production.

Likewise, literary feminist scholars today have also used the discourse of “voice” in such approach to struggle against patriarchal rule and dominance such as their practice of revisiting and resurrecting the “lost voices” of women writers and pioneers, voicing the muted fictional and real female figures in the past. In critical theories, Spivak, for example, has expresses her concern in the way the postcolonial theories and theorists has neglected the voice of women in their theorizing, therefore, she frequently writes about the plight of the “Subaltern,” those marginalized individuals and groups who cannot articulate their voice because of their multiple oppressions and discriminations. In literary theories and production, similar efforts have also been done because literature is indeed the arena of the power struggle to articulate different voices as illustrated by Rushdie that literature is “the one place in any society where, within the secrecy of

our own heads, we can hear *voices talking about everything in every possible way*" (1990: 16). Many women writers have exercised this discourse of voice in their works, and have also been aware that the narrative voice and the narrated world are interdependent and closely related. Therefore, in line with the approach of Mikhail Bakhtin's "sociological poetics," they view "narrative technique not simply as a product of ideology but ideology itself":

narrative voice, situated at the juncture of "social position and literary practice," embodies the social, economic, and literary conditions under which it has been produced (in Lanser, 1992: 5).

In general, women writing and the way women writers structure their narrative; therefore, have been utilized to facilitate liberating the female voice.

In narratology, the relation between the narrator and narratee determines **the narrative level** and the **reliability** of the narrator. In general, the narrative of male writers involve **public level**, meanwhile, female writers limit their narrative to **private level**. However, there are women writers who employed a public level, such as in the case of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, when Jane, the main character of the novel, greets the readers by using **Dear Reader**, and not **Dear Friend** or **Dear Diary** or any other personal way of addressing the narratee generally used by most women writers to some extents. In the past, women were allowed to write, however, they were only permitted to write for personal and private interests only, and not for public readership. Previously, letters and diaries were considered private, therefore, did not necessarily threaten the "**malediscursive hegemony**." However, when letter and diaries gained a wide popularity among women as their writing medium; consequently, such kind of writings was regarded as a lesser genre in the men dominated literary system. Some examples of the fe/male self-writings with their private/public narrative level are Herodotus's *Letters*, *The Letters of St. Paul*, *The Confession of St. Augustine*, Rousseau's *Confession*, *The Dairy of Samuel Pepys*, and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* as opposed to the female self-writing addressed to certain friends. In Asian

History, this kind of genre was also familiar in Japanese Literature during the Heian period (794–1185) such as in SeiShonagon's *The Pillow Book* (1002), *Sarashina Nikki* or The Diary of Sarashina (1037), and *Murasaki Shikibu Nikki* (978-1015): the diary of the writer who wrote the famous novel *Genji Monogatari*. All those Japanese writers are mostly women. In Indonesian history, we recognize Kartini who confided her minds and ideas on women emancipation in *Letters to Her Friends* in the Netherlands because as a woman, a Javanese, and a Moslem, she was not allowed to voice such ideas let alone speaking her liberated minds openly in public setting.

In the 18th century American and English literature, this self/confessional genre reached its peak of popularity, and “about one fifth of the total of eighteenth century fiction” were written in the form of letters and diaries (Wurzbach, 1969:ix). This genre also gave birth to the early form of modern novel, the so-called Epistolary Novel, which employed letters as important elements in characterization and plot. Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) is usually considered the first epistolary novel or the first novel in English. Aphra Benn actually already wrote her work *Love Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* in this genre in 1683. However, it is Richardson, who is often hailed as the father of the English novel. After 1800 when epistolary form had already been in decline, letters were still frequently used as a narrative technique as a minor element and no longer played a crucial role as in the early epistolary novels.

The term **epistolary** originated from “**Epistle**” in the tradition of letters written by St. Paul to the New Testament Churches. Similar to the Japanese women writers who used self/confessional writing during the Heian period, the 18th century American and English writers who utilized this genre were mostly also women. Due to its frequent use by women writers, epistolary novel and later also novel were regarded as a feminine genre, following children's book, letters, and diaries included in the category of “lesser genre,” or what George Elliot called “silly novels by silly lady novelists” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979). This genre is also perceived as a suitable and appropriate medium to express female

emotion and fantasy as stated by the American popular novelist, Fanny Fern:

women had been granted access to the novel as a sort of Repressive de Sublimation, a harmless channel for frustrations and drivers that might otherwise threaten the family, the church, and the state. Fern recommended that women write as therapy as a release from the stifling silence of the drawing room, and as a rebellion against the indifference and insensitivity of the men closest to them. (Showalter, 1989).

Regardless of its quality as a lesser genre, many contemporary woman writers on purpose have utilized and also revised the self/confessional writing in the form of epistolary novel, autobiography, and diary as their resistance and challenge toward the literary system that they view as operating patriarchal system which emphasizes male writer's interests and, on the other hand, marginalizes female writer's role and neglects her interests in the literary system. The famous contemporary African American writer, bell hooks, has published her two autobiographies, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (1996) and *Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* (1997) in an experimental style, combining imagination and memory and blending fiction and non fiction narrative technique in her works. Alice Walker, another African American author, employs an extended epistolary style in her novel, *The Color Purple* (1983), through her main character, Celie, who writes letters to God and later to her sister, Nettie. The modern example of self/confessional writing in the form of diary is Helen Fielding's best selling novel, *Bridget Jones's Diary* (1995) which not only becomes a big hit in Britain but has also received a worldwide popularity.

In addition to pay homage to this self-expression writing genre of their literary female pioneers, many of women writers wrote their works to voice the muted women in their family and society. bell hooks dedicated her autobiographies and memoirs to her grandmother and mother, and "to pay homage to the unheard voice of black women of past and present." hooks admits that she not only talks about the past, she does worse, "I write about it." We write about it so we will not

disappear and we write about it so we will not choose to disappear” (hooks, 1994:59). Gloria Steinem’s autobiography, *Ruth’s Song (Because She Could Not Sing It)* written in 1983, is one example of woman’s autobiographies that the daughter becomes the narrator of her parent’s story, focusing on the point of view of her mother (Conway, 1999:124). Similar view on this narrative approach is also shared by Maxine Hong Kingston who confessed that “she did not believe she would be a “real” novelist until she had written a book in the authorial voice” (in Lanser, 1992: 20), and her memoir *The Woman Warrior* also illustrated this perspective well.

Kingston’s *The Woman Warrior: Memoir of a Girlhood among Ghosts* juxtaposed voice and silence of various female figures in her life both real and fictional, echoing this voice/silence discourse through fantasy and reality experienced by women in the past and present. Her memoir opens with the life story of her muted aunt, “No Name Woman” whose existence could only be spoken in silence and whisper through the storytelling of the narrator’s mother. This unnamed aunt’s life had already been wiped out of her family history, vanished and left no trace, yet this life story of this unnamed and silenced woman had conjured up countless different images and haunted the memory of the narrator so that she decided to write about it, and no longer participated in silence, punishing this unfortunate woman who drawn herself and her baby into the well to end her unbearable misery. Meanwhile, the narrator’s mother who passed this story to her in silence was more fortunate and managed to survive through hardships and long journeys away from her homeland to the United States, yet in many ways, this mother had also been silenced and unable to voice her own minds except in storytelling that she told her daughter whether it was the unspeakable story of their family secrets or the story of the female warrior, Fa Mu Lan. This woman had to borrow life story of others in order to voice her minds because she could not tell her own story. Through such ventriloquist’ storytelling, this woman had decided to break up this tradition of silence and encouraged her daughter to speak up, defying the Chinese proverb of “a ready tongue is an evil” as narrated in “A

Song For a Barbarian Reed Pipe” when the narrator asked her mother why she sliced the daughter’s frenum:

I cut it so that you would not be tongue-tied. Your tongue would be able to move in any language. You’ll be able to speak languages that are completely different from one another. You’ll be to pronounce anything. Your frenum looked too tight to do those things, so I cut it (Kingston, 1976: 164).

Unfortunately, the narrator turned into a complete silence, “a dumbness—a shame” when she struggled to learn to speak English and was constantly forced to speak up. At first she enjoyed the silence and when silence became misery, she equated silence to being a Chinese girl; and then she finally realized that silence was also the lot of Chinese immigrants in the United States:

But when I saw Father’s occupations I exclaimed, “Hey, he wasn’t a farmer, he was a ...” He had been a gambler. My throat cut off the word—silence in front of the most understanding teacher. There were secrets never to be said in front of the ghosts, immigration secrets whose telling could get us sent back to China ... Sometimes I hated the ghosts for not letting us talk; sometimes I hated the secrecy of the Chinese. “Don’t tell,” said my parents, though we couldn’t tell if we wanted to because we didn’t know (Kingston, 1976: 183).

Experiencing the burden of silence and being silenced for being a woman and a Chinese, she resolved to struggle for voice of her own as well as for others; therefore, desperately she tried so hard to encourage her unfortunate Chinese classmate to speak up as if they both were bound for one entity, not of an individual power to speak up but a communal voice, one for all; similar to the way the narrator put the hope for voice in Brave Orchid or the songs of Ts’ai Yen, the Chinese poetess among the Barbarians whose voice and songs trespassed the understanding of race and language boundaries, voicing and lamenting the human lot and life.

The attempt to revisit and rethink the history and place of women in literature and society is indeed still very relevant and important today. Literature and literary research have indeed the power and opportunities to facilitate the voices of those women and other marginalized and disenfranchised groups to emerge in both private and public domains. Thus, their plights would be narrated and articulated, and not forgotten amidst stronger voices that always venture to dominate one another in literature particularly and society in general as stated by Lucelrigaray that To find a voice (voix) is to find a way (voie).

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A Feminist Criticism on Dorothy Parker's Female Character in "Big Blonde"

*Razors pain you;
Rivers are damp;
Acids stain you;
And drugs cause cramp.
Guns aren't lawful;
Nooses give;
Gas smells awful;
You might as well live.*
(Dorothy Parker's "Resume")

Introduction

■ ■ "Big Blonde", one of the collected stories written by Dorothy Parker in *Laments for the Living* (1930), is a sad biography of a woman named Hazel Morse who led a very miserable life. The British novelist and dramatist, W. Somerset Maugham, had given high praise to Parker's artistic talent in writing "Big Blonde."

...If you are going to judge an author at all he has the right to demand that you shall judge him by his best. "Big Blonde" has all the earmarks of a masterpiece ... It displays to perfection all Dorothy Parker's enviable gifts. There are few things more difficult than to write a short story the events of which take place over a long period of time, and yet maintain that the unity of effect which is essence of the short story (Maugham, 1974: 601-2).

Maugham admired Parker's writing skill in telling so effectively the life story of her character in a very limited space in short story form, and while still maintaining the single vivid intense effect of the aesthetic unity of her story which according to Edgar Allan Poe in his *Philosophy*

of Composition was a crucial key of a good short story (Poe, 1989: 370-8). He also praised Parker's vivid characterization in presenting Hazel Morse, the female character in "Big Blonde."

In "Big Blonde" Dorothy Parker has succeeded with peculiar skill in doing just this notwithstanding the passage of years you have the poignancy as is generally only possible to achieve in the narration of a single incident. I think it is done by a determined concentration on the pathetic, feckless, hopeless, tragic, sloppy wanton who is Hazel Morse (Maugham, 1974: 601-2).

Like Maugham, I am also greatly impressed by Parker's artistic writing skill, however, in this research I will only discuss this aspect as a secondary discussion. Instead, I will discuss the feminist issues in "Big Blonde" such as the experience of the female character as a single woman, a married woman, and a divorced woman in society. I make Hazel Morse' experience my primary emphasis in accordance with the feminist approach I use to study this short story. I also consider that the feminist issues such as the Images of Women in Patriarchy, and the Feminine Stereotypes in this story are quite interesting and challenging to discuss.

In the discussion of feminist issues in "Big Blonde," I am not discussing or questioning whether Parker is a feminist or not because that is not the purpose of my research. Rather, I will discuss the way or how Parker presents Hazel Morse, the female character in this story. For me, Parker's characterization of Hazel Morse is the most interesting aspect of the novel, considering the fact that Parker does not present the female character in her story as a heroine, not even as an ordinary heroine. On the contrary, Parker presents Hazel as a completely pathetic suicidal loser, who in short is a totally "no-good-failure." This fact arouses my curiosity, there must be something in this, something behind her tragic characterization of her female character who is also her fellow oppressed female being.

I will try to seek an answer to the problem of my research by discussing some feminist theories such as Women's Lives in Patriarchy, Feminine Stereotypes, and Feminist Literary Criticism, and relating

them to Parker's short story "Big Blonde". It is also of relevance to discuss Parker's biographical background as a woman and as a female writer, and also the sociological background of women in the USA in the 1920s and 1930s which was where and when Parker lived and wrote her works. By doing so I hope I can find a good reason for or answer all of my questions, and also that I can solve the problems that I want to formulate and discuss in my research.

Problem Formulation

Based on the discussion in the Introduction, I formulate the problems of my research as follows:

1. How does Parker present Hazel Morse as a single woman, a wife, a divorced woman, and as a member of the society in "Big Blonde?"
2. In what ways does Parker's characterization of Hazel Morse express feminist issues such as feminine stereotypes, and images of women in marriage and the divorce?
3. What possible background may have influenced Parker's characterization of Hazel Morse in "Big Blonde?"

The Plot Summary of "Big Blonde"

Hazel Morse, the female character in this story, was beautiful, well liked, and widely admired by men because of her physical beauty. In her twenties, she worked as a model in a wholesale dress establishment, and she was fortunate enough to have high, erect breasts, and a perfect large body so as to fulfill the fashion trends of her days. She was popular among men, and well known as "a good sport and big blonde" among her admirers. She proudly celebrated her popularity and prided herself upon her beauty as the most important and valuable thing in her life. However, when she was nearing thirty she became wiser and realized that she could not rely on her beauty forever. She, then, decided to find a man to marry and to depend upon. She felt lucky when she met

Herbie Morse whom she thought of as her Mr. Right, and they immediately agreed to marry only six weeks after they had met.

In the first months of their marriage, Hazel enjoyed the happiness that she always looked for. She happily did all the housekeeping work: cooking, marketing, laundry, and anything to make her marriage happier. She gave her husband "all the passion she was ever to know and she had not realized how tired she was. For her, this marriage was a delight, a new game, a holiday, to give up being a good sport" (Parker, 1974:189). She could do anything she wanted to, and she could express her emotions and feelings freely whether in sadness or happiness, whether crying or laughing, she believed her husband would understand and love her still. She really loved her husband, her marriage, and her life. Unfortunately, it did not take long before her husband began to feel annoyed by her melancholy and crabbiness, and he loved her less and less every day. Things changed quite suddenly. "First they were lovers, and then, it seemed without transition, they were enemies. She never understood it" (Parker, 1974: 190). She began to dislike her husband's drinking habit, something which previously she had found amusing she now found troubling. Fighting and drinking colored their marriage, and in the end Herbie decided to leave her without a divorce because he could not stand her anymore.

After Herbie left her, Hazel lived freely moving from one man to another. She still could find admirers although she had to be careful of her moods and treat her men extremely well because she was no longer considered as much fun as in her younger days; she was no longer thought of as a popular good sport and big blonde. Men, parties, and alcohol could not help her find happiness and she felt her life becoming harder and emptier. She could not stand it anymore and she tried to flee from her miserable life by committing suicide. Unfortunately (fortunately), her maid found her and saved her life, and once again she had to face the unavoidable music of her life as a miserable old blonde.

