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Introduction

Dikmen Yakalı Çamoğlu

Gender has become one of the key concepts of the humanities and social sciences since the early 1970s. Today, it is almost impossible to study culture without taking into account that all aspects of social life are gendered. This 'Genderquake' has shaken academic studies as well as Western democracies. While the study of gender intertwines with feminism, queer studies, sexuality studies, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies, the Gender and Love project calls for the consideration of gender in relation to various kinds of love. As you will also see from examples in this volume, the project explores the interactions of gender and love with regard to self, spirit, religion, the family, friendship, ethics, laws, nations, globalisation, the environment, and so on. Its aim is to address how the interactions of gender and love promote particular performances of gender; how they affect conceptions of individual and collective identity, formations of community, notions of the human, and understandings of good and evil. These are just some of the questions that occupy this project and this volume. The overall aim of the project is to understand the interconnection and interaction between the concepts of love and gender; and whether, when, how and in what ways the two concepts understand and construct each other.

The chapters in this volume were originally presented at the 3rd Global Conference *Gender and Love* held in Oxford in September 2013 as a part of the Hub activity of Gender and Sexuality by Inter-disciplinary.Net. The researchers represented every continent and a wide spectrum of disciplines. The volume covers topics ranging from social and cultural studies, philosophy, literature, media studies, to psychology and law.

One of the fundamental topics focused on during the conference was the issue of representation. Most of the chapters in this volume concern the various ways in which representations of gender and love are constructed, reproduced and circulated throughout the ages and geographies. Representations of gender are never innocent. As cultural constructions, they address us in the practices of everyday life. These chapters will show that all social practices take place within representations and are different narratives through which we make sense of ourselves, our world and our culturally constructed identities.

In the first part of this book we will discover various representations of gender and love from different times and places. 'Faith and *Ascensus* in Vittoria Colonna's Lyric Dreams' by Cristina Acucella is the very first chapter and takes us back to 16th Century Italy. The poetry of Vittoria Colonna represents a woman's love and dedication to the memory of her husband, who died in battle in 1525. In this context, she uses the dream as a tool for the encounter with the beloved, whom she gradually identifies with Christ. Love and the erotic dream in this sense are also the

place of spiritual elevation and sometimes a door to the neoplatonic *ascensus* and religious ecstasy.

The second chapter of the first part 'Identity, Gender and Love in Transition: *The Violet Hour* and *Absent Love. A Chronicle'* by Katarzyna Moszczyńska-Dürst takes us to Spain with women´s fiction of the Transition period. She focuses on the discursive strategies adopted by the protagonists of *The Violet Hour*, by Montserrat Roig and *Absent Love: A Chronicle,* by Rosa Montero, with respect to love, sexuality and woman´s role in society. She sheds light to the role played by the images of love in identity politics.

In the last chapter of the first part, Kelly Y. N. Tse brings us to women writers in contemporary China, who write from a transnational and transcultural vantage point. In her chapter, '(En)gendering Global China: Lesbian Affectivity in Fan Wu's *February Flowers,*' she critically examines the formation and constitution of lesbian subjectivities and its qu(e)erying of Chineseness against the backdrop of a discourse of globalization. The representation of China as a hetero-normative space where lesbian love is un-verbalized and unnamed, as opposed to the queer space of potentialities that is the USA, points to a kind of lesbian subjectivity which is predicated upon the affirmation of a global and hybridized Chineseness.

The second part goes on to talk about representations of gender and love in literature and furthers the concerns of the first part. As we acknowledge in the subsequent chapters and their various contexts, love may be used as a mechanism of social control. In 'Tennyson and the Idylls of Geraint: Medievalism, Victoriana, and the Mechanism of Social Control', Adèle Cook shows us how Tennyson was 'horrified' by the rapid social changes which confronted him and this horror was reflected in the Idylls, the work of his life. This chapter examines the Victorian representation of marriage as a means of control through love and discusses how this impacts on contemporary Arthurian texts.

In the next chapter, 'Love and the Crossing of Gender Boundaries: Strategies of Staging Transgender Identity', Marcus Hartner explores representations of transgender identities in film and novel and investigates how the themes of love and affection are used strategically for the narrative staging of transgender identity. He focuses on the protagonists in Jackie Kay's award-winning novel *Trumpet* (1998) and the American road movie *Transamerica* (2005), directed by Duncan Tucker. A discrepancy between their chosen gender and their biological sex shapes these characters' identities. However, the stories are not merely on the theme of romantic love but focus for the most part on filial, paternal, and maternal love as well as friendship. The chapter shows how the topic of love is fundamental in the depiction and evaluation of those characters: Hartner points out that *Transamerica* evokes the transformative power of maternal love and *Trumpet's* narrative structure follows the performative nature of identity and gender.

In 'Between Loyalty and Transgression: Towards A Feminist Deconstruction of Cultural Taboos Against Young Lovers in Africa', Canice Chukwuma Nwosu focuses on Africa's continuing struggle with patriarchy and the efforts made by feminist dramatists to deconstruct the taboos in African literature. By analysing Tess Onwueme's *The Broken Calabash*, he examines the representations of young lovers in Africa and the way in which love entangles, divides and separates as former cultural practices are deconstructed.

In her 'Happily never after: The Effect of Gender on Love as Narrative Closure', Megan Rogers focuses on another representation of woman which she terms the 'eternal madwoman'. As opposed to the nineteenth century female writers who only constructed two types of narrative endings for people of their gender – heterosexual love and marriage, or death, many feminist writers of the twentieth century attempted to construct stories that separated the concepts of the female from heterosexual love, but ultimately brought madness or paralysis to their female protagonist – the eternal madwoman. In her chapter, Rogers responds to Marta Caminero-Santangelo's question, and asks how 'the symbolic resolution of the madwoman in fictional texts contributes to the transformation of gender ideologies'. She discusses the possible frameworks for a more optimistic narrative world where the concepts of love and the female can be reunited.

The next part looks into the representations of gender and love in the cinema. With its visual as well as narrative prospects, cinema offers much more powerful possibilities in the re/imagination and representations of gender. In 'Madly in Love: The Mental Threat of Homosexuality in Hitchcock's Rebecca (1940)', Gesine Wegner reveals how closely homosexuality is linked to mental illness in Hitchcock's *Rebecca* by drawing insights from queer and feminist narrative theory. She focuses on the character of Mrs. Danvers and points out how she breaks with traditional gender roles and heterosexuality, all the while showing features of mental illness. Wegner argues that the traditional features of madness associated with Mrs Danvers' character disclose a causal relationship between homosexuality, mental illness and the social construction of it.

In 'Between Exotization and Erasure: Making Sense of Queer Desire on the Mainstream Screen', Mirjam M. Frotscher highlights another problematic issue in the representation of queer desire. She asserts that homosexual love and desire have become usual in the mainstream as long as the non-heterosexual desire can be located within the dichotomous framework of sex, gender, and sexuality. She argues that strategies are employed to re-inscribe the non-normative bodies into exactly the kind of logic that these bodies defy whenever portrayals are shown of a desire that is not easily located in the hetero/homo divide. She emphasizes that homosexuality is deemed acceptable only so long as this helps to stabilize the heterosexual matrix.

The last chapter of this part, 'Defying and Dodging the Homophobic Weimar Film Censorship: Same-sex Adoration, Peer Comradeship, or Lesbian Love?' by Chen Yuan-Tsai, analyzes the creative exploitation of cinematic conventions to depict either overt or carefully-hidden lesbianism in Weimar Cinema through the silent-to-sound era of the cinema (1920-1931). This era marks certain taboos on homosexuality due to a strict anti-homosexual criminal law and also a strict anti-homosexual censorship code banning any film with gay content. However, being male-centered and patriarchal, Weimar society was tolerant to the lesbian elements in these films. Yuan-Tsai examines how the directors of the Weimar cinema subtly used lesbian visual pleasure and conveyed the lesbian narrative impulse as an artistic support for the homosexual liberation movement that was developing at the time.

Part IV focuses on the ways in which we make sense of ourselves, our world and others. Through the representations, discourses and practices that we find in our culture, we struggle to give meaning to our existence and selves and to construct our identities. In 'Am I Man/Woman Enough: Using Trans-Youth "Self-Portrait Drawing" to Analyse Their Body Image', Wallace Wong and Fatima Natascha Lawrence illustrate the struggles of transgender children and young people whose bodies 'do not match what they see inside'. Their struggle to find their place in a world which is crowded with varied and sometimes competing images and representations about beauty and body images is even tougher than for their counterparts. They too dread to think how well they can 'pass' as the gender they desire. Using qualitative data from the Self-Portrait Drawings of transgender children and young people, this chapter seeks to understand their struggles, their strengths and the relationship between their bodies and the sense of self.

In the next chapter, 'Casual Hook Ups versus Committed "Love:" Gay Men, The Importance of Body Image and Relationship Status', Margaret A. (Peg) Murphy and Kevin Christophersen assess whether body image has an impact on the relationships and love priorities of gay men. The study profiles 992 self-identified gay men and analyses how personal relationships and external drivers such as the media, pop culture, celebrities, family, friends and the gay community itself impinge on gay men's self-image and self-love.

In Sabrina Zerar's chapter, 'Love and Gender in the Kabyle Family Romance', we explore gender and love relationships in the traditional Kabyle family romance with specific reference to selected folktales and love magic rituals. The backbone of the study consists of psychoanalytic and cultural anthropological theory, while Zerar argues that the concurrent male symbolic economy of goods and underground female economy of desire impact on gender and love relationships in this traditional romance. As other peoples do elsewhere, the Kabyle women use love to resist masculine domination; however, Zerar suggests that this backfires and leads to the emotional stunting of both genders.

The next part focuses on the theme of gender and love as it finds its way into law. Raadhika Gupta in the first chapter, 'Disabled for Love: Intersectionalities of Gender and Disability in Love and Law', focuses on the multiple discriminations that disabled women have to face in a society which renders them incapable of love through the system of law. While showing that people with disabilities are often viewed as asexual, dependent and incapable of or uninterested in love, Gupta examines how the intersectionality of sex and disability operates to deny girls and women with disabilities any access to love. Focusing on sexuality, marriage and parenthood, the chapter looks at the Indian legal framework to examine how law also supports the status quo by facilitating divorce or denying child custody on the grounds of disability. Gupta argues that, instead of denying access to various sites of love, society and the law should be based on the social model of disability; eliminate the barriers and create support mechanisms to enable disabled people to enjoy intimacy, relationships, self-expression and love.

In the next chapter, 'Women's Rights, Prenatal Harm and the Non-Identity Problem', Łukasz Dominiak and Łukasz Perlikowski show the relationship and conflict between women's rights and foetal rights in the context of abortion law and the new types of lawsuit, for instance in, cases of prenatal harm. Focusing on the paradigm shift in law concerning women's procreative liberty and the status of the foetus, they propose the *Metaphysical-Biological Split Account* as an explanatory framework for this legal and cultural conjuncture.

A recently developing academic endeavour, popular romance studies, finds a well-deserved place in this volume. Eirini Arvanitaki's chapter 'Gender in Recent Romance Novels: A Third Wave Feminist Mills and Boon Love Affair?' focuses on changes in the global background of love affairs and their reflections in popular romance. As the meanings attached to romantic love change with the constant evolution of the global economy, feminism and academic studies of gender, so our understanding changes of the way that men and women are constituted within a relationship. The idea of love as the individual choice of autonomous subjects has replaced the idea of romantic love as the foundation of marital bliss and motherhood. Arvanitaki's chapter takes a third wave feminist perspective and examines whether romantic love plays a key role in the production of gender and how far popular romance novels have adjusted to twenty-first century images of womanhood. While identifying the influences and changes in the representation of gender, the author examines whether these narratives have been updated to fit into the modernised world.

The last chapter of the volume is also concerned with postfeminism and its reflections in popular culture. In Franka Heise's chapter, 'Postfeminism, Consumerism and the Reclamation of Love', she explores the mediated meanings of heterosexual love in contemporary society. Through an analysis of an advertising campaign by the diamond company *De Beers*, she reveals the commodification of love and romance in the consumer culture and a discourse of

postfeminist, neo-liberal subjectivity as the framework for its articulation. She points out that postfeminist discourse goes hand in hand with neo-liberal consumerism to assert a representation of love as something that should be expressed and lived through the practices of consumption.

The chapters in this volume have presented some of the concerns, topics and discussions that took place during the 3rd Global Conference Gender and Love held in Oxford in September 2013. The overarching concept that embraces all the chapters in this volume is representation as a process of making. The reader can pursue various representations of gender and love and explore how its meanings are produced in different periods and places. These representations produce embodied individuals and shared meanings in which gender and love mutually construct each other. As you will see in the following chapters, what the conference set out to understand, most of the time, was not individual relationships but the relations of power. Thus, these chapters show how gender and love are represented in various discourses; produced in knowledge –in philosophy, psychology, literature and popular culture; and regulated by the discursive practices and disciplinary techniques of different societies.

Part I

Representations of Gender and Love

Faith and *Ascensus* in Vittoria Colonna's Lyric Dreams

Cristina Acucella

Abstract
Deception is one of the main features of the erotic dream in Petrarchist poetry. In this scenario, Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547) is a significant exception. Her poetical activity is entirely dedicated to the memory of her husband, Ferrante, Ferdinando Francesco D'Avalos, died in battle in 1525. In this context, the dream is a vital tool for the encounter with the beloved, that the poetess gradually identify with Christ, but also a moment of spiritual elevation, and, in some cases, a door to the neoplatonic *ascensus* and the religious ecstasy. Trying to shed light on this important issue for the poetess, but until now little studied, this chapter will focus on *Rime amorose* 14, 20, 84 and on the *Spirituale* 36 of the Bullock's edition (1982), considering the relationship between dream, memory and conjugal faith, the relationship between dream and religion, whereas Ferrante, after death, becomes a means to achieve the True Good and, finally, the particular features that the dream acquires in the *Amorose* and *Spirituali* rhymes. In this way we will attempt to demonstrate that the study of an ubiquitous theme in the Petrarchist *system*, that's erotic dream, it's an opportunity to investigate the work of a poetess as Vittoria Colonna, for which the interplay between poetic and life, and between *reformed religion* and Neoplatonic philosophy is a constitutive trait of her eccentricity into the Cinquecento's lyrical canon.

Key Words: Vittoria Colonna, dream, Renaissance, poetry, faith, memory, ascent, religion, Neoplatonism, Petrarchism.

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1. Introduction

The theme of the dream of the ladylove is widespread in the Renaissance and a fertile ground for the study of many cultural features of this period.[1] During the 15th and the 16th centuries, as it is known, lyric poets imitated Petrarca, lived in the fourteenth century and considered an essential standard for the love poetry. In many Petrarca's sonnets *in death* of Laura[2], the oneiric apparitions of the ladylove constituted a moment of high pathos and consolation and the only way to renew the contact with his beloved, physically, and not just symbolically, absent, like when she was alive:[3]

> Blessed spirit, who often returns
> to *comfort* my nights of woe
>
> […]

> One only *solace* is possible in this sorrow:
> by many a sign I know thy coming well
> thy walk, thy voice, thy garments and thy face.
> - *Canzoniere*, sonnet 282, my emphasis[4]

However, compared to Petrarca, the Petrarchist poets greatly accentuated the theme of deceitfulness, which would become a *leitmotif* in all the European love poetry[5] and it's in part connected to the Latin elegy influence.[6] In the Renaissance poetical dream, in fact, the appearance of the beloved is described as a deception of the senses, a representation of ephemeral and fleeting shadows, an inadequate response to the constant frustration of the poet's desire. For example, Jacopo Sannazaro, one of the most copied poets for this theme, in Italy and abroad, concludes one of his oneiric sonnets by saying:

> And even though the *pleasures* are not equal to the *tears*
> I thank you [dream] anyway for your *dear* and *sweet deceptions*
> (*Sonetti e Canzoni*, sonnet 62, vv. 7-8, my emphasis)[7]

These paradigmatic verses express two essential concepts: first, the pleasure generated by the dream is restricted and it do not counterbalance the constant poet's frustration; moreover, it is based on a deception that the poet accepts in order to alleviate the grief for the constant absence of the idealized ladylove. In fact, as one of the most important scholars on this topic, Francesco Gandolfo, stated, in the Renaissance lyric:

> The deceptive feature fits, separately or together, alongside consoling aspect, typical of Petrarch: the happy appearance vanishes quickly bringing down the poor lover in the most melancholic despair. The central issue, thus, becomes to see and possess the beloved in the dreams. Even if you are conscious that the fact is unreal, you cannot avoid to desire that brief and consoling happiness, which, when it vanishes, leaves behind an even bigger emptiness.[8]

Contrary to what happens in the contemporary male poetry, Vittoria Colonna's dream is not a mislead of the senses: it represents a revealing and illuminating reality,[9] the link with the heavenly domain, after the union with the beloved / God.[10]

As many studies have shown, the Colonna's phenomenon lies in the particular interconnection between literature and life.[11] This would explain, as well, the presence of many religious elements in her poetry, which denote her special closeness to the heretical movements of 16th century Catholicism, as evidenced by

the same letters to Reginald Pole, Bernardino Ochino and Cardinal Gaspar Contarini, which were prominent personalities in this regard. The Italian poet sympathized with evangelical ideals, she took part in the discussions on justification by faith alone, and she showed in her works the idea of a direct relationship with Christ. It is no coincidence, perhaps, if Vittoria Colonna had a special worship of Mary Magdalene, the woman who trusted and relied totally and sincerely on Jesus. Moreover, the poetess devoted her whole life to religion and, coming from one of the most important and powerful families of the time, she was engaged in a number of social causes, and often in direct relationship with the Pope.

All these autobiographical facets enter into the Vittoria's poetry, where they are connected to another essential element, the posthumous character of her songbook. In fact, almost all Colonna's rhymes were written after that the husband, the Marquis Francesco Ferrante D'Avalos, a great military leader, died in battle in 1525.[12] From this memorial aspect derive at least two importants elements: the first is the close connection between memory, death and writing,[13] which are, alongside the dream, the only options to feed the contact with the husband and to renew his memory; the second aspect is the epithalamic heroism[14]: the praise of the beloved is initially inspired by the classical humanist archetype of the martial and epic virility, and, subsequently, for these very noble virtues, the beloved/hero progressively becomes a celestial guide.[15] In any case, the poetess highlights her female passivity, portraying herself as a virtuous, faithful, chaste and devout woman, in a state of uncontaminated widowhood and mourning, in the act of remembering the deceased husband or in that of receiving divine illuminations.

The importance of this issue for gender studies lies precisely in the fact that when Vittoria Colonna wrote, women were still, according to the *gender-differentiated* Petrarchist tradition, only objects and not poetical subjects;[16] the dream, in this context, becomes, thus, one of the means to circumvent the judgment of impropriety attributed to a woman poet who spoke about her earthly love, because it is a moment in which the poetess sees the path to salvation and where the husband embodies an ideal of heroic and moral perfection, and for this reason gradually coincides with Jesus.

So, through the analysis of some texts, I will try to demonstrate that the dream, even though it is an ubiquitous element in Renaissance poetry, it is not just a passive object of Petrarchist imitation by the poetess, but it is an essential element of her songbook, where the love for her deceased husband becomes a way of access to God and no longer the extemporaneous demonstration of a physical desire, as for the poets of the time.

Furthermore, we know that Colonna's poetry was divided by the editors in two phases: the first, that of the *amorose*, composed by the early poems addressed to her deceased husband, that follows the Petrarchan modules and presents an ideal of lost love, and a more mature stage, that of the *spirituali*, where the poetess appears

to have sublimated her earthly love in a starting point for the spiritual elevation, through the Neoplatonic and religious filter. Our study about the dream in both of these sections will therefore be a test to demonstrate the lability of this distinction,[17] never made by the poetess, which throughout her life probably continued to remodel also her juvenile production.[18] Whether in the so called loving or spiritual poetry, the dream is always an opportunity for the elevation to the transcendental sphere.

2. The Dream in the So-Called *rime amorose*: Memory and Faith

After the Ferrante's death, Vittoria devoted her whole poetic activity to celebrate his memory. The dream acquires a vital importance, because it makes possible a contact with the beloved otherwise impossible, as it appears in the following sonnet:

> And if over time the great martyrdom advances,
> ever stronger in the *memory* stays,
> with *dream and thought*, the high semblance.
>
> This ardor renews the reward,
> because while *pleasure and hope fled*
> with greater force then *faith* fortified itself.
> (*Rime amorose*, sonnet 20, vv. 9-14, my emphasis)[19]

As we can see, dream and thought concur to offer the comforting image of the beloved, as opposed to the poets of the time, as Tansillo and Marino: after realizing that the dream only brought fallacious and misleading images of the beloved, they hunt it and invoke the thought:

> Go away, get away from my eyes, *ungrateful sleep*
> because I want that in this cruel distance
> *thought* is for me sleep, food and light.
> (*Poesie amorose per Laura*, sonnet 83, vv. 12-14, my emphasis)[20]
>
> Escape to the abyss now,
> the dawn and the sun, which comes back,
> already threaten you. Here is the thought,
> the *enemy thought*, which banish you.
> (*Rime amorose*, 62, vv. 12-14, my emphasis)[21]

This unusual compensation between thought and sleep is not the only aspect of the Vittoria Colonna's eccentricity. In the 9-11 verses of her 20th sonnet she says

that the longer the painful absence lasts, and more the image of the beloved is welded in memory. This type of memory has got an uplifting value:[22] it liberates the poetess from two earthly passions, pleasure and hope, that the lyric, since Petrarca, connoted negatively, and fortifies the faith, which were, on the contrary, a theological virtue. Moreover, this concept of faith is included in a context of liberation from earthly passions, so it evokes not only the marital faithfulness but also the *religious faith*, an aspect of the Christian reformist doctrine particularly important for the poetess.[23]

This type of overlap between marital and religious virtue returns in another oneiric sonnet, where Ferrante talks directly to the poetess:

> And he tells me: – you will be welcome with me in Paradise
> if the noble spirit restrains the grief.
>
> Martyrs, adversities, disdains and death
> did not split the desires together awakened
> that *Love, Faith and Reason* tied so strongly.
>
> I answer – your high words understood
> and preserved by me are trusted supplies
> to win the sinful struggles of the world –.
> (*Rime amorose*, sonnet 14, vv. 7-14, emphasis added)[24]

As well as Laura in Petrarch's *Canzoniere* 356, Ferrante promises Vittoria the prize of heaven, after her soul will be released itself from the pain, the worldly passion generated by his death. An original aspect, related to the religiosity of the poetess, and absent in the literary source, is that the amorous bond that binds the two lovers, consolidated by hope and faith, two of the three theological virtues, and reason, will be able to prevail over the sinful struggles of the world. The dream confirms the idea of the sacred *coniugium*, based on *fides* and *castitas*: their link is not broken, rather it is strengthened by the death, according to the Neoplatonic tradition, steeped in classical, biblical and evangelical elements. Ferrante's speech, in fact, is similar to a passage of the *Epistle to Romans*, where St. Paul speaks about the indissoluble love bond between Christ and his sons: 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?'[25]

Even if the *Amorose* preced the Christological poetry of the *spirituali*, in the following *amorosa* the dream of the beloved already acquires the features of an apocalyptic vision:

> *Happy dream*, and *holy hand* that dissolved
> my heart from various nodes and ancient damages,

and brought it, from dubious hopes and evident deceptions,
to the straight path of truth!

In an hour it removed many false images
engraved in my memory for many years,
and my soul caught repentance and sorrow
as fruit of its sweet and bitter troubles!

Never impetuous lightning pierced through a cloud
with so much fury as the *reason* did, when it opened
the veil that enclosed the *will*,

the hand who created Heaven reformed me,
so pitiful it offered itself to my prayer
that still the joyful heart trembles and burns.
(*Rime amorose*, sonnet 14, vv. 7-14, my emphasis)[26]

The dream leads to the road of truth and frees the poetess from the weight of earthly passions. The lightning, at the verse 9, is a ubiquitous element in the St. John's Apocalypse, and a symbol of the mystical renewal mentioned also in the St. Paul's letters: both are among the most widely read texts during the evangelical movements of the sixteenth century. Maybe is not a coincidence if the poetess' experience ends with a reference to a hand that has reformed her, that of God, already mentioned in the first verse. So we are very far from the stereotype of the time, that of the fallacious dream, as the following examples show:

Much is *fallacious* the dream, and *fake* the sign
that shows itself to the dormant' soul.
(*Amorum Libri Tres*, sonnet 102, vv. 1-2, my emphasis)[27]

Dear and sweet dream,
that show me my enemy merciful,
my heart does not dare to believe you;
even if it likes that
you depict this lie to him so well.
(*Rime*, madrigal 139, vv. 1-5, my emphasis)[28]

In Colonna's sonnet 82, in fact, the dream does not deceive, but, on the contrary, it unmasks the deceptions of the world.

Moreover, in the verses 9-11, the poetess says that the reason has pierced the veil that dulled the will. The latter was, along with intellect, one of the wings for the neoplatonic flight of the soul, as Ficino stated,[29] according to which, will was

'an inclination of the mind towards the good,'[30] an effort of the thought: 'as the irrational appetite follows sensation, so the will, which is rational appetite, follows the intellect.'[31] At the same time, the will was also an important element for Christian mysticism of the time, as Cardinal Contarini explained in a famous letter to Vittoria about the free will:

> [In] the Original Justice [...], in which is contained the true man's freedom, the *will* was addressed, and inclined towards right, in universal, and, in particular, *it was inclined to God, as the ultimate goal*.[32]

Therefore, for all these autobiographical references and philosophic and religious implications, Colonna's dream is clearly far from Petrarchist visitations, where the beloved consoles, with her only physical presence, and in an ambiguous scenery, the suffering poet.

3. At the Height of Spiritual Maturity: From Dream to *Ascensus*

Although the classification between *rime spirituali* and *rime amorose* is not due to the author, there is a long poetry *in terza rima*, titled *The triumph of the cross* that we can certainly define as spiritual.[33] Literarily it follows the genre of the Cicerone's *Somnium Scipionis* tradition, and Petrarch's *Triumphi*. It is a vision that the poetess has the day of husband's seventh death anniversary. After the Ferrante's apparition, she recounts her ascetic experience:

> He gladly took my hand, and did not answer
> my words but hugged me so tight
> that I was hidden by his splendor;
>
> and he surrounded me so much with his beauty,
> that I could see, as in a mirror, what God,
> through him, depicted in my eyes.
>
> But first I felt *a rip in the veil*
> around me and a warm and pure wind
> that inflamed me with amorous zeal;
>
> do so, that I can repeat what I fear,
> *Love, You who gave status and salvation to the world,*
> and you're pleased with yourself.
> (*Rime spirituali*, terzina 36, vv 70-81, my emphasis)[34]

The beloved is seen as the force that liberates the poetess' soul from the veil that obscures the inner see, and then as the mirror that reflects the divinity, perceptible only indirectly.[35] The poetess' otherworldly journey, which in the end of the poem leads to the vision of Christ, Mary and Mary Magdalene, merges the stages of Ficinian *ascensus*[36] with Dante's *Divina Commedia*. The breaking of the veil, an image already present in a similar context in Dante's *Purgatorio*,[37] is now a metaphor of an inner awakening: the love for Ferrante allows her to refine the intellect and leads her to the act of *supreme contemplation.*[38]

In the previous sonnets we have examined, religiosity emerged in a veiled way, and still combined with the conjugal virtues. In this poem, instead, it becomes explicit, and covers the entire semantic domain of Love. In fact, the apex of this Neoplatonic *ascensus* is an invocation to Love, which ultimately acquires the characteristics of the Christian *beneficium*, and finds in Christ, and in his salvific function, its ultimate aim.

4. Some Conclusions

For their memorial feature, Vittoria Colonna's rhymes are one of the very few cases of Petrarchist poetry with monogamous character.[39] The presence of a single poetic object, the husband, orients also the dream ontology. It is, in fact, always *uplifting* and decidedly different than the purely literary dreams, typical of the major part of the male contemporary opera, where the transience and the worldliness of the apparitions go hand in hand with the ephemeral and conventional status of their poetical objects. The poetess, since the early rhymes, shows the union with Ferrante as a union of souls in the name of a chaste and honest love marked by a noble sense of memory, as one of the greatest poets of the time, Ludovico Ariosto, was ready to recognize:

> and she does with example no more seen,
> despite the Fates and Death,
> shine in the sky her invincible consort
> (*Orlando Furioso*, XLVI, 9, praise to Vittoria Colonna)[40]

We have tried to demonstrate, with selected texts, that the eccentricity of Vittoria Colonna in the Petrarchist panorama consists in removing the dream from the secular perspective widespread in the lyric of the time.

Showing the link between poetry and personal piety of the author, the dream reveals the uniqueness of the Vittoria Colonna's poetic inspiration, and, at the same time, the conventionality of the *amorose* and *spirituali* rhymes distinction. With this same voice, Vittoria celebrates, without exception, the appearance of the beloved, a deified hero, that of Christ and the otherworldly visions. Finally there is no doubt that, with these eccentric features, Vittoria Colonna's poetry would have

represented a paradigm for almost all subsequent poetesses[41] of the Italian Renaissance.

Notes

[1] See Stefano Carrai, *Ad Somnum. L'invocazione al sonno nella lirica italiana* (Padova: Antenore, 1990) and Francesco Gandolfo, *Il 'Dolce tempo'. Mistica, ermetismo e sogno nel Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1978).

[2] See *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta*, sonnets 282-286, 340-343, 356 and 359, Francesco Petrarca, Canzoniere, *Canzoniere*, edited by Marco Santagata (Milano: Mondadori, 1996), 1121-1131, 1308-1316, 1344-1346, 1353-1361.

[3] See Fedele Romani, 'Laura nei sogni del Petrarca', *Giornale dantesco* XVII (1910): 101-117, Oscar Büdel, 'Parusia Redemtricis: Lauras Traumbesuche in Petrarcas *Canzoniere*', in *Petrarca, 1304-1374: Beiträge zu Werk und Wirkung*, edited by Fritz Schalk (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1975), 33-50, Giuliana Crevatin, '*Quid de nocte*? Francesco Petrarca e il sogno del conquistatore', *Quaderni petrarcheschi* IV (1987): 139-166 and Barbara Belleggia, 'I sogni nel Canzoniere di Petrarca', in *Sogno e racconto. Archetipi e funzioni*, Atti del convegno di Macerata (7-9 maggio 2002), edited by Gabriele Cingolani e Marco Riccini (Firenze: Le Monnier, 2003), 57-69.

[4] 'Alma felice che sovente torni / a consolar le mie notti dolenti […] //Sol un riposo trovo in molti affanni, / che, quando torni, te conosco e 'ntendo / a l'andar , a la voce, al volto, a' panni.' Petrarca, *Canzoniere*, 1121. All translations into English in this chapter have been made by the chapter's author.

[5] See Haffter, Pierre, 'Le songe mensonge. Essai sur un thème capital de la poésie française du XVIe', *French Studies in Southern Africa* 6 (1977):13-27, Julian Palley, *The Ambiguous Mirror. Dreams in Spanish Literature* (Valencia: Hispanófila, 1983), Antonio Alatorre, 'El sueño erótico en la poesia española de los siglos de oro', México, Fondo de Cultura Economica, 2003 and Christopher Maurier, 'Soñé que te… ¿Dirélo?'. El soneto del sueño erótico en los siglos XVI y XVII', *Edad de Oro* 9 (1990): 149-167.

[6] See Virginie Leroux, 'Refuge ou rival? Sommeil élégiaque et écriture du *dormir-veille* chez Jean Second et ses modèles', *Camenae* 5 (2008): 1-35.

[7] 'E s'e' piacer non sono al pianto eguali, / ringrazio pur tuo' dolci e cari inganni,' Jacobo Sannazaro, *Opere volgari*, edited by Alfredo Mauro (Bari: Laterza, 1961), 180-181.

[8] 'Accanto all'aspetto consolatorio, tipico del Petrarca, si inserisce, distinto o unito insieme, quello ingannatorio dell'apparizione felice che svanisce rapida piombando il povero amante nella più malinconica disperazione. Il tema centrale diviene allora quello di vedere e possedere l'amata in sogno. Anche se si è coscienti della irrealtà del fatto, non si può evitare di desiderare quella breve e consolante felicità, la

quale, scomparendo, lascerà dietro di sé un vuoto ancora maggiore.' Francesco Gandolfo, *Il 'Dolce tempo'. Mistica, ermetismo e sogno nel Cinquecento* (Roma: Bulzoni, 1978), 49.

[9] See Amy A. Bernardy, *Vittoria Colonna* (Firenze: Le Monnier, 1928), 60-61.

[10] See Fiora A. Bassanese, 'Vittoria Colonna's Man/God', *Annali d'italianistica* 25 (2007): 263-274 and Fiora A. Bassanese, 'Vittoria Colonna, Christ and Gender', *Il Veltro* 40 (1996): 53-57.

[11] See Giovanna Rabitti, 'Vittoria Colonna as a role model for Cinquecento women poets', in *Women in Italian Renaissance Culture and Society*, edited by Letizia Panizza (Oxford: European humanities research centre, 2000), 478-497.

[12] See José Guidi, 'Vittoria Colonna: les poesies funeraires en l'honneur du Marquis de la Pescara', in *Les femmes écrivains en Italie au Moyen Âge et à la Renaissance*, actes du colloque international Aix-en-Provence, 12,13,14, novembre 1992 (Aix-en-Provence: Université de Provence, 1994), 235-246.

[13] See Luciana Borsetto, 'Narciso ed Eco. Figura e scrittura nella lirica femminile del Cinquecento: esemplificazioni ed appunti', in *Nel cerchio della luna. Figure di donna in alcuni testi del XVI secolo*, edited by Maria Zancan (Venezia: Marsilio, 1983), 171-233, 190-191.

[14] Ibid., 203.

[15] Ibid., 201-206, Bassanese, 'Vittoria Colonna's Man/God', 68-69.

[16] 'The Petrarchan pararadigm is inherently gender-differentiated: male lover, female beloved. This paradigm creates a cultural dilemma for women writers, who overturn established norms by praising men in a code formulated on the elevation of female subjects and in a society fostering women's passive roles. Colonna managed to overcome any such criticism because of her socially endorsed position as a grieving widow and by the elevated tone of the love proposed in the rime amorose. Female religious texts were not subject to the same measure of negative associations and judgements in the '500,' Bassanese, 'Vittoria Colonna's Man/God', 270. See also Bassanese, 'Vittoria Colonna, Christ and Gender', 53-57.

[17]'Indeed the most striking feature of Colonna's poetry is the uniformity of style from the so-called 'love' poems (1538) to the later religious ones,' Rabitti, 'Vittoria Colonna as a role model for Cinquecento women poets', 482. See also Dennis J. McAuliffe, 'Neoplatonism in Vittoria Colonna's Poetry: From the Secular to the Divine', in *Ficino and Renaissance Neoplatonism,*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler and Olga Zorzi Pugliese (Ottawa: Dovehouse editions Canada, 1986), 101.

[18] See Abigail Brundin, 'Vittoria Colonna and the poetry of reform', *Italian studies* LVII (2002), 61-74, 63. See also Rabitti, 'Vittoria Colonna as a role model for Cinquecento women poets', 482-483.

[19] 'E se col tempo il gran martir s'avanza, / sempre più salda in la memoria siede / col sonno e col pensier l'alta sembianza. // Il proprio ardor rinova la mercede, / ché se fuggì 'l piacer e la speranza / con maggior forza alor s'armò la fede.' Vittoria Colonna, *Rime*, edited by Alan Bullock (Bari: Laterza, 1982), 13.

[20] 'Va via, sgombra dagli occhi, ingrato sonno, / ch'io vo' ch'in questa acerba lontananza / il pensier mi sia sonno e cibo e luce.' Luigi Tansillo, *Il canzoniere edito ed inedito*, edited by Erasmo Pèrcopo, (Napoli: Liguori, 1996), I, 121.

[21] 'Fuggi agli abissi omai, già ti minaccia / l'alba, e 'l sol che ritorna. Ecco il pensiero, / il nemico pensier, che ti discaccia.' Giovan Battista Marino, *Rime amorose*, edited by Ottavio Besomi and Alessandro Martini (Modena: Panini, 1987), 159.

[22] See Maria Serena Sapegno, 'La costruzione di un io lirico femminile nella poesia di Vittoria Colonna', *Versants* 46 (2003): 15-48.

[23] See Mila, 'La Poesia Come Vocazione Morale: Vittoria Colonna' *Rassegna della letteratura italiana* 77 (1973): 58-99 and Giovanni Bardazzi, 'Le rime spirituali di Vittoria Colonna e Bernardino Ochino', *Italique. Poésie italienne de la Renaissance* 4 (2001): 63-101.

[24] 'E dirmi: – Meco in ciel sarai gradita / se raffrena il dolor lo spirto altero.// Martiri, avversità, disdegni e morte / non diviser le voglie insieme accese / ch' Amor, Fede e Ragion legar sì forte –. // Rispondo: – l' alte tue parole intese / e servate da me son fide scorte / per vincer qui del mondo empie contese –.' Colonna, *Rime*, 10.

[25] St. Paul, *Epistle to Romains*, 8, 35. For Colonna's closeness to St. Paul scriptures see Roberto Nicolini, Sulla religiosità di Vittoria Colonna', *Studi e materiali di una storia della religione* XXII (1949-50): 89-108.

[26] 'Sogno felice, e man santa che sciolse / il cor da vari nodi e antichi danni, / e da dubbie speranze e chiari inganni / a la strada del ver dritta il rivolse! // Quant'in un'ora da la mente tolse / imagin false impresse per molt'anni, / e l'alma de' suoi dolci e acerbi affanni / pentimento e dolor per frutto colse! // Non squarciò nube mai con tal furore / impetüoso fulgor come 'l velo / che 'l voler chiuse, la ragion aperse. // Me riformò la man che formò il Cielo, / e sì pietoso al mio priego s'offerse / ch'ancor lieto ne trema ardendo il core.' Colonna, *Rime*, 45.

[27] 'Ben è fallace il sogno, e falso il segno / che se dimostra a lo animo sopito,'
Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato – Amorum libri*, edited by Aldo Scaglione (Torino: UTET, 1974), I, 125.

[28] 'Sogno soave e caro, / che la nimica mia mostri pietosa, / crederti il cor non osa; / pur gli piace che sia / sí ben dipinta a lui questa bugia.' Torquato Accetto, *Rime amorose*, edited by Salvatore S. Nigro (Torino: Einaudi, 1987), 151.

[29] 'Nam cum animus (ut Platoni nostro placet) duabus tantum aliis, id est, intellectu, et voluntate possit ad coelestem patrem et patriam revolare,' 'The soul,

as our Plato whould have it, can fly back to the heavently father and fhaterland on only two wings, that is intellect and will,' Marsilio Ficino, 'De Cristiana religione' in *Opera Omnia* (Basel: Henricus Petri, 1561), 1. For the English translation see Laura Westra, 'Love and beauty in Ficino and Plotinus', in *Ficino and Renaissance Neoplatonism*, edited by Konrad Eisenbichler and Olga Zorzi Pugliese (Ottawa: Dovehouse editions Canada, 1986), 175-187, 176.

[30] Ficino, *Opera Omnia*, 108 'voluntas, quae est inclinatio mentis ad bonum,' for this English version see Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, 257.

[31] See, for this theme, Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, 256-288 and Westra, 'Love and beauty in Ficino and Plotinus', 175-187.

[32] '[Nella] Giustizia Originale […] nella qual si contien la vera libertà dell'huomo […] la Volontà, non solamente era volta, et inclinata al Bene, in universale, ma in particolare, era inclinata a Dio, com'al'ultimo fine,' letter from Cardinal Gaspare Contarini to Vittoria Colonna, November, 13th 1536 in Vittoria Colonna, *Carteggio*, edited by E. Ferrero and G. Müller (Torino: Loecher, 1892), 450, my emphasis.

[33] The poem circulated within a number of printed editions of the rhymes, already mentioned in the frontispieces with a separate title. See Alan Bullock, 'Nota sul testo' in *Rime* by Vittoria Colonna, 223-510.

[34] 'Per man lieto mi prese, e non rispose / ai detti miei ma alor seco mi strinse / sì che nel suo splendor tutta m'ascose; // ond'io potea, sì del suo bel mi cinse, / veder quasi in un specchio quel che'l Cielo / sol per suoi pregi agli occhi miei dipinse. // Ma pria sentii com'un squarciar di velo / a me d'intorno, e un caldo e puro vento / tutta infiammarmi d'amoroso zelo; // fa' ch'io possa ridir quel che pavento, / tu che lo stato e la salute al mondo, / Amor, donasti, e sei di te contento'. Colonna, *Rime*, 187.

[35] See St. Paul (*Corinth*., I, 13, 12).

[36] For Neoplatonism and *ascensus* in Colonna's poetry, see Rinaldina Russel, 'The Mind's Pursuit of the Divine. A Survey of Secular and Religious Themes in Vittoria Colonna's Sonnets', *Forum italicum* 26, 1 (1992): 14-27 and McAuliffe, 'Neoplatonism in Vittoria Colonna's Poetry: From the Secular to the Divine', 101-12.

[37] XXXII, 71-72, Dante Alighieri, *Divina Commedia*, edited by Giorgio Inglese (Roma: Carocci, 2011), 386.

[38] See Paul Oskar Kristeller, *The Philosophy of Marsilio Ficino*, translated into English by Virginia Cornant (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 231-255.

[39] See Guglielmo Gorni, *Le forme primarie del testo poetico*, in *Letteratura italiana Einaudi*, edited by Alberto Asor Rosa, III, I, *Teoria e poesia* (Torino: Einaudi, 1984), 439-518.

[40] 'E fa, con non più visto esempio, / mal grado de le Parche e de la Morte, / splender nel ciel l'invitto suo consorte.' Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, edited by Lanfranco Caretti (Torino: Einaudi, 1992), 1383.
[41] 'Colonna's major contribution to other female poets was the *Canzoniere*'s spiritual content, and, above all, the vast stock of imagery and techniques perfectly suited to the poetry of an honourable and chaste gentlewoman,' Rabitti, 'Vittoria Colonna as a role model for Cinquecento women poets', 483.

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Identity, Gender and Love in Transition: *The Violet Hour* and *Absent Love, A Chronicle*

Katarzyna Moszczyńska-Dürst

Abstract
The aim of this study is to investigate love related narratives codified in Spanish women´s fiction of the Transition period. Thus, it analyses the role which inscriptions and images of love play with view to the new gender identity politics and esthetics. It focuses on the discursive strategies adopted by the protagonists of *The Violet Hour*, by Montserrat Roig and *Absent Love. A Chronicle,* by Rosa Montero with respect to love, sexuality and woman´s role in the society.

Key Words: Spanish Women Writers, Transition, Identity, Love Patterns.

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The aim of this article, as well as of my future project, is to investigate types of discourse, ideologies, values and judgments which the contemporary Spanish women´s fiction conveys in terms of love and gender related narratives during Spain´s transition and post-transition period. The following questions shall be taken into consideration: which love concepts are codified in the analyzed narrative?, how do love, gender and identity discourses interact among themselves?, are love narratives subversive or do they convey traditional messages?, which discourse types seem to be the dominant ones and how are they connected with the cultural logic of society?

Despite their semiconscious and internalized character, human emotions, including love, always enhance cultural meanings and social values. Every single love discourse, every version or interpretation of affective experiences can solely exist and be decoded within a specific cultural framework as it is connected with other socio-ideological narratives generated by a given culture. Therefore in her famous studies on love, sexuality and gender, Eva observes that love and gender identity should never be considered as essences, but as cultural constructs.[1]

Everything that is said and argued, everything that is silenced and ignored -all literary narratives, cultural myths, scientific explanations, cinematographic imagery- generate patterns and emotional maps which help us to experience and interpret the physiological stimuli in one way or another. Those discourse types also allow us to recount our love experience in terms of commonly acceptable and valid socio-discursive models. Given that those patterns are established involuntarily and cannot be considered fruit of free will or conscious consensus,

people experience their emotional life as something natural: they apply socially constructed and involuntarily acquired patterns to express their emotions.[2]

The first revolution in terms of love patterns was the invention of literary love, known as courtly love, which emerged at the end of the 12th century and which is commonly recognized as the most significant precursor of romantic love.[3] Romantic love as such is in turn a rather late invention of the Western culture; this socio-discursive construct appeared in the 19th century as an alternative to the arranged marriage system and as an opposition to capitalism, given that it was supposed to ignore the traditional categories of feudal obligations and at the same time confronted the constitutive elements of the new logic of modernity.[4] It is for this reason that studies on love practices should necessarily take into account other narratives and myths as well as values and evaluation of those within the social system that generates them. Thus, love and gender narratives, with all their taboos, their prohibitions and promises of happiness, should never be studied without the previous analysis of *the psychic life of power* inscribed in the female and male identities.[5]

In order to comprehend the mechanisms of power operating in Spain of the transition period, one needs to bear in mind that until Franco´s death in 1975 and the promulgation of the Constitution in 1978, Spanish women were confined to a political system of absolute legal and social inequality. If a woman was to sign any sort of document (a banking form, a passport application, an employment contract, etc.), she first had to obtain the permission of her father or husband.[6] Until the amendment to the family law in 1981, it was the father who enjoyed full and exclusive child custody, whereas until 1972, girls under the age of 25 were not allowed to leave the parental house without the consent of their father. Finally, there were no divorces until 1983. Francoist regime went so far as to introduce 'natality prizes' to Spanish couples with numerous children, who, proud to be the 'spiritual reserve of the West', considered their offspring as 'God's design' or 'a gift from heaven', and yet women were completely deprived of the right to be sensual and sexual. Their carnal needs were not only a taboo, but more importantly they were assumed to be nonexistent.[7]

Therefore, the social group that benefited most from the collapse of the Franco dictatorship was the Spanish women who thereafter obtained civil rights and gained access to higher education and public sphere after having massively flooded the labor market. Moreover, the transformation led to the emergence of feminist politics that developed rapidly and promoted the incorporation of women into public, professional and cultural spheres, as well as the liberation of the female body and discourse. Activists began to stage debates on the status of women and at the same time new female voices were to be heard on the literary scene.[8]

La hora violeta (*The violet hour*), by Montserrat Roig and *Crónica del desamor* (*Absent love. A Chronicle*), by Rosa Montero are, in my opinion, the most

paradigmatic female novels of the transition period.[9] They were published almost simultaneously, in 1979 and 1980 respectively, and share many common features: both of them rapidly became extremely successful bestsellers and are now part of the transition literature canon, are set in 1979 and relate women's experience from female protagonists´ perspective.

Crónica del desamor, was conceived, according to the author, as a feminist, documentary-style chronicle of personal relationships, as well as 'a photograph of the seventies'.[10] This 'documentary novel' is characterized by the abundance of dialogues, a colloquial register, sharp humor and the polyphonic construction of female perspectives and voices, narrated in the third person. The main protagonist, Ana Antón, is a journalist who dreams of writing a novel about the daily reality shared by women of her generation that would include each and every aspects of their lives, ranging from the most intimate to professional and strictly political issues. And yet, rather than a resentful book, it should be 'a chronicle of unlove'.

La hora violeta, in turn, blurs the distinctions between genres, combing fiction, meta-fiction and feminist essay with autobiographical elements; Norma, Roig´s *alter-ego*, is asked by Natalia to write a book about her mother and the whole previous generation of women, victims of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco regime. Acquiring insights into experience of their 'mothers', she argues, will help them to see through conventional, patriarchal constructions of femininity, forged during the Franco regime, and become agents in the creation of their own womanhood. At the same time, *La hora violeta* relates sentimental biographies of Norma and Natalia, by means of which love and gender patterns are strictly connected with the process of re-constructing identity, remembering and writing.

The first 'love stories' of Natalia and Ana, codified as retrospective in the narrative, are not only fragile and frustrating, but also related to the political disillusionment. When both men, dissidents and members of the Communist Party, fail to understand or support their girlfriends, the novels question the affective practices of their times as well as the genuine engagement of the Spanish left-wing parties with feminist issues. After months of emotional upheaval, Natalia was abandoned by her boyfriend midst political turmoil and repressions of the dictatorship, and had to face an unwanted pregnancy alone; she resorted to illegal abortion, which confronted her with conservative views of her family and almost put an end to her life.

The protagonist of *Chronicle*, Ana, admits that while falling in love with Juan, she was primarily fascinated with his political activism and his talent for poetry, but gradually understood that the man, far from incarnating a sensible, socially engaged writer, was a selfish egocentric, unable to participate in the activities of the opposition, show compassion to those in need or be a good father to their son. Finally, the protagonist chose a stigmatized life of a single-mother over a possibility of maintaining a relationship based on hypocrisy and self-deceit. In the

very moment, Ana stressed her agency and disillusionment with romantic discourses as she transformed from an object, chosen by the poet, to the subject of her own writing on 'absent love'.

Yet another dominant love pattern, related in both narrations, centers on affairs with married men; it is inscribed as a mixture of the traditional patriarchal system of values, often referred to as a 'double standard morality', and the abuse of new ideals of sexual liberation. The married lovers described in *Chronicle* believe that they, in contrast to their wives, have a right to realize sexual desires outside marriage, and establish sexual or romantic affairs with young liberated women who want to assure their emancipation by never voicing any demands or complaints. Such is the case of a love affair with José María, described by Ana as 'the greatest love of her life'; from the very beginning it seemed clear that it was he who would plan their encounters, furtive and short, whereas she would have to adjust her needs and wishes to the agenda of her married lover. Nevertheless, during their ten year relationship, she never ventured to talk about her disappointment or loneliness, since every conversation was based on intellectual quotations, sophisticated irony and cynicism, necessarily deprived of scorn or jealousy. As their last conversation proves, Ana felt that the new rules established by sexual liberation required her to play the part of the hard, distant and independent woman and therefore she never allowed herself a moment of 'weakness', i.e., she put on a mask of an emancipated 'new woman' who enjoys the Ludus-like love style and wants no bonding.[11] After gaining insights into the mechanisms of her affair with José María, Ana is able to predict with striking accuracy the stereotypical behavior of her boss, Soto Amón, governed by the same cliché-ridden rules of verbal and non-verbal conquest.

The Violet Hour codifies similar concepts of love that lead to unhappiness and self-disdain, as it describes the relationships of Natalia and Jordi as well as Norma´s love for Alfred; however, a new ideological tone is introduced by putting emphasis on disenchantment with female protagonists´ own behavior, provoked by the clash between feminist ideals and the cultural praxis of love. *La hora perdida* (Natalia y Agnes)/The lost hour, the second chapter of the novel, deals entirely with thoughts, feelings and dilemmas of two women: Jordi´s lover, Natalia, now independent, politically active photographer and Agnes, his pregnant wife who, having lived solely for her family´s sake, considers committing a suicide when Jordi leaves. In a manner that resembles the archetype encoded in *The Sleeping Beauty*, Agnes admits that she started to be really alive only when her husband confessed he fancied her, and therefore now, abandoned, she can only feel 'like a ghost'. [12]

After a year, when Jordi decides to return to his wife, Natalia, like Ana from *Chronicle*, is incapable of showing her real feelings of sorrow and regret, and tells her lover 'not to worry'. Thus, while she promises herself that he would never see

her cry, not knowing 'where loneliness ends and where independence begins', he is convinced that she can 'put up with it', because she 'as strong as a rock'.

Under similar circumstances, Norma, a writer and militant feminist, asks herself how she can possibly reconcile passion she feels for Alfred with solidarity between women and her commitment to the cause. Deeply disappointed, she notes that the pretended solidarity between women, on which she held speeches at feminist meetings, was broken into pieces the moment she converted into a rival of Alfred´s wife and a possible cause of another woman´s suffering. Moreover, she realizes that despite all her intellectual capital and political engagement, in the love sphere she is as fragile and lost as other women that resort to her in search for support and advice. On reflection, she asks what the use of all those feminist talks is, if she cannot find reasons for such illogical love.[13]

It is equally significant that although Ana´s friends, portrayed in *Absent Love. A Chronicle*, have opted for different 'love scripts' than the ones described above, they all ended up disenchanted. La Pulga, for instance, chose a traditional way of life, propagated by the Francoist ideology. Educated in accordance with the angel in the house ideal, she entered the marriage at the age of nineteen with no previous sexual experience or knowledge, and conceived the first sexual encounter with her husband as a rape. Traumatized, she didn´t want to have any sexual contacts with him in future, which, in turn, led to a divorce. In the course of time, Pulga manages to overcome her fears and lead a satisfactory sexual life, however, as the novel progresses, we understand that she is still incapable of trusting and loving a man; driven by the fear of being dominated, she subsequently chooses ever younger partners, prone to easy fascination and submission.[14] Another prototype described by Montero is incarnated by Julita, a housewife abandoned by her husband after making sacrifices in name of love and family for fifteen years. The narrator describes her as 'lost' and 'paralyzed with fear', since the education she received failed to prepare her to lead an autonomous life, independent from her husband in emotional and financial terms.

On the example of Agnes, Pulga and Julita, the writers speak of women who still strive to incarnate the model of the 'angel in the house' despite the dictator's death and the restoration of the democratic order. On one hand, they continue thinking that women's behavior needs to be based on the spirit of self-denial and sacrifice for the husband´s good, on the other, they see themselves incapable of applying modern emancipatory projects and taking advantage of all the political, intellectual and economic rights feminists have managed to win. However, the very end of both novel includes a promise of a change: whereas Julita manages to find a job, socialize and embark on a new affair, Agnes repeatedly rejects the idea to reunite with her husband.

The modern characters, Ana, Norma and Natalia, despite overcoming the Victorian model of the 'angel in the house', also fail to develop their intellectual

and emotional capacities. Just like bourgeois women of the past trying to follow the prescriptions confining them to their home-spheres, they are also trapped in cognitive-emotional patterns that block their social, academic and political activity. Having interiorized the social transition from the ultraconservative Franco dictatorship to democracy, those characters transgress the role of the perfect (docile and devoted) mother and wife only to play the role of sexualized and independent lovers that act as if they expected nothing in return (even if they do). For the sake of 'unrestricted love and freedom' and emancipation, they get dominated and frustrated by men who impose on them the rules of macho sexuality and take advantage of the new cultural situation. Those protagonists seek personal and political autonomy, but their love choices and love stories –due to their subconscious, internalized and culturally determined character- still reproduce patriarchal patterns of thought and conduct.

In conclusion, both novels are constructed on the basis of various narratives of 'absent love', which are compared and contrasted so as to document the affective experience of the 'chicas de la transición' and to explore how emotions are determined and mediated though cultural practices. What they have in common, apart from documenting a cultural conflict, provoked by the 'synchronicity of non-synchronic', is that they re-write a greater narrative of disenchantment ('desencanto'), rooted in the social imaginary of this period[15]. The more disillusioned are the protagonists with political and social projects of the new democracy, the more they try to find 'a sense of life' in love and sexuality, and the more disappointed they feel with their partners.

Further, the protagonists try to reconcile, if unsuccessfully, contradictory patterns: the old, not totally obsolete modes of gendered behavior with the new ones that have emerged, without becoming dominant. New models strive to gradually replace the earlier myths, most notably the myth of the 'angel in the house' with contemporary concepts on femininity and sexuality, but, as far as the love sphere is concerned, patriarchy is still unchallenged. No new love discourse emerges to unify 'the collective love' and 'the individual love', which Norma and Natalia dream of.

Notes

[1] Eva Illouz, *Intimidades congeladas. Las emociones en el capitalismo* (Buenos Aires, Madrid: Katz Editores, 2007).

[2] Pierre Bourdieu, *La dominación masculina* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 2000).

[3] Carlos Yela García, *El amor desde la psicología social* (Madrid: Ed. Pirámide, 2002).

[4] Illouz, *Intimidades congeladas. Las emociones en el capitalismo*; Anthony Giddens, *La transformación de la intimidad: sexualidad, amor y erotismo en las sociedades* (Madrid, Ed. Catédra, 2004).
[5] Judith Butler, *Mecanismos psíquicos del poder: teorías sobre la sujeción* **(**Madrid: Cátedra, 2001).
[6] Carmen Martín Gaite, *Usos amorosos de la postguerra española* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1994).
[7] Janet Pérez, *Contemporary Women Writers of Spain*. (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988).
[8] Jo Labanyi, Jo, Helen Graham, eds., *Spanish Cultural Studies: The Struggle for Modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Janet Pérez, *Contemporary Women Writers of Spain* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1988).
[9] Montserrat Roig, *La hora violeta. (*Madrid: Ed. Castalia, 2000); Rosa Montero, *Crónica del desamor* (Santillana: Madrid, 2010).
[10] Montero, *Crónica del desamor,* 10.
[11] Montero, *Crónica del desamor,* 240.
[12] Roig, *La hora violeta*, 69.
[13] Ibid, 236.
[14] Montero, *Crónica del desamor,* 97-98.
[15] Edmond Cros, *El sujeto cultural: sociocrítica y psicoanálisis* (Montpellier: CERS, 2002);
Labanyi, Graham, (eds.), *Spanish Cultural Studies: The Struggle for Modernity*.