The Life and Times of Dorothy Parker

Dorothy Parker was born Dorothy Rothschild in New Jersey 1893 in a family of half Jewish and half Scottish ancestry. Sometimes if people asked her about her life and origin, she simply answered "I was just a little Jewish girl trying to be cute." (Keats, 1970:13). However, "she felt a constant resentment at being Jewish; life might have pleased her better if it had been her mother who had been a Jew and her father a Scot, and she had been born a Marston." (Gill. 1974: xxiii). When she met Edwin Pond Parker II, she thought of him as her Mr. Right who had a "clean name" and she decided to marry him. She continued to use his name which she preferred to her own although they were divorced some years later (Gill. 1974: xxiii). Mrs. Parker, then, was well known as "the most talked-about woman of her time:"

...She was for a while rich, famous, and powerful. She had two husbands, four lovers, a mansion in Beverly Hills, a country estate in Pennsylvania, and a series of apartments in New York. She was a central figure of the celebrated Algonquin Hotel Round Table; newspaper columnists quoted her, practically every bright remark of her day was attributed to her ... (Keats, 1970: 9).

During her long life, Parker experienced ups and downs in love as well as in her career. Divorce and betrayal colored her love life, and in her writing career she experienced "arts brevis. vita longa." In her day she was regarded as the most famous woman writer, and her works gained great success.

Her books of poems and short stories were immediate best sellers. Subscribers to The New Yorker would turn first of all to the column that she wrote. A college generation worshiped her, for she mirrored, expressed, and helped to establish a new style in life and art for the nation in the late nineteen-twenties and early nineteen-thirties (Keats, 1970: 9).

However, literary critics considered her as not being as productive as she should be, and that she lacked the depth of literary quality which she could have had if only she took her works more seriously (Gill,

1974: xviii). Still for all her strength and weaknesses, she would be remembered as one of the wittiest people in the world, and possibly also as the saddest and most cynical of women. This witty, sad, and cynical old woman aged 73 died in 1967, from natural causes, a fact that was ironical considering that her favorite theme in her works was the pleasing nature of death (Gill, 1974: xiii). She was no doubt a very extraordinary figure, not only as a woman but also as a writer of the Jazz Age.

As a woman, Parker was indeed also a controversial figure of her time. She was brought up and educated in an old-fashioned and conservative way.

When her formal education was completed, the acceptable thing for a young girl of Dorothy Parker's social class to do was to sit demurely at home, waiting for Mr. Right to come along. Society then pretended there was always just one Mr. Right for each pure young girl, and that he would somehow discover her address. In those days before the first World War, no well-bred young woman was expected, or even allowed to go to work, unless bleak fortune required her to do so. If worse come to worse, and a young woman had to work in order to eat, the most acceptable task for her was to teach music, for that would imply the dignity and cultivation to which she had been born (Keats, 1970: 29).

Little Dorothy would not have any of these things. She was too talented and intelligent to obey the conservative rules set by her traditional society. Her intelligence and talent demanded that she should have her own opinions, her own way of life, her own career, and a place of her own. As for the Mr. Right business, she did not sit waiting for him, but she looked for him, and in the end she chose him the way she liked him. She was indeed a woman ahead of her time, and "In Dorothy's youth, such girls not only were rare but were also viewed with alarm" (Keats, 1970: 30). She went further in pursuing her existence as a woman, and she even identified with feminism.

She ardently identified with the feminists who were demanding parity with men and the right to vote, although this enthusiasm

did not lead her to go out on the street herself: carrying a placard and chaining herself to a lamppost to make a point. Nevertheless, she said she believed in rights for women, and this was enough in itself to establish her difference from the still-Victorian Establishment (Keats, 1970: 30).

When the freedom came for women to express themselves, Parker enjoyed this freedom and the permissiveness of the twenties and the thirties with its motto of "anything goes." She wrote verses that celebrated "a woman's equal rights inside a sexual relationship, including the right of infidelity" (Gill, 1974: xvi). Parker herself was one of those flappers of the Jazz Age who wanted to have fun.

Newspapers, magazines, movies, and novels all told Americans that womanhood had changed, again. Young, hedonistic, sexual, the flapper soon became a symbol of the age with her bobbed hair, powdered nose, rouged cheeks, and shorter skirts. Lively and energetic, she wanted experience for its own sake. She sought out popular amusements in cabarets, dance halls, and movie theaters that no respectable middle-class woman would have frequented a generation before. She danced, smoked, and flaunted her sexuality to the horror of her elders (Evans, 1997: 176).

Yet all these triumphs and freedoms enjoyed by the flappers also brought a contradictory and complicated problem such as the exploitation of the female body as a public product used in advertisement. In courtship and marriage which now involved "romantic love, sexual pleasure, and companionship the responsibility still rested primarily on the shoulders of women, who had the most to lose" (Evans, 1997: 178). Complexity and controversy of the flappers in the twenties was also reflected in Parker's works. She herself also experienced and lived these controversies, no wonder people described her as the representative figure of the twenties and that her works also voiced the spirit of the twenties.

The Analysis

1. Parker's Characterization of Hazel Morse

a. Hazel as a Single Woman

As a young woman, Hazel had almost all the qualities of beauty that men of her time required. She was blonde and high-breasted, and she was proud of it.

Hazel Morse was a large, fair woman of the type that incites some men when they use the word "blonde" to click their tongues and wag their heads roguishly. She prided herself upon her small feet and suffered for her vanity, boxing them in snub-toed, high-heeled slippers of the shortest bearable size (Parker, 1974: 187).

Her beauty enabled her to work as a model in a wholesale dress establishment. She liked her job because it made it possible for her to meet numbers of men to spend "a couple of thousand evenings with them." She was popular among men, and she enjoyed being a good sport for her admirers.

Men liked her, and she took it for granted that the liking of many men was a desirable thing. Popularity seemed to her to be worth all the work that had to be put into achievement. Men liked you because you were fun, and when they liked you they took you out, and there you were. So, and successfully, she was fun. She was a good sport. Men liked a good sport (Parker, 187).

She could think of nothing else but to be popular and to stay a good sport among men as long as possible. She was not the only woman who believed in beauty, popularity, and fun, many other blonde women of her day shared the same principle.

No other form of diversion, simpler or more complicated, drew her attention. She never pondered if she might not be better occupied doing something else. Her ideas, or, better, her acceptances, ran right along with those of the other substantially built blondes in whom she found her friends (Parker, 187).

However, when she got older "she had little flashes of fear about her job" that demanded her always to be young, amusing, and well shaped. She finally realized that she could never be that way forever, and the next thing she started to think of was marriage.

She was delighted at the idea of being a bride; coquetted with it, prayed upon it ... She wanted to be married. She was nearing thirty now, and she did not take the years well (Parker, 188).

She thought that she had met her Mr. Right when she met Herbie Morse, a thin, quick, attractive, brown-eyed man with a large drinking habit whom she found very entertaining. Hazel "liked him immediately upon their meeting, and they were married six weeks after they had met" (Parker, 188).

b. Hazel Morse as a Wife

Hazel was delighted at her married life. She did all she could to start well the beginning of her life with her husband. She decorated their apartment, she took good care of Herbie and all of the housekeeping work. She did not even realize how tired she was because for her "it was a delight, a new game, a holiday, to give up being a good sport" (Parker, 189). She expressed her emotions and feelings freely, and believed Herbie would understand her well. She was so happy with her marriage.

She missed nobody. The old crowd, the people who had brought her and Herbie together, dropped from their lives, lingeringly at first. When she thought of this at all, it was only to consider it fitting. This was marriage. This was peace (Parker, 189).

Unfortunately, her happiness did not last long because Herbie discovered that he was no longer amused by Hazel. He was tired of Hazel and her melancholy. He was tired of his married life and he missed his days as a single man. He often did not come home to his wife; he felt that he just wanted to get out of it all. "There were longer and longer intervals between his leaving office and his arrival at the

apartment" (Parker, 190). Hazel did not understand this sudden change, and she was miserable seeing these changes. She spent her days just waiting for Herbie to come home and to be with her; she wanted to make him happy again. Somehow, things did not work out so well, and she did not know what to do about it. She fought hard for their marriage and happiness, but then she could no longer manage him.

She fought him furiously. A terrific domesticity had come upon her, and she would bite and scratch to guard it. She wanted what she called "a nice home." She wanted a sober, tender husband, prompt at dinner, punctual at work. She wanted sweet, comforting evenings (Parker, 191).

What she got was different from what she expected. Herbie hated her even more, and he would easily be angry at her, he even called her a lousy sport. Herbie's drinking habit made him more violent and abusive toward Hazel.

He would be immediately enraged. All right, crab; crab, crab, crab, crab, that was all she ever did. What a lousy sport she was! There would be scenes, and one or the other of them would rise and stalk out in fury ... The scenes became more violent. There were shouted invectives and pushes, and sometimes sharp slaps. Once she had a black eye (Parker, 191-2).

Drinking and fighting colored their everyday life. Hazel was willing to do anything to save their marriage, she even tried to drink the way Herbie did to make them closer but it brought them no nearer. Hazel felt desperate, she had been married to him for almost three years, and she did not want to lose him.

Each time he felt the place in a rage, he threatened never to come back. She did not believe him, nor did she consider separation. Somewhere in her head or her heart was the lazy, nebulous hope that things would change and she and Herbie settle suddenly into soothing married life. Here were her home, her furniture, her husband, her station. She summoned no alternatives (Parker, 192-3).

Her marriage was the most valuable thing in her life now, but she could no longer do anything to save it. Things became worse and worse and it was all beyond her control. She could not do anything when Herbie decided to move out and to leave her for good. They separated without a divorce and this finally ended their marriage, and Hazel was left alone.

c. Hazel Morse as a Divorcee

Hazel was not really a divorced woman because her husband left her without a divorce. They had separated for good, but she still continued to use his name describing herself as Mrs. Morse, as Herbie Morse's wife. However, the breakdown of their relationship meant that it was practically just like a divorce. After Herbie left her, Mrs. Morse felt lonelier than ever before, and she could not bear it. "In those days began the hatred of being alone that she was never to overcome. You could be by yourself when things were all right, but when you were blue you got the howling horrors"(Parker, 193). She tried to drink to forget her sorrow and loneliness. She lived her life day by day in a hazy kind of state as if she had not been alive at all. "She commenced drinking alone, little, short drinks all through the day ... Her life took on a dream-like quality. Nothing was astonishing"(Parker, 193). In this vulnerable state of mind, Mrs. Morse, then got acquainted with Mrs. Martin, a woman whom was just like Mrs. Morse herself.

A Mrs. Martin moved into the flat across the hall. She was a great blonde woman of forty, a promise in looks of what Mrs. Morse was to be. They made acquaintance, quickly became inseparable. Mrs. Morse spent her days in the opposite apartment. They drank together, to brace themselves after the drinks of the night before ... She never confided her troubles about Herbie to Mrs. Martin. The subject was too bewildering to her to find comfort in talk. She let it be assumed that her husband's business kept him much away. It was not regarded as important: husbands, as such, played but shadowy parts in Mrs. Martin's circles ... Mrs. Martin had no visible spouse; you were left to decide for yourself whether he was or was not dead (Parker, 193).

Mrs. Morse felt at home at Mrs. Martin's place where she could forget her misery and emptiness of life even if it was only for a moment. She enjoyed drinking, having parties, and playing poker with Joe who was Mrs. Martin's special admirer, and Joe's friends whom they called "The Boys."

The Boys were big red, good-humored men, perhaps forty-five, perhaps fifty. Mrs. Morse was glad of invitations to join the parties ... The Boys brought plenty of liquor along with whenever they came to Mrs. Martin's. Drinking with them, Mrs. Morse became lively and good-natured and audacious. She was quickly popular. When she had drunk enough to cloud her most recent battle with Herbie, she was excited by their approbation. Crab, was she? Rotten sport was she? Well, there were some that thought different (Parker, 194).

Mrs. Morse felt accepted in this Mrs. Martin's circle. She even had a special admirer named Ed. He was one of the Boys, and others soon accepted that Ed was Mrs. Morse's particular friend.

After Herbie left her, now it was Mrs. Morse and Ed. She knew that Ed was a married man from Utica with children and that he spent most of his time in New York City for business and pleasure. She did not care about that at all; she did not even really love him, she just wanted someone to be with her once in a while.

She accepted her relationship with Ed without question or enthusiasm. When he was away, she seldom thought definitely of him. He was good to her; he gave her frequent presents and a regular allowance (Parker, 197).

Mrs. Parker practically became Ed's mistress. When they had a dispute over a poker game with Mrs. Martin and The Boys, Mrs. Morse followed Ed's suggestion to move out and to share an apartment with him near the Grand Central. She gladly moved in with him but not with the joy and passionate enthusiasm she had once felt when she lived with Herbie for the first time in their marriage. Living with Ed, she hired a maid to

take care all the housekeeping work because she was tired and she had had enough of those drudgeries when she was with Herbie.

A colored maid came in every day to clean and to make coffee for her ... She was "through with that housekeeping stuff," she said, and Ed twenty years married to a passionately domestic woman, admired this romantic uselessness and felt doubly a man of the world in abetting it (Parker, 197).

It seemed that everything was fine but things were not as good as they appeared. Mrs. Morse had to be very careful of her moods when she was with Ed because he always "insisted upon gaiety." Ed did not like to see her sad or complaining, and he made it clear that it was her duty to make him pleased and happy.

He would not listen to admission of aches of weariness ... "Hey, listen, " he would say, "I got worries of my own, and plenty. Nobody wants to hear other people's troubles, sweeties. What you got to do, you got to be a sport and forget it. See? Well, slip us a little smile, then. That's my girl." ... She never had enough interest to quarrel with him as she had with Herbie, but she wanted the privileges of occasional admitted sadness. It was strange (Parker, 199).

Mrs. Morse had to fight her moods, sometimes she had to eat all her troubles and not let them out so that Ed would not notice she was moody. She could not allow her emotions to flow and express her feelings freely in sadness because Ed and their friends would be annoyed and angry.

"Why the hell don't you stay home and not go spoiling everybody's evening?" he had roared ... "What's the matter with you, anyway?" they would say. "Be your age, why don't you? Have a little drink and snap out of it" (Parker, 199).

To avoid her sadness and to maintain the gaiety of their life, Ed frequently took her to Jimmy's bar and to a club where Ed and his friends used to hang together and have fun. In this club, Mrs. Morse met many men and women, and immediately formed quick friendships. If

Ed was away, she liked to go to Jimmy's alone and would certainly join the people she knew and have drinks with them. Most of the men at Jimmy's were just like The Boys in Mrs. Martin's circle, and the women were just like Mrs. Morse herself.

The women at Jimmy's looked remarkably alike, and this was curious ... They were all big women and stout, broad of shoulder and abundantly breasted, ... They might have been thirty-six or forty-five or anywhere between ... They composed their titles of their own first name with their husbands' surnames ... Mrs. Florence Miller, Mrs. Vera Riley, Mrs. Lilian Black. This gave at the same time the solidity of marriage and the glamour of freedom. Yet only one or two were actually divorced. Most of them referred to their dimmed spouses; some, a shorter time separated, described them in terms of great biological interest. Several were mothers, each of an only child ... a boy at school somewhere, or a girl being cared for by a grandmother. Often, well on toward morning, there would be displays of Kodak portraits and of tears (Parker, 198).

These women, just like Mrs. Morse also, lived depending upon the kindness of their particular friends. In return for their financial kindness, these women would take care of them well. It seemed like long-term prostitution or kept women or mistress relationships, but that was the way they lived their lives.

They were comfortable women, cordial and friendly and irrepressibly matronly. Their was the quality of ease. Become fatalistic, especially about money matters, they unworried. Whenever their funds dropped alarmingly, a new donor appeared; this had always happened. The aim of each was to have one man, permanently, to pay all her bills, in return for which she would have immediately given up other admirers and probably would have become exceedingly fond of him: for the affections of all of them were, by now, unexacting, tranquil, and easily arranged. This end, however, grew increasingly difficult yearly. Mrs. Morse was regarded as fortunate (Parker, 198-9).

Mrs. Morse who was no doubt as miserable as she could be was still considered lucky by others, and she continued living in this way with Ed for almost three years just as long as her married life with Herbie. Eventually, Ed reluctantly had to leave her, he hated leaving her but he had to move to Florida with his family, and he would only be able to see Mrs. Morse twice or three times a year. Meanwhile, Mrs. Morse did not miss him at all, she still continued living her life at Jimmy's with many other new men.

After Ed left, Charley became the main figure in her life. She classified him and spoke of him as "not so bad". There was nearly a year of Charley; then she divided her time between him and Sidney, another frequenter of Jimmy's; then Charley slipped away altogether (Parker, 200).

Mrs. Morse again and again lived her free way of life with a number of different men: "... and then there was Billy. No - after Sidney came Fred, then Billy, then Art," (Parker, 200) and numerous other particular short friends. Still, she felt so lonely and empty. She was so deeply miserable that she could not stand it any longer, and decided to end her life with the help of lots of veronals and whisky.

She was tired so much of the time. Tired and blue. Almost everything could give her the blues. Those old horses she saw on Sixth Avenue - struggling and slipping along the car-tracks, or standing at the curbs, their heads dropped level with their worn knees. The tightly stored tears would squeeze from her eyes as she teetered past on her aching feet in the stubby, champagne-colored slippers ... The thought of death came and stayed with her and lent her a sort of drowsy cheer. It would be nice, nice and restful, to be dead ... There was no settled, shocked moment when she first thought of killing herself it seemed to her as if the idea had always been with her ... (Parker, 201).

She felt life was unbearably cruel and painful, and she felt just like those old tired horses with extremely heavy burdens on their backs. She could not bear it anymore, and she thought death was the only and best way out of this cruel world. She almost made her ride to the other world but,

unfortunately, when she was dying her maid found her and saved her. Once again, Mrs. Morse had to face all the music of her life without any other way out except the veronal and whisky that would cheer her up and ease her troubles for a moment, and soon enough she had to embrace her destiny as an old divorced blonde in an unbearably cruel world.

2. Feminine Stereotypes and Women's Lives in Patriarchy.

If we see Hazel Morse in Parker's "Big Blonde" by using the perspective of the 1990s feminists, both the female character and the story might seem a bit dated. Hazel as the female character was no doubt a total flapper herself, superficial and dependent. However, a study of the story and of the female character in "Big Blonde" would still be interesting to see how far gender relations have progressed.

At the very beginning of the story, Parker had already characterized Hazel as a man's woman. She willingly placed herself as men's doll and good sport whose main role was to please and to entertain them; she was the men's big blonde. She was even willing to suffer to maintain her position as their good sport; and she certainly held the idea that beautiful blonde women like her were born "to be chosen, admired, and sought after, that to succeed in being chosen follows upon certain attributes: physical beauty ..." (Ruth, 1980: 250). She did everything she could to meet the standard of beauty set by the men of her time so that she would be liked and admired by them. She felt happy, joyous, and secure among her admirers. What she did strengthened the feminine stereotypes of sensuality and narcissism: women as the object of sex and beauty. Hazel accepted this objectification; and as a result when she got older she suffered from a certain anxiety, the fear that she would no longer be able to meet the standard of beauty set by her admirers. R.D. Laing also noted this problem in which he stated that the patriarchal culture tended to objectify people, women especially, and it contributed to the anxiety of narcissism suffered by women (Aisenberg, 1994:67-8). As she got older,

Hazel realized that she could not maintain forever her position as men's good sport. She began to think of something else that would give her more permanent security and happiness. She had no other alternative but marriage. Hazel, just like any other flapper of her time, saw marriage as a promise of happiness.

Women understood that their economic security, emotional fulfillment, and social status all depended on a successful marriage. If they failed to marry, they risked becoming "dried up old maids" ... Anxieties about marital success curbed some of the flappers 's new physical freedoms (Evans, 1997: 178).

Hazel finally found Herbie Morse, her Mr. Right, to fulfill the promise of her happiness. She was just like millions of girls in the old days who believed in their favorite fairy tales that ended with marriage, and eventually they would live happily ever-after.

In the first month of her marriage, she found the happiness that she looked for. She believed and made herself believe that she had experienced all that the pervasive American mystique of marriage promised to women like her in her time:

You will have someone to make you happy. You will be loved and cherished till death. You will be cared for and protected from all the dangers of the world. You will have sexual intimacy and satisfaction. You will have someone to understand and support you. You will have companionship and safety from loneliness. You will have a father for your children. You will be socially secured as part of a couple. You will have a place in the world, a meaning, and you will love it. You will gain status and prestige as someone's chosen wife. You will not be an "old maid." You will be financially secure. You will be happy (Ruth, 1980: 252).

She really believed in all those promises. She was excited at her marriage, her new life where she could express herself freely in happiness and sadness: "Wedded and relaxed, she poured her tears freely. To her who had laughed too much, crying was delicious" (Parker, 1874: 189). She for the first time in her life felt really happy without the

pressure of being a good sport. Their marriage was a typical traditional patriarchal arrangement: Hazel's role as the wife was to take care of her husband and to manage their household, while Herbie as the husband was the breadwinner of the family. In a patriarchal society this division of roles is common: "Socially, space also shapes a woman's definition, her gendered sense of her identity. Women are projected into a domestic space, which is again an interior space, a space which contains the container, and within which the activities of the household are enacted" (Aisenberg, 1994: 189). Hazel did everything to please and to take care of Herbie. Instead of being men's good sport, now she was completely Herbie's good sport. She did all she could to make her husband a complete man, she followed exactly the old motto that "The woman's function is to inspire the man, whereupon he proceeds to develop and eventually to produce his completed work" (Ellmann, 1960: 253). She did not mind doing all she did for her husband, she even did it with love because in return she believed that she would also get the security, emotional fulfillment, and happiness that she looked for, and furthermore it was her duty as a wife.

Her concept of marriage was of a typically traditional marital arrangement: "The back bones of the agreement require that the husband is to provide the physical necessities of life through his income - shelter, food, clothing, and so on --- and that in return for this the wife is to provide care of the home and the family" (Ruth, 1980: 253). These arrangements seemed to work well and she experienced moments of true happiness during the first month of the marriage, unfortunately, after that their marriage became hell on earth. Hazel's role as a wife was to serve and to love her husband, and when Herbie was no longer satisfied with her service and love, he simply dumped her. Herbie was tired of all the boring routines of their married life, of Hazel's melancholy, and of Hazel's dependence. He was not amused, and he became violent and abusive when he was tired. He complained about anything that his wife spoke of or did, especially about money matters. He thought that Hazel spent all his money carelessly while he was the one who had to work hard for it.

Herbie was getting, in her words, something awful about money. To ask him for it brought him an instant row... "What the hell do you do with it?" he would say. "Shoot it all on Scotch?"... "I try to run this house half-way decent." She would retort. "Never thought of that, did you? Oh, no, his lordship couldn't be bothered with that" (Parker, 194).

In the traditional marriage, the woman's place as a housewife and as a dependent spouse is very common, and it often brings trouble and frustration especially for women.

Wives do not receive a salary for their work, although their husbands share their incomes with them, sometimes generously ... The money they are given by their husbands is perceived by all, institutions, and individuals, as a grant. Therefore, they must endure the disadvantages and indignities of pensioners. Dependent wives are cautioned as to how they are to spend their husband's money; they are to express gratitude for sums earmarked for their own personal use (such as clothing), and they must wait until their husbands decide it is time to replace the washer. To put aside a savings of their own "granted" money is perceived as deceptive and is rarely done, and wives sometimes find themselves trapped in intolerable marriages by finances (Ruth, 1980: 256).

Their money matters also became one of Hazel's and Herbie's reasons to fight with each other in their marriage. Hazel's dependence and neediness as a housewife also strengthened the feminine stereotype that women are dependent and needful; and in Hazel's case, this was true. She became unhappier every day. Her marriage was really a hell on earth, and it made her depressed and frustrated. In the beginning, her marriage promised her happiness and security, or at least those were what she wished and hoped for. In the end, it only gave her great misery. If only she knew that "married women experience greater depression, anxiety, and fear than single women" (Ruth, 1980: 252), she would have done better than just thinking of marriage as the best alternative in her life.

After Herbie left her, Hazel still bore the name of her deserting husband to maintain her social status as a respectable woman in society. In a patriarchal society, the wife's social status depends on her husband's social status. In the society, when she married Herbie Morse, Hazel was seen as Herbie Morse's wife, she was Mrs. Morse. After the marriage failed and ended, she was still seen as Mrs. Morse since in a patriarchal culture "one is never free of a once-married state, but instead is always perceived as a "formerly married person." when a marriage ends there follows a period of aftermarriage, a time with its own particular character and issues, a time that ends either in remarriage or death. It is a time experienced more by women than by men" (Ruth, 1980: 260). Hazel did not only bear her husband's name but also bore all the painful experiences of their marriage as a dependent woman after the marriage ended. She could not stand living alone; she lacked the personal strength, preparation, and experience to live on her own without a man. She was not ready for it, she was just a typical traditional woman who was never encouraged "to live life alone well and happily without a man."

As we might expect, the woman of a traditional marriage, a woman who has built her life around and patterned her behaviors after the prescribed patriarchal model, truncated and distorted as it is, is apt to find her condition after marriage similarly truncated and distorted. Traditional imperatives fix a woman's whole identity within her marriage and make her dependent on it in a very profound way; the more traditional the arrangements of the relationship, the more profound the dependence (Ruth, 1980: 261).

Hazel's experience of life as a single woman, a married woman in marriage and after the marriage was a typical picture and example of a woman who had lived by the rules set by men for men's sake, and it was the woman who always had the most to lose. She had no idea at all what to do with her life after her husband left her.

"Herbie blew today, "she said. "Going to live outwest."

"That so? "he said. He looked at her..."

"Think he's gone for good, do you?" he asked.

*"Yeah, "she said. "I know he is. I know. Yeah."
"You going to live on across the hail just the same?" he said.
"Know what you're going to do?"
"Gee, I don't know," she said. "I don't give much of a damn"
(Parker, 196).*

She was not used to living alone without a man. That was why after Herbie left her, she depended her life upon one man after man. Still, the story was just the same, she was the dependent one whose duty was to please and to amuse her man. She was not even allowed to express her moods and feelings when she was with her man because she was there to entertain him and not to annoy him with all her crabbiness.

*He would run his hand lingeringly over her back and shoulders ...
"Some dizzy blonde, eh? "he would say. "Some doll" (Parker, 194).*

*Let's get the hell out of here, "Ed said. "What I want you to have is
a place near the Grand Central. Make it easier for me" (Parker,
197).*

*Nobody wants to hear other people's troubles, sweetie. What you
got to do, you got to be a sport and forget it. See? Well, slip us a
little smile, then. That's my girl." ... But she was instantly
undesirable when she was low in spirits. Once, at Jimmy's, when
she could not make herself lively, Ed had walked out and left her
(Parker, 199).*

Hazel herself who was all the time known as emotional and sensitive did not even have the privilege of expressing her feelings: "She fell readily into the habit of tears during the first year of her marriage. Even in her good sport days, she had been known to weep lavishly and disinterestedly on occasion "... All sorrows became her sorrows; she was Tenderness." (Parker, 189) As a woman, Hazel had been stereotyped as sensitive and emotional. Still, she could not even express this feminine stereotype if it did not amuse her man because once again her function was to serve and to love him, and not to make him upset.

*In patriarchy, women in their sexual roles are ideally to function
not as self-affirming, self-fulfilling human being, but as beautiful*

dolls to be looked at, touched, felt, experienced for arousal, used for titillation (for sexual release or the sale of merchandise), to be enjoyed, consumed, and ultimately used up and traded in for a newer model thing. We may respond or even enjoy, but not for our own pleasure (only bad women are selfish) but for the greater pleasure of the user. Our sexual role in patriarchy is to be acted upon, not to act ourselves, except insofar as this served the users' interest or needs (Jouve, 1998: 286).

This function was applied to Hazel as Herbie's wife in their marriage. The same experience happened again to her after the marriage ended and she became Ed's mistress. Ed, who was happily married to a passionate domestic woman with great children of their own, did not want anything from Hazel except pleasure and fun. He only wanted her as "Sexual Playmate," he did not care at all about her feelings or emotional needs. Once again, Hazel Morse was trapped in a cruel patriarchal world ruled by men for men's pleasure; she could not do anything to change it except playing by all their rules and becoming their doll and good sport.

3. Possible Backgrounds That May Influence Parker's Characterization of Hazel Morse in "Big Blonde."

It is difficult to understand Parker's view towards women because she is widely known as a great cynic and ironic person as well as a writer. If we take every word she wrote and said literally, we miss her cynicism and irony and we will possibly misunderstand her real intention and view. That is why attempting to analyze the meaning behind the lines in her works as well as in her remarks is very important and helpful when seeking to understand her view and ideas better.

Parker herself had stated very clearly in her works (short stories, poems, essays, and reviews) as well as in her own direct declaration that she hated women: "I hated women. They got on my nerves:"

Since she had a gift for evisceration: "Women: A Hate Song" enabled her to enjoy an orgy, happily lashing all the women she had never been able to stand. Those she hated most virulently were the ones who sewed their own clothing, the ones who scanned the newspapers for recipes and were forever telling her that they had to hurry home to see about dinner. Oh, she exploded. "how I hate that kind of woman." (Meade, 1988: 37)

Parker's friends revealed that as a writer, Parker's most fervent prayer had been "Please, God don't let me 'write like a woman" (Calhoun, 1992: xiv). Parker's remarks may literally not simply signify her hatred toward women. This kind of hatred, on the contrary, may even reflect her deep hatred toward the social injustices that place women in the domestic space. Parker's hatred of the picture of a good and ideal housewife may also reflect her refusal to the kind of woman who is unconsciously and ignorantly willing to be victimized as a subordinated being by the patriarchal system. This opinion may not be true, but it may also be considering her cynical and ironical nature.