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(En)Gendering Global China: Lesbian Affectivity in Fan Wu's *February Flowers*

Kelly Y. N. Tse

Abstract
In the age of global modernity and the ensuing frequent cross-cultural encounters and exchanges, it is not surprising that there has been a phenomenal rise of women writers of Chinese origin who write from a transnational and transcultural vantage point. Fan Wu (b. 1973), an emerging post-seventies writer born in China and currently based in the United States, is a notable example. Putting an accent on Wu's first novel, *February Flowers* (2007), this paper critically examines the formation and constitution of lesbian subjectivities and its qu(e)erring of Chineseness in relation to the discourse of globalization and the competing impulses of the national and the transnational/ postnational. Set in post-Mao and postsocialist China in the early 1990s and early 2000s, the novel depicts the subtle female-female love between two university students, Ming and Yan, in the modernizing and globalizing city of Guangzhou. Through the perspective of the heroine, Ming, it narrates how the two girls, whose familial backgrounds and personal dispositions are vastly different, come from other provinces in China to study in the booming southern city where they develop an affectingly powerful bond that is indicative of incipient, albeit unnamed, homosexual yearnings. The novel ends with Ming looking for Yan in the United States, thus implicating at once the hetero-normativity of China and the possibility of a diasporic consummation of their un-verbalized love in the US. Borrowing from queer and transnational theorizations and formulations, this paper illustrates the ways in which the novel portrays a female coming of age through coming to terms with inchoate lesbian desires amidst global modernity, thereby asserting a lesbian subjectivity. In so doing, it argues that the claiming of a lesbian subjectivity is both predicated upon an affirmation of a global and hybridized Chineseness and the idealization of America as a queer space of potentialities.

Key Words: Postsocialist China, global modernity, transnationalism, Chineseness, queerness, lesbianism, gender, love.

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In an age of intensified global movements and transnational encounters, more and more women writers of Chinese origin have embarked on a creative writing career in the West. A central issue that their works engage with is the re-configuration of Chineseness in a global context. China-born and US-based women writer, Fan Wu (b. 1973) is a case in point. Growing up first on a state-run labour farm and then in Nanchang, Wu attained her degree in Chinese Language and

Literature from Sun Yat-Sen University in Guangzhou before a scholarship took her to the United States to pursue her Master's in Mass Media Studies at Stanford University in 1997. At present, she resides in northern California.[1] Apparently, her own transnational trajectory seems to inform some of her writings. Focusing on her debut novel, *February Flowers* (2007), this paper examines the intersection of queerness/ lesbianism and Chineseness in a global context. It contends that in the novel, the assertion of a lesbian subjectivity is contingent on both a redefinition of Chineseness in the midst of global movements and an idealization of the United States as a space of queer and lesbian becoming.

In an interview, Fan Wu underscores the advantage of a transnational perspective:

> I feel moving to the US has contributed a lot to writing *February Flowers*. It gave me an opportunity to compare the Western culture and the Chinese culture, allowing me to see where I came from more clearly. A Chinese ancient poem says that a person cannot see the whole picture of a mountain while he is inside the mountain. I cannot agree more.[2]

To see clearly the whole mountain that is China, Wu implies, necessitates a transnational perspective, one that is beyond the geopolitical boundary of the Chinese nation. In the novel, she also highlights the transnational subject positions of her heroines, thus moving away from any hegemonic conceptions of Chineseness with which many critics have voiced their discontent. Rey Chow, for instance, picks apart the Western academy and Chinese patriots' 'habitually adamant insistence on *Chineseness* as the distinguishing trait in what otherwise purport to be mobile, international practices' and calls for the demystification of the myth of Chineseness as a universalistic identity marker.[3] Echoing Chow's critique, Shu-mei Shih contends that the labels 'Chinese' and 'Chineseness' are 'hegemonic particulars passing themselves off as the universal, which is complicit with the crude generalizations imposed on China, the Chinese, and Chineseness.'[4] In a similar spirit, Ien Ang denounces the reductive equation of 'China' with the 'transparent master-signified of 'Chineseness.'' [5] She turns to a postmodern articulation of ethnicity that considers Chineseness an 'open signifier,' whose meanings are persistently reinvented in specific temporal and spatial circumstances.[6] Chinese identities, these critics insinuate, are not fixed, but in flux. And this eventually speaks to Wu's characters who move abroad at the end of the novel.

Commencing in the post-millennial metropolis of Guangzhou, the novel introduces its recently divorced heroine, Ming, who muses upon her intimacies with her best university friend, Yan, more than a decade ago. Lacking the courage to question the regulative bounds of a largely hetero-normative community, Ming

yielded to an ideologically reticent society to marry like a 'proper' woman should. In so doing, she became, although fleetingly, a heterosexual subject whose heterosexuality is, as Judith Butler contends, precisely cultivated through prohibition, which entails '*preempting* the possibility of homosexual attachment, a foreclosure of possibility which produces a domain of homosexuality understood as unlivable passion and ungrievable loss.'[7] The unlivable passion or ungrievable loss that is homosexuality thus, to borrow Sara Ahmed's words, 'return[s] to haunt the heterosexual subject through its melancholic identification with that which has been permanently cast out.'[8] It is only by divorce that Wu's heroine eventually begins to defy the Chinese cultural prohibition against homosexual attachments.

In mounting its transnational critique, the novel focuses on national prescriptions in post-Mao China. As Wu shows, Guangzhou in the early 1990s, while freer than before, is still somewhat inhibiting regarding heterosexual, not to mention homosexual, articulations. The university, where Ming and Yan meet, is symbolic of the nation's disciplinary apparatus. On the door of her female dormitory, for instance, Ming notices a brochure which states 'College students shoulder the historical mission of building a modern socialist China.'[9] This Maoist-inflected national exhortation that college students be constructive, productive and possibly reproductive nationals of the PRC is an explicit act of national interpellation that engenders recognized and recognizable Chineseness and Chinese citizenship. Her lack of enthusiasm notwithstanding, she has to attend mandatory ideological education, thereby hinting that the pedagogical apparatus may serve as nationalistic apparatus. When competing for a nation-wide Top Ten Campus Award, the university even lays down new rules: 'smoking is prohibited, lovers can't hug or kiss or even hold hands in public, and girls can't wear revealing clothes or makeup […].'[10] The regulatory rhetoric that the university wields points to the Foucauldian mechanics of social normalization. Akin to the Panopticon, the university becomes an 'enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded,'[11] thus haunting Wu's narrator.

> A group of uniformed workers from the Security Department patrolled the campus and would stop students who were smoking, or wore makeup, or broke any of the other new rules. […] In the evening, these security workers would raid the woods where lovers liked to go. […] If I hadn't seen it with my own eyes, I wouldn't have believed that it was happening at a university. My heart sank, seeing the university treating students like criminals.[12]

Granted that it does enforce and exercise strict discipline and punishment, one might argue that the university is capable of functioning as a mini state in its mode

of operation. Given these restrictions on the constitution of a 'good' Chinese citizen in the post-Mao ideological landscape, it is difficult, if not impossible, for queer affectivity to be legitimate in Wu's China.

In foreshadowing her heroine's eventual transnational migration to the more liberal America, Wu depicts a somewhat conservative and hetero-normative Chinese cultural landscape. Despite her academic excellence, young Ming is ignorant about sexual and homosexual desires. Upon seeing a naked woman in one of the porn magazines shown by her roommate, Pingping, the seventeen-year-old Ming experiences an embodied sexual awakening: 'It had never occurred to me that a woman's naked body could be arousing. […] I felt my body getting warm and my heart rate rising. There was an inexplicable tumult within my body.'[13] She cannot take her eyes off a picture showing two undressed Asian women kissing each other and confesses, 'I wanted to turn the page, but I couldn't – my hands weren't following my mind. My breathing was getting heavier and I was becoming agitated. My bra and underwear seemed tight, which made me want to go to the bathroom. I took a deep breath, trying to force myself to calm down, but my hands were trembling helplessly.'[14] Ming's attraction to women is obvious, yet she does not have a language for its expression. Significantly, when Pingping states that the two Asian women are homosexuals, Donghua, another roommate, replies, 'Homosexuals? I've heard about them. They have a mental illness […] They must be Americans. I heard there are a lot of them in the U.S.'[15] Here, Donghua's unthinking pathologization of homosexuality as a form of mental illness is not surprising. According to the dictionary of the modern Chinese language published by the PRC in 1973, homosexuality was defined as 'the love relationship that takes place between men or between women, a form of psychological perversion.'[16] In this light, Donghua's castigation of homoerotic attractions is reflective of the official declamation, which has entered popular vocabulary and has apparently also shaped Ming's (mis)perception despite her burgeoning lesbian affection for Yan.

> It was unacceptable and obscene for two women to touch each other like that, I thought. Though I had read about homosexuals I had never thought such people really existed. […] I retraced in my mind all the books I had read and tried to recall if any had ever mentioned a sexual relationship between two women. Nothing came to mind. Then I assured myself that Yan and I were close and intimate because we cared about each other and wanted to help each other out. I hadn't the slightest desire to see her naked or touch her naked body. But then I asked myself why, if that was true, I sometimes wanted to touch her or even kiss her.[17]

Ming's anxious repudiation of her female-female passion for Yan attests to the extent of her internalization of society's prohibition against homosexual attachments. Her later subjection to the institution of marriage makes clear how she is forced to conform to society's hetero-normative orderings by denying and burying her queer feelings.

When the novel jumps back to the narrative present, postmillennial Guangzhou, an apparently more liberal and global space with China's entry into the WTO in 2001, Ming, the divorcee starts her exploration of queer spaces and possibilities and takes note of the changes in queer visibility in China. She goes to a gay bar which welcomes both heterosexuals and homosexuals, 'who still live underground, afraid of revealing their sexual orientation, though homosexuality is no longer classified as a 'mental illness.''[18] This is because in April 2001, the Chinese Psychiatric Association deleted homosexuality from its latest version of *The Chinese classification of mental disorders*.[19] That this de-pathologization of homosexuality occurred in the same year when China joined the WTO seems to implicate that a modern China entails a more 'modern' attitude towards homoeroticism. But if Wu underscores that postmillennial China becomes more liberal with the emergence of queer subculture and 'homo economics,' namely, the entanglement of homosexuality and the capitalist economy, it is not yet a space where articulations of queer sentiments are effortless.[20] In fact, Ming's mother never fails to persuade her divorced daughter to re-marry. This parental injunction illustrates precisely how mechanisms of hetero-normativity that operate through Confucian Chinese familial units are still alive and active.

To be truly lesbian then, the novel intimates, requires one to go transnational. The last few pages of the novel, which are set in the diasporic space of America, thus embody the most significant narrative move. Prior to her visit to the gay bar, Ming has already decided to pursue a PhD in Comparative Literature in New York. And prior to this academic decision, she has already heard about Yan who currently resides in San Francisco. By going to the United States, Ming envisions a potential diasporic re-ecnounter and reunion with Yan. In doing so, Wu indicates that the possibility for proper lesbian subjectivities and lesbian existence lies in the global West. Queerness then calls for a more transnational form of Chineseness that transcends the Chinese nation-state. The idealization of the United States as the geopolitical space of queer potentialities is worth noting here. As Petrus Liu and Lisa Rofel argue, '[t]he integration of China into a system of capitalist production dominated by the United States and the disintegration of an older model of Cold War binarism have turned the Unites States into an 'indispensable friend/foe' from within.'[21] In the field of global queer politics and culture, America has played a dominant and even hegemonic role. The Stonewall riots in 1969, a groundbreaking event for later gay and lesbian rights movements in the US, took place in New York City where numerous gays and lesbians protested against political repression.[22] The prominent US-based journal, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian*

and Gay Studies aside, the ascendance of the United States as the hub of queer theorization and activism is also underscored by the presence of eminent US-based queer theorists and activists such as Adrienne Rich, Eve Sedgwick, Judith Butler, Judith Halberstam and David Halperin. While Wu's novel does not attempt at progressive queer coalitional politics, her choice of the US as a location of queer becoming is potentially informed by an idealized transnational imaginary of America as a liberal capitalist country where human rights and queer rights discourses prevail. Regarding the fate of her protagonists, Wu speaks approvingly in an interview, 'They struggle, they rebel, they grow, they mature, that's what they have to go through, as February flowers survive a harsh winter and bloom with amazing vitality in the spring.'[23] If America is the fertile soil where the two February flowers can bloom, then the implication seems to be that China is a bleak land that causes their wilting. In idealizing the US as the liberal space of queer potentialities, Wu's novel then affirms the convergence of lesbian subjectivities and transnational Chinese subjectivities. In the novel, lesbian 'coming out' thus also implies coming out of the geopolitical site of China.

Notes

[1]For Fan Wu's Bio Data, see 'Fan Wu,' last accessed Nov 7, 2013, http://www.fanwuwrites.com/bio.htm.

[2] See Magdalena Ball, 'Interview with Fan Wu,' last accessed Oct 10, 2012, http://compulsivereader.com/html/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1371.

[3] See Rey Chow, 'On Chineseness as a Theoretical Problem,' *Boundary 2* 25.3 (Autumn, 1998): 3.

[4] Shu-mei Shih, 'Against Diaspora: The Sinophone as Places of Cultural Production,' in *Global Chinese Literature: Critical Essays*, ed. Jing Tsu and David Der-wei Wang (Leiden, The Netherlands; Boston: Brill, c2010), 32.

[5] Ien Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese: Living Between Asia and the West* (London; New York: Routledge, 2001), 35.

[6] In her deconstructive move, Ien Ang holds, '[i]nasmuch as the stress on ethnicity provides a counterpoint to the most facile forms of postmodernist nomadology, however, we might have to develop a postmodern notion of ethnicity. But this postmodern ethnicity can no longer be experienced as naturally based upon tradition and ancestry. Rather, it is experienced as a provisional and partial 'identity' which must be constantly (re)invented and (re)negotiated.' See Ang, *On Not Speaking Chinese*, 36.

[7] Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1997), 135.

[8] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 155.

[9] Fan Wu, *February Flowers* (New York: Washington Square Press, 2007), 27.
[10] Ibid, 104.
[11] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 197.
[12] Fan Wu, *February Flowers*, 105-106.
[13] Ibid, 122.
[14] Ibid, 123.
[15] Ibid, 124.
[16] Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian: Female Same-Sex Desire in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 9.
[17] Fan Wu, *February Flowers*, 125.
[18] Ibid, 236.
[19] Tze-lan D. Sang, *The Emerging Lesbian*, 169.
[20] Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed (editors), *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997), xiii.
[21] Petrus Liu and Lisa Rofel, 'Beyond the Strai(gh)ts: Transnationalism and Queer Chinese Politics,' *Positions* 18:2 fall 2010, 284.
[22] Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed (editors), *Homo Economics: Capitalism, Community, and Lesbian and Gay Life* (New York: Routledge, 1997), xiv.
[23] See Magdalena Ball, 'Interview with Fan Wu,' last accessed Oct 10, 2012, http://compulsivereader.com/html/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=1371.

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Part II

Gender and Love in Literature

Tennyson and the Idylls of Geraint: Medievalism, Victoriana, and the Mechanism of Social Control

Adèle Cook

Abstract
Published in 1859 'The Marriage of Geraint' and 'Enid and Geraint' were originally published as simply 'Enid'. Written as part of the initial instalment of the Idylls, they were penned in 1857, when they appeared in the privately circulated 'Enid and Nimue: The True and the False'. This title depicts the polarised images of femininity that can be found throughout the Idylls, and yet Tennyson's image of gender, love and social stability is more complex than this alone would suggest. Tennyson's Arthuriad is primarily based on Malory's late medieval text; however, Tennyson employs a medievalism which never existed. In the face of rapid social changes Tennyson is said to have ended his life in a world which 'horrified him'[1] and the Idylls, the work of a lifetime, reflect this horror. This is particularly evident in his attitude to the changing nature of marriage within Victorian society. Having witnessed his own parents' separation, the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857 was a source of great alarm for Tennyson. The Geraint Idylls can be read as Tennyson's discourse regarding this area of social change. Making clear the ideal 'that woman's function in life is to complement man's personality',[2] it also complicates the idea that Tennyson was simply anti-woman [3] by stipulating the responsibility of the man to control his wife. This paper will examine this picture of marriage as a means of control, discussing the contrast between the eventually happy union of Geraint and Enid, and the disastrous marriage of Arthur and Guinevere. Most importantly, it will discuss the way the persistence of this pseudo-medieval Victorian image of control through love and marriage impacts on contemporary Arthurian texts, and the need to re-imagine the gender dynamic of myth in a way that reflects the medieval texts.

Key Words: Arthurian, marriage, Geraint, Enid, Idylls, Tennyson, medievalism, masculinity, femininity.

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Tennyson's Arthurian work was the project of a lifetime, with included works and revisions spanning 49 years, beginning 'The Lady of Shallot' in 1832 and making his last alterations to the *Idylls of the King* in 1891, the year before his death. Having read Malory's text as a child, he claimed to perceive Arthur as the ideal soul of man, but herein lies the essential difficulty with Tennyson's mythical king;

> Arthur is the great problem in the Idylls of the King, for though one quite understands that he represents the quasi-divine figure, [he]is assimilated to Christ when he denounces judgment upon Guinevere, and generally represents the voice of conscience within man, still the legend makes him a human figure with a human role to play.[4]

While Tennyson pursues the figure of the ideal soul of man in his Arthur, it is paradoxically Arthur's inherent flaws which make him appealing. As Tennyson was all too aware, he needed to have a contemporary significance which could underpin and make relevant his Arthuriad, and the Victorian concerns over declining masculinity and the problems of female education and emancipation proved the ideal framework.

In 1857 Tennyson privately published his first two *Idylls* under the working title 'Enid and Nimue: The True and the False'. In so doing he immediately made obvious the dichotomy which would be a central feature of his work. Although the types were removed from the sub-title by the time the poems were published widely in 1859, the stereotypes themselves remained. 'Enid', included as an exemplar of 'good' female behaviour, is a less well known tale of the Arthuriad, and is linked to the rest of the *Idylls* through the inciting event, where Geraint's suspicion regarding Enid's behaviour stems directly from rumours circulating the court in relation to Lancelot and the Queen. In so linking the tales, Tennyson places Enid and Guinevere on opposite sides of the female dichotomy. Yet Tennyson is not merely concerned with this polarised construction of femininity, and his *Idylls* represent the Victorian concern regarding the maintenance of ideals of masculinity, and an exploration of the model of marriage presented in the Geraint *Idylls* will enable a discussion of good and bad examples of masculinity which make explicit the ideals of gendered behaviour and love which I will argue still persist in contemporary reworkings of the Arthuriad.

The Geraint *Idylls* are not as well known as the core tales of the Arthuriad, so I will briefly explain the plot of these *Idylls*, before going on to discuss their significance. They start much like any other quest narrative, with Geraint embarking on an errand to pursue a villainous knight who has caused offence to Guinevere. Setting off with no weapons or armour, he finds himself at the castle of Enid's father, the impoverished Earl Yniol who has lost his lands to the same knight that Geraint is hunting down. On sight of Enid he falls in love, and with her as his paramour defeats the knight and restores Yniol's lands to him. Taking Enid in her ragged clothes to Camelot, he weds her with full ceremony and she becomes a great friend to the queen. When rumours begin to circulate about Guinevere, Geraint removes Enid from the court from fear that Enid's character will be tainted by proximity to a fallen woman. He then overhears her lamenting her falsity and assuming he is too late sets out on a mission to punish his errant wife with no explanation to her. While the early part of the tale is of little significance to this

discussion, Geraint's suspicions and the behaviour of both on the journey provide a model of love and marriage that can be argued to be exemplary of the Victorian ideal.

Culler states that:

> Tennyson is deeply perturbed about the power of language to corrupt, and there is a real ambiguity in the poem as to whether the rumours about Guinevere and Lancelot do not in some sense create their infidelity.[5]

While this may or may not be true of Guinevere and Lancelot, this ambiguous attitude towards language comes through in the Geraint *Idylls* where difficulties are caused by a series of half-heard sentences and whispered rumours that fail to translate into real communication. In a world where people fall in love and marry without saying a word to each other, language has a role in the court but not in the boudoir. Geraint is attracted to Enid when 'Seeing her so sweet and serviceable' he is nearly overwhelmed with longing to 'stoop and kiss the tender little thumb, /That crost the trencher as she laid it down'.[6] It is her pliancy and willingness to serve and obey that convinces Geraint of her love for him:

> I thought,
> That could I someway prove such force in her
> Link'd with such love for me, that at a word
> (No reason given her) she could cast aside
> A speandour dear to women, new to her,
> And therefore dearer....
> That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and flows,
> Fixt on her faith.[7]

This would seem to suggest that in the Victorian rendering of the medieval world there is no language of love; that love is a series of actions not a selection of words. The love of a woman for a man is uttered in passivity, and in this Enid is the quintessential Victorian wife, fulfilling the criteria of the stereotypical angel of the hearth. What Tennyson has also created though, which seems to have been overlooked by many critics, is an equally structured model of masculine behaviour. If a middle class Victorian man could expect an angel of the hearth, then a middle class Victorian woman could expect a man of the world, a man dedicated to his responsibilities and duties beyond the home.

The language of corruption in the Geraint *Idylls* is not that of rumoured adultery, but whispers of Geraint's emasculation since his marriage. Overwhelmed by love for his wife and by a need to protect her character from stain, Geraint becomes:

> Forgetful of his promise to the King,
> Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
> Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
> Forgetful of his glory and his name,
> Forgetful of his princedom and his cares.
> And this forgetfulness was hateful to her.[8]

As people begin to jeer and scoff at her husband's behaviour, his lack of traditional masculinity forces Enid into a position whereby she must break the bounds of silence and passivity so cherished in women, an act which she finds herself unable to undertake. In her adherence to traditional gender roles and his rejection of them, they find themselves in a situation of half truths and overheard whispers in which Enid laments over the sleeping naked chest of her husband that her inability to confront him means that 'I am no true wife'.[9]

The significance of this lamentation is two-fold. Firstly there is the sexuality of the imagery by which Geraint's physicality is described:

> ...the knotted columns of his throat,
> The massive square of his heroic breast,
> And arms on which the standing muscles sloped,
> As slopes a wild brook o'er a little stone.[10] (ll.74-77)

Knight[11] describes Geraint's physicality as that of 'a beefcake', and as such he retains an unmistakeable masculinity despite his effeminate actions. Such physicality hints at hope for his redemption and marital reconciliation while at the same time making explicit the need for Geraint, and all men, to maintain a manly persona. Not only is this the moment in which Geraint half overhears Enid's lament, somewhat predictably only hearing that which makes Enid's guilt look unquestionable, it is also a moment in which Enid's sexuality is made apparent.

As Lerner[12] argues 'Victorian wives were regarded as passive and even unwilling sexual partners, and respected for their reluctance'. Tennyson in this paragraph presents us with the epitome of the Victorian ideal woman engaging in behaviour which suggests that she does not share this unwillingness to engage in sexual activity as she, 'sat beside the couch,/ Admiring him, and thought within herself,/ Was ever man so grandly made as he?.[13] Despite Enid's construction as a sexual being, which Tennyson made so explicit in his original working title, this depiction of her enjoying her husband's physicality suggests that women are not so easily positioned as either true or false. While Stephen Ahern argues that:

> [c]onsistently a woman's character is defined according to her degree of loyalty to a male counterpart. She is "true" or "false"

> insofar as she fulfils the expectations of her lover, who articulates the expectations of her society in general.[14]

I would suggest that in fact Tennyson is here presenting a rather more complex argument, namely that no woman is wholly true or false. He breaks away from the stereotype that has become so associated with the Arthuriad in the post-medieval period and depicts a more nuanced picture of femininity that rejects to some extent the Victorian model of the fallen woman as being beyond redemption. The difficulty with such a reading, which may seem to be supported by Guinevere's apparent repentance in the closing *Idylls*, is that Tennyson does depict wholly bad women, most notably in the form of the 'lissome Vivien',[15] and his intent here is arguably more to warn against complacence with regard to the seemingly good woman. In revealing a hint of Enid's sexuality, Wynne-Davis convincingly argues that:

> Tennyson implies that there are similarities between Enid...and the sexually dangerous women of the *Idylls*, offering the reader a doubled vision of female identity in which chastity can never be ensured and sexual danger becomes a compelling and fascinating nightmare.[16]

This argument would suggest that it is not the morality or virtue of the women themselves which ensures that they are angels of the hearth or devilish whores whose mere presence is a canker on society, but that it is the way in which such urges, repugnant to Tennyson's contemporaneous society, are controlled by outside influences. The difference then between Geraint and Enid's 'happy life' crowned 'with a fair death'[17]and the disastrous union between Arthur and Guinevere can only be attributed to the action of the men themselves. While Knight states that Tennyson's:

> *Idylls* were made partly realistic in terms of the fears they created and [are] satisfyingly ideological for a male and powerful audience by blaming all trouble on the nearest and dearest source of disturbance for the adult male, his assembled womenfolk.[18]

It is also clear that Tennyson's secondary concern throughout the *Idylls* is the 'explanation of what has gone wrong with the authority of the king...or, more exactly, with the authority of a male sex who felt born to own and to rule'.[19] A convenient scapegoat for this is the rising power of women within society, which has contributed to the fostering of increasingly emasculated men, and yet within this depiction we find Geraint, who when he feels his domestic stability threatened,

and his social standing threatened as a result of his wife's perceived infidelity, takes action to penalise Enid and reassert his male authority.

Arthur, despite ever increasing rumours regarding his wife and friend, turns a blind eye and a deaf ear to his sexually erring wife, leading Barczewski to assert 'Arthur's expressions of masculinity are confined to the verbal realm, as he impotently attempts to reassert his dominance over his marriage and his kingdom',[20] again reiterating Tennyson's concerns regarding the corruption and limitations of language. Consequently, despite Tennyson's own declaration that Arthur is the ideal soul of man, a quasi-divine figure who all men should aspire to be, his inaction leads to questions surrounding his own culpability in the destruction of his life's work, and it also raises the question over whether Geraint is not a more suitable candidate for the epitaph of ideal man.

When Geraint overhears those dreaded words he eschews the doubtful verbal realm, preferring instead to take decisive action. He immediately instructs Enid to:

> '...put on thy worst and meanest dress
> And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd, amazed,
> 'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her fault.'
> But he, 'I charge thee, ask not, but obey' [21]

Enid complies with the wishes of Geraint and arrays herself in her meanest garb and although confused, abides by his wishes to ride in front of him. Geraint issues these instructions because he so fears the ability of language to corrupt and override and dare not speak to Enid as he 'felt that tempest brooding round his heart,/ Which, if he spoke at all, would break perforce/ Upon a head so dear in thunder'.[22] Instructing her to remain silent upon her honour and duty as a wife (l.16), they travel together in misery and in silence. In fact the duty of both to uphold their gendered roles within the marriage is reiterated throughout the Idyll 'Geraint and Enid' to the point that Geraint prefers to have his life endangered than have Enid break her silence. Travelling out into the wilds, Geraint must reclaim his masculinity and cast off his effeminate behaviour[23] by taming both nature and his errant wife.

Hourihan writes extensively on what makes a hero, the epitome of maleness, and she argues that one of the central codifications of the hero is 'the exploitation of the environment [and]...the marginalization and subordination of women'. [24] As such Geraint's choice to wander in the wild is as significant as his decision to wander at all. It places him as successor to a long and vibrant history of valiant hero knight in a chivalric order that renounces the effeminate male. If Arthur depicts courtly life and verbosity, Geraint is his opposite. Geraint's choice to embrace the masculinity required of a patriarchal social order and thus preserve his marriage is echoed in the behaviour of Enid. Enid errs from Geraint's harsh

instructions only to warn him of dangers on the path ahead on three occasions when she utters such sentiments as:

> I needs must disobey him for his good;
> How should I dare obey him to his harm?
> Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill me for it,
> I save a life dearer to me than mine.[25]

Each time danger lurks she is aware that in disobeying she threatens her own life, but each time decides that his life is worthier than her own. In so doing Enid conforms to the self-sacrificing representation of the Victorian wife. Such a model of behaviour continues throughout the second Geraint Idyll, 'Geraint and Enid', up to the point at which Geraint appears to be mortally wounded. Captured by the roguish Earl Doorm, Enid kneel beside her apparently deceased husband, refusing food, drink and rest, even in the face of the Earl's wrath, declaring, 'I will not eat/ Till yonder man upon the bier arise,/ And eat with me'.[26] This resolution holds to the point that, faced with the death of Geraint, she wishes her own death rather than a life without him. Geraint has in fact been listening throughout and is finally convinced of his wife's loyalty. Enid's feminine passivity and inaction mean that she epitomises 'the long-suffering wife who conquers through her moral superiority'.[27] As Lerner goes on to state '[t]he relationship of this [ideal] to patriarchy is distressingly obvious: woman is helpless and when she is wronged the only course open to her is non-resistance'.[28]

Birstow argues that throughout the *Idylls* Tennyson employs manly women and womanly men to 'reinforce, rather than eradicate, sexual divisions'.[29] I would suggest that it is because Victorian society feared the breakdown of their social structure and the empire as a result of the collapse of traditional gender roles that throughout the *Idylls* Tennyson stresses the need for the maintenance of gendered identities. It has been stated by critics (such as Wynne-Davies[30]) that Enid and Geraint depict one of the last literary examples of men and women accepting their traditional gendered identities, and while I agree that these characters eventually accept and reinforce the gendered identities believed essential in Victorian Britain for a successful marriage, I do not believe that they constitute the last example of such a union.

The Arthurian tradition in contemporary literature is claimed by many critics to have its genesis in Malory's fifteenth century text, and indeed Tennyson himself claimed that he owed much of his own work to Malory's *Morte Darthur.* However, the *Idylls* spoke to their time, and it was for this reason that they were so hugely popular. In employing what Stephens termed 'medievalism', [31] Tennyson was able to write about love and sexuality in a way that otherwise would have been perceived as shocking. This medievalism is a technique still employed by writers of Arthurian fiction today, allowing for the perpetuation of rigidly gendered roles

that have been widely attributed to Malory but which are not present in the medieval text. Rather it is Tennyson's model of gendered love which persists in contemporary works, including those of J. K. Rowling and Mary Hoffman. Such medievalism contributes towards a growing trend of retro-sexism, particularly prevalent in children's Arthurian literature, in which the mythical speech of the Arthuriad allows for the belief in the sentiment that just as it has always been so it must always be.[32] Consequently, although it seems paradoxical, a move towards the gender roles in the medieval texts may allow for more freedom from the strict gender roles of Tennyson's Victorian *Idylls* and allow for a literature in which both Arthur and Geraint can be considered masculine in their own way and in which Enid and Guinevere can be freed from the dichotomy of representation which still influences their presence within a depressing number of reworkings.

Notes

[1] P. Turner, *Tennyson* (London: Routledge, 2000), 17.
[2] Ibid., 14.
[3] Stephen Knight, *Arthurian Literature and Society* (London: The Macmillan Press, 2000).
[4] A. Dwight Culler, *The Poetry of Tennyson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 236.
[5] Ibid., 239.
[6] Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'The Marriage of Geraint' in *Idylls of The King,* ed. J. M Gray (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), ll.393-396.
[7] Ibid., ll.804-814.
[8] Ibid., ll.50-55
[9] Ibid., l.108.
[10] Ibid., ll.74-77.
[11] Knight, *Arthurian Literature and Society,* 162.
[12] Laurence Lerner, 'Stereotypes of Woman in Victorian England' in *Exploring Stereotyped Images in Victorian and Twentieth-Century Literature,* ed. John Morris. (New York: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 162.
[13] Tennyson, 'The Marriage of Geraint' ll.79-81.
[14] Stephen Ahern, 'Listening to Guinevere: Female Agency and the Politics of Chivalry in Tennyson's Idylls.' *Studies in Philology* (2001): 1. Viewed on 5 August 2014.
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[15] Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'Merlin and Vivien', in *Idylls of the King,* ed. J. M Gray (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), l.236.

[16] M. Wynne-Davies, *Women and Arthurian Literature: Seizing the Sword,* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000), 12.
[17] Alfred Lord Tennyson, 'Geraint and Enid', in *Idylls of the King,* ed. J. M. Gray.(London: Penguin Classics), ll.960-966.
[18] Knight, *Arthurian Literature and Society,* 183.
[19] *Ibid.,* p.158.
[20] Stephanie, L. Barczewski, *Myth and National Identity in Nineteenth-Century Britain: The Legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 183.
[21] Tennyson, 'The Marriage of Geraint', ll.130-133
[22] Tennyson, 'Geraint and Enid', ll.11-13.
[23] *Ibid.,* l.20.
[24]Margery Hourihan, *Deconstructing the Hero: Literary Theory and Children's Literature,* (London: Routledge), 203. [25] Tennyson, 'Geraint and Enid', ll.135-138
[26] *Ibid.,* ll.655-57.
[27] Lerner, 'Stereotypes of Woman in Victorian England', 29.
[28] *Ibid.,* 30.
[29] Joseph Bristow *The Victorian Poet: Poetics and Persona,* (London: Croom Helm), 10.
[30] Wynne-Davies, *Women and Arthurian Literature,* 130.
[31] John Stephens, *Language and Ideology in Children's Fiction,* (Harlow: Longman Group UK Ltd)
[32] Carl Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 100.

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Love and the Crossing of Gender Boundaries: Strategies of Staging Transgender Identity

Marcus Hartner

Abstract
Love and romance are among the oldest plot devices in literary history and have been employed in many different ways. From Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to Meyer's *Twilight*, romance has helped to stage the (attempted) crossing of various kinds of boundaries (ethnical, cultural, social, political, etc.). Though popular culture generally privileges the portrayal of 'stereotypical' heterosexual romance in this context, filmmakers and novelist have also begun to employ different types of love as successful plot devices in order to present transgender issues to a wider audience. This paper investigates how the themes of love and affection are used strategically for the narrative staging of transgender identity in recent fiction and film. It illustrates that these issues form a functional and conceptual unit in Jackie Kay's award-winning novel *Trumpet* (1998) and the American road movie *Transamerica* (2005), directed by Duncan Tucker. Both narratives are deeply concerned with portrayals of transgender issues such as gender passing and sex change. They feature protagonists whose identities are fundamentally shaped by a discrepancy between their chosen gender and their biological sex. The paper shows that the topic of love plays a central role in the depiction and evaluation of those characters. Significantly, the stories are not merely concerned with romantic love but largely focus on other forms of emotional attachment such as filial, paternal, and maternal love as well as friendship. However, though the portrayal of transgender issues in both narratives fundamentally hinges on the narrative negotiation of different facets of love, those negotiations are employed with quite different effect. While *Transamerica* evokes the transformative power of maternal love in order to reach a mainstream audience, *Trumpet* displays a more complex narrative structure that manages to emulate the performative nature of identity and gender (Butler).

Key Words: Transgender, sex change, gender passing, love, family, performative identity, narrative, strategies of representation.

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1. Transsexualism in Mainstream Film: Duncan Tucker's *Transamerica*

Love and romance are among the oldest plot devices in literary history and have been employed in many different ways. From Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* to Meyer's *Twilight*, romance has helped to stage the (attempted) crossing of various kinds of boundaries (ethnical, cultural, social, political, etc.). This paper investigates how the themes of love and affection are used strategically for the

staging of transgender identity in the road movie *Transamerica* (2005) directed by Duncan Tucker and the Jackie Kay's award-winning novel *Trumpet* (1998). Both narratives are concerned with a portrayal of various transgender issues. They focus on the topics of gender passing and sex change and feature protagonists whose identities are fundamentally shaped by a discrepancy between their chosen gender and their biological sex. I argue that though the portrayal of transgender issues in both narratives fundamentally hinges on the narrative negotiation of different facets of love, those negotiations are employed with quite different effect.

Duncan Tucker's directing debut *Transamerica*, for example, presents the story of Bree Osborne (formerly Stanley Chupak). Bree is male-to-female transsexual, living in Los Angeles, whose life revolves around the wish to become 'fully' female. In the opening scenes of the movie the viewers learn that she desperately wants to undergo gender-reassignment surgery. Just as the operation that will change Bree's anatomical sex has finally been approved, she unexpectedly learns that she has a teenage son called Toby, who has been arrested by the police. Forced by her therapist to take responsibility for the boy who has run away from home after his mother's death, Bree takes a plane to New York where Toby has been living as a rent boy. Here, she bails him out of prison and convinces him to accompany her on a road trip back to California, all the while concealing her identity and pretending to be a charitable Christian missionary. The ensuing trip across the US takes up a variety of typical elements of the American road-movie: Instead of taking busy interstates, they drive along 'winding two-lane highways, and eat in homey little roadside cafes;'[1] they encounter colourful figures, including 'a wise warm black woman, a drunken and depraved hillbilly and a courtly Indian […], who takes a liking to Bree.'[2] They manage to get their car stolen, and eventually those events lead to a foreseeable, slow and reluctant bonding between the two characters. After a series of adventures and their equally predictable falling out after Bree is forced to disclose her 'true' identity, they finally reach California. Though the movie refrains from a sugar-coated happy ending in typical Hollywood fashion, it still closes on a decidedly hopeful note: Bree undergoes surgery and contently settles into her new life with an anatomically female body. Furthermore, the final scene stages a tentative reconciliation with Toby in which both characters accept their respective roles as parent and son.

'Like all good road movies,' as Philip French points out, '*Transamerica* is both a journey in space and time and a journey of the mind and spirit.'[3] Like its title 'Trans-america' tellingly suggests, it uses the structure of the road movie to pair 'geographic migration/dislocation and gender transition in a process of thematic mirroring.'[4]

> Transgender narratives, autobiographical and fictional alike, have traditionally used this motif to signify the trans person's movement toward self-acceptance and into an integrated, newly gendered personhood […]. The trans person is recurrently

> imagined as both a geographical and gender migrant – moving through uncharted territory and between the poles of intelligible gender.[5]

By the end of the movie, however, Bree's journey is over. She has not only completed her trip across the US but she has also completed her journey towards female anatomy. More importantly, she has also come to acknowledge her deep emotional attachment to Toby. Felicity Huffman, the actress playing Bree, points out in an interview that Bree 'thinks the biggest thing she can do is become a woman, and she realizes that the biggest thing she can do is become a parent.'[6] Paternal love—most dramatically staged in Bree's despair when she thinks that she has 'lost' her son after their quarrel—becomes the main cinematic means with which Tucker's *Transamerica* ensures the audiences sympathy towards its transgender protagonist. The film refrains from staging potentially less uncontroversial issues such as transsexual sexuality or romantic love, not to mention social marginalization, discrimination, and inequality. Instead, it relies on the value of family and the transformative power of becoming a parent to ensure a broad audience's acceptance of Bree and her journey. This narrative strategy appeals to a variety of viewers. A. O. Scott, for example, writes in a review for *The New York Times* that the film succeeds in 'affirm[ing] Bree's dignity…[and] liberat[ing] her and others like her from any association with camp or freakishness.'[7] Critics such as Cael M. Keegan, however, view the movie's gender politics in a much more critical light. *Transamerica* certainly promotes a liberal acceptance of transsexualism, but in order to achieve this aim it creates a simplified, one-dimensional representation of transsexual identity and experience. As Keegan points out, *Transamerica* eschews social and political issues of trans-existence and stages a narrative relying heavily on rather traditional social values:

> The enduring message of *Transamerica* is that transgender identity can only be authenticated though kinship […]. It is biological connection, not the political connection of a transgender community or culture […] that the film stresses as the key to personal liberation and the end to bad feeling. Through this process, the film makes transgender difference consumable for a mainstream audience that is assumed to share a sentimental, romantic ideal of the biological family as the affective centre of national life.[8]

Bree's love for Toby, in other words, has to become more important than her wish to become a woman for both her and the movie to gain a large audience's sympathetic approval.[9] In this respect, it is crucial that Bree has also completed her journey from male to female anatomy by the end of the story. Only through this

transformation she can 'fully' become Toby's mother. In other words, she is re-integrated into the normative binary gender matrix. Interestingly, it is surgery that makes this transition possible – a narrative move that seems to suggest love and the surgeon's scalpel as the ultimate solution for 'curing' gender dysphoria.[10]

3. Polyphony, Jazz, and Gender Performance: Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*

Another text in which domestic relationships and love constitute central narrative strategies is Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*.[11] However, Kay's award-winning novel proceeds in a quite different manner and with quite different effect in comparison to *Transamerica*. It was inspired by the life of the American jazz musician Billy Tipton and tells the story of the successful male black Scottish jazz trumpeter Joss Moody, who is discovered to have been born biologically female after his death. The novel displays an unusual narrative structure. The story sets in only after the death of its protagonist and is rendered alternately from the points of view of different characters who retrospectively try to make sense of Joss Moody's life. Friends, family as well as a journalist from the yellow press, who is after a sensationalist biography, are among this group of fictional agents.

With the exception of Moody's wife Millicent, the discovery of his biological sex comes as a complete surprise to all of these characters. This includes, most importantly, his adopted, adult son Colman, whose shock and disbelief about the discovery soon turn into rage and anger. Unlike *Transamerica*, Jackie Kay's novel does not employ the motif of a journey to stage the crossing of gender boundaries. Instead, it is by showing different characters' attempts to come to terms with the memory of Joss that the narrative reconstructs his life and deeply engages with the topic of gender passing, i.e. the ability of an individual to pass for a member of the opposite sex.[12]

Unlike Bree, the protagonist of *Trumpet* does not seek gender-reassignment surgery. However, the novel's strategy to employ a variety of voices enables the text to engage in a truly multifaceted literary exploration of the notions of gender, identity and race.[13] The complex and fragmentary novel is composed of thirty-five a-chronologically arranged chapters of various lengths; it features a collage of memories, dialogues, reflections, obituaries, letters, and newspaper clips. Thus, the very form of the text underlines the multifaceted and plural nature of Moody's identity. In sharp contrast to *Transamerica*, its formal structure explicitly opposes a teleological notion of narrative.[14] Instead, the narrative presents a 'plurality of voices who try to make sense of the contradictions of a female body living under a masculine identity.'[15] Due to this plurality of voices, the personality of Joss 'can only be partially reconstructed' by the reader:[16] a strategy that functions to present identity and gender as fundamentally multilayered, incomplete and performative categories.

> [T]he multiple narratives allow the reader no fixed position by which Joss's constructed identity may be contained; rather, the at times competing perspectives imply that his/her life and death can never be safely delimited through standard teleological narrative modes.[17]

Gender questions in *Trumpet*, in other words, are less discussed than performed by an orchestra of different voices. The polyphonic quality of the novel is further underscored by the musical form of jazz, which serves both as a thematic and a structural leitmotif. Lars Eckstein points out that 'jazz is, above all things, paradigmatically 'hybrid' in nature.'[18] It has thus often served as a metaphor for 'unconventional constructions of identity.'[19] In this light, it is no coincidence that the character Joss Moody is a Jazz musician. Kay confirms in an interview that the polyphonic form of the narrative constitutes a reference to jazz music:

> I wanted to tell a story, the same story from different points of view. I was interested in how a story can work like music and […] I wanted to write a novel whose structure was very close to jazz itself. So the registrar, the drummer, the cleaner all interested me because they gave the same story a different note.[20]

The choice to draw on Jazz both thematically and structurally signals a fundamentally performative understanding of gender and identity.[21] Yet, despite its experimental structure and elusive protagonist, the novel does not engage in an extreme form of postmodern criticism of subjectivity, identity or narrative. In fact, those elements are counteracted by a parallel development within the story. While on the one hand the unsolved questions about Moody's past and personality undermine traditional notions of identity and gender, the narrative presents rather conventional and coherent character portrayals of his wife Millicent, his son Colman, and the journalist Sophie Stones on the other. In jigsaw-puzzle manner, these characters gradually emerge as fully developed and psychologically consistent fictional beings.

With regard to their emotions, actions and personalities, the multiperspective structure of *Trumpet* has a complementary rather than contradictory effect. While other polyphonic texts confront the reader with entirely irreconcilable information, the different voices in *Trumpet* can be organically integrated into a coherent story with a realistic setting. The reasons why some aspects of Joss Moody's personality still remain obscure have to do not only with the a-chronological and fragmentary narrative structure of the text but also with *Trumpet*'s refusal to unveil certain aspects of the protagonist's life. It is the questions at the very heart of Moody's gender passing which are not resolved and remain subject to conjecture: When and why did he decide to become a passing man? Did the decision have something to

do with his career as a musician? The absence of an answer to those questions is central to the novel's rendering of gender and love. On the one hand, the musician's gender and identity remain incomplete and 'in process.' On the other hand, the deliberately frustrated attempt to fully reconstruct Moody's personality and sexuality foregrounds the other characters' and their emotions while they endeavour to grapple with the same questions. Thus, the novel turns from a story primarily about Joss Moody to a story also essentially concerned with some of the other characters, particularly his wife and son, who have to 'de and re-construct themselves, finding ways to exist after his death.'[22]

It is through the thoughts and emotions of these characters that the novel manages to manipulate the audience's sympathy towards the protagonist. While piecing together the narrative jigsaw-puzzle of *Trumpet*, it becomes possible to distinguish between two different sets of characters: fictional agents who had an intimate personal relationship with the deceased musician, and characters that were not personally acquainted with him. While individuals in the latter group (e.g. the physician, the undertaker, the journalist Sophie Stones) either remain emotionally indifferent or show a merely voyeuristic interest, all members of the first group (e.g. his wife, the housekeeper, fellow musicians etc.) reveal a deep emotional attachment to their late relative and friend. Their perspectives unambiguously endorse Joss Moody's musical genius and his kind, compassionate, and likeable personality. It gradually becomes apparent that all of these characters loved the protagonist in their individual way – as band leader, caring husband, friendly employer, or great friend. In the face of this shared positive assessment, the emotional relevance of gender categories steps into the background. While the many narrative fragments do not provide exhaustive information about Moody's life and sexuality, they nevertheless enable a decisive emotional assessment of his qualities as a human being – a move that undermines the relevance of binary gender categories.

It goes without saying that the narrative is not as harmonious and devoid of conflict as this short summary might suggest. Particularly, the protagonist's son Colman is deeply upset by the revelation of his father's biological sex. However, the reader realizes quite early that his resentment is rather an expression of deep insecurities about himself. Underneath Colman's anger, as Angela Walz points out, the relationship between Colman and his father is equally characterized by an unacknowledged, yet deep love and loyalty.[23]

By filtering the question of gender passing though the perspective of various characters and their emotions (e.g. Coleman's anger and Millicent's grief), Kay gives the story a high degree of diversity and authenticity:

> The beauty of Kay's narrative is that she does not undo the life narrative of a passing man; rather, she sets out to honor it by

> weaving together a patchwork of memories from Joss's survivors […] and making that patchwork into the authentic narrative.[24]

While the novel programmatically declines to provide clear-cut definitions of the notions of character, gender or biography it displays tremendous respect for the practice of gender passing by refusing to pry into the most intimate spheres of its protagonist's life and identity. Questions about Joss and Millicent's sex life, his reasons for becoming a man, or the everyday details of successful gender passing remain disclosed and private.

In combination with the aforementioned jazz-metaphor, those open questions undermine the notion of rigid gender categories and suggest the possibility of successfully transcending the binary 'male/female' in a performative way. At the same time, the overall emphasis on love and compassion emerging from the array of character perspectives identifies love, affection and empathy as the fundamental qualities defining human nature: 'I think that we are all not that different really,' Jackie Kay states in an interview 2004. 'So I always write from the knowledge that we share a very common humanity with other people.'[25]

4. Conclusion

Both Duncan Tucker's *Transamerica* and Jackie Kay's *Trumpet* strategically employ love as a narrative means for staging transgender identity and the passing of gender boundaries. While the former presents a straightforward road-movie evoking the stereotypical image of the transformative power of maternal love in order to reach a mainstream audience, the latter displays a narrative structure that manages to emulate the performative nature of identity and gender (Butler). *Trumpet* features a protagonist whose personality and gender orientation are mutually constitutive and fundamentally in flux. Significantly, romantic love is not the primary concern of either story. The narrative core of *Transamerica* is formed by the relationship between mother and son, while Jackie Kay's novel engages with a variety of different emotional attachments such as filial, paternal, and maternal love as well as friendship. Though both texts, thus, rely on love as a central narrative element, they use is to quite different effect. *Transamerica's* ending closes the tension between Bree's chosen gender and her biological sex. The film, in a sense, resolves the problem of gender dysphoria by normalising Bree, by transforming her transsexality into a conventional version of femininity and motherhood. *Trumpet*, in contrast, does not resolve this tension and rather suggests a notion of gender that is transitory and in flux. The questions triggered by Joss Moody's gender passing are neither answered nor silenced. Yet the passing man is rendered with a deep sense of respect and compassion, thereby creating a complex and more authentic image of transgender identity.

Notes

[1] A. O. Scott, 'A Complex Metamorphosis of the Most Fundamental Sort' review of *Transamerica*, directed by Duncan Tucker, *The New York Times*, 2 December 2005, Viewed 12 September 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2005/12/02/movies/02trans.html?r=0.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Philip French, 'Transamerica' review of *Transamerica*, directed by Duncan Tucker, *The Observer*, 26 March 2006, Viewed 12 September 2013, http://www.theguardian.com/film/2006/mar/26/philipfrench.
[4] Cael M. Keegan, 'Moving Bodies: Sympathetic Migrations in Transgender Narrativity', *Genders* 57 (2013): §8, Viewed 12 September 2013, http://www.genders.org/g57/g57_keegan.html.
[5] Ibid.
[6] DVD Interview 'Conversation with Duncan Tucker and Felicity Huffman', in *Transamerica*, DVD, directed by Duncan Tucker (Belladonna Productions, 2005).
[7] Scott, 'Complex Metamorphosis'.
[8] Keegan, 'Moving Bodies', §12.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Ibid., §17.
[11] For an analysis of *Trumpet* from the perspective of cognitive narratology, see Marcus Hartner, 'Cognitive Approaches to Narrative: Blending Theory and the Analysis of Character Perspectives in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*', in *New Approaches to Narrative*, ed. by Vera Nünning (Trier: WVT, 2013), 57-71.
[12] Eveline Kilian, *GeschlechtSverkehrt: Theoretische und literarische Perspektiven des gender-bending* (Königstein: Helmer, 2004), 285.
[13] Silvia Mergenthal, 'Kay, Jackie: *Trumpet* (1998)', in *Novels: Part II*, ed. by Susanne Peters (Trier: WVT, 2008), 132.
[14] Angela Walz, *Erzählstimmen verstehen: Narrative Subjektivität im Spannungsfeld von Trans/Differenz am Beispiel zeitgenössischer britischer Schriftstellerinnen* (Münster: LIT, 2005), 138.
[15] Carla Rodríguez Gonzáles, 'Biographical Improvisation in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*', *Scottish Studies Review* 8.1 (2007): 89.
[16] Ibid.
[17] Alison Lumsden, 'Jackie Kay's Poetry and Prose: Constructing Identity', in *Contemporary Scottish Women Writers*, ed. by Aileen Christianson and Alison Lumsden (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 87.
[18] Lars Eckstein, 'Performing Jazz, Defying Essence: Music as a Metaphor of Being in Jackie Kay's *Trumpet*', *ZAA* 54 (2006): 53.
[19] Rodríguez Gonzáles, 'Biographical Improvisation', 89.

[20] Jackie Kay, 'Interview with Jackie Kay', *Bold Type* 3 (1999), Viewed 12 September 2013, http://www.randomhouse.com/boldtype/0499/kay/interview.Html.
[21] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).
[22] Lumsden, 'Poetry and Prose', 89.
[23] Walz, *Erzählstimmen verstehen*, 148.
[24] Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time & Place* (New York: New York University Press, 2005), 59.
[25] Susheila Nasta, *Writing Across the World: Contemporary Writers Talk* (London: Routledge, 2004), 241.

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Between Loyalty and Transgression: Towards a Feminist Deconstruction of Cultural Taboos against Young Lovers in Africa

Canice Chukwuma Nwosu

Abstract
The relationship between male and female folks motivates gender issues that reinforce stereotype identity for women and a chauvinistic personality for men. Love is like a springed measuring scale that dangles these issues, swaying them more to men and intermittently to women. Despite this war of sexes, love is a bridge across the gulf that exists between both sexes. Even when one woman is at war with one man for trying to dictate, control and determine her destiny, love makes her place her fate in the hands of yet another man. Sometimes her struggles to break the walls built by identity and cultural practices put in place by men are carried out with yet another human of the male specie. Love is a sensational feeling that indicates acceptance and affection between/among persons. However, emotional flows from young lovers sometimes suffer inhibitions created by identity, cultural dams of taboos and myths that create gulfs between lovers. Hence, Love entangles, divides and separates. Be it as it may, most nations of the world still cling to these cultural practices: taboos and traditions on the grounds that they hold the fabrics of their society together. While the Western world, over time has succeeded in diffusing and refiguring the impact of these cultural practices; Africa is still struggling with the deconstruction of her negative cultural practices targeted mainly at the female folk. This chapter examines gender issues raised by these inhibitions and implications of such on young lovers in Africa as well as efforts being made by feminist dramatists to deconstruct these taboos in African literature. The researcher focuses on Tess Onwueme's *The Broken Calabash* using case study and content analysis research designs of the qualitative research method.

Key Words: Relationship, taboo, lovers, transgression, cultural, feminists, drama, gender, deconstruction, Africa.

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1. Introduction

Loyalty and love are among the most appreciated virtues of mankind. However, loyalty affects the community and institutions more, while love is more individualistic; in the balance hangs transgression which either reinforces or weakens loyalty and love. These three phenomena of life are vital variables in determining identity and social relationships. Chronologically, love may be said to be the oldest of these phenomena, since God himself is love and consequently

created the world out of love. Hence, man's relationship with God is based on the love of God and mankind. Apart from the Christian religion, most religions and worldviews reflect this shared love between God and mankind. Loyalty follows in that order because it is an ingredient of love, a prerequisite, as well as a determinant of the level of love that exists between two lovers; institutions and their members, citizens and states etc. Transgression is derived from weakness in love and loyalty; it may be seen in this regard as a rebellious and protest tool. The binary nature of these concepts is reinforced or weakened by identity formations. However, the fact remains that it takes two to actualize actions connoted by these terms; the lover and the loved, the leader (object of loyalty) and the loyalist, the aggrieved and the transgressor. Norms as participants in the drama of beings and their environment condition positive and negative forces emanating from these relationships. Thus, attainment to normativeness breeds myths, rituals, taboos and other societal mores that hold the fabrics of every society together. That God created humans male and female further complicates the performance of each group within the frame work of these norms put in place by the society for attainment of normalcy within each geo-enclave co-habited by the two sexes. Consequently one is faced with the problem of making choices within restrictive conventions that force him/her to: respect, trust, be loyal, love or transgress.

Taboos are important aspect of these conventions that restrict and inhibit the choice process of young lovers especially the female folks. Hence, women have continued to agitate against these inhibitive practices seen as disempowering them. Despite this age long war of sexes, love enables male and female folks to co-exist in the same environment. Simply put, love is a sensational feeling that indicates acceptance and affection between/among persons. According to Deborah Anapol; 'Love is a force of nature,'[1] but she goes further to explain that love is difficult to control, concluding she says; 'Love is bigger than you are. You can invite love, but you cannot dictate how, when, and where love expresses itself.'[2] Anapol's definition and understanding of love appears to be saying that transgression in love may be motivated by its overwhelming driving force or betrayal. Thus, when emotional flows of love encounter cultural dams of taboos and norms; loyalty and love take positions at opposing sides of the gulf with love as the springed measuring scale that dangles opinions of lovers between loyalty and transgression. Such socio-centricism between love and societal norms in most cases sway issues to the side of the community and project young lovers as transgressing normative laws. Placed side by side, the relationship between love and loyalty raises two vital questions: is loyalty a pre-requisite of love or an ingredient of love? John Kleinig in his own view says that:

> Loyalty is usually seen as a virtue, albeit a problematic one. It is constituted centrally by perseverance in an association to which a person has become intrinsically committed. Its paradigmatic

> expression is found in friendship, to which loyalty is integral, but many other relationships and associations seek to encourage it as an aspect of affiliation or membership: families expect it, organizations often demand it, and countries do what they can to foster it. May one also have loyalty to principles or other abstractions?[3]

Other issues include: Does loyalty spring from the heart like love? Is it possible to induce loyalty? Love fosters loyalty, but the breach of love leads to transgression. Therefore loyalty is '…primarily a feeling or sentiment – an affective bondedness that expresses itself in deeds *and thought*.'[4] Transgression indicates unfaithfulness, infidelity and betrayal of trust when associated with individual relationships. On the other hand Merriam Webster Dictionary online gives it a broader meaning linking it to institutions and the larger community. It says that; 'transgression is an act or process of infringement or violation of law, command or duty.'[5] These two definitions raise the issue of which interpretation brings transgression closer to taboos: the individual or collective meaning? Communities and societies set the standard that guide individual behavior and sustain societal norms. Therefore the breaches of such norms constitute a body of what the people refer to as taboos. Dairo Oyelade and Rasheed Lateef affirm that, 'peoples of all nations of the world have things that shape their societies. These include their customs norms and taboos.'[6] According to the Lexicon Dictionary, Taboo is defined as; 'separated or set apart as sacred, forbidden to general use, or placed under prohibition or ban.'[7]

Western, Asian and African cultures are full of taboos, but application, interpretation and understanding of these taboos are; 'context- specific and therefore the act of transgression can only be judged within its specific socio-historical context.'[8]

Patterns of socio- economic change impact on the social context and seriousness attached to transgression of taboos. The Western world for instance has succeeded in diffusing and refiguring over time their own taboos and negative cultural practices. This can be seen according to Batra and Messier;

> … In the wide acceptance and prolific exposure of subjects that had once been considered taboo in Popular culture and the social sphere (such as main streaming of pornography, the extensive figuration of gays and lesbians in prime time TV shows, and the acceptance of same sex marriage in Spain) ... [9]

Unfortunately, Africa is still struggling to deconstruct her negative taboos and cultural practices especially those targeted at women and children. Thus, there is no gainsaying that the major hurdle facing African feminist agenda is how to

refigure these taboos put in place by men (because they are at the helm of affairs) to inhibit the performance of women in their different endeavours. Hence, African feminist agenda cannot be a separatist movement; rather it should be an aspect of genderism; because it encapsulates loyalty, Love, transgression, taboos and reflections of identity inter-change in the developing nations. Attempts have been made in African literature to lay bare these issues by African feminist writers like: Efua Sutherland in her *Edufa*, Zulu Sofola in her *Sweet Trap* and Tracie Utoh in her *Out of the Mask*.