Parker loved the company of men. This statement was completely true. She did not only love a man, but she definitely loved man. She herself once openly declared to a reporter. "There was", she told the reporter, "nothing more fun than a man" (Keats, 1997, 286). Her love for men was clearly seen in the number of men she had during her life: two husbands, four lovers, and numerous small affairs. She always loved and enjoyed to be among men who adored and admired her. She gladly embraced her title as the queen of the Algonquin Hotel Round Table. "It happened to be true. She much preferred the company of men. If being one of the fellows was pleasant, being the only female among males was her ideal situations" (Meade, 1998: 37). In the twenties, Parker was well known for her love affairs with men whether these affairs were romantic, notorious, comic, or even tragic. She had had many kinds and types of men in her life: the single, the married, the rich, the penniless, the loving, the opportunist, the faithful, the playboy, the straight, and the gay. She loved them all in her own way even after they betrayed, left, and hurt her.

Nearly everyone warned Dorothy that Charley was only, interested in a good time --- he was, ostensibly, married --- but she fell in love and started that would for the next decade become a horrible pattern with several men: she beseeched, he temporized; she whined, he withdrew; she accused, he cheated; she sobbed, he left ... Dorothy's romantic disasters puzzled many observers. Many men found her quite attractive, even after she started gaining weight (Silverstein, 1996: 28).

People who read "Big Blonde" and also had the knowledge of Parker's biographical background will immediately identify Hazel Morse, the female character, with Parker, the writer herself. It was true that there were many similarities between Hazel Morse's life and Parker's own experience of life. It was not only that they both were women who loved to be among their male admirers but also in their experiments with alcohol and suicide. Parker maybe used some of her own experience to characterize Hazel Morse, but definitely they were also two different kinds of women.

In writing about Hazel Morse, Dorothy Parker had written about herself, but of course the Hazel Morse in the story was not Dorothy Parker. The fictional Mrs. Morse could not possibly have seen in herself what Dorothy Parker could see in herself. Mrs. Morse was a big, blowsy, dumb blonde of the lower classes who associated with traveling salesmen in cheap bars. Mrs. Parker was an intelligent little brunette of the upper classes who associated with fascinating men in expensive bars (Keats, 1997: 146).

Parker who had experienced and lived her own life as a woman, and as a writer who had pessimistically and pathetically characterized her fictional female character as a single woman, a wife, and a divorcee, wanted to convey her views and ideas that it was so difficult for a woman to live happily in a cruel world ruled by men. Even though these men might have declared that they loved and respected women, had acknowledged the existence of female sexuality and had prescribed sexual pleasure separate from procreative intention, and they wanted to have fun and also wanted to share fun with their women, still there was

little fun in that sort of fun because it was women who had much to lose as a victim. That was why Parker characterized Hazel Morse in the most pessimistic and pathetic way possible so that Parker could present the evidence that for most women like Hazel who lived in a cruel society ruled by selfish and dominating men there was no other way for her to live except to be a victim and a loser. That was why Parker boldly declared that she hated women because she refused to be a victimized woman like the one in her story. The good and ideal women whom she saw were only pictures and the ideas of women shaped by men for their own sake. Her talent and intelligence enabled her to see this condition, and she demanded more than just being their women, she deserved to have the same right to live her life as men did. Parker no doubt was a woman with all her feminine nature, yet she also had all the best qualities as a writer as well as a human being equal to her fellow male writers and friends.

This tiny, big-eyed woman with the mind of a man ... Perhaps any woman who lives her life all the way up qualifies for the epithet, just as a man may be defined as one who actually lives his life.
(Keats, 1997: 305)

Parker was definitely a woman who demanded her full right as a human being and she did not want to compromise this entitled right as a complete human being in any other way. In all respects, she greatly and truly deserved it.

Conclusion

In her short story "Big Blonde," Parker depicted the life of a beautiful blonde woman as a single woman, a wife and a divorcee. Parker characterized Hazel Morse, her female character in the story, in the most pessimistic and pathetic way. As a single woman, Hazel was characterized as narcissistic and superficial; as a wife, she was needful and dependent; and as a divorcee, she was even worse being pathetic and suicidal. It seemed that she bore all the feminine stereotypes negatively placed on women.

Parker on purpose characterized her female character in the most pessimistic and pathetic way in order to reveal the difficult realities faced by the women of her time in living their lives in a society ruled by men for the sake of men's interest and need. Parker's hatred toward women often openly expressed in her works as well as in her direct remarks in her irony and cynicism seemed to voice a protest and the demand to refuse the victimization and domestication of women set by men in the patriarchal society. In "Big Blonde," she vividly conveyed the struggle of a woman in cruel world ruled by dominating men, and in the end the woman had no chance except to be a victim and a loser.

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Family Narrative and The Family As A Discourse in Suchen Christine Lim's *The Lies That Build A Marriage* (A Feminist Literary Criticism)

Introduction

Family becomes the centre stage to portray the lives and society of the past and present day Singapore in Suchen Christine Lim's novel *Fistful of Colours* and her collected short stories *The Lies That Build a Marriage*. Family narrative and faded photos of family build and move the plot of the story and connect all the characters and their lives in *Fistful of Colours*. Meanwhile, *The Lies That Build a Marriage* as its subtitle suggests, "the stories of the unsung, unsaid and celebrated in Singapore," depicts different family structures and experience; and their 'Otherness' and being the 'Other' outside the idealized family norms promoted by the Singapore government and politicians, become the ties that bind thirteen different stories in this collected stories.

This short paper focuses on Lim's collected stories, *The Lies That Build a Marriage* only and intends to analyze the use of family and family narrative as a structural and aesthetic unity of Lim's ten short stories in the collection. Furthermore, this research also attempts to unveil the significance of such family narrative in Lim's short stories. "Family" has been used by the patriarchy as a "discourse" to dictate gender role and assign women to their domestic sphere. The term discourse in this paper refers to "the specific structure of statements, terms, notions, and beliefs that categorize women. These are found in institutional and organizational behaviour as well as in language and texts." (McDowell and Pringle, 1996: 7)

Through the perspective of feminist literary criticism, this paper argues that family and family narrative in Lim's collected stories do not only become the aesthetic vehicle to unite the structure of her works but at the same time also serve as a discourse, a sign, a representation of Lim's politics of writing. As a female writer, Lim uses and appropriates 'family' with its patriarchal discourse as the very weapon to challenge the domination of the phallogocentrism in order to rewrite the Singapore history through the female perspective, thus producing 'herstory' to voice the experience and lives of the muted groups of different race, class, and gender in Singapore of the past and present.

Redefining and Rethinking about the Family

The family and the term family itself have undergone changes from time to time. People constantly try to understand this changing nature of the family; and because of its complexity, experts often have to put the family in the quotation mark whenever they discuss it. The contemporary issue about the family is no longer a traditional question of "What is the family?" but some skeptical inquiries such as "Is there a family?" or "Does the family exist?" However, without ignoring such complex problem of the family debate and in attempt to understand the basic issues concerning the family, this paper will start with a traditional definition of the family.

Sociologically, the family is a social institution and a social system. As a social institution, it meets broad societal goals that center around intimate relationships and the reproduction and socialization of children. As a social system, it has many interdependent components with major differentiations by gender, race, class, age, size, and so forth (Eshleman, 1994: 2)

In this perspective, the family is a fixed social category with certain fixed structures and functions; and in general the image of the family in this definition is the idealized nuclear family (a middle-class married heterosexual couple with two healthy children; and the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is the homemaker). This nuclear family

becomes the standard to evaluate its structures and functions. Hence such standard also brings about social phenomenon such as “the dysfunctional family” and other “deviated forms” of the family as suggested also by Dalley (1996) that “within ...the ideology of familism, non-family forms are deemed to be deviant and/or subversive” (in Bernardes, 1997: 3). The traditional model and definition of the family is no longer relevant and consistent with “the realities of today’s relationships: remarriages, dual careers, childless couples, one-parent households, same-sex unions, gender inequalities, abusive partners, and intergenerational disruptions” (Eshleman, 1994: 2). Therefore, there are many attempts to redefine the family and to rethink about family not in terms of its structure and stability, or its traditional portrayals, norms and standard but more in terms of its process and change to meet the contemporary social realities and problems.

The Family: a Feminist Perspective

One influential endeavor to redefine and rethink about the family is done through the feminist perspectives. Feminist theories and perspectives view gender as very basic and crucial to all social structures, institutions, and organizations; and feminist scholars also see “the family” and the ideology of family play a very significant role in performing these patriarchal social norms and values.

Ideals of family relationships have become enshrined in our legal, social, religious and economic system which, in turn, reinforce the ideology and penalize or ostracize those who transgress it. Thus there are very real pressures on people to behave in certain ways, to lead their lives according to acceptable norms and patterns. Patriarchal ideology is embedded in our socio-economic and political institutions, indeed ... Most of these are presented and defined in terms of ‘the family’, and the family is in turn seen as the bulwark of our culture. The pressures of patriarchal ideology are acted out – and reacted against – in our inter-personal relationships, in marriage and non-marriage, in love and hate,

having children and not having children. In short, much of our social behaviour occurs in, and is judged on the basis of, the ideology of 'the family'” (McDowell and Rosemary Pringle, 1996: 74).

Feminisms challenge patriarchal and sexist notions and concepts about the family because through the family patriarchy defines the gender roles and women's sphere. The home and the family become the source of oppression and sexism where women and experience gender inequality, oppression, and subordination as revealed in some published research and books by the feminists such as Gavron's *Captive Wife* (1966), Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1971), Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1972), Hartmann's *The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class and Political Struggle* (1981), Delphy and Leonard in *Familiar Exploitation* (1992), and Gittins' *The Family in Question* (1993). Some feminist scholars such as Oakley (1974) proposes an argument that in order “to liberate housewives, the family must be abolished” (in Bernardes, 1997: 43). Meanwhile, other feminist scholars like Gubrium and Holstein in their book *What Is Family?* (1990) insist to replace the idea of “the family” with “being family” that suggests a conception of the processes rather than a mere definition. Others like Bender (1967) prefer the concept of “household” to avoid the problem of the typical family model because “a household may be thought of as a ‘residence group that carries out domestic functions’ whilst ‘a family’ should be seen essentially as a ‘kinship group” (in Bernardes, 1997: 45). These proposals of concepts and ideas to replace “the family” have not yet succeeded in contributing new understandings and reinterpretations of the family nature and the family studies.

Eshleman (1994: 67-8) has mapped three issues on feminism and family studies conducted by feminist researchers:

- a. Women—or any group that is defined on the basis of age, class, race, ethnicity, disability, or sexual preference—are oppressed.
- b. The *personal* is *political*. In other words, nothing is exclusive to women's personal lives; everything has social ramifications.

The social system imposes a reality on everyday life and is not separate from it. Social structure must be taken into account.

- c. Feminists have a double vision of reality: They need to be successful in the current system while working to change oppressive practices and institutions.

Some feminists, among other is Myra Marx Ferree, also attempt to debunk the myth and its false notion that “the family is a private world” where women are the reigning queens with unlimited power and responsibility for the mental and physical welfares of all the family members and even “to the prevention of male violence.” Furthermore, in her feminist perspective, Ferree aims to “redefine families as arenas of gender and generational struggles, crucibles of caring and conflict, where claims for an identity are rooted, and separateness and solidarity are continually created and contested” (in Eshleman, 1994: 68). In line with Ferree’s feminist agenda, Deborah Chambers in her book *Representing the Family* (2001) follows the ideas of Barthes, Butler, and Foucault to analyze the family as a discursive construct and regulatory ideal. Chambers borrows Barthes’ idea of myth and extends it into ‘myths of familial origins as “signs that convey familiar and powerful systems of cultural beliefs in such a way as to naturalise them” (Chambers, 2001: 34). Although many scholars have unveiled the false notions of these myths,

Several fundamental premises are still taken for granted and Davidoff et al. refer to this set of myths as a public story, an unhelpful public story because it consistently foregrounds the nuclear family and denies the complexities of familial relationships that actually existed in our recent past (Chambers, 20001: 34).

Similarly, Chamber extends Foucault’s ideas of the body as a site power exercise and the production of subjectivity to analyze the discursive formation of the family as “a sign within the politics of representation.” Chambers also uses Butler’s concept of performativity to analyze the family as a ‘socially scripted behaviour’ that needs to be acted out, enacted and re-enacted, and repeatedly performed because “performativity is that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to

produce what it names” (in Chambers, 2001: 28). Interestingly, Chambers also points out the role of the mass media and photography (the family photography and album in particular) in repeatedly performing and immortalizing these family discursive rituals in which women participate and play an important role in this family practice and culture.

Meanwhile, regardless of different themes and perspectives that feminist scholars focus in the family studies, Linda Thompson through her feminist frame of reference suggests that a feminist agenda for family studies should include “experience embedded in broader context, the struggle to adapt to the contradictions of family life, a vision of nonoppressive families, diversity among women and families, and rethinking the discipline.” (in Eshleman, 1994: 69). In its essence, feminist perspectives on the family studies should not only work on the critical and theoretical plane only but should also attempt to make social activity, social activism, and social justice possible so that equality and respect for differences finally come to live in the society. In similar fashion, this paper also borrows those different feminist themes and ideas in the family studies to analyze the family as a discourse in Lim’s *The Lies That Build a Marriage*.

Family Narrative and the Family as a Discourse in Lim’s *The Lies that Build a Family*

In order to facilitate the discussion of the family as a discourse in Lim’s collected stories, this paper will firstly conduct the preliminary analytical step to analyze different portrayals of the family in each story. This paper then will use this preliminary analysis to study the construction of Lim’s narrative discourse in relation to her gender as a woman and a writer as well as her race background as an Asian woman of Chinese ancestry.

The image of the family depicted in the ten short stories in this collection is mostly outside the popular image of the idealized nuclear family. In *The Lies That Build a Marriage*, there are single-parent

families either because of divorce or the death of one partner, interracial family, unmarried mother, 'dysfunctional' nuclear and extended families, family with aging members, step family, and homosexual families.

1. Single Parenting Families and Step Families

The image of the single-parent families dominates the depiction of the family structures in "The Morning After": the narrator's mother is a widow who had to raise her two children alone (the narrator and her brother Cheng Lock) after the death of her husband. When the narrator married at her early age, her brother Cheng Lock continues to live with their mother until he is forty one. The mother is a good homemaker and provider who takes care of all her children's needs, paying all the bills, cooking, cleaning, and even buying underwear for Cheng Lock when he is already forty one years old. The narrator herself is also a single-parent by divorce and raises her two sons, Daniel and David well despite of the shocking confession of David's being gay. She blames her divorce ("the idea of the dysfunctional family because of the absence of a 'father' as the male role model for the son's sexuality") as the cause of his son's condition and sexual preference. However, afterward she reflects that this is not the case because one happily married couple she knows also has two gay sons. Cheng Lock's fiancée is also a single mother with two sons, and his plan to marry her seems to upset his mother. In spite of these problems and conflicts, they try to accept and support one another.

Divorce, single-parenting, and domestic violence are also mentioned in "Usha and My Third Child." Vivienne Chua, the narrator of the story, works as a counseling volunteer in a crisis centre to help women with problems among others are:

Abused foreign domestic workers, abused wives and children, and unmarried mothers. There were twenty-four women and six children staying at the centre. Four mothers and their children had run away from violent husbands and fathers. The rest were maids

from India and Indonesia who had been beaten, scalded, molested or raped by their employers (Lim, 2007: 33-34).