Therefore this chapter examines approaches to love, women liberation and the consequent whirlwind of feminism in Africa with the aim of suggesting effective and suitable methodological approaches that will enable crossing and redrawing of boundaries. Hence, intersections among love, gender, transgression and loyalty as variables of culture are explored using Onwueme's play *The Broken Calabash*.

2. Young Lovers and Feminist Deconstruction of Cultural Taboos

Feminist deconstruction of cultural taboos is a holistic women liberation enterprise within which love, taboo and transgression are imbedded. It is hinged on genderism because the male folk would want to hold sway and sustain cultural practices that boost the male identity. Women liberation movements encounter resistance in Africa because the people still cherish the mores of their society like taboos, myth, rituals and festivals for the fact that they help to hold the fabrics of the society together. Taboo among other cultural practices appears to be the one mostly targeted against women. According to Eric Ayisi, Sir James Frazer was the first to give the term serious sociological attention, Ayisi posits that;

> …the term was imported by voyagers who visited Polynesia – and they used the term for a special kind of prohibition which they illustrated by the physical avoidance of certain things or categories of people, such as new born infant, a corpse or the person of a Chief - all these were said to be taboo.[10]

However, people did not adhere willingly to these practices until their enforcement was backed by the use of sanctions. Apart from the fear of sanction, the mystification of these taboos and the psychological impacts of the mythology of their sustenance are also responsible for the resistance encountered by feminist deconstructionists. According to Ayisi; 'a man who touched any of these things become taboo himself and was expected to submit himself to prescribed ritual purification.'[11]

Deconstruction was easier in the West because government agencies, individuals and organizations got involved and put in place structures (the media, schools, enlightenment campaign organizations) that facilitated the deconstruction process. Even at that; did the deconstruction of these taboos in the West come on a

plaster of gold? Agitation and protests are the tools for revolutionary change as I have observed even from close personal life experiences involving two families in my community without male children. The two families labeled A and B in this study are faced with the dilemma of enforcing the 'Nwanyi ibichi ama' cultural practice; which simply means preventing a female child from getting married so that she inherits her father and bears children for his household. Family A has five daughters while family B has six daughters. It is expected that each of the families will prevent at least one of their daughters from getting married; so that she can 'live in her father's compound' and bear children for her lineage. Daughters of family B became educated, got married to responsible men and today they are all happily married. But before they all got married they fought for their freedom individually and collectively stepping on the toes of their parents and breaching a prevalent cultural practice. At the long run they convinced their parents to adopt a male child.

Family A forced their last daughter to comply and 'inherit the compound'. Today she is frustrated, with neither parents nor husband; she is left alone to shoulder the burden of her rascally but illegitimate children.

The semblance of this Igbo negative cultural practice and "Idegbe," an Ugwashiuku negative cultural practice against women; which Tess Onwueme captures in *the Broken Calabash*, interests me. This is sequel to the artistic and stylistic manner with which Onwueme concretizes bell hooks theory of feminism; *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* in *the Broken Calabash.* Ewwillia, reviewing this hook's master piece on feminist theory says that:

> Teaching to transgress illustrates the importance and possibility of rupturing traditional pedagogical boundaries- the extremely limited parameters of the traditional misperception of methodological rigor, and the authoritarian model of (the teacher and parents) as all knowing …[12]

According to Ewwillia, hooks dwells on the importance of education as the locomotive engine of transgression and deconstruction for the purpose of change. However, according to Ewwillia; hooks furthers her argument in an elongated differentiation that leaves her readers with two types of education. The type that reinforces bourgeois identity and ideology and the type that gives one '…the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.'[13]This theory becomes an analytical tool with which the researcher interrogates Onwueme's idea of deconstruction in *The Broken Calabash*. Hence, Onwueme's female protagonist, Ona, Diaku her lover and Ugo

another female character, are put on the love scale and allowed to be dangled by the wind of loyalty and transgression as they struggle to transcend issues of identity and love.

The playwright's presentation of the female protagonist reflects the bifurcation of African feminism into liberal and radical feminist movements. From the radical point of view, Ona's vision fits into hooks' theory as affirmed by Leonard Lawlor that; 'the deconstruction of the opposition is to overturn the hierarchy at a given moment.'[14] Ona's failure to transgress, expresses the liberal view as cautioned by Derrida that, 'the final task of deconstruction is not to surpass all oppositions; because it is assumed that they are structurally necessary to produce sense.'[15] Consequently, Onwueme is caught between the forces of liberal and radical feminism, as well as the cost and gains of the deconstruction agenda. Hence, the radical stance of the female protagonist whittles down as it becomes obvious that she cannot transcend her 'idegbe' identity to achieve a desired heterosexual marriage relationship.

3. Deconstructing of Cultural Taboos by Young Lovers in Africa: An Analysis of *the Broken Calabash*

The Broken calabash derives its thematic thrust from the 'Idegbe' cultural concept of Ugwashi-uku people. The heroine of the play Ona, is an 'Idegbe'- interpreted as a 'male' only daughter. Idegbe tradition creates a new identity for Ona and bestows on her, a masculine gender role of a son in the absence of a male child in her family. Thus, it becomes a taboo in Ugwashi-uku culture for Ona to marry because she is expected to stay in her paternal home and bear children for the continuance of her father's race. Ona rejects this role and identity despite the interest in gender passing, equality of the sexes and sex exchange among young female University graduates and revolts in order to love and find fulfillment in a heterosexual marriage relationship. She also rejects the option of exchanging herself with another female by marrying her into chief Rapu's family. Ona's father Chief Eloke Rapu (Cortuma) sends Ona to school with the intention of equipping her with everything she will need as his 'son' and heir apparent. Unfortunately the reverse becomes the case, as Ona's University education as proposed by hooks teaches her to transgress. She falls in love with Diaku who must contend with his Osu identity and Ona's idegbe identity in order to transcend. Hence, in order to love, Ona, an Idegbe and Diaku an Osu transgress their people's norms; but chief Rapu insists on preserving the people's tradition. Events take a dramatic turn, Diaku and Ugo betray Ona and she becomes pregnant. Falsely Ona accuses her father of being responsible for the pregnancy and chief Rapu commits suicide.

Ona's love for Diaku places her between loyalty and transgression; not even her father's love, could change her loyalty. Below Ona bemoans her father's culturally motivated but selfish inhibitive tendencies that prevent her emotional flow for her lover, she laments:

Ona:

> My father inhibits me in every way. He always hangs around whenever Diaku comes to see me … I normally look forward to Sunday when Diaku and I can both elope from the church after the gospel to his house.[16]

Ona's desire for heterosexual love places her in conflict with her father and the idegbe identity that inhibits and de-womanizes her; yet love entangles her with Diaku, another male specie with Osu identity. It becomes obvious that as Ona struggles; she does so with Diaku; hence apart from Ona's Idegbe identity, Onwueme raises the issue of cast system in Africa. Diaku as a member of the Osu cast, an inferior race marginalized within the African culture especially in Igbo-land suffers subjugation by the treatment meted out to him by chief Rapu despite his male identity. Ona a free born and an only daughter is expected to remain loyal to this age long cultural practice of her people inhibiting her marriage. Armed with her University education and spurred on by bell hooks principles of transgression; Ona is able to climb the bridge love built across the gulf baring her from her deconstruction mission. Not even the plea and explanation from Ona's father, Chief Rapu could make Ona change her mind; Chief Rapu explains:
Courtuma:

> … we are nothing without you… my fathers thought it wise not to allow our homestead to be deserted after I am gone. And you, Ona, are the living plant to shade this homestead. How are you going to shade it Ona, answer me? [17]

Courtuma speaks in riddles and his explanation is shrouded with imageries and symbols of the people's ancient tradition beyond the understanding of his confused daughter and she responds:

> Ona: I do not know.
> Courtuma, (Chief Rapu) though surprised and disappointed continues his explanation and says:
> Courtuma: Okey then what this simply means is that you, my Ona, cannot marry outside this my family. You are an idegbe! [18]
> The atmosphere becomes charged and tension heightens as the protagonist wrestles with the forces from her environment, she lashes out at her father:
> Ona: leave me alone. Do I not see my mates? Am I to live my life unfulfilled just because I am your only child and you have some obsolete tradition? [19]

> Ona's reaction attracts her mother's intervention who quickly cautions Ona.
> Oliaku: you refuse to hear your father? Odida forbids! Isah! Come! They have cast a spell on my only daughter Ona? [20]
> Ona feels betrayed as her mother, a fellow woman joins her father in the plot to sacrifice her at the altar of tradition. The battle line is drawn and Ona's love places her between the forces of loyalty and transgression. Overwhelmed by the emotional flows of love Ona proclaims:
> Ona:
> I see. You people have a very ambitions murder-plan. You will not only slaughter me on the altar of your decadent tradition, but would also want another female head. I say- to hell with your Tradition. Homestead Norm! All!
> Let the wind blow-
> Let the shaky homestead be blown. Anything which cannot stand the force of change must be uprooted or be blown into oblivion by the storm heralding the new season.1[21]

The level of antagonism and subjugation of women come in different socio-political and cultural dimensions as perpetrated by tribal sentiments, taboos and general chauvinistic tendencies.

4. Conclusion

The study established among other findings that taboos reinforce identities that affect performance of young lovers in Africa, therefore, there is need to deconstruct these taboos and put them to better uses like family A, in this study to ensure liberation and empowerment of women for national development. The researcher shows that transgression and taboo are topical because of their reflections of the interchange between chauvinistic tendencies and women empowerment campaign in the developing nations and their impact on Performance of lovers in Africa. To deconstruct these taboos, the researcher recommends enforcement of compulsory girl child education, enlightenment campaign, and attitudinal change.

Notes

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Happily never After: The Effect of Gender on Love as Narrative Closure

Megan Rogers

Abstract
In the nineteenth century female writers were only able to conceive of and construct two types of narrative endings for their gender: heterosexual love and marriage, or death. In response to this dichotomy many feminist writers of the twentieth century attempted to construct stories that transcend the interaction and interconnection between gender, heterosexual love and narrative closure. Novels such as Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* separate the concepts of the female and heterosexual love, but ultimately end in madness or paralysis. These texts, which sever the narrative from formerly conventional structures of fiction, may momentarily imagine a world devoid from the patriarchal expectation of heterosexual love yet they ultimately leave their characters with feelings of futility, confusion and resignation. This chapter argues that the narrative impact of separating female protagonists from heterosexual love is the creation of a new 'madwoman in the attic'; what I term the 'eternal madwoman'. Building on Rachel DuPlessis' *Writing Beyond the Ending*, and the collection of writing *Famous Last Words* edited by Alison Booth, the chapter aims to offer possible responses to Marta Caminero-Santangelo's question, 'How can the symbolic resolution of the madwoman in fictional texts contribute to the transformation of gender ideologies?' Rather than reinforcing further ruptures in the female/love narrative, Maureen Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey* is seen as a possible framework for a more hopeful narrative world where descent and ascent and, in turn, the concepts of love and the female can be reunited.

Key Words: Twentieth-century literature, creative writing, narratology, myth criticism, feminist literary criticism.

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1. Heterosexual Love as Narrative Closure

In November 1985, the eighth meeting of the annual colloquia on poetics held at Columbia's Maison Française focused on the poetics of gender. From this conference feminist critic Nancy Miller collated a series of papers by attendees, including herself and the influential theorists Elaine Showlater, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar. The resulting publication was the collection of writing *The Poetics of Gender*. At the heart of the conference was the question, 'Does gender have a poetics?'[1] More specifically, Miller's publication demonstrates an investigation into feminist criticism and the ways in which it has shown that the social construction of sexual difference 'plays a constitutive role in the production,

reception and history of literature'.[2] Around the same time *Writing beyond the ending: narrative strategies of twentieth-century women writers* (1985) by Rachael DuPlessis was published and was later followed by *Famous last words: changes in gender and narrative closure* (1993) edited by Alison Booth. These texts concentrate on the aspect of 'production' and, more specifically, on the ways in which gender has affected feminist writers' choice of narrative closure.

DuPlessis and Booth demonstrate the historical association between heterosexual love as closure and patriarchal hegemony, and the subsequent stigma surrounding romantic happy endings in feminist literature. They argue that, in the nineteenth century female writers were only able to conceive of and construct two types of narrative endings for their gender: heterosexual love and marriage, or death.[3] Booth's collection of writing on changes in gender and narrative closure reinforces the notion that endings are often duplicitous and seldom anything more than 'double or binary choices for most female characters'.[4]

In response to this restraint, DuPlessis argues, twentieth-century women writers aimed to examine and subvert cultural conventions about 'romance as a trope for the sex-gender system'.[5] She identifies a number of narrative strategies invented or deployed by female writers of the twentieth century explicitly to question romance plots and related narratives. One of the primary approaches is what DuPlessis calls 'breaking the sequence'; that is, to question the construction of gender in narrative form, a writer must distance the reader from codes of conventional narrative.[6] DuPlessis explains that the only way she believes authors can reinterpret the lives of the women they depict is to write outside the terms of the novel's script; [7] a strategy which forces an author to invent a narrative which offers an alternative to individual quests.[8]

Booth and DuPlessis argue that this rebellion against conventional narrative structure allowed twentieth-century feminist authors to construct stories that transcend the interaction and interconnection between gender, heterosexual love and narrative closure. This chapter seeks to identify the possible postromantic structure these writers have employed to formulate an alternative to and subvert the supposition of couple formation.

In the end of her Preface to *The Poetics of Gender*, Miller argues that future conferences on gender should focus on feminist intertextuality.[9] The third Global Conference on Gender and Love is an opportunity to open a dialogue about the possible benefits to gender studies of the intersection between feminist myth criticism, feminist literary criticism and the practice of feminist creative writing.

2. Deconstructing the Heroine's Journey

Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972) have been seen to deconstruct the conventional romantic plot. Gayle Green argues that *Surfacing* is an example of a new genre that came into existence in the 1970s: women's 'quest fiction', in which the protagonist finds 'an ending of her

own',[10] which differs from marriage or death. Green argues that love in general is often problematised in this fiction. So too is marriage, seen as representative of the tradition that the protagonist must identify herself against and associated with the ending she tries to avoid.[11] Mary Lou Emery describes *Wide Sargasso Sea* in a similar fashion, defining the novel as a rupture of conventional romance narratives.[12] Rhys herself, in a letter to Selma Vaz Dias in April 1958, describes *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a reaction against 19th century romance.[13] Both feminist texts in turn question cultural conventions of romance and 'subvert those structures narratively'.[14]

So then, if these two novels – as examples of twentieth-century feminist fiction – utilise a new narrative framework to destabilise previous conventional structures, how can we plot this alternative approach? Green's identification of 'quest fiction' has led this study to the literary interpretation of myth criticism as a possible way to examine the narrative structure of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Surfacing*. Probably the most famous and widely used model of myth criticism is Joseph Campbell's Hero's Journey.[15]

Recently, American feminist theorists have adapted Campbell's model and advocated myth criticism as a possible guide for women's self-actualisation. Maureen Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey* (1990), Kim Hudson's *The Virgin's Promise* (2009) and Valerie Estelle-Frankel's *From Girl to Goddess* (2010), explore myth as a possible framework for a woman's quest for internal growth and change.[16]

Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* was also written as a response to Joseph Campbell's model and utilises Jungian psychology. Murdock, who was a student of Campbell's work, felt his model failed to address the specific psycho-spiritual journey of contemporary women.[17] She subsequently developed a model of the feminine journey, which has become a template for novelists and screenwriters. Drawing upon cultural myths Murdock illustrates an alternative journey model to that of patriarchal hegemony.[18] For this reason, I employ Murdock's model of the heroine's journey as a possible approach to uncover new narrative readings and interpretations of twentieth-century feminist literature.

It is important to note from the outset that this approach is indeed structuralist in nature and therefore could be criticised for neglecting cultural and historical differences as well as specific properties of the literary works. Yet, when scrutinised in terms not of what it is but of how it functions, of how it has served writers in the past, and of how it may serve today, mythology, as Campbell argues, 'shows itself to be amenable to the obsessions and requirements of the individual, the race, the age'.[19]

Image 1: Maureen Murdock's framework of the heroine's journey.[20]
© Megan Rogers. Courtesy of the author

Reading *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Surfacing* through the configuration of the heroine's journey reveals narratives that mirror the journey's descent. Both novels describe protagonists who are separated from the feminine by being abandoned by their mothers. Antoinette's mother's rejection is physical and emotional: '…she pushed me away, not roughly but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if she had decided once and for all that I was useless to her'.[21] When visiting her mother in hospital, *Surfacing*'s protagonist (hereafter referred to as Narrator) talks of a similar experience with her mother, who she describes as a 'harsh bird' with 'clinging claws' and 'absent eyes',[22] when she is taken to hospital.

The protagonists are then drawn to identify with the masculine. Antoinette's mother's failings, internalised as part of the inner negative mother, cause her to feel humiliated about being female and therefore unworthy of a point of view. Her father and feeling safe, as if they were connected in some way, 'belong to the past'.[23] Antoinette's only male role model, her stepfather Mr Cosway, promises her hand in marriage and in turn her fortune to an Englishman. The search for a father is also Narrator's driving force, yet in her case she is looking for her actual father who has 'simply disappeared…vanished into nothing,'[24] rather than a replacement figure.

The outer road of trials takes Antoinette and Narrator through an obstacle course of friendships, education, employment, conceiving a child and marriage. Along the way, these women face ogres, dragons and monsters resembling boyfriends, parents, friends and employers who tell them they cannot possibly succeed.

The protagonists become 'enamoured with the accolades winning brings'.[25] There is a great adrenaline rush associated with the achievement of a goal, and this 'high masks the deep-seated pain' associated with 'not being enough'.[26] Their construct of success is deeply flawed. Antoinette believes that if she can make her husband want her, to desire her physically, then she will be happy. Narrator is convinced that finding her father will solve all her problems. The reward of the outer journey is seductive and the protagonists are unable to sacrifice the false notions of the heroic to find the 'inner' boon of success.

Towards the end of descent, the women experience a period of introversion and depression, a slow painful process through which their identities are scraped away.[27] As Antoinette's husband renames her Bertha, she becomes lost and wishes to stay in the dark 'where she belongs'.[28] Antoinette has 'looked for love in all the wrong places' and it has broken her.[29] In the attic in England Antoinette's identity is finally eradicated: 'There is no looking glass here and I do not know what I am like now.'[30] Narrator marks her descent by staying at her childhood lodge while her companions return to the mainland. She turns the mirror in the lodge around so it 'no longer traps' her,[31] an action similar to Antoinette's, she removes her clothes in an animalistic gesture and adorns the blanket her mother wore when experiencing bouts of depression. Narrator begins to shed her human identity yet she is also terrified of losing control, of letting go of the logic she held onto like a crutch: 'Blank dark, I can see nothing…The fear arrives like waves; logic is a wall, I built it, on the other side is terror.'[32] Though Narrator makes some movement towards reconnection with the feminine, she ultimately remains a narrative captive.

In the end, the women in *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Surfacing* become trapped: unable to move beyond their descent into darkness. They are on 'thresholds', stuck in a kind of limbo or purgatory. We leave Antoinette roaming the hallways of Thornfield thinking about burning down the house and we leave Narrator standing behind and between trees as Joe calls her name. Thus, instead of experiencing the personal growth associated with the mythical journey structure, the women remain in darkness; immobile at the threshold, poised to move forward but stationary, trapped within what seems like a constant pause.

Employing Murdock's model to read *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Surfacing* reveals, initially, a familiar enough structure, yet there is then an abrupt closure. The narratives are in fact revealed to dissect their protagonists' archetypal journey in half, trapping the woman in the darkness of descent. This rupture conjures Charlotte Brontë's epitaph for Lucy Snowe: 'The orb of your life is not to be rounded; for you the crescent-phase must suffice'.[33]

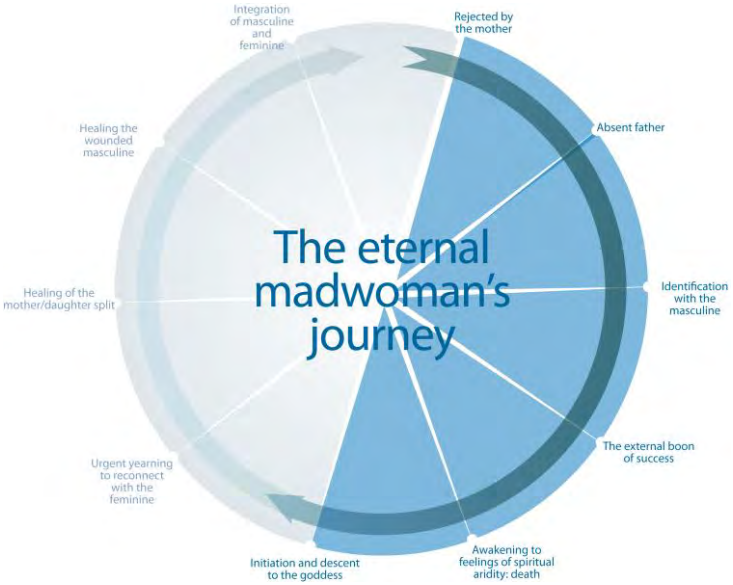

Image 2: The narrative framework of the eternal madwoman's journey.
© Megan Rogers. Courtesy of the author

This paralysis provides little effective rebellion against structural conventions of the romantic plot. While Booth and DuPlessis discuss ruptures in expected narrative structures, I would like to argue that many twentieth-century feminist writers have specifically cut the quest narrative in half. Yet, as Christiane Makward asserts, this deconstruction is highly problematic, since the theory of rupture comes dangerously close to repeating in deconstructive language the traditional assumptions.[34] While texts which end in madness may momentarily envision a world devoid of patriarchal oppression, these writers were finally unable to create it and, in the end, their characters succumb to madness. Just as madness as rebellion can actually function as if in 'collusion with the cultural conditions that produced it',[35] so too can the narrative structure – this ruptured romance – ultimately trap the woman in silence.[36]

Thus, in aiming to separate women from the gendered roles associated with romantic happy endings, the writers have also separated their female protagonists from experiencing any love at all – parental, familial, friendly or self. This break in narrative sequence has created a new version of the madwoman in the attic

character, what I term, the eternal madwoman – a female protagonist maddened by a lack of love and trapped in an attic of narratological descent.

3. The Love-Starved Eternal Madwoman

Straitjacketed by expectations and, often, by more tangible restraints, the character of the 'madwoman in the attic' has been an enormously compelling image of both thwarted feminine potential and society's oppressive assumptions. The 'moguls of feminist criticism on literary madness',[37] Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that the madwoman is an important figure of feminist rebellion. They were the first to publish a diverse commentary on 'mad intertexuality' and, importantly, to use the phrase 'madwoman in the attic'.[38] The madwoman character has subsequently become an enormously compelling image of feminist disobedience and narrative subversion.

I argue that in their rebellion against employing conventional romantic love as narrative closure, *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Surfacing*, and thus potentially many other twentieth-century feminist texts, create an eternal madwoman. Just as the madwoman has historically been employed by writers and interpreted by literary theorists as a powerful feminist motif of rebellion and rage, so too have Rhys and Atwood fabricated with their narrative form a madwoman to subvert cultural conventions of romance.

Yet, using this motif of madness as an effective form of rebellion has been called into question. Many American feminist theorists argue against the madness as resistance metaphor. Rather than rallying against societal assumptions of and constraints on women, they believe madwomen posses and enact little personal or political efficacy.

Caminero-Santangelo in fact argues that *the* central question of current feminist debate is: 'How can the symbolic resolution of the madwoman in fictional texts contribute to the transformation of gender ideologies?'[39] She also argues for feminist practice that improves the lives of women:

> Instead of privileging the retreat into madness, then, let us privilege forms of agency, and of active transformation in all its forms, which women engage in. And, in doing so, let us open an imaginative space for women to be able to escape from madness by envisioning themselves as agents.[40]

The new reading using Murdock's heroine's journey supports the criticism of madness as rebellion as the protagonists can be seen as being more tragic than transformational. It also begs the questions, have we, in our eagerness to deconstruct what we believe to be patriarchal structures and provide alternatives to individual quests, actually prevented our female protagonists from experiencing

any form of love? Have we in some ways said that if a woman cannot have heterosexual romantic love, she can have no love at all?

Caroline Rody argues that Antoinette furiously opposes her pre-scripted fate and is thus 'our greatest figure for the resisting female figure', [41] and Barbara Hill Rigney proclaims that *Surfacing*'s protagonist has escaped from madness and is finally secure in an undivided self.[42] Although previous interpretations have viewed the texts as subversive, by contemplating their narrative structures as depictions of the heroine's journey we are able to illuminate new meanings. In the entrapment of the madwoman at the narrative stage of descent we see the woman as unable to move past the chaos, to transcend the emotion; indeed, to integrate all the aspects of what are referred to as masculine and feminine attributes so as to become a whole individual. Rather than an act of influential dissent, I would like to argue that rupturing the romance narrative and dividing the heroine's journey in two simply reiterates a doctrine of gendered behaviour.

4. Ascent as a Counter-Narrative of Self-Love

In deconstructing the conventional romance plot, Rhys and Atwood have also deconstructed the descent/ascent narrative binary. The journey downward usually precedes a journey upwards, or an up-coming (anados),[43] a re-establishment of equilibrium.[44] Campbell believes that these two narrative paths (a downward and upward path) are inextricably bound and that together they 'constitute the totality of the revelation that is life'.[45] Similarly, Tzvetan Todorov argues that the two halves constitute the 'very definition of narrative' and that without the second 'hemicycle' there is no character transformation and thus, he believes, no narrative.[46] Carl Jung similarly argued that every descent should always be followed by an ascent, an enantiodromia.[47]

Therefore, if we read the rupture of romance narratives as a descent rather than dissent, it inevitably alludes to the possibility of an ascent. Whilst the descent in the heroine's journey separates the female protagonist from 'labouring under the spell of romantic love',[48] the ascent allows her to experience a 'marriage within'.[49] Through self-actualisation she is able to earn her autonomy from the patriarchal expectations and gendered ideologies of heterosexual love and develop long-lasting self-love. The framework of ascent thus enables a writer to transform the eternal madwoman from oppressed victim of the patriarchal hegemony to self-realised, self-respecting and therefore self-loving subject.

Green argues that this type of 'symmetrically patterned, formally well-made' narrative's 'neat, circular structure is finally constricting'.[50] That though the protagonists find 'an ending of their own', in that she ends alive and alone, the sense is of a 'narrowing off of possibilities rather than an opening up into new ones'.[51] Yet, I argue, it is in fact transcending paralysis and developing self-love in the narrative, which opens up new possibilities. Murdock's Heroine's Journey is, therefore, an important framework for feminist writers in the twenty-first century.

The ascent and complete heroine's journey offers a counter-narrative of self-love to the conventional narrative of romantic love.

It is this reunion of descent and ascent and, in turn, female protagonist and love, which I argue responds to Caminero-Santangelo's question: 'How can the symbolic resolution of the madwoman in fictional texts contribute to the transformation of ideologies of gender?'[52] It is this more hopeful narrative closure that privileges active transformation; and it is the focus on reconstruction rather than deconstruction that opens an imaginative space for women to envision themselves as agents.