The narrator tries to help Usha, a pregnant teenager (only seventeen years old) to follow her own decision for her own future with the baby and settle with her own family to support her. The narrator herself is a wife with two daughters whose husband does not have a stable financial source has to accommodate her own widowed mother and her two teenage brothers. This financial difficulty and crowded living arrangement make her encounter a difficult choice to keep her pregnancy or to do an abortion. She decides to do the abortion and finally two years later divorces her husband. The story ends with the celebration of Mother's Day when Usha is already twenty-one, graduating as a nurse, and her son is already in nursery school; meanwhile, the narrator will celebrate the day with her two daughters, and alone in the night she will remember her third child. Single parenting, pregnancy at early age, domestic abuse and poverty also become the theme of "The Tragedy of My Third Eye." Poor and fatherless, little Ping-ping, the narrator of the story had to be raised by her grandmother and grew up without knowing her biological father and only recently found out that the woman she used to call as Ah Koo her aunt is actually her own biological mother. Her mother took her away from her grandmother's house in a supposedly to be a poor rural area to live a new life in a very crowded row townhouse of a poor urban neighborhood. Their poverty also drives her mother and her mother's sister into prostitution business and this poverty possibly also makes her mother become abusive to her.

Inter-racial marriage, stepfamilies, and the absence of the father in the family are depicted in "Christmas Memories of a Chinese Stepfather." Bob Lim, the Chinese narrator of the story and his brother Kit are raised by their mother after their father left them since he was eight and Kit was six. His Indian girlfriend, Alice George, whom he finally marries to, is previously also a divorcee with two sons. As a child who grew up without the presence of his own father, Bob Lim attempts to be a good father even though only a stepfather to Alice's two sons. Nevertheless,

Bob is indeed a good stepfather, and his stepsons feel closer and more at home with him than with their own biological father who has remarried to another woman, and she turns to be an abusive stepmother to them. Love, good intention, and cross-cultural understanding from both Bob and Alice do not really escape them from the marital problems, yet they try hard to make their marriage work, and for Bob, Christmas becomes the good time of reflection and contemplation to face the uncertain future with positive perspectives.

Another story with the Christmas setting, inter-racial marriage, and divorce is “Christmas at Singapore Casket.” Michelle, the narrator of the story is a lawyer, her father Mah-Li or Marley O’Connor is a businessman with half Chinese and half Irish ancestry, and her mother is a writer who writes in English despite of her Chinese ancestry. Her parents had already divorced when she was still young and they have a joint custody to raise her and her brother Leonard. Her mother remains single and actively pursues the writing career to support her life because after the divorce she was not given a fair share of the family wealth and property from Mah-Li although during their marriage she did contribute a lot to his company business; and instead Mah-Li left his property to Joan his new wife. Michelle was disappointed with her father’s inability to be generous with her mother; yet at the end, her mother praises her father’s generosity in donating all his organs away on his death.

2. The Families of Choice: Homosexual/ Lesbian Families

Meanwhile, “My Two Mothers” portrays the homosexual families, in this case lesbian families, and questions the definition of the family in Singapore. Kwai Chee or Precious Pearl, the narrator of this story is adopted and raised by the two old women, Yee Ku and Loke Ku. Both women are poor and uneducated; they both came from southern China and immigrated to Singapore and become *Amah Jieh* or traditional Chinese domestic servants in Singapore. Both are good providers and caring parents to Pearl, yet she is not happy to be their daughter

because she feels that her family is not “normal.” However, her unhappy feeling seems not to have sprung from the reality that she is raised by two unmarried women living together because her friends, Joyce Lee and Julie Nazareth, are also raised by two unmarried women, an Indian and a Chinese, living together, and Pearl has no problem with such family structure and condition, as a matter of fact she even envies her friends’ family. The reason is not simply because of the lesbian family structure but more because of class and education: Her two mothers are poor and illiterate, while her friends’ mothers are educated middle-class. Pearl feels comfortable in the company of such family and open-mindedly questions and mocks the ideal concept of the nuclear family as promoted by the Singapore government:

‘That Mr Chan Soo Beng in the Prime Minister’s Office. He defines a family as one man, one woman and their children,’ Miss Lee told us.

‘Oh yeah, absolutely. People whose parents have died are orphans, not family, don’t you know?’

‘What about widows, Mum? By his definition, widows and their children are not families either,’ Julie said.

‘Or ... or,’ Joyce jumped in, ‘what about one grandma, one unmarried uncle and the children of his dead sister? Is that a family?’

‘Of course not, silly!’ Julie scoffed. ‘According to Mr Chan a family is one man, his wife and their children!’

‘Jeepers, such a broad definition! That should include everybody in Singapore! What about us, Mum?’

There was a pause. Then Miss Nazareth said, ‘Some families are born; some families are made.’

‘But ours,’ Miss Lee looked at Joyce and Julie, ‘is especially cooked. We selected our ingredients.’ (Lim, 2007: 23)

The definition and understanding of the nuclear family do not facilitate and tolerate other forms of the family structures and since the concept and norm of the heterosexual nuclear family have been repeatedly performed over time most people see it as normal and natural while other family structures will be deemed 'abnormal' thus Butler's theory is at work in this case because in such way 'gender' and 'sexuality' are also produced. The absence of even the single member of such nuclear family will already disrupt the idealized image of the nuclear family defined; moreover, the existence of homosexual family will certainly "subvert the category of normal 'sexuality' by untying sexuality from gender ... As such the family becomes an important site of performativity... 'families of choice', subversive possibilities come to the fore, making 'gender trouble', undermining old binary restrictions" (Chambers, 2001: 29). In this case, Giddens's argument "to focus on lesbian and gay families of choice as the vanguard of change in meanings of familiness, as they have the greatest potential to disrupt and weaken dominant family discourse based on heterosexual/reproductive discourses" is indeed proven to be correct (Chambers, 2001: 29). Pearl, the adopted daughter of this kind of family is fully aware of her own lesbian family background after her two adopted mothers passed away; and she was already graduated, and traveled in the United States as a writer. Pearl ponders her own family condition through her encounter with her American lesbian friend, Laura Jackson, who forms her own family of choice with her partner, Kathleen; and both gave birth to their own biological daughters by the help of their generous male friend's sperm donation.

3. The Nuclear Families

Along with other family structures outside the idealized nuclear family structure, the existence of the nuclear family itself is also depicted in Lim's collected stories, yet without its highly idealized perfect picture. The parents of the narrator in "The Lies That Build a Marriage" stay intact together with their children for so long despite their financial difficulty and other marital problems. The parents still

even stay married to one another after they grow old and their children get married and have their own children also as expressed by the narrator:

In the meantime my parents continued to row and bicker but they stayed together, and I suppose my brother and I were grateful for that. In an age when marriage couples with more money divorced like flies, our bickering parents hung in there. I would like to think they did it for our sakes. Perhaps it was my father who did it for our sakes. He smoked and drank but did not leave us, and he kept his bus driver's job till he retired (Lim, 2007: 76).

This intact nuclear family is not without flaws, and at the end of the story, the narrator wrote a postscript to tell the truth about her family secrets and her parents' married life. It is revealed that her parents lied to each other, and Miss Pak or Mei, the dance hostess, who used to live with her family in their house, was actually her father's mistress and her mother financially took advantage from this woman. Her family fares well in the end at the expense of Mei's unhappy married life and destruction.

"The Man Who Wore His Wife's Sarong" presents a different kind of depiction of the nuclear family. The narrator's mother is the minor wife or the second wife of the narrator's father who already married to a woman in Penang with their three children. Her parents eloped to Singapore and lived their new life happily and abandoned his father's first wife and children, and the narrator comments on her family background as follows,

Now, I don't want to judge my pa, but this was what he did. Heartless betrayal at one end, and constant love for my mother at the other. His first marriage was what they called a customary marriage. Just serve tea to your parents-in-law and all the dead ancestors, and you're married. His domineering mother chose his first wife. Pa was her eldest son. He had to do his duty by his mother. And I must say that he did it very well.

The narrator sees her father's reason for marriage from two different perspectives: the first one is for a social and cultural obligation and filial duty, and the second is for individual choice or "love." Meanwhile, the narrator's uncle Kim Hock married a woman from a different class background also as a filial duty to please his mother, but at the end, Kim Hock and Gek Sim live happily with their children in their nuclear family although Kim Hoch and Gek Sim do not really conform to the prescribed traditional gender role. Kim Hock loves to wear his wife's clothing and is more feminine than his wife; he does most of the domestic household chores although he is also the breadwinner who works in a good commercial establishment. Although they deviate from the heterosexual norms of gender roles, both love and stay faithful to one another even after their death and have successful children who are proud of their parents.

Another depiction of the family that still lives together as the nuclear family is Usha's parents in "Usha and My Third Child." Yet, Usha's parents do not really match the traditional image of idealized nuclear family in which the husband is the breadwinner and the wife is the caregiver and the homemaker because both of Usha's parents work shifts as factory operators. Perhaps, the seemingly happy suburban middle-class image of the nuclear family is the narrator's family in "Ah Nah: an Interpretation" but there is not much evidence about the life of this nuclear family because the story focuses more on Ah Nah, the former prostitute who becomes the goodwill ambassador and a social worker forming "Save the Children organization" after she was rich and retired.

4. The Modified Extended Families

Despite these different Singaporean family structures depicted in Lim's works, there is also a distinctive characteristic of Asian families in which members of the family and their kin have a close connection and support one another. Quah in her book *Home and Kin: Families in Asia* also reveals this kind of extended family across Asia:

Notwithstanding the cultural differences across Asian countries, they are all inclined to regard their ideal family the extended family, understood as a tightly knitted group involving at least three generations where parents, their married children – all, some, or only one child – and their children's children and spouses live in the same household or compound or at least in the same neighbourhood. Thus, the concept of the ideal family has undergone comparably minor variations in Asia across time (2003: 2)

This kind of family refers to the term the modified extended family, and in Lim's depiction of the diverse family structures in one way or another also exists along the side with this modified extended family. One example of this modified extended family is illustrated in "Retired Rebel." The old married and retired couples in the story frequently visit their daughter and help take care of their grandson. Usha's grandmother in "Usha and My Third Child" also looked after her three granddaughters until they were in teens when both of Usha's parents worked shifts. In "The Tragedy of My Third Eye" Ping-ping's grandmother also helps raise her although their modified extended family lives far away from one another. Similar depiction of the three generations of the modified extended families also exists in "The Morning After," and "Christmas Memories of a Chinese Stepfather." This modified extended family becomes the backbone of different kinds of family structures depicted in the story through their happy and sad experience of their lives from time to time.

5. Lim's The Lies That Builds A Marriage: Gynocriticism At Work?

After analyzing the family structures in Lim's collected stories, the next step in this analysis is to scrutinize the significance of such family portrayals to unveil Lim's politic of narrative, rhetorical practice, and discourse in relation to Lim as a woman writer in general and particularly Lim as an Asian woman writer. There are indeed many

different theories and perspectives on women writing yet for the limited space and time allocated, this short paper will simply summarize and simplifies the complexity and diversity of critical and literary theories about women writing from various different sources.

The term women writing may be understood in three different lights: the first is it is writing for women; the second is it is writing about women; and the last is it is writing by women. The first and the second can be done by both female and male writers while the last one is particularly concerning women as a producer of the literary texts. Lim's collected stories can be seen through all these three frame of works, and this paper will focus more on the second and the third perspective, that is, writing about women done by the female writer. In general, scholars have agreed that the production of those three kinds of writing is not always necessarily a feminist writing because there are a lot of examples of the literary texts for women, about women, and done by women writers yet those texts do not really have any feminist agenda to struggle for women equality and rights, and instead conforming and supporting female oppression and gender equality by the dominant patriarchal systems.

There is a growing interest in the study of women writers or '*gynocritics*' in the tradition of critical and literary theories, among others are works by the French Feminist Helene Cixous and the Anglo-American feminist critic Elaine Showalter. Using the development of the Western literary history to the study the nineteenth century women's writing, Showalter has identified three different phases of women writing in her book *A Literature of Their Own* (1977): The feminine, the feminist, and the female phases. In the feminine phase, women writers of the nineteenth century wrote their works in an imitation of male writers and their works because women were not socially accepted as a writer; and therefore, they frequently also had to hide under the male pseudo name to write their works. In the feminist phase, most women writers wrote about the plight of female oppressions experienced by women under the patriarchy. Finally, in the female phase, Showalter proposes the idea of *gynocriticism* in which women writer can write

about their experience using their own language and their own rhetorical theories. In similar fashion, Helene Cixous also proposes *écriture féminine* or feminine (female) writing, written by/from the body. In “Sorties” taken from her work *The Newly Born Woman* (1986), Cixous invites women writer to “write yourself. Your Body must make itself heard. Then the huge resources of the unconscious will burst out.” Unfortunately, “French has only one adjective from *femme* (woman), and that is *feminine*. Consequently, in French the distinction between female (a matter of nature) and feminine (an effect of cultural construction) is difficult one to make.” (Belsey and Moore, 1989: 244-245) Not all feminist scholars agree with this proposal of distinctive female rhetoric. Gasbarrone argues that in its claim to facilitate multiplicity of voices, Cixous’s writing theory fails to display the dialogic quality, and instead

Cixous’s feminine écriture remains monologic because it seeks the unconscious, the other within, a presence internalized and therefore precluded, rather than the “living mix of varied and opposing voices,” the conscious external conversation in which tension is not diffused and in which opposition is neither forestalled nor contained (in Hohne and Wussow, 1994: 16).

Similarly, Toril Moi in “Feminist, Female, Feminine” redefines and uses these three terms to subtly warn the danger of both Showalter and Cixous’ theoretical positions of the female rhetoric.

In the light of those conflicting theories and perspectives on women writing, this short paper attempts to unmask Lim’s rhetorical discourse in *The Lies That Build a Marriage*. From the discussion concerning the different theories and perspectives in the family studies, one point to be taken is that the family functions as a sign within the politics of representation, and among its various discursive construct, the family is used by the patriarchy to define the gender role and women’s domestic sphere. Lim as a female write does not invent a radical narrative discourse in her work, and instead she uses the family, the designated domestic female sphere to exercise her politic of writing. In other words, Lim uses, appropriates, inverts, subverts, and twists the

patriarchal discourse to subdue women into their limited private sphere and active oppression to articulate the voices and the stories of the unsung, unsaid and uncelebrated in Singapore. In the case of the Singapore, such use of the family as a discourse is very remarkably historical and noteworthy. Heng and Devan in “State Fatherhood: The Politics of Nationalism, Sexuality, and Race in Singapore” reveal how the boundary between the private and public spheres has always been trespassed. With the limited geographical territory of Singapore, the state actively attempts to create social benefits and social security by passing many policies for its citizens. In the name of social and national welfares and security, the state also regulate and control the population of the Singapore by intervening private and intimate decision of the families to reproduce or not reproduce children. However, this policy is not for all citizens, there is in a way the question of class and education in determining population and reproduction issues. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew is well known for his charge against the Singaporean women whom he addressed as ‘the nation’s mothers’ for endangering the Singapore future for their reluctance of reproducing babies. However, Lee only encouraged the highly educated women to be mothers and at the same time also controls the birth rate of the uneducated families. Thus many view this as not a social justice but a social engineering. In which the private female body is controlled and regulated by the state for the sake of the family, the public, and the state. At the end of the article, heng and Devan conclude that “Women, and all signs of the feminine, are by definition always and already antinational” (in Lancaster anddi Leonardo, 1997: 116). Lim also depicts such problem in “Usha and My Third Child,” the narrator of the story Vivienne Chua had to decide to do abortion because of the family financial and housing problems:

The nurse at the ward gave me some forms to sign. Under the heading ‘Reason for Termination of Pregnancy’ I’d scribbled ‘Obeying govt, orders to stop at two.’ The nurse smiled. For a brief moment, looking across the counter at each other, we were fellow conspirators who understood each other. Women tired of being

told what to do—how many children to have and the penalties!
(Lim, 2007: 38-39).