Notes

[1] Nancy Miller, ed., *The Poetics of Gender* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), xi.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Alison Booth, ed., *Famous Last Words: Changes in Gender and Narrative Closure* (United States of America: The University Press of Virginia, 1993), 2.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Rachel DuPlessis, *Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), ix.
[6] Ibid, 20.
[7] Ibid, 6
[8] Ibid, xi.
[9] Miller, ed., *The Poetics of Gender,* xiv.
[10] Gayle Green, 'Feminist Fiction, Feminist Form', *Frontiers* xi, (1990): 82.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Mary Lou Emery, 'The Politics of Form: Jean Rhys's Social Vision in Voyage in the Dark and Wide Sargasso Sea', *Twentieth Century Literature* 28, no. 4 (1982): 425.
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[14] Green, 'Feminist Fiction, Feminist Form', 83.
[15] Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (California: New World Library, 2008).
[16] Lee R. Edwards, *Psyche as Hero: Female Heroism and Fictional Form* (United States of America: Wesleyan University Press, 1984) 11.
[17] Maureen Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1990) 2.
[18] Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey*, 5.
[19] Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 382.
[20] Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey*, 5.

[21] Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (London: Penguin Group, 1966) 7.
[22] Margaret Atwood, *Surfacing* (London: Virago Press, 1972) 15.
[23] Ibid., 5.
[24] Atwood, *Surfacing*, 18.
[25] Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey*, 66.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., 88.
[28] Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 87.
[29] Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey*, 107.
[30] Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, 117.
[31] Atwood, *Surfacing*, 179.
[32] Ibid., 176.
[33] Charlotte Bronte, *Villette* (New York: New American Library, 1987) 340.
[34] Christiane Makward, 'To Be or Not to Be ... a Feminist Speaker,' in *The Future of Difference* ed. Alice Jardine and Hester Eisenstein (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980) 96.
[35] Susan Bordo, 'Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallisation of Culture,' in *Feminism & Foucault: Reflections on Resistance*, ed. Irene Diamond and Lee Quinby (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988), 105.
[36] Marta Caminero-Santangelo, *The Madwoman Can't Speak or Why Insanity is Not Subversive* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1998) 123-146.
[37] Elaine Showlater, 'Gilbert and Gubar's Madwoman in the Attic After Thirty Years,' *Victorian Studies* 53, no. 4 (2011): 715.
[38] Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (United States of America: Yale University Press, 1979) xix.
[39] Caminero-Santangelo, *The Madwoman Can't Speak*, 2.
[40] Ibid., 181.
[41] Caroline Rody, 'Burning Down the House: The Revisionary Paradigm of Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea', in *Famous Last Words: Changes in Gender and Narrative Closure* ed. Alison Booth (Virginia: The University Press of Virginia, 1993) 302.
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[43] Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 21.
[44] Tzvetan Todorov, 'The 2 Principles of Narrative,' *Diacritics* 1, no. 1: 39.
[45] Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* , 21.
[46] Todorov, 'The 2 Principles of Narrative,' 39.
[47] C. G. Jung, *Symbols of Transformation* (London: Routledge, 1953) 357.
[48] Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey*, 60.

[49] Ibid., 165.
[50] Green, 'Feminist Fiction, Feminist Form', 85.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Caminero-Santangelo, *The Madwoman Can't Speak*, 2.

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Part III

Gender and Love in Cinema

Madly in Love: The Mental Threat of Homosexuality in Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940)

Gesine Wegner

Abstract
This chapter uses queer and feminist narrative theory in order to demonstrate how closely homosexuality has been linked to mental illness in Hitchcock's *Rebecca*. It aims to disclose aspects of female homosexuality and its relation to mental illness that other queer readings of *Rebecca* have so far failed to notice. By focusing on the narrative of Mrs. Danvers, it will become clear that this particular character breaks most drastically with traditional gender roles and heterosexuality. At the same time, Mrs. Danvers is shown to continuously develop features of mental illness. By bringing concepts of gender, sexuality and disabilities studies into the analysis, I am going to identify Mrs. Danvers not only as a queer, but also as a mentally ill character. The traditional features of madness associated with her character are argued to disclose a causal relationship between homosexuality, mental illness and its social construction.

Key Words: Cultural semiotics, gender performativity, medical concepts of homosexuality, feminist narrative theory, constructions of mental illness/ concepts of madness, disability theory, censorship.

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As a contribution to an on-going debate about the representation of women in Hitchcock's work, this chapter aims to disclose aspects of female homosexuality and its relation to mental illness present in *Rebecca* that its queer readings of Rhona Berenstein and Tania Modleski have so far failed to take into account. Using Freudian oedipal trajectory theory, particularly Modleski has argued for a same sex attraction of the young protagonist Mrs. de Winter towards the deceased, albeit omnipresent, Rebecca.[1] While some of Modleski's arguments seem rather questionable, this chapter is going to argue that homosexuality in Hitchcock's *Rebecca* is indeed present.[2] Yet same sex attraction, as will be shown, is rather depicted by the frightening figure of Mrs. Danvers than by the childlike and innocent Mrs. de Winter. The shift in focus towards the character of Mrs. Danvers will reveal the interaction of madness and homosexuality within Hitchcock's film – a connection that critics and scholars have failed to notice so far, owing to the fact that the character of Mrs. Danvers has not yet become a primary interest within greater research. Through analysing the overall structure of Mrs. Danvers' narrative as well as some specific scenes, I will shed light on the importance of this presumably flat character in regards to a more general depiction of gender and sexuality in Hollywood films of the mid 20th century.

By bringing concepts of gender, sexuality and disabilities studies into the analysis, I aim to identify Mrs. Danvers not only as a queer, but also as a mentally ill character. Moreover, the traditional features of madness associated with her character are argued to disclose an interrelatedness of both categories. The chapter finally suggests that *Rebecca* thereby represents a then contemporary perception of homosexuality which – at this time – was starting to become increasingly pathologized. While the medical categorization of homosexuality reached its peek in the 1950s, *Rebecca* can be seen as an early reflection of this very development.

As has been laid out by Victor Russo's ground breaking book *The Celluloid Closet*, gay characters have been an on screen presence since the birth of cinema.[3] By the 1930s Hollywood had started to increasingly experiment with different gender expressions and performances. Marlene Dietrich's androgynous appearance is surely just one example of such a play with gender that comes to mind. Opponents of such liberal dealings with sexuality and gender roles were, however, soon to be gathered, particularly under the head of the Catholic Church. In 1934, the so called 'Legion of Decency' had not only rated movies as to content but threatened massive boycotts of movies they regarded as indecent.[4] In regards to the power of the Church within society, these threats necessarily lead to regulations which were then to be manifested within the Production Code.

The Motion Picture Production Code reinforced normative gender roles and sexualities by stating what could and could not be shown. Although homosexuality was not named directly under the code, including the term 'sex perversion' among the prohibitions held back homosexual characters from being openly shown on screen. Instead, these characters needed to take on a new identity: that of an evil and, I argue, often equally 'mad' villain.[5] This is certainly the picture that is painted of Mrs. Danvers in Hitchcock's film. Being one of the movie's most important secondary characters, Mrs. Danvers challenges gender roles with her mere appearance. When the newly wed couple arrives at Manderley, their staff awaits them standing separated into gendered groups. While the men are dressed in dark colors, standing to the left, the maids, standing to the right, are wearing white aprons on top of their clothes. It is only Mrs. Danvers who breaks this arrangement by standing on the supposedly 'male side' and by wearing a long black robe.[6] Introducing her to the story in this particular way highlights that Mrs. Danvers is unlike others. The contrast of dark and light colors continues as the young Mrs. de Winter explores the house wearing different light colored dresses while being followed by Mrs. Danvers almost completely dressed in black. Mrs. Danvers is thus depicted as a dark shadow watching and following every step that the new Mrs. de Winter takes. The young Mrs. de Winter is not the only one frightened by this strange behavior: as the camera angle mostly denies any view of Mrs. Danvers' feet, the audience soon realizes that there is something 'wicked' in the way Mrs. Danvers moves around the house as if she were a floating ghost. As the film scholar Kendra Bean has argued in her online article *The Mysterious Mrs.*

Danvers: Queer Subtext in Alfred Hitchcock's Rebecca, 'portraying lesbians as ghosts in Hollywood movies is directly linked to cultural attitudes and anxieties about homosexuality'.[7] It is even more so, I argue, linked to notions of madness and to the fact that mental deviation can, as it seems, not be depicted and seen outside a negative, eerie frame. Those common adverse perceptions and depictions of mental disability are in return closely linked to other identity categories such as gender and sexuality as they are used to negatively influence our understanding of same sex desire. Moreover, making metaphorical use of madness and therefore of mental disability involves for the reader to both stare at disability in its socially constructed form and yet to look away from mental disability as lived and embodied experience.[8] As I will further explore, the trope of madness used in order to emphasise and judge Mrs. Danvers' gendered difference can be understood as both ableist and patriarchal.

As the story is mainly told through the perspective of the new Mrs. de Winter, audience members are as likely to experience the same unease in regards to Mrs. Danvers as the protagonist does. This becomes significant for the reading of Mrs. Danvers' character. While Rebecca seems to be spiritually present beyond her absence, the audience experiences Mrs. Danvers to be physically watching Mrs. de Winter. By adopting an otherwise traditionally male gaze, Mrs. Danvers continues to move across the gender binary. The concept of visibility hereby becomes, as Patricia White has argued, 'paradoxical; it is not the 'to-be-looked-at-ness' of Woman, but the 'always-hanging-around-ness' of the spectator'.[9] Mrs. Danvers does not only take on the role of the male spectator, she also establishes a clear hierarchy between her and Mrs. de Winter by constantly commenting on her decision making. By frightening and therefore ruling over the new Mrs. De Winter, it seems that the deceased Rebecca is given a voice after all, operating through the house keeper. Just how connected the two characters are, is emphasized by a key scene taking place in Rebecca's bedroom. As Mrs. Danvers is leaning against the wall, she starts to talk about Rebecca very much like a love struck teenager. This takes place only a few minutes after Mrs. Danvers has taken some of Rebecca's clothes 'out of the closet.' Mrs. Danvers' use of the first person pronoun provides the audience with another piece to the puzzle: 'this is where I keep her clothes,'[10] 'I keep her underwear,'[11] and finally 'I keep it here, always!'[12]

As Mrs. Danvers continues to talk about Rebecca's gowns and underwear, those clothes, instantly become a personification of Rebecca herself. Lost in her memories, Mrs. Danvers asks 'did you ever see something so delicate?' while holding Rebecca's nightgown standing right next to the deceased's bed. Moreover, she continues to talk about Mr. de Winter's grief in such detailed fashion that one is likely to wonder whether she is not indeed articulating her own grief, projecting herself into the role of the loving husband. I would like to argue that the homosexual tendencies of Mrs. Danvers become quite apparent in this scene and may have even been accessible to a close observer at the time. This is likely to be

the reason why Joseph Breen, head of the Production Code, sent an explicit message to David O. Selznick, producer of R*ebecca*, forbidding him to openly depict this sort of 'sex perversion' on screen. Berenstein quotes directly from one of these letters in her 1998 article: 'We have read the temporary script. . . and I regret to inform you that the material, in our judgment, is definitely and specifically in violation of the Production Code . . . sex perversion, or any inference of it, will not be allowed.'[13] Yet, despite his letter, the previously described scene made it through the final cut.

Having been produced regardless of the Production Code, this controversial scene raises a number of interesting questions. One might wonder what element within the structure of the narrative allowed Mrs. Danvers' more or less overt homosexuality to be shown on screen. In order to answer this question, a further look at the 'bedroom-scene' is needed. Not only does this scene reveal Mrs. Danvers' attraction to the deceased Rebecca, it simultaneously also discloses further traits of Mrs. Danvers' madness. While leaning against the wall, obsessing about Rebecca's and her past, Mrs. Danvers is trapped inside her memory to the point that audience members can find her repeatedly talking to herself instead of actually speaking with the young Mrs. de Winter. Yet, as much as her mind seems to be trapped inside those memories, for parts of the scene she manages to focus on Mrs. de Winter instead. These moments, however, do not depict the house keeper as being any less 'out of her mind.' As Mrs. Danvers moves closer to the protagonist, the camera provides the audience with close ups of both characters. As the audience is able to gaze directly at Mrs. Danvers face, her eyes attract particular attention. At one moment she is staring at the young Mrs. de Winter for quite some time without a single bating of her eyelashes, yet just a moment later her eyes start to wander about strangely. The camera's extreme close up focus on these eye movements make them seem even more strange and clearly influence the audience's attitude towards Mrs. Danvers. This scene and its use of camera close ups, I argue, make use of the popular ableist idea that madness can be seen in the eyes of a person. It becomes clear that, while the gaze of the audience is directed toward Mrs. Danvers' own gaze, the concept of the gaze itself is normative. The gaze does not only reflect a certain power structure, it is at the same time very much an embodied experience. Mrs. Danvers eye movements do not fit normative ideas of how eyes are 'supposed' to look and therefore withdraw the original power from her gaze and instead marginalize her as 'the other.' The extra-diegetic, ableist gaze of the audience devalues the intra-diegetic and disabled gaze of Mrs. Danvers.

All of this happens deliberately after having been confronted with a similar eye expression by a minor character earlier on in the film. While taking a walk with her husband, Mrs. de Winter makes the acquaintance of a man who is clearly at a mental stage of health not considered 'normal.' There are two attributes to his character that help the audience to identify the man as mentally ill: his verbal

wanderings and the way his widely opened eyes stare at the young Mrs. de Winter.[14] His eye non-/movements can, in regards to his clearly deranged state of mental health, be used as a key for reading Mrs. Danvers. The man by the sea, I would like to argue, is used to introduce the audience to an indicator of madness that is then adapted to Mrs. Danvers to indicate her 'otherness.'

The interpretation of Mrs. Danvers as a homosexual as well as a mentally ill woman manifests itself quite spectacularly during the last ten minutes of the film. After Mr. de Winter reveals that his deceased wife told him the 'unspeakable' about herself, it becomes known that the former Mrs. de Winter had been making doctor's appointments for years using the name 'Mrs. Danvers' for herself. Unlike the new Mrs. de Winter who is merely defined by her position as Maxim's wife and does in fact seem to have no other name, Rebecca refuses to be defined as 'the other' of Maxim. However, she does not choose her maiden name in order to prove her independence, but uses the name of Mrs. Danvers instead. She hereby discloses her relationship to Mrs. Danvers to be similar to a matrimonial relationship. It is further revealed by the doctor that Rebecca had suffered from cancer. What she herself had identified as a pregnancy, turns out to have been a tumor growing inside her uterus. Since the ability of bearing a child has been understood as an indicator of 'true womanhood' during this time, it seems that Rebecca's specific type of cancer is being consciously used in order to de-feminize her character. The move to pathologize Rebecca's body is deeply embedded in the general depiction of non- heterosexual bodies as 'sick'. The doctor further reveals that Rebecca reacted to the news by smiling 'in a queer sort of way'[15] instead of expressing a more common reaction of shock or sadness. The fact that both characters, Rebecca and Mrs. Danvers, do not express weakness at any time during the film stands in direct opposition to the traditional idea of femininity as being fragile and weak. Although Mrs. Danvers is in deep grief about the loss of Rebecca, she does not shed tears. Additionally to her unusual eye movements, she does not ever seem to move her lips, neither to give someone a smile nor to express grief. Lacking the ability to mourn in traditional ways, Mrs. Danvers thus becomes unintelligible to the audience. Being neither readable as subject nor as object, she consequently becomes what Julia Kristeva has coined the abject. Her position as being cast off is caused, as I argue, by the fact that she inherently disturbs what is, by an ableist society, understood as social reason.[16]

It is despite – or rather because of – this lack of feminine fragility that the Production Code could not allow Mrs. Danvers or Rebecca to survive. In the end, both more or less covertly homosexual characters die of their 'sickness'. While Rebecca is already deceased, Mrs. Danvers becomes the victim of her own madness as she dies in the flames of a fire she herself started. When Maxim finds his wife outside the burning house, she explains to him with no great surprise that Mrs. Danvers 'has gone mad.'[17] Mrs. Danvers' suicide resembles most strikingly Bertha's death in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and thereby aligns Mrs. Danvers

with other so called 'mad women' as they have stereotypically been represented in literature and film. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have pointed out in their groundbreaking analysis of *The Madwoman in the Attic*, female characters in 19th century literature – and as I would like to argue way beyond this time – are either to embody the 'angel' or the 'monster.' Hereby, the notion of monster is, I argue, created through using mental disability as a tool. Characters such as Bertha are, as the disability scholar Lennard J. Davis emphasized in *The Mad Woman and the Blind Man* 'seen as a crazed monster, rarely as a woman with affective and cognitive disabilities.'[18] While their madness makes both Bertha and Mrs. Danvers unintelligible to the reader, their unintelligibility serves as foundation for the misogynist reading of their characters. It is this tragic ending that along with the happy ending for the main characters seems to be the only solution for a rather openly homosexual character at the time. It was, after all, only twelve years after *Rebecca* 'came out' that the American Psychological Association decided to add homosexuality to its list of mental disorders.

What I hope to have illustrated is how the trope of madness is continuously used to amplify the marginalization of homosexuality within *Rebecca*. Analyzing Mrs. Danvers' character, furthermore, illustrates that the concept of madness itself is a social construct used in order to reinforce existing power structures. These power structures, as they rely on ableist as well as on heterosexist ideas, clearly privilege heterosexual over same sex desire and the normative mind over what is constantly defined and redefined as madness. The fact that Mrs. Danvers' madness seems to be part of or caused by her homosexuality forces the categories of disability and homosexuality as well as the analyses of such categories to overlap. To focus on only one of these categories, I argue, is to ignore their interaction and therefore to miss the complexity of Mrs. Danvers's character.

Notes

[1] Tania Modleski, *The Women Who Knew Too Much: Hitchcock and Feminist Theory* (London: Methuen, 1988), 50-51.

[2] Rhona Berenstein, 'I'm Not the Sort of Person Men Marry: Monsters, Queers, and Hitchcock's *Rebecca*', *Out in Culture: Gay, Lesbian, and Queer Essays on Popular Culture* (Durham: Duke UP, 1995), 249.

[3] Vito Russo, *The Celluloid Closet: Homosexuality in the Movies* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 5.

[4] *The Celluloid Closet,* Dir. Rob Epstein and Jeffrey Friedman. Written by Russo, Vito, et al. (Hollywood: TriStar Pictures, 1995), 00:15:14.

[5] Kendra Bean, 'The Mysterious Mrs. Danvers: Queer Subtext in Alfred Hitchcock's Rebecca', Viewed on 12 April 2013, http://www.vivandlarry.com/classic-film/the-mysterious-mrs-danvers-queer-subtext-in-alfred-hitchcocks-rebecca/.

[6] *Rebecca*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Based on the novel by Daphne du Maurier. Selznick. (Internat. Pictures, 1940), 00:29:07.
[7] Bean, 'The Mysterious Mrs. Danvers', n.p.
[8] David Bolt, ed., *The Mad Woman and the Blind Man. Jane Eyre, Disability, Discourse* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), xi.
[9] Patricia White, *Uninvited: Classical Hollywood Cinema and Lesbian Representability* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 205.
[10] *Rebecca*, Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 01:06:25.
[11] Ibid., 01:06:54.
[12] Ibid., 01:08:10.
[13] Rhona Berenstein, 'Adaptation, Censorship, and Audiences of Questionable Type: Lesbian Sightings in *Rebecca* (1940) and *The Uninvited* (1944).' In: *Cinema Journal* 37, No. 3 (1998): 16-37. 17.
[14] *Rebecca*, Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 00:47:28.
[15] Ibid., 01:58:58
[16] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia UP, 1982), 65.
[17] *Rebecca*, Dir. Alfred Hitchcock, 02:03:51.
[18] Bolt, *Mad Woman and the Blind Man,* ix.

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Between Exotization and Erasure: Making Sense of Queer Desire on the Mainstream Screen

Mirjam M. Frotscher

Abstract
Representations and portrayals of non-heterosexual love and desire in mainstream media are not particularly new these days, nor are they still considered especially shocking. Homosexual desire has become quite palatable to mainstream appetites. This however is only possible as long as we can locate the non-heterosexual desire within the dichotomous framework of sex, gender, and sexuality. I argue that portrayals of a desire that is not easily located in the hetero/homo divide are met with strategies of re-inscribing the non-normative bodies into exactly the kind of logic that these bodies defy. Furthermore, these normalizing strategies, and whether they are employed and in what way, can tell us quite a lot as to who the cultural offering was actually intended for – rarely ever a non-normative audience. Moments are analyzed when trans* bodies – bodies that are running the risk of becoming unintelligible in the mainstream eye if their queer position is maintained – are brought back to legibility by either relocating the bodies through their desire or by pushing the bodies back into a supposedly natural state. These moments do not create heterosexuality exclusively; within the logic of the binary, homosexuality is deemed just as acceptable, highlighting how it helps in stabilizing the heterosexual matrix.

Key Words: Non-heterosexual, binary, sex, gender, sexuality, media, trans*, queer.

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While in 1991 a kiss between two women on the US television series *L.A. Law* was still reason for public uproar, seeing gay and lesbian characters on television or the big screen has become rather ordinary in our day and age. The last 15 years have seen the release of various cultural offerings that did not only feature non-heterosexual love and desire, but which garnered much acclaim and mainstream success: from the cinematic hits *Brokeback Mountain* and *The Kids Are Alright*, to gay-themed TV series like *Queer As Folk* or *Lip Service*. While this may signal a greater acceptance of non-heterosexual desire by the viewing public, I want to argue that non-heterosexual desire is only deemed acceptable, and in fact readable, as long as it can be located within the dichotomous and complimentary frameworks of sex, gender and sexuality. As soon as the bodies that enact these moments of love, longing and lust fall outside of the binary system, interventions to *straighten out* these bodies are the par for the course. Trans* bodies in particular are threatened by erasure within mainstream media production in order to make them more legible for a wider, usually non-queer, audience.[1] I propose to call these

strategies that are used to locate possibly queer or disruptive bodies within the binary system, *strategies of uncovering*.

In this reading, heterosexuality and homosexuality are two sides of the same coin for both are based on and need clearly identifiable bodies, i.e. bodies that sustain and reinforce the heterosexual matrix.[2] Thus it becomes rather secondary whether the then rearticulated desire is marked as hetero- or homosexual. My claim draws heavily on Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's work. In *Epistemology of the Closet* she states that,

> ... an understanding of virtually every aspect of modern Western culture must be, not merely incomplete, but damaged in its central substance to the degree that it does not incorporate a critical analysis of modern homo/heterosexual definition; … .[3]

From this we can deduce that the modern Western hetero/homo divide does not only structure our understanding of lust and desire but also our knowledge of the bodies that enact them. This also means that we can no longer view heterosexuality alone as the only normativizing force that all people, gay or straight, are subjected to. What has become quite apparent within the last decade is that mainstream gay and lesbian concerns, like marriage equality or open service in the armed forces, have driven homosexuality away from being a queering and questioning force.[4] If we define queer to be

> the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or can't be made) to signify monolithically,[5]

the un-queerness of what homosexuality has come to denote becomes visible. Homosexuality does no longer go against the recognition within the dialectic, as Deleuze and Guattari saw it.[6] Rather it has become part of said dialectic and now functions as a monolithic, stable and defining force. Thus I align my reading of the strategies of uncovering also with J. Jack Halberstam's critique of the current gay and lesbian rights movement by seeing the way homosexuality is used to normalize queer bodies in line with the impetus to 'straighten out' all things queer while at the same time silencing voices of dissent.[7] Besides Halberstam, Jasbir K. Puar and other critics have referred to these developments as an evolving homonationalism which aligns the goals of supposedly equal rights with the state's inherent need to discriminate against outsider groups, be they racially, ethnically or sexually diverse 'others'.[8] The ensuing pressure to conform can in turn be read as a rising pressure towards homonormativity. Thus neither straight nor non-straight spaces can be

regarded as save for the bodily marked other. To that effect, also seemingly non-straight or even queer cultural offerings can be volatile spaces for trans* characters.

To illustrate my point, I will focus on two examples in particular: the quite successful 1999 film *Boys Don't Cry* directed by Kimberly Peirce and the equally commercially successful TV show *The L Word* created by Ilene Chaiken. The parameter for choosing these examples was their overall commercial success and the fact that these are depictions that someone with little to no interest in anything 'queer' has most likely come across.

Let us first turn to *Boys Don't Cry*. Based on the real-life story of trans* man Brandon Teena, the film that portrays his struggles in rural, working-class Nebraska, seems far from mainstream cinematic fare. Although I partially agree with Halbertstam who sees the film as being dominated by a transgender gaze, or as being filmed through a transgender gaze, I believe that the film cannot break entirely with the semi-fetishizing gaze usually targeted at trans* bodies.[9] These very moments of gazing at and thereby seemingly objectifying the body of Brandon Teena that occur most noticeably towards the end of the film complicate its reading immensely.[10] Halberstam, as well as John Phillips and Annabelle Willox, also see the film derailing towards the end in its portrayal of its trans character but usually place the moment that breaks an otherwise empathetic narrative well after the moments of uncovering that I believe are crucial for the so-called love scene to have the derailing, or feminizing, effect that it does.[11]

Upon discovering that their friend Brandon is referred to as Teena Brandon in a small newspaper article, the two local men, Tom Nissen and John Lotter, forcefully undress him. At this point Brandon Teena's body is shown uncovered from the waist down, not only visible to Tom and John but also to the audience.[12] This image of his uncovered female genitalia, together with the very graphic and brutal rape scene in which another focus is put on Brandon's bound breasts serve as the first instances of uncovering;[13] which, in turn, also imply that something along the lines of an essential truth had been hidden before. The subsequent cutting of the binder in the hospital during Brandon's post-rape examination rounds out the image of the uncovered trans* body.[14] All of these instances are not only implied but closely shown to the audience making them moments of literal uncovering and thereby turning them into moments of direct confrontation with the 'naked truth'. Thus, the point that Brandon Teena had a biologically female body is stressed over and over again.

The scene that finally serves to re-inscribe the formerly uncovered protagonist into the (homo)normative order and enables the character to be read as a lesbian rather than as a trans* man, comes right after these acts of uncovering. Brandon spends one last night with his love interest Lana Tisdel, in the so-called love scene.[15] This moment of intimacy stands in contrast to the earlier sex scene between the two.[16] While in the earlier scene Brandon was portrayed as the more active and dominating, read masculine, part it is almost as if now that his body has

been 'revealed' that he can give up 'pretending'. The binder is off; the love making is gentler and seemingly more equal than before. While in the earlier scene, Lana had been the one partially uncovered and thereby became the object the audience was allowed to gaze at, now both Lana and Brandon are equally available to be looked at. In fact, there is almost a role reversal happening which is further marked by one sentence that is being uttered twice these scenes. 'You are so pretty', while first being targeted at Lana is now uttered by Lana with regards to Brandon.[17] Earlier, after finding out that Brandon is trans* Lana had also said: 'I want to touch you the way you touch me', already implying a different dynamic in their lovemaking. During their last encounter then, the switch or the evening out is complete.

It is not only this love scene but the combination of all these scenes that adds a very troubling layer to reading Brandon strictly as a trans* man. In fact, after the film was released the confusion surrounding Brandon's identification arose. To this day, Brandon Teena, as portrayed in the film, is frequently referred to as a lesbian and the film can be found in lesbian sections of online blogs, online retailers or in lesbian movie guides. The scenes that throw Brandon Teena back to being defined by his body make it easy for an audience not well-versed in trans* issues to come to the fatal conclusion that your body, in the end, defines not only who you are but also how your desire should be labelled.

Although it is a lot more light hearted than *Boys Don't Cry*, *The L Word*, too, employs similar strategies of uncovering trans* masculine bodies. Since it first aired on *Showtime*, the series has not been without criticism. Among other things, *The L Word* was accused of being a rather narrow portrayal of lesbianism by choosing to focus on a conventionally beautiful, middle-upper class, high-femme, able-bodied and mostly white core ensemble and thereby virtually erasing any other expressions of being a lesbian.

In an attempt to address one of the most controversial topics within lesbian circles, butch women coming out as trans*, the makers started adding the character of Moira/Max Sweeney at the beginning of season three. While Max remains the most well known trans* character on the show, another trans* character had already appeared in season one, Ivan Aycock. He first appears as a drag performer at the lesbian café-bar *The Planet* and starts to court the only straight woman on the show, Kit Porter.[18] Kit is swiftly warned by her sister, Bette, that Ivan is not a *real* man. In fact, while Kit is willing to refer to Ivan as 'he', seeming at least partially willing to see Ivan as the man he presents himself as, Bette stresses that Ivan is physically female ad-nauseam: 'That's because *she* is in love with you and *she* wants to be your husband'.[19] Still, even though Kit is clearly attracted to Ivan, Kit cannot quite get beyond the fact that she identifies a heterosexual woman, wavering between romance and friendship.