Lim does express her criticism to the government policy in controlling the female biological reproduction rights. However, unlike Heng and Devan, Lim does not view her critical perspective as antinational because in her short stories Lim also acknowledges Singapore government and policies to support their citizens such as housing facilities, scholarship for higher education, facilities and care for the elderly citizens such as seen in the prayer group in the temple, dancing activities, and pension benefits to enable the retired elderly to travel and live well in “The Morning After” and “Retired Rebel.” In line with the existence of such policies and benefits and in relation with race, class, and gender, Aline Wong, a Singaporean sociologist and also a member of the Singapore Parliament speaking as a woman and politician:

Feminism is action for women. However, action for women can be too narrowly focused as to become no more than an interest group or political lobby. As a politician, I am constantly aware of the need for checks and balances among various interest groups. Equality for women, or for that matter, for any other group, must not be simply a matter of rough justice. If we were to arrive at a balance between self-interest, group interest and nation interest, there must be some give and take on the part of all involved. Thus, if feminism in Singapore appears to be conservative (and this need not be a contradiction in terms), we have no need to be apologetic about it (1994: 27).

In her pursuit of checks and balance in the history of Singapore, Suchen Christine Lim, a woman and a writer unapologetically tells the good and bad stories of the Singapore, and using her private female domestic sphere, the family, Lim voices the stories of the unsung, unsaid and uncelebrated in Singapore to challenge the hegemonic patriarchal domination of the Singapore history to produce ‘herstory’ version of the Singapore history so that the checks and balances will finally become realities and all the Singapore citizens of different walks of life, race,

class, and gender experience equality and gain respect. This goal seems too utopian, yet one characteristic of feminist rhetorical discourse is aimed to this kind of social justice and activism. In the words of bell hooks, Lim uses the family to transgress “discursive frontiers” in Lim’s case similarly adopts the patriarchal discursive construct of the private sphere (the family) to trespass the public sphere (the state and history) therefore Lim’s family narrative is also a discursive construct for the Singapore national narrative. This discourse is used to allow the “possibility of change” because “without the capacity to think critically about our lives, none of us would be able to move forward, to change, to grow” (in Foss and Griffin, 1999: 81). Through her short stories and the use of the family as a rhetorical discourse, Lim in hooks’ perspective is a feminist: an individual who struggles to fight oppression and domination. Thus, Lim’s collected stories *The Lies That Build a Marriage* can be considered as a feminist text and Lim as a female writer has also practiced *gynocriticism* in her narrative discourse.

However, there is also a difference between Lim as Asian female writer compared to most western women writers in their politic of narrative to conform or challenge the patriarchal hegemonic domination of the family discourse. Most western women writers in general use an individual character (usually a female central character) to voice their agreement with the patriarchal family discourse in the decision of the female central character to marry the male hero in the story despite her capability of being financially and socially independent such as seen in the case of Bronte’s heroine Jane Eyre. Meanwhile, their disagreement with such oppressive patriarchal system is also reflected in the female central character’s decision to end their life or going mad rather than being confined in the family imprisonment such as the case of Gilman and Plath. Lim as an Asian female writer express such agreement or disagreement not through the individual central character per se but through the family and the family narrative as a whole, this kind of rhetoric may also spring from the author’s Asian cultural background in which the formation of identity and subjectivity is not formulated through the individual self ‘I’ but the communal self ‘We’ because community plays a very crucial role in the Asian culture and

not the individual person. Such Asian cultural root of expression can also be seen in Lim's portrayal of the supporting family unit: the modified extended families that underlie different kinds of the family structures in *The Lies That Build a Marriage*. Lim indeed has a particular interpretation of race and gender issues in the Phallogocentrism, a rather strange yet bold take as in the portrayal of the dance hostess Mei/ Miss Pak who cannot read English yet she has enough courage to read it and interpret the Catholic rituals, texts, and prayers, Catholicism in her own Chinese view and understanding. Such attitude is parallel with the courage of Lim to use the family to understand, subvert, and challenge the patriarchal discourse of the family in particular and phallogocentrism in general.

Conclusion

In social sciences and real life, the family has undergone drastic changes in its definitions, concepts, values, and understandings. The family, and in particular, the nuclear family has been used as a sign, representation, and discourse. The patriarchal system has used the family as a discourse to define gender role and women's domestic sphere. Feminist scholars have challenged this oppressive patriarchal discourse by offering different theories and perspectives to understand the actual families in the social realities that have been marginalized by the patriarchal ideals of the nuclear family.

Many women writers have also responded and reacted against this patriarchal discourse of the family in their works. Suchen Christine Lim as an Asian woman writer has also done the same in her works. In her works, the family becomes the important structural element of her writing aesthetic and a discourse in her politic of narrative as well. Lim does not propose or invent a new and radical rhetoric to challenge the hegemony of the patriarchal discourse; instead she utilizes, appropriates, subverts, inverts, and challenges the patriarchal hegemonic discourse by adopting the designated female domestic sphere, the family, as a counter discourse to articulate the voices of

different muted and invisible groups in the Singapore history. By doing so, Lim also produces 'herstory' version of the patriarchal Singapore history, thus merging the private and public domination, and in addition to this feminist characteristic, her work also reflects the distinctive Asian cultural root of expression in which the communal 'We' is more central than the individual self 'I' as seen in the portrayal of the modified extended families that become the family supporting unit. In this concept of the Asian communal 'We' Lim also includes diverse kinds of the family structures such as the single-parent families and the homosexual families that have been marginalized by the image of the idealized nuclear family. Thus, Lim has indeed succeeded to fulfill the promise of her sub-title work, *The Lies That Build a Marriage: Stories of the unsung, unsaid and uncelebrated in Singapore*.

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Narratology and Ideology in Susanna Tamaro's Novel *Follow Your Heart* (A Structural Feminist Perspective)

*"Literature is an assemblage. It has nothing to do with ideology.
There is no ideology and never has been."*
Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1987.

"Narratology itself is ideological."
Susan Lanser, *Toward a Feminist Narratology*, 1986.

Introduction

In the history of civilization and literature from ancient period to our contemporary society, "Self/Confessional Writing" has frequently been utilized by writers as a medium of expression and communication in fiction as well as non-fiction prose. Autobiography, diary, letter, and journal are some examples of the self/confessional writings as seen in *Herodotus's Letters*, *The Letters of St. Paul* in the Bible, *The Letters of Heloise to Abelard*, *The Confession of St. Augustine*, Rousseau's *Confession*, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, and *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. In Asian history, this kind of genre was also familiar in Japanese Literature during the Heian period (794-1185) such as in Sei Shonagon's *The Pillow Book* (1002), *Sarashina Nikki* or *The Diary of Sarashina* (1037), and *MurasakiShikibu Nikki* (978-1015): the diary of the writer who wrote the famous novel *GenjiMonogatari*. All those Japanese writers are mostly women. In Indonesian history, we recognize Kartini who confided her minds and ideas in *Kartini's Letters to Her Friends*.

In the 18th century American and English literature, this self/confessional genre reached its peak of popularity, and “about one fifth of the total of eighteenth-century fiction” were written in the form of letters and diaries (Wurzbach, 1969:ix). This genre also gave birth to the early form of modern novel, the so-called Epistolary Novel, which employed letters as important elements in characterization and plot. Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1740) is usually considered the first epistolary novel or the first novel in English. Aphra Benn actually already wrote her work *Love Letters between a Nobleman and His Sister* in this genre in 1683. However, it is Richardson, who is often hailed as the father of the English novel. After 1800 when epistolary form had already been in decline, letters were still frequently used as a narrative technique as a minor element and no longer played a crucial role as in the early epistolary novels.

The term **epistolary** originated from “**Epistle**” in the tradition of letters written by St. Paul to the New Testament Churches. Similar to the Japanese women writers who used self/confessional writing during the Heian period, the 18th century American and English writers who utilized this genre were mostly also women. Due to its frequent use by women writers, epistolary novel and later also novel were regarded as a feminine genre, following children’s books, letters, and diaries included in the category of “lesser genre,” or what George Elliot called “silly novels by silly lady novelists.” (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979). This genre is also perceived as a suitable and appropriate medium to express female emotion and fantasy as stated by the American popular novelist, Fanny Fern:

women had been granted access to the novel as a sort of Repressive de Sublimation, a harmless channel for frustrations and drivers that might otherwise threaten the family, the church, and the state. Fern recommended that women write as therapy as a release from the stifling silence of the drawing room, and as a rebellion against the indifference and insensitivity of the men closest to them. (Showalter, 1989).

This lesser and inferior position of women writers in literature is still evidently apparent in the use of term “**Chick Lit**” in our modern day society.

Regardless of its quality as a lesser genre, many contemporary woman writers on purpose have utilized and also revised the self/confessional writing in the form of epistolary novel, autobiography, and diary as their resistance and challenge toward the literary system that they view as operating patriarchal system which emphasizes male writer’s interests and, on the other hand, marginalizes female writer’s role and neglects her interests in the literary system. The famous contemporary African American writer, bell hooks, has published her two autobiographies, *Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood* (1996) and *Wounds of Passion: A Writing Life* (1997) in an experimental style, combining imagination and memory and blending fiction and non-fiction narrative technique in her works. Alice Walker, another African American author, employs an extended epistolary style in her novel, *The Color Purple* (1983), through her main character, Celie, who writes letters to God and later to her sister, Nettie. The modern example of self/confessional writing in the form of diary is Helen Fielding’s best selling novel, *Bridget Jones’s Diary* (1995) which not only becomes a big hit in Britain but has also received a worldwide popularity.

Susanna Tamaro, a contemporary Italian woman writer, also uses the epistolary/diary style in her novel *Follow Your Heart* or *Va’ Dove Ti Porta Il Cuore* (1994) which has gained a great attention around the world and has been translated into many different languages. Its Indonesian version has already been translated by Antonius Sudiarja into *Pergilah Ke Mana Hati Membawamu* (2000). This paper will discuss Tamaro’s novel in the perspective of feminist narratology to analyze its narrative discourse by paying attention to the social and cultural context of its narrator, therefore, the life and experience of this female narrator can be revealed, recognized, and well acknowledged, and not be drowned in the diagrams, categories, and taxonomies of the pure structural narratology.

Narratology and Ideology in *Follow Your Heart*

The term narratology originated from the French word, “**narratologie**,” introduced by Tzvetan Todorov in his book *Grammaire du Decameron* (1969). Narratology and its methodology have its root in the tradition of Russian Formalism and French Structuralism. The narratologists in their methodology put more emphasis on the “narrative discourse” (HOW) than the “narrative content” (WHAT). Narratology as a structural discipline is no longer popular after the emergence of Deconstruction and Post-Structuralism. However, many experts have tried to revise the limit and weakness of Formalism and Structuralism and have applied and developed them into their own discipline and expertise. In its development, narratology is not seen as a literary phenomenon only which devotes itself solely to literary criticism, but it has developed into a more interdisciplinary study which includes myths, films, paintings, history books, comic strips, philosophical systems, any great number of numerous other narrative forms both literary and non-literary as well as verbal and non verbal. In its true discipline, a narratological analysis requires an in-depth discussion of all its intrinsic elements including its detail linguistic use such as diction and tone. However, due to my limited Italian mastery, this paper will only discuss certain intrinsic elements like point of view, character and characterization, and plot in Susanna Tamaro’s *Follow Your Heart* or *Va’ Dove Ti Porta Il Cuore*.

1. Point of View, Character and Characterization in *Follow Your Heart*

The story of this novel is told by Olga, the main character through her long letters/notes more like a diary to her absent granddaughter who is currently studying in the United States. This novel applies the **first person point of view**, using Olga as the **narrator/addresser** who refers to herself by the pronoun “I” and sometimes “WE” to refer to herself and her granddaughter in her letters to her granddaughter as the **narratee/addressee**. In narratology, this kind of point of view is

widely known as **first person and homodiegetic narrative**, and because Olga is also the protagonist of the novel, it can also be considered **autodiegetic narrative**. Olga's letters are addressed to her daughter, however, the granddaughter has not read or responded to those letters, and this kind of narrative technique is commonly **monologic** or sometimes termed as an **internal monologue**. As the narrator, Olga is all-knowing about all events that she has experienced and also other characters's experience and their minds as well, therefore, she is regarded as an **omniscient and overt narrator**.

In narratology, the relation between the narrator and narratee determines **the narrative level** and the **reliability** of the narrator. In general, the narrative of male writers involves **public level**, meanwhile, female writers limit their narrative to **private level**. However, there are women writers who employed a public level, such as in the case of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, when Jane, the main character of the novel, greets the readers by using **Dear Reader**, and not **Dear Friend** or **Dear Diary** or any other private and personal way of addressing the narratee generally used by most women writers to some extents. In the past, women were allowed to write, however, they were only permitted to write for personal and private interests only, and not for public readership. In the past, letters and diaries were considered private, therefore, did not necessarily threaten the "**male discursive hegemony**." Hence, letter and diaries gained a wide popularity among women as their writing medium; consequently, such kind of writings was regarded as lesser genre in the men dominated literary system.

The narrative technique in *Follow Your Heart* follows the rule of this private level, that is, Olga's letters/notes/diary are only addressed to her granddaughter as the narratee. However, in her letters, Olga not only tells about her life and her family but also talks about public matters such as religion, philosophy, science, literature, politic, war, and other current issues of the time; and she frequently gives comments on those subjects from her own views and values, therefore, in her letters, Olga quite often sounds patronizing, opinionated, annoying, and subjective. Despite her subjective perspective, Olga can still be

considered “reliable” in the light of narrator-narratee relation because she is the grandmother of the narratee, therefore, is considered more mature, experienced, wiser. Consequently, it is proper and appropriate for her to behave in such a way considering her superior familial position to her granddaughter and also the fact that her narrative level is private and limited. In the perspective of patriarchal narrative standard, it is not possible for a woman regardless her age and experience to express her opinion freely and openly concerning those public issues in public level, and if/when she does, her narrative would be considered weak and unreliable because a woman as the female narrator does not have the capacity and capability to patronize the public over those importantly public subjects that clearly do not belong to their territory nor their authority. Therefore, the private narrative technique employed in this novel endows the narrator with reliability and freedom to discuss issues that essentially and originally involve the public domains. In other words, the narrative technique of this novel follows the rule of patriarchal narrative system designated to women and female writers, and at the same time, becomes the tool to overrule and break such rule by obscuring the **dichotomy of private/public levels for fe/male writers**. The **obscurity of this private/public dichotomy and oppositions** can also be revealed through its narratee aspects. Firstly, the granddaughter as the narratee has not read or responded to Olga’s letters. Moreover, secondly, the fact that the granddaughter is not named (Olga never mentions her name), indirectly and implicitly also signifies that the **Implied Reader** may become the narratee. Finally the **Real Reader** who has read this novel and consequently also has read Olga’s letters can also be regarded as the targeted unnamed narratee, therefore, the private level has changed its function into public level. In short, the narrative technique in this novel follows the rule of the patriarchal narrative system designated for women writers, and at the same time also **subverts** the rule to reveal **resistance** and challenge toward the rule in such a **subtle yet effective narrative masquerade**.