At the beginning of season two, Kit and Ivan become closer. But of course within the logic of hetero- and homonormativity these two cannot become truly

involved with each other. This is made perfectly clear in the 'big reveal' scene. Kit is given the keys to Ivan's apartment. Using them to see herself in, Kit stumbles first upon Ivan's marker of masculinity, a strap on dildo, and then upon a half-naked Ivan just about to put his binder back on.[20] In this scene Ivan's breasts are uncovered, his hair flows in long blonde waves well below his shoulders, so that the character is not just uncovered but also re-inscribed into the binary order of things. This act of uncovering and re-inscribing then, makes it perfectly clear that the heterosexual Kit and Ivan without drag cannot ever be together. Here I slightly disagree with other interpretations of this scene by critics like Marnie Pratt or Aviva Dove Viebahn who see the Kit/Ivan relationship ending due to Ivan's refusal to regain the relationship.[21] In fact, after this incident Kit starts referring to Ivan as 'she' and 'a woman', marking the clear split and thereby implying that it is not one's self-definition but the body that holds the truth.[22] This change of Kit's attitude is in keeping with a series that never really allows for things to become too queer. Interestingly enough it is not just these scenes that seem to essentialize the characters biology, in fact Ivan's masculinity has been read as a phallic mask, a mere performance or even a ruse by such critics like Niina Kuorikoski, Janet McCabe and Kim Akass, who almost seem to deny Ivan any kind of trans* agency.[23] Thus implying that Ivan's masculinity is only drag put on for Kit and not authentic. This can of course easily be countered by referring to Butler's concept of performativity and the claim that there is no such thing as an original. Still, in the end it is this kind of counter-productive and trans* silencing reading the show supported.[24] And indeed, after the 'reveal' scene Ivan pretty much disappears from the show without any further explanation. He only re-emerges twice for very short moments which only serve to stress how Ivan is an inherently deceitful character.

The character of Max Sweeney is slightly better developed than Ivan. Introduced at the beginning of season three as Moira, a highly butch lesbian, his path seems very much set. Moira is too butch for a butch, at least within the logic of a show that centres on highly feminine lesbians, and starts to transition mid-season. This plot point and the treatment it received have been criticized by various scholars. Pratt points out that 'Moira/Max is problematic because the show seems to be hoping to depict butch identity, transgender issues, and class struggle all through one character, which seems too much'.[25]

The first scene of uncovering that the character goes through is shown as a mirror scene in the fourth season. Used as the opener of episode five, then still Moira is shown undoing the drag that is Max and winds up naked and confused in front of the mirror. Here I agree with Rebecca Beirne who argues: 'This narratively unnecessary scene seems to deliberately reaffirm for viewers who are sceptical of his transsexuality that Max "really" is a woman…'.[26] This scene is thrown in without any context; it is not reflected on and will only be echoed by the scenes of uncovering that are to follow.

Although season five gives us an interesting and promising plot point of Max embracing a same sex relationship with Tom, a gay man, this liaison goes up in flames in season six. Borrowing the idea for this plot point from the then fairly recent case of the supposedly first pregnant man Thomas Beattie,[27] Max, too, becomes unintended pregnant. This alone already functions as a re-inscription into the normative order *par excellence* but could have been handled more gracefully and without scenes of uncovering. The first scene of uncovering pregnant Max is focalized through the eyes of Tom who is struggling with the transformation of his boyfriend's body. He watches the reflection of Max in the window getting undressed: first the packer is removed, and then Max undoes his binder. What is left is a semi-nude, pregnant Max, an image that leads Tom to quickly close his eyes. This scene in no subtle terms indicates how little interest Tom, as a gay man, could possibly have in a female bodied trans* man.[28] Thus, this scene implicitly denies any legitimacy of Max's self-identification. Tom actually leaves Max the next morning.

The last scene of uncovering takes place after a harrowing baby-shower that had Max close to a nervous breakdown. Having survived the ordeal, he is all alone in the bathroom, upper body once again uncovered, at one point directly facing the camera, and now in the process of getting rid off the only other outside marker of his masculinity, his beard.[29] At the end, viewers who did not accept Moira as Max were enabled by these scenes, which do nothing else but push the trans* male body back into its supposedly *natural* female state, to re-locate the character into the category of (heterosexual) woman.

Before concluding, I want to reflect on the fact that all of these examples play with some form of (female) masculinity, as put forward by Halbertsam. Halberstam suggests that 'female masculinity within queer sexual discourse allows for the disruption of even flows between gender and anatomy, sexuality and identity, sexual practice and performativity'.[30] Looking at the depictions of the trans* masculinities in *Boys Don't Cry* and *The L Word*, however, we notice that these mainstream depictions will use moments of visually uncovering their protagonists and of reapplying feminine markers to otherwise masculine bodies in order to re-inscribe them into the hetero/homo divide. Thereby any disruptive powers which 'break the even flows' that their doing masculinity might have had are being negated and safely relocated within the legible binary framework. Thus it stands to reason that neither the sexual discourse nor the bodily discourse that is being presented is therefore a queer one or made for a queer audience.

In fact, heightening the visual appeal of *looking at* trans* masculine bodies seems to be another big reason for employing these strategies of uncovering. This can be further supported when comparing these few examples to the frequency with which trans* femininities were depicted in film within the last two decades. Drag queens, forms of cross dressing and trans* femininities were featured in a wide array of films.[31] Most of these depictions played with the allure of looking at

and mocking trans* feminine bodies. In this regard we could assume that trans* masculinities are simply not deemed spectacle enough without adding the level of uncovering and re-inscribing.

The strategies of uncovering presented are employed to 'make sense' out of supposedly confusing trans* bodies. Thereby these depictions play on what one would have hoped were outdated stereotypes: a) that there is always a truth that can be revealed, b) that biology trumps all else and c) that trans* people are at least a little deceitful. All of this implies that, even though mainstream audiences have become more open towards watching non-heterosexual desire on screen, at least the producers of these visuals refuse to believe that their audience is ready to question their binary frameworks of knowledge. This would not be such a big deal if diverse depictions of trans* people were widely available within mainstream distribution. Since this is not the case, it is these kinds of normativity-affirming depictions that the (mainstream) audience is stuck with, for now.

Notes

[1] Using the asterisk at the end of trans serves to imply some of the qualms I had with applying the terms transgender or transsexual to the characters in question. Therefore trans* leaves the term open enough to include various representations.

[2] This usage of the term 'heterosexual matrix' is heavily indebted to Judith Butler's definition of the term in her seminal book *Gender Trouble*.

[3] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistomology of the Closet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U of California P, 1990,) 1.

[4] By mainstream concerns I mean issues that are most closely associated with and most vociferously fought for by larger gay and lesbian rights / equal rights campaigns.

[5] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Tendencies* (Durham: Duke UP, 1993), 8.

[6] See Verena Andermatt Conley, 'Thirty-six Thousand Forms of Love: The Queering of Deleuze and Guattari', in *Deleuze and Queer Theory*, ed. Chrysanthi Nigianni and Merl Storr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2009), 24-36.

[7] See J. Jack Halberstam, *Gaga Feminism. Sex, Gender and the End of Normal* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 95-130.

[8] See *ibid*. 65-94. and Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham and London: Duke UP, 2008), 1-36.

[9] See Judith Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place–Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York UP, 2005), 83-92

[10] Besides criticizing Peirce's portrayal of her trans* character, other criticism has been levelled at the movie for not including the third murder victim and for a very classist portrayal of Brandon's surroundings.

[11] See Halberstam, *Queer Time and Place*, 88-89. John Phillips, *Transgender on Screen* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 141. Annabelle

Willox, 'Branding Teena: (Mis)Representations in the Media', *Sexualities*, 6.3/4 (2003): 413.
[12] *Boys Don't Cry*, Dir. Kimberly Peirce, *Fox Searchlight*, 1999, DVD, 01:19:30.
[13] See Ibid., 01:25:00.
[14] See Ibid., 01:30:00.
[15] See Ibid., 01:36:00.
[16] See Ibid., 00:53:00.
[17] Interestingly enough, the recently released French film *Tomboy* (2011) treats its protagonist Mikael similarly. Although we do not see him entirely naked, the scenes in which Mikael is put into a dress and forced to confess his true sex to the neighbourhood children functions on a similar level as the undressing of Brandon.
[18] See *The L Word*, Created by Ilene Chaiken, *Showtime*, 2004-2009, Season 1, Episode 12, DVD.
[19] Ibid., Season 1, Episode 13.
[20] See Ibid., Season 2, Episode 1.
[21] See Marnie Pratt, '"This Is The Way We Live . . . and Love!"', in *Televising Queer Women*, ed. Rebecca Beirne (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 141. Aviva Dove Viebahn, 'Fashionably Femme: Lesbian Visibility, Style, and Politics in *The L Word*', in *Queer Popular Culture: Literature, Media, Film, and Television*, ed. Thomas Peele (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) 81.
[22] See Ibid., Season 2, Episode 2.
[23] See Niina Kuorikoski, '"Sexuality is Fluid" or Is It? An Analysis of Television's *The L Word* from the Perspectives of Gender and Sexuality', *Interalia: A Journal of Queer Studies* (2007): 9, Viewed 22 March 2013, http://www.interalia.org.pl/pl/artykuly/artykuly_numer/09_sexuality_is_fluid/htm. Janet McCabe and Kim Akass, 'What is a Straight Girl to Do? Ivan's Serenade, Kit's Dilemma', *Reading the L Word: Outing Contemporary Television*, ed. Kim Akass and Janet McCabe (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 155-156.
[24] Candace Moore and Kristen Schilt go even further: They see the gender fluidity that Ivan had in season one already compromised in season two when he becomes clearly readable as a trans* man. So in this case, *The L Word* is an uninhabitable place for both trans* and gender queer characters. (See: Candace Moore and Kirsten Schilt, 'Is She Man Enough? Female Masculinities on *The L Word*', *Reading The L Word*, 166-167.)
[25] Pratt, '"The Way We Live"', 145.
[26] Rebecca Beirne, 'Recycling *The L Word*', *Lesbians in Television and Text after the Millenium*, ed. Rebecca Beirne (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 123.
[27] There have been quite a few cases of pregnant trans* men that were a lot less publicized and therefore remained unknown to most non-queer people.

[28] See *The L Word*, Season 6, Episode 4.
[29] See *The L Word*, Season 6, Episode 6.
[30] Judith Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (Durham: Duke UP, 1998), 139.
[31] A few examples are: *The Bird Cage* (remake of 1992), *The Crying Game* (1992), *Priscilla Queen of the Desert* (1994), *To Wong Foo* (1995), *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001), *Breakfast on Pluto* (2005), *Transamerica* (2005).

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Defying and Dodging the Homophobic Weimar Film Censorship: Same-sex Adoration, Peer Comradeship, or Lesbian Love?

Yuan-Tsai, Chen

Abstract
This chapter will analyse the creative exploitation of cinematic conventions to depict either overt or carefully-hidden lesbianism in Weimar Cinema through silent to sound era (1920- 1931). There had existed some taboo on homosexuality in Weimar films because of a stern anti-homosexual criminal law putting gay men in prison and also a strict anti-homosexual censorship code banning any film containing gay content. However, the whole Weimar society is very tolerant to lesbian elements expressed in the films because of the society's particular male-centered concepts on female sexuality and also the specific artistic techniques ingeniously deployed by the directors to blind the censors from seeing the lesbianism. Therefore, since the homophobic German film censorship had been re-established in 1920, the films transpiring obvious and devious lesbian visual pleasure become a very important vehicle for scholars to decode the directors' cinematic lesbianism and to discover the society's discrepant attitude toward gay love and lesbian love - it is the gayness, i.e. male homosexuality that Weimar censorship is more concerned with, but not lesbianism. Mostly, the lesbian visual pleasure was intentionally designed and skilfully disguised in the films by the directors knowing the blind side of the anti-gay censors, patriarchal society and its audience. This chapter will examine how lesbian visual pleasure in Weimar Cinema was utilized, deployed and disguised to convey the lesbian narrative impulse as an artistic support for the homosexual liberation movement that was developing ardently in Weimar period.

Key Words: Weimar Cinema, Weimar film censorship, lesbian films, Paragraph 175, silent films, queer films, lesbian sexuality.

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According to the existed record in previous scholarship, Weimar Germany produced the first gay film in 1919, and the first lesbian films in 1929. Weimar Germany not only produced the first group of films in this world containing rich queer elements, it also preserved a notorious anti-homosexual law and established the homophobic film censorship. In this chapter, I will analyse the creative exploitation of cinematic conventions to depict both overt and carefully-hidden lesbianism in Weimar cinema through silent to sound era (1920-1931). There had been some taboo on homosexuality in Weimar films because of the stern anti-homosexual penal code incriminating gay men and also the strict anti-homosexual

censorship banning any film containing explicit gay content. However, the whole Weimar society seemed very tolerant to lesbian elements expressed in films because of the society's particular male-centered concepts on female sexuality, and of the specific artistic techniques ingeniously deployed by the directors to blind the censors from seeing the lesbianism. Therefore, since the homophobic film censorship had been reinstated in 1920, the films transpiring lesbian visual pleasure become a very important vehicle for scholars to decode the directors' cinematic lesbianism and to discover the society's discrepant attitude toward gay and lesbian love. So to speak, it is the overt male homosexuality that Weimar censorship was more concerned with, but not the lesbianism depicted ambiguously. Mostly, the lesbian visual pleasure was intentionally designed and skilfully disguised in the films by the directors knowing the blind side of the anti-gay censors, the patriarchal society and its audience, and in doing so, these films managed to deceive the censors and escaped from the fate of being banned. This chapter will examine how lesbian visual pleasure in Weimar cinema was utilized, deployed and disguised to convey the lesbian narrative impulse as an artistic support for the homosexual liberation movement that was developing ardently in Weimar Germany.

Right after the founders of Weimar Republic announced the establishment of the new regime they annulled all kinds of censorship of the imperial period in 1918.[1] Aiming to strengthen the power of the gay liberation movement for abolishing the notorious anti-homosexual law— Paragraph 175 of German Criminal Code, Richard Oswald, an Austrian film director, together with Magnus Hirschfeld, an physician and sexologist, produced the first homosexual film in the world– *Different from the Others*— to propagandize and educate the audience on the issue during this cinematic honeymoon without censorship in 1919. Paragraph 175 was established in 1871 aiming to punish the gay men having 'unnatural' sexual behaviours between male individuals, and those who were sentenced to be guilty by the court could be put in jail up to five years.[2] In order to strive for homosexual human rights, clear gay people of stigmas and help demolish Paragraph 175, Hirschfeld invited Oswald to make this film as a teaching material and a discursive medium.

Although this film achieved a tremendous box-office success, it also greatly offended the conservative groups. The fact that this film was extremely popular startled the political, religious and social rightists. In addition, when this film was screened in a theatre in Berlin in 1919, the dance scenes of the underground cross-dressing party in the film even caused a riot raised by the enraged audience who felt offended by the scenes.[3] The demands for reinstating film censorship and banning this film in virtue of its 'glorifying homosexuality,'[4] 'frank obscenity'[5] and 'creating a public nuisance'[6] were growing wide, fast and strong. In response to the furious objections and boycotts rising from the cinema reform movement, the central government was forced to accept the demand for reinstating the film

censorship.[7] The film censorship of Weimar Germany was thus officially established in 1920. Thereafter, although this film did not show any sex act between two homosexual men, it was still banned for its overt and positive depiction of homosexuality.

Since the anti-homosexual penal code was so harsh and the homophobic film censorship so strict in Weimar Germany, then the question why all the films depicting lesbian images were so mushrooming in this temporal and spatial environment is worth answering. The three films *Hamlet* (Svend Gade and Heinz Schall, 1920), *Pandora's Box* (Georg Wilhelm Pabst, 1929) and *Girls in Uniform* (Leotine Sagan, 1931) would be taken as the examples of my analysis. The reasons why all the films containing rich images and implications of lesbianism could be free from the banning and cutting of Weimar censorship could be simultaneously examined from the perspectives of socio-political conditions and artistic techniques of cinematic practice.

In terms of the socio-political conditions, for part of the reasons based on which the censorship panel ruled to ban the filming of *Different from the Others* is that this film was holding a twisted understanding to proclaim the abolishment of a law, and this so-called biased proclamation could be 'damaging the image of the judiciary and the state.'[8] The following films with lesbian implication were therefore made to be devoid of a claim for changing the law against homosexuality in response to this ruling. According to James Steakley's historical research, the reason why the censors considered the filmmakers' understanding of Paragraph 175 in *Different from the Others* to be twisted and biased is that this film might render 'impartial and especially uneducated viewers […] easily arrive at the conclusion that the protagonist was sentenced to prison simply for stroking his pupil's head or placing his arm on the blackmailer's shoulder'[9] but not the sexual behaviours between two men that is prohibited by Paragraph 175. Some scholars might argue that films with lesbian elements were not banned simply because female homosexuality was not legislated against and thus the cinematic depiction of lesbianism could be free from censorship's ban. Lesbianism or the sexual behaviours between two women was indeed not outlawed by Weimar penal code; however, this ruling against *Different from the Others*, as Steakley indicates, 'was sweeping enough to set limits on the portrayal of female homoeroticism.'[10] Therefore, one of the prominent reasons why the films with lesbian implication were not banned by Weimar censorship is that they neither appealed to challenge the law nor did they hold any ground to be judged by censors as biased against public institutions, but not that they were depicting simply lesbianism that was tolerated by Weimar penal code. With the establishment of the precedent ruling against the damaging of judiciary's image, films appealing for challenging an anti-gay law or the prestige of the official institution still risk being banned no matter they are about female homosexuality or not.

Avoiding the depiction of any on-going lesbian relationship is another strategy for the films with lesbianism to keep a low profile in front of the censors. For the other major reason Weimar censors banned the filming of *Different from the Others* is that the film actually depicted the on-going love relationship between two gay men as idealized and Platonic. Steakley quotes from Albert Moll of the latter's detailed record of the censorship panel's concerns that Oswald and Hirshfeld did show a homosexual musician teaching his young student, but the two gay men's sexual behaviours with each other as mutual masturbation and fellatio were not shown by the two filmmakers.[11] Moll further illustrated that from the censors' point of view this idealized and Platonic depiction of homosexual love is condemnable, as he recorded the panel's comment as below:

> These [sexual acts] are shown neither by the film, nor by the advocates of ideal homosexuality. To be sure, the acts that follow from heterosexual drives are not shown … in heterosexual films. But here people do not need to be enlightened, since everyone knows that matters will not end with romantic, Platonic love. These are more commonly the beginning, and sexual acts are the end… But advocates of ideal homosexuality prefer to present things as if the homosexual occupied his love object only with pedagogic tasks, or they present homosexuality as something purely aesthetic; about homosexual acts and especially about the seduction of young people they are silent.[12]

With or without sex scenes, simply the depiction of a relationship between two homosexual lovers could sufficiently construct the ground to be banned. As Steakley puts it that '[i]f a cinematic portrayal of homosexuality that did not show sexual acts could be banned for its omissions, filmmakers were placed in a damned-if-you-do, damned-if-you-don't position, for any more explicit presentation would unquestionably have been declared obscene.'[13] At least two things we could learn from this ruling: firstly, the overt and positive depiction of a homosexual relationship per se was surely the enemy of the censorship, for the omission of the sexual acts including embracing, caressing and kissing each other in heterosexual romance would not incur a ban; next, this censorship panel confirmed the limitless ability of the audience's imagination; however, the panel considered that this imaginative ability must be contained, or it will go rogue and dirty.

In response to this ruling, a good way for filmmakers to convey lesbian implication or visual pleasure without their films to be banned is to depict the growing affections between two women before any beginning of a possible relationship, as the one-way adoration the countess has for but not accepted by Lulu in *Pandora's Box*, and the school-girl crush Manuela has on her teacher

Fräulein in *Girls in Uniform*. The countess and Manuela's lesbian love for Lulu and Fräulein is neither fulfilled nor does it unfold any lesbian relationship in both films. Therefore, there is no omission of any homosexual sex act to be judged as obscene, because neither an on-going homosexual love relationship nor any lesbian couple is portrayed. Any sort of same-sex affections in these films with lesbian implications remains ambiguous for any audience to define.

Concerning the artistic techniques deployed by directors, Weimar queer films demonstrated a consistent inclination to destabilize the gender norm and to blur the gender boundary of the mainstream society with all kinds of symbolical and visual devices for presenting gender ambiguity. In the case of *Hamlet*, which is greatly adapted from Shakespeare's original version, the namesake leading role Hamlet starred by the popular actress Asta Nielsen is portrayed as a prince who has a crush on his attendant Horatio but Horatio happens to be attracted by Ophelia's beauty. In order to keep Horatio's heart and make him give up the adoration for Ophelia, this prince seduces Ophelia and successfully wins her love out of this selfish intention; in other words, Hamlet's love for Horatio is true, and his love for Ophelia, false. At the level of drama, Hamlet's crush on Horatio implies gay love; however, the power of image and Asta Nielsen's screen sweetheart impression are too overwhelming. While heterosexual audiences were entertained by the intimate body interaction between Horatio and the prince, Hamlet, who was beautifully presented by a charming woman, lesbian audiences found their objects of love when the two women, Asta Nielsen and Ophelia, were intentionally shot and framed by the camera as a couple courting cheek to cheek and hand in hand for the lesbian visual pleasure could be smuggled onto the screen. Thus the visual presentation of heterosexuality between Asta Nielsen and Horatio, that between Horatio and Ophelia, and the symbolic/narrative presentation of heterosexuality portraying Horatio's adoration for Ophelia and Ophelia's adoration for Hamlet all serve as the artistic devices meticulously designed to distract and disguise the lesbian visual pleasure embodied by the intimate interaction between Asta Nielsen and Ophelia. At dramatic level, this heterosexual love is a fake, but in the eyes of lesbian audiences, this lesbian visual pleasure is a true homoerotic arousal.

Another sort of false heterosexual courtship is adopted to disguise the lesbianism in the case of *Girls in Uniform* in the form of "drama in drama." As a girl studying in an all-girls boarding school and having a crush on her teacher, Manuela in the school play plays the role as the prince Don Carlos who confides his love to the queen, his stepmother, who is starred by another girl. Not only this 'forbidden court love' signifies Manuela's forbidden lesbian love for her beloved teacher Fräulein, this school play itself also allows a false heterosexual courtship to be smuggled onto the screen to serve the lesbian visual pleasure. With this drama in drama, a girl in drag courting another girl in dress is intentionally framed in the aspect of visual but carefully camouflaged in the aspect of plot, for it could not be

more normal for the girls in an all-girls boarding school to play men's roles as well as women's in a school play.

The depiction of the Berlin underground drag dancing party in *Different from the Others* caused a riot raised by the angry audience in Berlin; however, the celebration dancing party of the girls in uniforms and in drama costumes of men and women did not cause any riot but was greatly welcomed and appreciated. One could assert that the double standards of the anti-gay reception of the society were applied respectively to the party of men in drag and to that of girls in drag; nevertheless, the artistic technique of displacement of context could not be overlooked. While the scene of the Berlin underground drag party in *Different from the Others* served as a background for two gay men soliciting each other for gay sex and thus was condemned as obscene, the scene of the celebration party of the girls in drag or in men's costume in *Girls in Uniform* served seemingly just as an event for the girls to celebrate the extraordinary success of their school play but in fact implicitly and visually as a means to present the image of the girls in men's clothes dancing in pairs with the girls in dress for the lesbian visual pleasure to be again smuggled. Two drag parties in two different contexts with two different styles (overt vs. disguised) caused two different kinds of audience reception and thus faced two different destinies.

The displacement of emphasis concerning the shaping of characters also unfolds the space of ambiguity for various definitions as motherhood or lesbianism to be defined or denied. Manuela is shaped as a sad student who had lost her mother but becomes happier after she has found her loving teacher Fräulein 'a replacement mother figure.' [14] As Mccormick puts it that '[t]his stress on motherhood was the strategy behind the attempts… for muting the film's lesbianism in the Leipzig production…,'[15] even the censors' slightest awareness of the implicit lesbianism could be easily counter-argued or dismissed by the filmmakers' interpretation of the mother-daughter relationship, or a relationship between a loving teacher and a beloved student. The display of lesbianism was so carefully disguised, distracted and displaced to the degree that its existence could be easily denied with various alternative interpretations.

The same strategy was also applied to *Pandora's Box* even more conveniently for the genre nature of silent films. The countess's lesbian love for Lulu was embodied in the long takes of her deep loving gaze at Lulu, in her desiring eagerly to dance cheek to cheek and chest against chest with Lulu and in her unusual self-sacrificing behaviour for Lulu. The inter-title of this film mentions nothing about lesbianism. Thus, the carefully manipulated images and the absence of lesbian descriptions in inter-titles unfold an extensive terrain of ambiguity wherein too many kinds of possible interpretations of the relationship between the two women other than a lesbian one could be presented, projected and identified with. The countess's unusual affection towards Lulu could always be explained as anything else except for lesbian love as long as the inter-titles never try to define it as

lesbianism. This strategy proved itself effective to smuggle the lesbianism onto the radar screen of Weimar censorship.

The oppression of Weimar film censorship against the queer elements could not destroy them; on the contrary, it somehow stimulated the mutation and evolution of the expressional techniques, artistic styles, film genres and narrative strategies of Weimar queer films. Under the pressure of Weimar film censorship, Weimar queer films generated a sort of drug resistance to continuously communicate with and voice for the queer audience in a subtler way that is difficult for heterosexual hegemony to discover. With this drug resistance, Weimar queer films expressed the ultimate concerns of homosexual human rights and strived for the queer living space and the freedom of speech. Nowadays, in the queer-friendly countries which could produce massive amount of queer films, the queer elements and homosexuality are directly presented and portrayed without the need of hiding. Therefore, these kinds of cinematic art of disguise and distraction seem to be disappearing in the twenty-first century queer cinema. Through learning form these old films, I wish to gather the attention to these ingenious artistic skills that are almost lost. In addition, through the identification of these artistic techniques, the exploration of these expressional skills, the analysis of these narrative strategies, and the examination of the corresponding time-space background, I hope to help cultivate the society a more and more sensitive ability of observation to detect and identify the vision carefully hidden in all kinds of films by the resisting filmmakers in different repressive eras and environments.

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Part IV

Gender and Making Sense of Self and the World

Am I Man/Woman Enough: Using Trans-Youth 'Self-Portrait Drawing' to Analyse Their Body Image

Wallace Wong and Fatima Natascha Lawrence

Abstract
In my years of practice with transgender children and youth, I have learned that body image is a complicated subject for them. It is hard for the 'general population' to deal with their body image in current gender binary culture, where media influences and social expectations dominate the definition of one's beauty and body image. Unfortunately, it is even harder for trans-youth to deal with this issue; especially when 'their bodies don't match what they see inside.' For them, there is a persistent identity message of gender incongruent about their sex and their physical bodies. Interestingly for trans-youth, body images are more than external beauty. They are indicators of how well they can 'pass' as the gender they desired. To them, having a body image that passes successfully is not only a matter of beauty; it has a direct effect on their safety and is a way to lessen potential stigmatization that society has bestowed on them. Different research has indicated that the better they pass as the desired gender, the better social emotional adjustment they have in their later development. With these imminent pressures, it is easy to see that how some may be at greater risk for developing eating disorders, depressive symptoms, and low self-esteem. This presentation will use the qualitative data from their Self-Portrait Drawings, to get a glimpse of how they see and feel who they are inside. These drawings allow us to better understand their inner view of themselves. In addition, they also tell us their struggles and strengths, as well as the relationship between their bodies and the sense of self.

Key Words: Transgendered, binary, youth, gender, self-identity, body image, adolescence, projective measures, self-portrait, media.

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1. Introduction

Transgender youth often complain about having difficulties being accepted by their peers. As members of a marginalized group, imagine the difficulty trying to conform with a body that does not match one's birth sex. Transgender youth occupy 'the borderlands between communities and identities',[1] their gender identity and cognitions impose limits of their capacity to be a part of a community.[2]

Once a youth comes out as transgender, others often expect the person to present with the stereotypical gender characteristics of the gender he/she identifies with. Unfortunately, most transgender youth usually are at the transitional stage with hormone blocker or at the beginning stage of hormone therapy, in which their

bodies do not fully match as their peers' do. This situation makes them 'stand out' and often puts them as the target for being stigmatized and ostracized by others. By seeking acceptance and being able to function in the binary gender system, it is not surprising that many transgender youth are forced to strive to be 'uber-feminine' or 'hyper masculine' to prove their identity as 'real' or true females/males.[3]

While we are aware that current social-culture has a significant influence on one's perceived body image,[456] there is very limited research on the relationship of transgender youth and their body images under the current rigid gender binary system. Self Portrait Drawing (SPD) is one of the assessment tools that we use when a youth presents with transgender concerns. We have found this tool reveals in depth qualitative information on how transgender youth perceive their desired gender body image. This paper will analyze some of their drawing by highlighting different themes of body image concerns that they presented through this process.