There are some interesting points to discuss concerning the character and characterization. Tamaro’s novel shows similar **motifs**

commonly used by women writers of 18th and the early 19th century in presenting the **dichotomy of good/bad women** in their novels: Those who obeyed the rules and norms of the patriarchal society and those who broke them. The women who were considered “**good**” were usually depicted as **obedient, happy, and emotionally stable**. On the other hand, the “**bad**” women were portrayed as **emotionally disturbed, mad**, or sometimes even as **a dangerous monster literally and symbolically** who at the end would experience **destruction or death**.

In this novel, the depiction of Olga, the main character, and her daughter, Ilaria, also reveals such dichotomy. In her life, Olga has experienced multiple sufferings in her own family as a child and later also in her marriage life. All her sufferings originated from the rules and norms of patriarchal society that she has to obey. As a woman, her life has been confined in such limited space and opportunity in education, career, and other social life. Olga did not like those injustices and oppressions; however, she is a conformist who is willing to follow those rules and to obey her father and her husband. On the contrary, when Olga becomes a mother, she disagrees with her daughter’s rebellious attempts toward those patriarchal norms and rules that had also oppressed her as well. Olga perceives Ilaria as a social rebel, non-conformist, and a radical feminist who breaks all the social rules and norms and tries to live up to her own selfish and individual values. The portrayal of **Olga/Ilaria**, in structural analysis reveals the binary oppositions of the **traditional obedient/modern rebellious women---conformist/non-conformist** and finally the **good/bad women**. Similarly, following the motifs of the 18th and 19th century women writers’s novels, Ilaria, this rebellious, non-conformist, and bad woman ultimately also experiences destruction through a tragic car accident, and died miserably. This kind of **doubleness** or **split** is also frequently found in those 18th and 19th century works and is usually symbolized by **a mirror** and the character who often contemplated herself in front of the mirror to reflect their internal and social conflicts toward their repressed and oppressed identity. In a similar fashion, Olga also repeatedly questions and contemplates her life through the mirror,

reflecting her internal conflicts symbolically. Externally, her social conflicts are also revealed through her constant oppositions to her own flesh and blood with her daughter, Ilaria. There is also another female character that she sometimes compares and contrasts to herself, that is, the first wife of her husband, who died mysteriously, possibly a suicide. All her belongings were kept in the basement where Olga sometimes came there, wondering whether her life would end up the same as this forgotten woman/wife whose life story was completely hidden or was supposed not to be known. The depiction of this dead and unknown wife is also the typical silenced woman in the 18th and 19th century novels.

Besides the similarity concerning the death of the silenced wife and the death of the non-conformist as the portrayal of the “bad” women, Tamaro’s novel distinctly also shows a different character and characterization of female characters through the portrayal of Olga’s granddaughter who is depicted as possessing the qualities and personalities of both her mother, Ilaria, and her grandmother, Olga. Similar to her mother, this girl possesses a courageous and rebellious spirit, and values of the radical feminists, and at the same time is also as sensitive and empathic as her grandmother. This girl seems to represent Tamaro’s discourse on feminisms, the split as well as the combination between the **radical and moderate feminists**. Olga who suffered from various gender oppression and discrimination hates those injustices, however, she is afraid and not willing to be called as a feminist, “have I become a feminist? No, don’t worry, I just try to see and understand things clearly and put them all into their perspectives.’ (p.61). In our modern-day standard, Olga’s thoughts and attitudes toward all those gender problems have reached the so called **feminist continuum** level, and we may call her a moderate feminist in contrast to her radical feminist daughter. How would we call her granddaughter in relation to these different feminist thoughts. Olga herself actually has considered her granddaughter as rebellious, arrogant, and defensive (p.26) and even in her anger calls her a “monster” (p.41). The term “monster” here once again definitely reminds us of a familiar portrayal of “bad” women of the 18th and 19th century novels. However, this girl is

still pretty much alive, has not yet been silenced, destroyed, or tragically killed as other bad women in the novel. This granddaughter is given an opportunity to explore herself and find her identity in the United States, and she is the only hope and future for her grandmother who wish to reconcile with her and hopes that this young girl would listen to her own heart and unlike her mother or her grandmother, someday would live up to her heart and finally find happiness. If the conformist, traditional and obedient woman like Olga can not find happiness in her society, and neither her non-conformist, radical feminist daughter, Ilaria, therefore, the unnamed granddaughter as the new generation of women becomes the reconstruction of these unhappy women to find freedom and happiness in the future society.

2. Plot in *Follow Your Heart*

The setting of place of the novel is in Italy, however, most events actually happen in Olga's minds and finally are revealed through her letters/notes/diary. In the beginning of the novel when Olga starts writing her letters, her first letter is dated 16 November 1992. Olga then tells her story in a series of **flashbacks** in the style of **stream of consciousness** recalling past and present events randomly. Chronologically, the setting of time in this novel spans from the birth of Olga in 1910, war periods, to the third millennium of the year of 2000 (Sudiarja's notes). Seen from its plot, Tamaro's novel can be regarded more as **a novel of character rather than a novel of action**. In terms of **Aristotle's definition of plot (384-322 B.C.)** concerning **a single action with beginning, middle, and ending**, this novel certainly seems **plotless**, only a strain of endless slow and monotonous thoughts. The definition of plot by Aristotle evidently was constructed from male style of writing that is definitely designed to express the life of men and, not necessarily proper for female writing style nor appropriate for revealing the life of women. Olga herself has clearly pronounced these different gender roles and life.

For men, the problems are quite different, they have their career, politic, and war, and they can channel their energy. We can't. For hundreds of generations, we are only confined in beds, kitchens, and bathrooms; we have taken thousands of steps and moves, and each step and move possesses its own similar anger and dissatisfaction (p. 61).

Compared and contrasted to men's life, the life of women that Olga has depicted would seem more like in the “**mode of waiting**” (Lanser, 1986), and precisely will not match the masculine plot definition of Aristotle. Besides Aristotle, another classic writer like **Horace (35-29 B.C.)** actually has already had a more flexible definition of plot. Horace adopts the “**in medias res**” concept or “in the middle of the thing” that differentiates a single action from the real event when it actually takes place and its chronological order in which the story is told, therefore, the real event should not necessarily happen in the beginning, but may take place in the middle. The detective story serves as the concrete example of this “in medias res” concept: the story begins with a murder that has already taken place, and then a detective enters “in medias res” and has to investigate this murder and what has already happened. This detective has to reconstruct the plot and the story is actually about this murder reconstruction. Similar to this concept, **Deleuze and Guattari** in their book, *A Thousand Plateaus* also develop the term “**Rhizome.**”

the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states ... It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overflows (1997:21).

E.M. Forster also introduces a more inclusive concept that can be applied to many different narratives written by both male and female writers. Similar to Propp who differentiates **fabula** and **suzjet**, Forster also differentiates **story** as a series of events that take place chronologically, and **plot** that focuses on the causal relationship. In Forster's concept of plot, Tamaro's novel indeed does have a plot, even more than one plot in the form of sub-plots, focusing on Olga's life as

the **main plot**, and the **sub-plots** can reveal the lives of Olga's parents, Olga's daughter, and also Olga's granddaughter.

Many feminists are reluctant to use structural narratology in their research for many different reasons. Firstly, feminism and structuralism have different theoretical frameworks in seeing literature. Feminists (particularly the Anglo-American feminists) view literature **mimetically** as a representation of reality that also reflects **gender role**, meanwhile, the French feminists are more interested in linguistic and psychological aspects of narratives; on the other hand, structuralists view narratives **semiotically** as a **non-referential system** or a mere **linguistic construct**. Secondly, structuralists usually use narratives written by men as their research model and theoretical formulation. The third reason is that structuralists tend to analyze variously different narratives from different cultures mechanically regardless of their contextual aspects; therefore, many feminists disagree with their theoretical ground because context plays a very important role in feminist perspective. Many different groups and schools are actually interested in structuralism and they try to revise this structural theoretical limitation by developing the structural methodology into a more awareness toward the cultural and social context. Not only feminists who try to do this revision effort, **Bakhtin**, a well-known early formalist-structuralist, has developed his theory on "**sociological poetics**." Similar to many revisions and redefinitions that have occurred in the literary history, it seems unavoidable to start revisions and redefinitions on the literary theories and literary canons as well to be more inclusive and not necessarily exclusive for certain writers of certain gender, race, class, or culture.

Conclusion: is *Follow Your Heart* a Woman Novel or/and Feminist Novel?

Is *Follow Your Heart* a woman novel? The answer is quite easy: Yes, because first, it is written by a female writer and tells the story of a woman, and her daughter and her granddaughter. It talks about

domesticity and its all aspects such as marriage, the garden, the house, the kitchen and cooking, and about women with their gender roles. Is it a feminist novel? The answer is difficult and not plainly yes or no, it will depend on our definition of feminist and feminism. However, seen from its narrative technique, despite its obedience in using the female genre prescribed by the patriarchal system, there is also an effort to resist and challenge that system as revealed in the obscurity and masquerade of the public/private level, and the unconventional plot to portray the life of women and also to present criticism toward the female oppression and discriminations. In these regards, Tamaro's novel has shown an effort to build a "feminist poetics" that may not be seen explicitly, however, it is evidently present in its narrative discourse aesthetically, or in the words of **Gilbert** and **Gubar**, it is not revealingly and bluntly "a military gesture but a strategy born of fear and dis-ease."(1979). A strategy which comes into existence as a result of fear, disease, and dis-ease experienced by women because their lives have been infected by the patriarchal norms and language. In conclusion, I believe that Tamaro's novel is a feminist novel that applies a feminist poetics in its discourse and narrative technique despite the evidence whether Tamaro herself is a feminist or not.

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Daydreamers, Fairy Tales, and Tragedy Revisited: A Character Analysis of Pauline and Pecola Breedlove In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*

Toni Morrison's first novel, *The Bluest Eye* (1970), is the bleak story of a black girl who prays for blue eyes and the struggle that leads her into madness and tragedy. The bleak tone and sad atmospheres of the novel are often associated with the hard times experienced by Morrison herself when she wrote the novel, and also with the setting of time and place within the novel itself.

The Bluest Eye is in two ways Morrison's depression novel. First, it comes out of a spiritual loneliness when she was divorced, single mother, with two preschool boys, and was trying to establish herself in the work world with little support system....Secondly, Morrison places the novel in 1934 at the end of the Great Depression when life was hard for everyone, but even more for black people (Hollaway and Demetrakopoulos, 1987:31).

The depression, bleak feeling, and sadness dominantly color the novel not only in the depiction of the characters, but also in the depiction of places and time, and in the use of season and the barren land when and where the marigolds do not grow. The African Americans are described as experiencing many misfortunes in life, experiencing poverty, and not even being capable of fulfilling their daily basic needs: "Our house is old, cold, and green. At night a kerosene lamp lights one large room. The others are braced in darkness, peopled by roaches and mice" (Morrison, 1994:10). They are not only poor, but they also have to face discrimination and oppression in the predominantly white society in which they live.

There is a difference between being put out and being put outdoors. If you are put out, you go somewhere else; if you are outdoors, there is no place to go. The distinction was subtle and final. Outdoors was the end of something, an irrevocable, physical fact, defining and complementing our metaphysical condition. Being a minority in both caste and class, we moved about anyway on the hem of life, struggling to consolidate our weaknesses and hang on, or to creep singly up into the major folds of the garment (Morrison, 1994:18).

Cholly Breedlove, then, a renting black, having put his family outdoors, had catapulted himself beyond the reaches of human consideration. He had joined the animals; was, indeed, an old dog, a snake, a ratty nigger (Morrison. 1994:17).

Being poor, the African Americans in this novel cannot provide decent housing, and they experience the difficult struggle to survive. The Breedlove family is one example of poor African American families who have to experience great poverty and also the multiple discrimination of class and race in the predominantly white society that views blacks as second class citizens. In such a social system, the Breedloves do not have any opportunities except to suffer and they finally have to descend into an unthinkable human tragedy. This depiction of the life of the characters is also strengthened by the description of the setting of time, especially, its use of gloomy seasons and barren land to create the depressive and pessimistic tone of the novel.

Critics often compare Morrison's use of barren lands and the cycles of season to T.S. Eliot's "The Waste Land," and they call *The Bluest Eye* "a wasteland in Lorain, Ohio" (Harris, 1991: 27). In fact, there are other literary aspects in *The Bluest Eye* comparable to T.S. Eliot's poems not only "The Waste Land" but also "The Love Song of Alfred J, Prufrock " and "The Hollow Men". Morrison and Eliot have much in common in depicting the relationship between the individual and the community, their characters' failure in bridging their realities and the social expectations that drive them to become pitiful daydreamers, and in the end lead them into their tragedies. Similar to Eliot's characters in those

three poems, Morrison's characters in *The Bluest Eye*, Pauline and Pecola Breedlove also experience conflict with other characters, within themselves, and with society. Both Morrison's and Eliot's characters try to take a refuge from their conflicts by becoming daydreamers. However, unlike Eliot's characters whose tragedies are caused by their own fear and inability to make choices and decisions for their life and future; Pauline's and Pecola's tragedies are the result of the strong and deep racial influence of white culture and of those social values that the Breedlove women cannot fulfill. This research will focus on the discussion of the inner and social conflicts experienced by Pauline and Pecola Breedlove in *The Bluest Eye*.

The tragedies faced by the Breedlove family originated within the unhappy life of young Pauline Williams who felt lonely and dissatisfied, and who blamed her unhappiness on her crooked and archless foot. Pauline never felt at home, and as if she did not belong anywhere. Having no friend and no one to understand and console her, she found a home for her lonely and unhappy soul in her own fantasies and daydreams.

Fantasies about men and love and touching were drawing her mind and hands away from her work. Changes in weather began to affect her, as did certain sights and sounds. These feelings translated themselves to her in extreme melancholy. She thought of the death of newborn things, lonely roads, and strangers who appear out of nowhere simply to hold one's hand, woods in which the sun was always setting. In church especially did these dreams grow. The songs caressed her, and while she tried to hold her mind on the wages of sin, her body trembled for redemption, salvation, a mysterious rebirth that would simply happen, with no effort on her part. In none of her fantasies was she ever aggressive; she was usually idling by the river bank, or gathering berries in a field when a someone appeared, with gentle and penetrating eyes, who-- with no exchange of words-- understood (Morrison, 1994: 113).

She became a melancholic, sentimental, and sensitive daydreamer. Anywhere and most of the time she lived in her fantasies, she was so deeply carried away into her fantasies that her daydreams seemed more real to her than the reality of her own life. Pauline also started dreaming of someone special, who would be her dream man, and who would love and live only for her.

Thus it was that when the stranger, the someone, did appear out of nowhere, Pauline was grateful but not surprised... He came, strutting right out of a Kentucky sun on the hottest day of the year. He came big, he came strong, he came with yellow eyes, flaring nostril, and he came with his own music... and she saw the Kentucky sun drenching the yellow, heavy-lidded eyes of Cholly Breedlove... And he did touch her, firmly but gently, just as she had dreamed. But minus the gloom of setting suns and lonely river banks. She was secure and grateful; He was kind and lively. She had not known there was so much laughter in the world (Morrison, 1994: 114 - 116).

Pauline was happy when she met Cholly Breedlove. She thought that she had finally found her dream man and they would live happily together forever. That was why she agreed to marry him and became Pauline Breedlove. Unfortunately, her happiness did not last long. Time went by and she began to see the real Cholly Breedlove, and she found out that he was not the man of her dreams at all. Cholly, who was the product of a broken home, was also an unhappy and unfortunate person himself, and he could not meet Pauline's dreams and expectations. They ended up fighting, hating, and hurting each other; and together they made their marriage and life unhappy and miserable. Pauline grew disappointed and frustrated, and finally she was just as lonely and unhappy as she had been before. However, she was also still the same dreamy Pauline who clung to her dreams. When her marriage and life became unbearable for her, she went to the movies to find an escape.

...She went to the movie instead. There in the dark her memory was refreshed, and she succumbed to her earlier dreams. Along with the idea of romantic love, she was introduced to another --

physical beauty. Probably the most destructive ideas in the history of human thought. Both originate in envy, thrived in security, and ended in disillusion... She was never able, after her education in the movies, to look at a face and not assign it some category in the scale of absolute beauty, and the scale was one she absorbed in full from the silver screen. There at last were the darkened woods, the lonely roads, the river banks, the gentle knowing eyes. There the lawed became whole, the blind sighted, and the lame and halt threw away their crutches... "the onliest time I be happy seem like was when I was in the picture show. Every time I got, I went. I'd go early, before the show started. They'd cut off the lights, and everything be black. Then the screen would light up and I'd move right on in them pictures. White men taking such good care of they women, and they all dressed up in big clean houses with bathtubs right in the same room with the toilet. Them pictures game me a lot of pleasure, but it made coming home hard, and looking at Cholly hard (Morrison, 1994. 122 - 123).

In movies she found a momentary solace from all her troubles and disappointments. She found things, people, and life in movies amusing and pleasing. Those were all she dreamed of, those were all she wanted. Those beautiful people with their happy life; these were the fairy tales she longed to have and searched for. However, whenever she went home, she grew more disappointed, frustrated, and miserable; and she saw Cholly, her husband as the opposite of all she ever dreamed of. When she was pregnant, she thought that there would be hope to be happy once again. It turned out that her child only made her life more unhappy and burdensome. She was now busy taking care of her family and working to support them. She had no more time for movies and fantasies. Instead, she projected her fantasies into her works for a well-to-do family where she pretended and played her secret role as if she belonged to this family. She created her own secret world where she could have all the power, praise, and luxury that she longed for. She kept this private world to herself, and separated it from her own real life and from her child. She was led by her own daydreams to meet the values and culture set by the white society. Unfortunately, she herself

absorbed, believed in, and lived by those values and culture. She even detested her own life and her own child and found her ugly and depressing. This victim, Pauline Breedlove, in turn also victimized her own child and made her as unhappy as she was.

Pecola Breedlove as the child of an unhappy family could not help but be unhappy herself. Her misery was more severe because she was only a child with no one to turn to. Moreover, she had to witness horrible conditions and humiliations, to see the members of her family fighting each other, hating each other, and hurting each other. When it became so unbearable for her, she just wished she had never existed. "

"Please, God," she whispered into the palm of her hand. "Please make me disappear." She squeezed her eyes shut (Morrison. 1994 45).

She was even more hurt knowing that the people around her, her friends, and even her own family hated her and told her how ugly she was. Pecola herself even believed this, and she thought that she was nothing but an ugly and unwanted little black girl. Cynthia Davis in her essay, "*Society, and Myth in Toni Morrison's Fiction*" stated that "All of Morrison's characters exist in, a world defined by its blackness and by the *surrounding* white society that both violates and denies" (Bloom, 1990: 7). This is also the case in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. The dominant depiction of the condition of the characters and life in this novel "renders the destructive Self distance between the white standards and the realities of African American life (Page, 1995: 38). White-dominated culture and industry have strongly influenced the life and identities of black Americans. Susan Willis, Associate Professor of English at Duke University, who wrote many articles on black women writers also discusses this issue in her article "*I Shop Therefore I am: Is There A Place for Afro-American Culture in Commodity Culture?*" (Warhol and Herndl, 1997: 992). This white-dominated culture that has had great influence on the life and identities of black Americans is also clearly shown in *The Bluest Eye*.

Adults, older girls, shops, magazines, newspapers, window signs--all the world had agreed that a blue-eyed, yellow-haired, pink-skinned doll was what every girl child treasured (Morrison, 1994: 20).

Pecola herself, this very young girl, had also been deeply influenced by white culture, believed in it, and she even wanted to be part of it. In her own innocent, naive, and childlike way, she believed what people told her when they said that she was black, ugly, and unwanted. She blamed herself for being "ugly" and thought that she was the source of the ugliness, unhappiness, and hatred in her family. That was why she wanted to have blue eyes, she prayed for blue eyes.

Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes. Fervently, for a year she had prayed. Although somewhat discouraged, she was not without hope. To have something as wonderful as that happen would take a long, long time (Morrison, 1994: 46).

By having blue eyes she thought that she would be part of the culture and values that people required her to enter. She thought that she would be wanted, well liked, and loved, and that finally she could even change the life of her family to be as happy as the life of those beautiful people of Shirley Temple.

Pecola feels that blue eyes are a talisman of whiteness, of pride, of security, and she seeks them through prayer, through the intercession of a spoiled priest who has become a "reader and advisor, ultimately, through madness, when she believes blue eyes have been granted her (Gates and Appiah, 1993: 4).

As a child Pecola did not have the knowledge and the understanding to know that she was only "the other", "an outsider" in relation to the culture she wanted to belong to. In reality, having blue eyes was only a fairy tale for her. Pecola in some way, like her mother, was also a daydreamer who believed in her dreams and fantasies. By giving the example of this influence on an innocent little girl like Pecola, Morrison wanted to show how powerful, strong, and deep is the influence of this white-dominated culture on the life and identities of black Americans.

In *The Bluest Eye* Morrison portrayed Pecola as the most horrifying and destructive example of the influence of white-dominated culture on black Americans. Pecola's mother, Pauline Breedlove, held on to her daydreams by going to the movies and creating a private world through her work in a well-to-do family, while Pecola lived in her daydreams through her madness finally believing that she had blue eyes. Pecola, this young dreamer, who was also the child of a daydreamer, had drowned in her tragedy; both mother and daughter failed to achieve their false destinies. The novel ends with the description of Pecola becoming a homeless beggar and the object of the pity of the people in her town. Once again, tragedy had revisited a black family.

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"De/Encoding "Double Entendre" in Gaiman's *Anansi Boys*: A Brief View of Narratology

And once the storm is over, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the storm is really over. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the storm, you won't be the same person who walked in. That's what this storm's all about

(Haruki Murakami)

Neil Gaiman's bestseller and award-winning fantasy novel, *Anansi Boys* (2005), weaves various legends and myths into a life history and struggle of modern-day family. His novel chronicles the root and origin of the Nancy family from their patriarch, Anansi, the Western African legendary trickster god, to their 21st century life as a family in England and the United States. Gaiman reveals the complexity of *Anansi Boys* as a genre and writes, "If you have to classify it, it's probably a magical-horror-thriller-ghost-romantic-comedy-family-epic." Regardless of its category as magical fiction, horror, thriller ghost genre, or romantic comedy novel, family indeed becomes the center and driving force for *Anansi Boys'* narrative movement.

In *Anansi Boys*, the Western African trickster spider god, Anansi is a modern-day man by the name of Mr. Nancy with his two sons, Fat Charlie and Spider. Mr. Nancy, "god" the father, still retains his mythical and ancient power of owning and weaving stories into his modern-day family fate and future. Mr. Nancy also exercised his power of naming "name" his son, Charles Nancy into Fat Charlie, a nickname

that his son has to carry and endure throughout his life although he is not really “fat.” As he endures his family trials and adversaries, he finally discovers that his family comes from ancient bloodline that controls the ownership of stories in the Beginning of the World where his father comes from.

The novel begins with “names and family relationships” of the Nancy family and the sudden and embarrassing manner of death of Mr. Nancy. He suffered heart attack in karaoke bar while singing to a young woman on the stage. After the death of Mr. Nancy, Fat Charlie has to encounter more surprises of meeting his brother, Spider, whom he never met and knew before. His life becomes topsy-turvy when his brother Spider disguises himself as a “better version” of Fat Charlie, seducing his virgin fiancée, Rosie Noah, and taking over his life. Interestingly, in their “conception,” these two brothers were in the past actually one person: Fat Charlie is the good side and Spider is his bad half. In Chapter One of the novel, this family drama is narrated playfully in the solemn manner of biblical genesis and the lighthearted and mocking style of vaudeville tradition of songs, dances, and comedies:

It begins, as most begin with a song.

In the beginning, after all, were the words, and they came with a tune. That was how the world was made, how the void was divided, how the land and the stars and the dreams and the little gods, and the animals, how all of the came into the world.

They were sung.

.....

Songs remain. They last ... A song can last long after the events and the people in it are dust and dreams and gone. That's the power of songs.

There are other things you can do with songs. They do not only make world or create existences. Fat Charlie Nancy's father, for

example, was simply using them to have what he hoped and expected would be a marvelous night out (Gaiman, 2005: 4)

Despite its rich thematic and narrative allusions of *Anansi Boys*, this short article employs only its brief excerpt (p. 58-61) to unveil some examples of Gaiman's intertextual and narrative styles. This excerpt narrates Fat Charlie's strange dream, having a party at Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, California and his contemplation after waking up from his dream in South London early in the morning. This article focuses on three narrative details only. Firstly, there is an interesting presentation of 'reality and representation': "Fat Charlie had never been to Beverly Hills. He had seen it enough, though, in movies and on television to feel a comfortable thrill of recognition." Thus, there is the real Beverly Hills and the Beverly Hills as experienced by Fat Charlie through movies and TV.

Secondly, there is a double identity and its multiplicity: Fat Charlie was actually not invited to the party, but he was there among the partygoers having a time of his life, telling everyone "a different story about who he was and why he was there" and they were all convinced he was an important person in the business.

Thirdly, there is a reversal of reality: in his dream he led people to do the most impossible thing in the life, "Walking on the Water," and they did marvelously. However, after the appearance of the "spider," they all suddenly regained their 'normal' awareness of water as liquid, and were finally wet and drowned.

My reading of those three narrative details is guided by Fat Charlie's cocktail called "Double Entendre," a seemingly alcoholic beverage which is "actually scientifically non-alcoholic" that he served to the partygoers who pleasantly sipped and gulped it. I use this phrase, 'double entendre' as a metaphor to unlock Gaiman's narrative style, and I argue that *Anansi Boys* displays a double-coded narrative. The phrase, 'double entendre' is originally a French expression, "a figure of speech similar to the pun." According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'double entendre' is a "double meaning; a word or phrase having a double sense." This 'double entendre' or the double-coded narrative is

presented as a binary opposition that is frequently juxtaposed and interchangeably mixed in Gaiman's *Anansi Boys*.

The first narrative detail of presentation of 'reality and representation' can also be seen as the binary opposition version of this "coupling or pairing" in this Fat Charlie's episode in Beverly Hills. Fat Charlie's knowledge/experience of Beverly Hills through movies and TV replaces the real Beverly Hills or reality of itself or borrowing Baudrillard's term the "simulacrum, the copy, comes to replace the real" (in Allen, 2006: 183). Meanwhile, in Fat Charlie's dream, these two are presented side by side without any reference of which one is real and which one is the representation.

Secondly, the identity that Fat Charlie created for himself is frequently changing whenever he met each of the partygoers, yet they seemed convinced and had their own conclusion that he was someone important regardless of the different version that Fat Charlie gave. In his dream, Fat Charlie can see himself from inside and outside, "and he was not himself ... *And that man, who was him and was not him...*" This binary opposition is juxtaposed and at the same time also merged, and can be understood in/from one way or both ways. This dream also gives a clue that Fat Charlie and his brother Spider had once been actually one person.

Finally, the discrepancy of the logic of nature/life and the logic of dream that is successfully reversed but at the end all come tumbling down. In Fat Charlie's dream, everyday occurrence/life was turned into a fantasy world where Fat Charley led the partygoers into a parade/parody (similar to Bakhtin's carnivalesque) of 'Walking on the Water,' creating a bizarre parade or borrowing Eco's phrase "a topsy-turvy universe in which dogs flee before the hare, and deer hunt the lion" (in Allen, 2006: 197). This carnivalesque displays the disruption of what is real and not real, the real Beverly Hills and Fat Charlie's access of knowledge of it through movies and TV versions: Which one is real and which one is true when the two are presented both as real and not real in the dream. This juxtaposition and merger, however, had been interrupted and disrupted by the "spider." This binary opposition and

their merger/immersion into one (plus the disruption by the "spider") reflect the doubleness and its unity in Gaiman's narrative style.

Gaiman's double-coded narrative is not only displayed through the happenings and events in his novel but also through the characterization, the title, and the Anansi myth that builds the plot and the characters in the novel. The Anansi or the Anansi Spider is the famous trickster hero of the West African Myth. In his attempt to trick people, the trick itself often backfires upon himself. Gaiman's choice of this spider myth is closely related to his use of the double-coded narrative in terms of characters and the unifying plot narrative. The Anansi and his two boys serve as the metaphor for the double-coded narrative and its meaning/interpretation.

Anansi, aforementioned in this article, has two boys: Fat Charlie and Spider. Spider then masquerades as Charlie. These three characters can be read as the metaphor of the 'reality and representation'. Mr. Nancy, the 'god' father, (Anansi, the mythical Spider god) serves as the master reality (the origin---if there is such possibility of the so-called the original master reality). Meanwhile, the sons are the dual version of its representation with its binary oppositions in which both are false but at the same time are also real/true.

Interestingly enough, the images of spider and web are also closely related to the literary theory of the narrative. Barthes uses webs and weaving as the metaphor of viewing the 'text' in *The Pleasure of the Text* in trying to eliminate the role of the author and to focus on the key role of the text itself. Furthermore, these images of webs, weaving, and spider are also employed by the feminist critic Nancy Miller in her essay's "Arachnologies" to criticize the poststructuralist notions of text, textuality, and intertextuality, and to regain the female subject in the narrative.

From the discussion of the key role of the spider, web, and weaving in the narrative theories; therefore, it is also evident that the Anansi myth plays a crucial role in understanding Gaiman's double-coded narrative style and the complexity of the narrative theory. Similar to the Anansi who tricks and be tricked by his own trick, reading the text also

involves the backfire of the subjectivity of the author, the text, and the reader. In such complexity, the 'double entendre' enters to facilitate the dialogic and the polyphonic nature of such complex relationship. The double-coded narrative and the polyphony are indeed not a new invention in the narrative theory, but with its double-layered parallel presentation and constant self-reflexivity, crossing the boundary of space, race, class, and intertextuality of music, film, literature, and other medium, Gaiman's *Anansi Boys* present a fresh, lively, and inventively "new" narrative style in its own way.

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ISBN 978-623-7601-09-8