2. Body Image Development

Portrayals of men, women, sexuality and social roles in the mass media affect the way an individual defines who they are and who they strive to be.[7] The rigidity of the binary system is constantly being reinforced when a youth surfs the net, watches a television program, a movie, or reads a magazine.[8] Transgendered youth simply cannot get away from images of strong, muscular men, and thin, beautiful women.

Even though some have argued against the norm,[91011] there is extensive research that has indicated that exposure to highly idealized images of thin women [1213] and muscular lean men[14151617]in the media can have a direct affect on body satisfaction. These images can have a deleterious effect on the mood and body image of youth.[18] Body image disturbance has been linked to low self-esteem, depression, social anxiety,[19] dieting and disordered eating.[2021]

It's no wonder that transgender youth, like other sexual minorities, have increased internalization, body surveillance, disordered eating and body shame when they violate the idealized appearances they are exposed to in the media.[22] It is challenging enough being an 'average' adolescent comparing oneself to the idealized men and women one sees everyday in the media. How can transgender youth compare themselves to images of 'perfect' gender representations, when their birth sex does not match?

3. Gender Binary System

In western culture, there are highly defined ideals of what men and women should look like, behave, think and feel.[23] Men and women are binary categories that do not overlap. Relying on the rigid conceptualization of sex as only male or female is not sufficient to make the assertion that one's gender is a function of one's biology.[24] Some research has indicated that those who self-identify as transgender male experienced gender role conflict associated with the socialized

gender role male expectation, experienced psychological distress.[25] With this in mind, some transgender youth view being a woman or being a man, as a either, or situation. One can only be all woman or all man, there is no fluidity or continuance in the binary gender system.

For some transgender youth, as their bodies do not match their gender expression, they need modification to feel complete. Their bodies need to change that allows their body presentation to fit into the binary gender category they align with, as at the core of their identity is the ability to be male or female 'enough'. In order to pass as being female or male, they adopt very stereotypical masculine or feminine gender expressions to fit into the gender binary system.[26]

4. Self Portrait Drawing

SPD in psychoanalytic therapy is often considered as part of the 'self-objects' of the person, revealing the cohesion and continuity of one's sense of self.[27] Because of this reason, it is considered a useful tool in assisting a transgender youth to project his/her inner self and future 'ideal' image onto the drawing. This process allows the transgender you to use transference as a symbolic self-expression to communicate with the clinician about their sense of self. Use as part of the assessment process, we have found that this tool reveals vital information about the youth that helps in the development of their treatment plans.

5. Discussion

Research has indicated that transgender youth suffer significant distress from negative body image.[28] They carry a sense of discomfort and alienation because their anatomical sex does not match their identified gender. According to Benjamin transgender persons tend to have 'fundamentally disliking' toward their biological sex as well as the sexual characteristics that come along with it.[29] For instance, he points out that many trans-women see their male genitalia as the primary 'organ of hate and disgust'.[30] Different research in gender and eating disorder studies has linked negative self image to one's negative thinking of the self.[313233] These studies also share how negative self-thinking lowers one's self-worth and creates more intense body image disturbance.[34] SPD may help to reveal some information regarding the negative body image associated with transgender youth's current 'wrong' body; often by comparing their current body to the future self they imagine or hope to one day be in. Information as such gives the clinician better understanding in developing future treatment plans with these youth.

As with any marginalized group, assimilation has its own sets of benefits and problems. Being able to 'pass' as the gender they identify with is extremely important for transgender youth.[35] As we know, the better a transgender youth is able to 'pass', the better they adjust socially and emotionally. Passing, not only helps the youth fit better into their associated gender group, very often it is related to their safety. Incidents of physical assaults occur regularly in less tolerant

communities.[36] Because of this reason, we have found that some transgender youth over compensate their appearance to passing as the gender they feels inside, and desire the outside world to see. As a result, they may choose a relatively extreme approach in their gender expression; meaning a MtF may try to adapt into a feminine role in an exaggerated way and a FtM may present himself in a masculine and 'macho' way that others perceive as socially and culturally acceptable. By reflecting on their self-portrait drawing, we often can see how they want their future selves to be in this binary gender society.

As a transgender youth is trying to 'pass' as much as he/she can, often he/she needs to abandon all roles, behaviours, and qualities that are merely associated with their birth gender. For example, a MtF may share that she only wants to be caretaker and be submissive instead of being a provider, because a provider is often perceived as a masculine responsibility. A FtM may restrain himself from 'being emotional' and often they report that only women would cry and men are supposed to be tough. As a result, the internal struggle of taking on rigid gender roles and denying a part of their authentic self often create distress for these youth.

We are all conditioned to a certain degree on our views with gender. Very often, we internalize this information and express them in our daily lives without requiring much awareness. We tend to behave in ways that society expects us to behave in our gender role. Through SPD, it is not unusual that a youth may share how he/she expects himself/herself to be like, without much awareness of how this comes about to be. This kind of automatic thinking to abide and to align with the cultural expectation of one's gender has become such a strong part of the 'self' that they become unaware how they are affected cognitively, emotionally, and socially.

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Love and Gender in the Kabyle Family Romance

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Abstract
The following paper seeks to explore gender and love relationships in the traditional Kabyle family romance with specific reference to selected folktales and love magic rituals. The central argument turns on the impact of two identified economies, a male symbolic economy of goods and an underground female economy of desire, on gender and love relationships in that romance. Based on a psychoanalytic and cultural anthropological theory, it illustrates how the Kabyle women's deployment of love in resistance to masculine domination backfires because of the contradictions inherent to this mode of resistance, and how women's wartime kind of love defeats its purpose and leads to the emotional stunting of both genders.

Key Words: Gender, love, folktales, magic, marriage, economy, resistance

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1. Introduction

> This is why when the old woman [the mother] is looking for a partner for her son she is, in fact, doing her own business in the matrimonial market. […] In choosing a spouse not liable to contest her son's heart, the first condition is to find one with whom the son won't fall in love, because if the son falls in love with that spouse, it is she herself who will eventually lose in the transaction.(trans. mine)[1]

Two preliminary remarks need to be made about this quote by Belaid Aith-Ali in relation to love and gender power relations in the traditional Kabyle community. First, contrary to affirmations made by various sociologists and anthropologists, the matrimonial market in this community, referred to as the 'market of symbolic goods'[2] by Pierre Bourdieu, is not the sole reserve of males working for the biological reproduction, preservation, and increase of their social capital in the form of male children and honour. What Aith-Ali tells us is that Kabyle women do, indeed, intervene in the process of matrimonial exchange in order to preserve their children's love. He reveals the existence of a female economy of desire, a product of a peculiarly Kabyle feminine psychology, pitted against the dominant male economy of symbolic and social goods. Moreover, since it is practically impossible for the mother to find a spouse ready to negotiate on so serious a matter as love, the former's ultimate choice often falls on the maternal cousin. In accepting to share her son's love with her niece, the mother thus spares the energy of playing a losing

game with a complete female stranger, and reinforces the presence of her lineage in her husband's home.

However, this feminine matrimonial strategy is not without its double binds, since Kabyle women, much like their counterparts in the rest of the world, are mothers to both males and females. In the extended family type of the traditional Kabyle community, this inevitably raises intractable problems among the womenfolk, notably among sisters and sisters-in-law, due to an all too obvious conflict in matrimonial interests. Whilst the mothers seek to marry their sons to maternal cousins, they also seek to have their daughters given in marriage to paternal cousins so as to keep them close to home. Though a huge number of scholars have already devoted their attention to gender power relations in the traditional Kabyle community[3] they have hitherto overlooked the impact of the two conflicting gendered economies singled out above, and the huge contradictions of women's resistance to masculine domination on love and gender power relations in the Kabyle family romance. The discussion below studies this issue with specific reference to selected folktales and love magic rituals.

2. The Male Symbolic Economy and Its Excesses

Bruno Bettelheim [4] has already fully demonstrated the relevance of Freudian theory for the analysis of the family romance and its love-hate relationships in Western folktales. Following her lead, I shall avail myself of her insights and findings to examine the family romance in Kabyle folktales, with special emphasis on the perversion of love relationships between mother and son on the one hand, and among half-brothers on the other. Two folktales will serve as the basis for my discussion: The *Ungrateful Mother* and The *Lover of White Things*.[5] These tales illustrate perfectly the interplay of the male symbolic economy with the subversive female economy of desire, and the perversion of love and gender power relationships that ensue from that interplay.

The Ungrateful Mother tells the story of a father who instructs his seven sons to kill their respective mothers. The motive for such an instruction differs from one variant of the folktale to another, but in all of them the seventh son refuses to comply. To escape his father's outrage, he flees with his mother to the wilds. There, he storms into an ogres' home, slaughtering ninety-eight of its monstrous occupants, and severely wounding one of them. The carnage thus accomplished, he locks up their bodies in a separate room, and makes his home in the rest of the castle. The son will go hunting day after day with his two dogs, leaving his mother alone. During one of his hunts, the forlorn mother discovers the agonizing ogre in the closed chamber of horrors. Growing gradually jealous of the love her son bears for his canine brothers, the mother is soon overwhelmed by sexual desire for the ogre whom she has helped to recover. To enjoy fully her secret life with her monstrous paramour, she repeatedly conspires against her son's life, but every time she gets away with it, the son still being head over heels in love with her. Instead

of seeking vengeance on the adulterous couple, he elects to go on a self-imposed exile to a distant village. He eventually earns the hand of the village chief's daughter for slaying a seven-headed female fountain serpent to which she is on the point of being offered in propitiation.

The mother reappears on the very day of her son's wedding, begging her would-be daughter-in-law to do her the favour of spending the bridal night in the sole company of her son. The request reluctantly granted, the mother gets access to her son, and treacherously poisons him with venom extracted from the hydra he has slaughtered some time earlier. The apparently deceased son is soon buried, but his faithful canine companions dig him out, and miraculously manage to bring him back to life by licking his body clean of the poison. This time, the son gives no quarters to his criminally obsessive mother. Not only does he behead her, but he also chops up the rest of her body, keeping one of her arm skeletons as an ash tool, after having scattering the other pieces.

Several implications can be drawn from the above folktale summary with regard to the performance of the Kabyle family romance. The most obvious relates to the highly perverted nature of mother-and-son love relationships. The father's peremptory command for his sons to slay their respective mothers; the breach of this instruction by his seventh son; the barely disguised infringement of the taboo of incest; the difficulty for both mother and son to sublimate their incestuous love; and the gruesome matricide climaxing the folktale are symptomatic of the psychological havoc caused by a harsh patriarchal order. To fully understand the peculiar contours and exacerbated form that the Freudian family romance takes in the folktale, one has to put it in the context of the conception of love for male children in the feminine economy of desire, which as explained above, is a response against masculine domination. For traditional Kabyle women, the male child's love for the mother is much more a debt to be repaid for the passive suffering undergone for his sake in the father's home than the natural affection it is usually supposed to be. Default on payment is often followed up by the mother's reminders, laying a guilt trip for the ungrateful male. The problem is that if the final goal of the deployment of such a strategy of love blackmailing is to turn the tables against patriarchal law, the psychological consequences on both the mother and male child, as the folktale illustrates, are really disastrous. Emotionally stunted, both mother and son experience a fixation of identity, turning the former into a puerile, possessive and blaming progenitor, and the latter into a perpetually dependent man-child.

Moreover, the folktale and its many variants read as an introverted folktale, i.e., a folktale laying bare the generally observed structure and characterisation of folktales. According to Bettelheim, folktales are primarily didactic. Their major function is to resolve oedipal conflicts by splitting the image of the mother, into a good and bad mother image. They spare the good image of the mother by keeping her in the background shadows, while they generally foreground the image of the

bad mother, very often in the role of stepmother in order to wean off the male child from his mother. There is no such polarized construction of the mother figure in the Kabyle reference-folktale or myth. The mother turns from the good loving mother into a bad mother in front of our very eyes. The gruesome matricide at the end of the folktale cannot but strike a tragic cord in a Kabyle male audience brought up in reverence for the mother, but it teaches the lesson about the social necessity of maintaining the patriarchal system by the elevation of fraternal love signified by the relationship between the dogs and the hero into a masculine ideal. Thus, at the end of the folktale it is the economy of symbolic goods threatened by the mother that is strongly vindicated and restored.

It has to be noted that the economy of symbolic goods is primarily founded on males put under the obligation not only to perpetuate and consolidate the paternal lineage, but also to work for the preservation and increase of the capital of honour at all social levels. The role of women as a feminine 'proletariat' in such an honour-driven and highly segmented community is to give birth to a huge number of males for their conjugal 'lords.' The repetitive pregnancies imposed by the male 'noble' class largely explain women's low life expectancy, and the numerous step-mother figures appearing in Kabyle folktales. These often start with a canonical statement about a husband's wife loss and his quest for a replacement mother for his children, his own capital. There is no question of love and sex between husband and new spouse in such folktales since the drama of the reconstituted family romance inevitably turns on the love and caring that the replacement mother is capable of investing in her own and foster male children.

As all folktales worldwide, the Kabyle folktale follows the same line of narrative development in its illustration of both the stepmother's cruelty and her final demise. However, the remarkable number of summary executions of stepmothers by their own sons, out of love for their half-brothers and ideological commitment to the patriarchal order in these folktales makes them stand poles apart. The title character in *Lover of White Things*, for example, comes back home from a long period of exile after his father's death only to have his now grown-up half-brother charge his errant mother as follows:

> Brother, tell me what will soothe your heart and I will do it. As to this mother, I don't know how she will act. You see while we are here sorry for the death of our father, she wants to exile you again! But what she wants to do to you, she will certainly do it to me too if I let her live. As far as I am concerned, it is better to kill her, otherwise she will separate me from you. (trans. mine) [6]

Mother-son love relationship as can be inferred from the above quote does not count that much in front of the imperative of fraternal or masculine solidarity. In carrying out the execution of this judgement, the half-brother butchers his own

mother and keeps her arm skeletons to use it for removing sewage from the gutters. Read against the background of that legendary jealousy among Kabyle brothers documented by such scholars as Malek Chebel,[7] this gruesome end sounds like an exorcism of fraternal dissension, and a reaffirmation in another form of the patriarchal system threatened from within by Kabyle women's excessive love for their male children.

3. Feminine Magic in the Female Economy of Desire

The Kabyle family romance as performed in female magic rituals also provides valuable insight into the nature of love and gender power relationships in the traditional Kabyle community. A peculiarity of feminine Kabyle magic, as many scholars have already pointed out, is its emphasis on love and the war that women wage against one another in an attempt to bind, unbind, or preserve conjugal unions.[8] As already suggested, this female magic war of love has its roots in the conflicting interests of women in the deployment of matrimonial strategies for strengthening the matrilineal line in the husband's home through the marriage of the sons to matrilineal cousins, and the daughters to their patrilineal ones. Unsurprisingly, love in these magic rituals is gender-marked in the sense that it is nearly always the female who is put under the obligation to create and keep the love of the male in marriage to avoid the public opprobrium of celibacy and divorce. While love is considered as 'natural' to females, in males it is often looked at as the cause of feminine magic. Males, it is implied, cannot express soft emotions without forfeiting their 'masculine domination,'[9] losing face with their 'noble' peers and disturbing the functioning of the family and the community at large.

Marcel Devulder rightly employs the Kabyle notion of 'chebbouil' as a generic name for describing the ritual followed in the performance of love magic rituals. 'Chebbouil,' as he says, is a word derived from the verb 'chebbouel' meaning 'agitate,' 'perturb,' 'make signs,' 'trouble,' 'importunate,'[10] in short disturb the peace of a male's mind in order to make him heed the woman's urgent call for love. It is difficult here to cover all the ingredients that go into the ritual making of love witchcraft already amply detailed by Devulder in his book. So I shall content myself with noting that the choice of ingredients in this love magic is largely determined by that law of sympathy which Sir James George Frazer [11] has discovered at the core of magic practices. To use Michel Foucault's word in another context, these ingredients have their specific 'signatures'[12] pointing to the disturbing effect they are likely to produce on the erotically targeted male if they are activated with the appropriate magic incantation, at the appropriate ritual time and place. For example, a pinch earth from an anthill is supposed to produce an itching effect if it is mixed in a man's plate of couscous. Similarly, thorny plants, sweet or bitter vegetables, repulsing animals such as dogs, frogs, serpents and bats; objects belonging to the dead or those associated with them such as hair, finger

nails, soap bars and water used for cleansing corpses; and sexual elements such as pubic hair, menstrual blood and bath water can all go into the Kabyle witch's brew, with appropriate ritual prescription.

'Foul is fair/ And Fair is foul'[13].These words uttered by Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth* summarizes perfectly the state of mind with which Kabyle women approach their bewitching job, consisting mainly of putting males under the sway of love. Five major types of love magic can be distinguished, each according to its purpose. A female in love of a reluctant male, for example, will resort to burning love magic (*tirughi*). Standing on the house roof at dusk, she will wave in all directions a urine-soaked bundle of ritually selected plant branches while reciting the following incantation: 'I agitate you in the heat of the day/ So that your love runs towards me.'[14]In case the female happens to be already married, her concern is to jealously preserve her husband's love and to mitigate the risk of repudiation, adultery, or bigamy by magically binding him (*tuqna*): 'Oh fencing wall [the pubis]/ May the man's [the husband's] love turn towards me/ As rivers towards the sea,' will intone the anxious wife as she burns some of her husband's pubic hair. Pouring a spoonful of urine to her husband's meal, she will follow up the bewitching ritual with this magic formula: "I made you drink urine/ Issued from my liver [the seat of love in Kabyle culture] and the navel/ May he love me/ As eyebrows love the eyes and protect them.'[15]

Apart from love binding (*tuqna*) and love burning (*thirughi*), there are three other types of female magic, each of them concocted for a very specific purpose. When a spouse, for example, seeks to reverse the gender power relations in the household in order to have her husband at her beck and call, she resorts to a type of magic called '*aafas*' or '*arkab*' (stepping on or topping). To step on or top on her husband she will eat with her husband's spoon on market day. At her husband's return from the market she will murmur to herself this highly racist magic formula: 'Hi, my friend/ Your market [your will] is in my hands/ If he [the husband] used to bark like a dog/ Now he will be silent like a Jew.'[16] When a wife happens to have a concubine (*takhna*), she will attempt to have that concubine hated and chased by her husband by brewing a hatred magic potion (*tekriha*): 'May your [the husband's] love for this woman [the concubine] die/ In the same manner that this person is dead,'[17] will declaim the wife in this case as she throws in a handful of couscous rolled with the hands of a dead person in her husband's meal. Another magic practice not documented by Devulder but mentioned by Aissa Ouitis[18] is that of parental disavowal magic potion (*tenquir*), administered to the husband to cause separation from the parental family.

4. Conclusion

It follows from the above that Kabyle women's erotic resistance to masculine domination through the affective overinvestment in their male children, and the occupation of the patriarchal domestic space by preferential marriages with

maternal cousins collapses under the weight of its inherent contradictions. The hegemony of the symbolic economy of goods is such that women reinforce their allotted role as a sexual 'proletariat' for the male 'noble' class by waging a magic war of love against each other in pursuit of males as objects of desire. Though love in the traditional Kabyle community is deployed by women in the erotic margin of a peculiarly distinct female economy, it paradoxically puts women under the same social control as the commodified love women are urged to buy into by the 'matrimonial' and 'bridal culture'[19] of Western capitalist societies.

Notes

[1] Bélaid Aith Ali, *Les cahiers de Bélaid ou la Kabylie d'antan*, II, trans. J.M. Dallet and J.L. Degezelle (F.D.B: Fort National, 1963), 38.
[2] Pierre Bourdieu, 'The social uses of kinship', in Pierre Boudieu, *The Logic of Practice*, trans. Richard Rice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).
[3] Camille-Lacoste Dujardin, *La vaillance des femmes: les relations entre femmes et hommes berbères de Kabylie* (Alger: Editions Barzakh), 2010 ; Germaine Tillion, *The Republic of Cousins* (London : Al Saqi Books, 1983).
[4] Bruno Bettelheim, *Psychanalyse des contes de fées*, trans. Théo Carlier (Paris : Robert Laffont, 1976).
[5] Leo Frobenius, *Contes Kabyles, tome II : Le monstreux*, trans, Fetta Mokran (Paris: Edisud, 1996).
[6] Camille-Lacoste Dujardin, *Le Conte Kabyle: Etude ethnologique* (Alger : Bouchène, 1991), 414.
[7] Malek Chebel, *L'esprit de sérail: Mythes et pratiques sexuels au Maghreb* (Paris : Payot, 1995), 229-255.
[8] Aissa Ouitis, *Possession, magie et prophétie en Algérie* (Paris: Arcantères Editions, 1998).
[9] Pierre Bourdieu, *La domination masculine*, Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1998.
[10] Marcel Devulder, *La magie en Kabylie : Rituels magiques des femmes Kabyles* (Paris : Belles-Lettres, 2012), 10.
[11] Sir James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough, Volume I and 2* (London: Macmillan, 1957).
[12] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Things*, trans. R.D. Laing (New York: Vintage, 1994).
[13] William Shakespeare, 'Macbeth', in *Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed., Peter Alexander (London: Collins Clear-Type Press, 1974), 999.
[14] Duvelder, 21.
[15] Duvelder, 41-42.
[16] Duvulder, 40-41.
[17] Duvelder, 59.

[18]Aissa Ouitis, *Possession, magie et prophétie en Algérie: Essai* (Paris: Arcantères, 1998).
[19] See Adèle Cook's, Franka Heise's and Marianne Schleicher's articles in this book for further insight into the way love is used by males in premodern and modern times to exercise social control on gender

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Part V

Gender and Love in Law

Disabled for Love: Intersectionalities of Gender and Disability in Love and Law

Raadhika Gupta

Abstract
The chapter examines how gender and disability render women with disabilities incapable of love in the eyes of society and often in the eyes of law. Feminist and disability rights movements have not adequately addressed multiple discrimination against disabled women. The discourse on love reveals how gender and disability as two identities get pitted against each other for women with disabilities. While women, often assumed to be caring, loving and nurturing, are fighting against imposition of roles of wives and mothers, women with disabilities are denied these very roles. Persons with disabilities are often viewed as asexual, dependent and incapable of or uninterested in love. This chapter examines how the intersectionality of sex and disability operates to deny access to love to girls and women with disabilities. It focuses on three sites of love: sexuality, marriage, and parenthood. The chapter examines the social and legal barriers that hinder accessibility to love at these sites. For example, performance of forced hysterectomies on disabled girls exemplifies the denial of sexuality, relationships and roles of love to women with disabilities. The chapter looks at Indian legal framework to examine how law has also supported such denial, for example by facilitating divorce or denying child custody on the grounds of disability. By denying access to these sites of love, the society and law continue to deny disabled women basic values of intimacy, relationships, self-expression and love. This chapter argues for an approach based on the social model of disability that focuses on elimination of such barriers and creation of support mechanisms to enable disabled persons to access and enjoy love.

Key Words: Women with disabilities, gender, disability, intersectionality, law, multiple discrimination, relationships, sexuality, marriage, parenthood.

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1. Introduction

Persons with disabilities are denied many opportunities in society are deemed incapable for many purposes in law. Women with disabilities lie at the intersection of the two identities of disability and gender and are doubly discriminated. This chapter examines how gender and disability render women with disabilities incapable of love in the eyes of society and often in the eyes of law.

This chapter focusses on three sites of love: sexuality, marriage and parenthood, and examines the extent to which disabled girls and women have access to love at these sites. While there are other sites of love, like friendship,

these three are of particular significance with respect to disabled women because they reveal the conflicting social attitudes towards disabled and non-disabled women. While society sexually objectifies women and associates them to roles as wives and mothers, it views disabled persons as asexual and deprives disabled women opportunities to perform these very roles. The discourse on love reveals how gender and disability as two identities get pitted against each other for women with disabilities.

This chapter argues that women with disabilities are denied access to love both in society and in law. The law often supports the social non-recognition of need and ability to love for disabled persons, which tends to have greater implications for disabled women. While this chapter highlights the social and legal norms prevalent in the Indian society, the social perceptions have been found to be equally applicable to many other cultures and have also been referred to in the chapter.

The first part of this chapter examines how disabled women have distinct experiences of discrimination on grounds both of disability and gender. The second part examines the importance of access to love for an individual's well-being and studies accessibility from medical and social models of disability. Thereafter, the chapter explores the denial of love to disabled girls and women in law and society at the three sites of sexuality, marriage and parenthood.

2. Multiple Discrimination against Women with Disabilities[1]

Women with disabilities are subject to discrimination both on grounds of disability and gender.[2] Lying at the intersection of the two identities of disability and gender, women with disabilities have distinct lived experiences, different from those of non-disabled women and disabled men, and not simply a sum of barriers faced by disabled men and by women. Both disability movement and feminist movement have ignored these distinct experiences.[3] For example, feminist writings excluded disabled women by focusing on women only as care providers, and not as care receivers.[4]

Discrimination against women with disabilities operates in a manner that mainstream feminist account is unable to accommodate their experiences. For example, disabled persons are socially perceived as asexual,[5] and feminist theory, which has dealt with objectification and eroticization of the female body, becomes inadequate to address the issues of disabled women who have been unsexed due to their bodies.[6] Further, disabled and non-disabled women have different, often contrary, concerns. While non-disabled women question their womb-driven roles and seek the right to abort, women with disabilities seek freedom to assume these very roles of bearing and rearing children and seek the right to retain their fertility.[7]

While non-disabled women have been oppressed by imposition of stereotypes, disabled women are oppressed by exclusion from those stereotypes.[8] Both are seeking greater autonomy to take decisions regarding their lives and bodies, but

share different experiences. Notions of womanhood and sexuality hold separate meanings for disabled and non-disabled women. Thus, while women are generally stereotyped as loving, caring and nurturing,[9] the contradictory dimension of discrimination against women with disabilities portrays them as incapable of or not desiring love.

3. Access to Love

Well-being of individuals requires achieving certain capabilities, that is being able to access certain 'beings' and 'doings'.[10] For example, being in good health and engaging in play are important capabilities for well-being of humans.[11] Philosopher Martha Nussbaum gave a list of ten central capabilities, which includes the capabilities of being able to love and have attachments, being able to engage in social interactions and to 'recognize and show concern' for others.[12] Love is one of the central capabilities. Denial of love implies denial of the opportunity to lead fulfilling lives.

Accessibility to love, or to other claims like education or employment, for disabled persons can be explained using two models of disability. The medical model focusses on the person's medical impairment, viewing disabled people as abnormal and in need of special facilities to be able to access social goods and services. [13] On the other hand, the social model of disability locates the problem in the society and claims that social barriers prevent disabled persons from accessing opportunities.[14] Barriers may be physical, like building staircases instead of ramps, or attitudinal, like viewing disabled people as inadequate. Removal of social barriers which allow disabled persons to access opportunities available to others.[15]

The following segments explore how disabled women are denied access to love at three sites: sexuality, marriage and parenthood. The denial is the result of social barriers, mainly in the form of false notions about sexuality and capacity of disabled people. Further, law supports or creates its own barriers. Such social and legal barriers work against disabled women in getting access to love.

4. Sexuality

Sexuality is an important form of intimacy.[16] Greek philosophers identified *eros* or sexual love or romantic love as a form of love.[17] Romantic love often involves sexual desires, at least partly to begin the love relationship.[18] Sexual intimacy helps express love and cement a romantic relationship.[19] It also often involves emotions like care for each other and concern for each other's well-being.[20]

The society has largely perceived persons with disabilities as asexual or in need of protection from sexual activities.[21] The fact that discussion on sexuality is considered a taboo in India[22] heightens the problem. Instead of addressing sexuality as an integral part of identity, intimacy, relationships and self-expression,[23] public discussions around sexuality in India have usually involved the

context of prevention from abuse and consequences of sexual activities like diseases and unwanted pregnancies.[24] Sometimes, the contrary assumption of disabled people being 'oversexed' also prevails, creating the notion that they need to be restrained to avoid hurting others.[25] Acknowledging sexuality or the need for a sexual love partner may cause disabled women to be labeled as 'crude' or 'sex-mad'.[26] The sexual agency of disabled persons, especially disabled girls and women, is severely denied.[27]

Forced sterilizations and abortions on girls and women with disabilities exemplifies the denial of their sexuality. These medical procedures are often considered to be in the 'best interest' of disabled women.[28] At times, the state itself participates in their performance. For example, in 2008, the government of the state of Maharashtra allowed hysterectomy operations for mentally challenged women on the ground that they have 'no sense of hygiene' during menstruation,[29] and to protect them from assault and pregnancies.[30] The judiciary has also given implied recognition to such practices in the past. For example, in the US, the District Attorney's Office allowed a plea bargain where a woman suffering from postpartum depression agreed to undergo sterilization to avoid murder trial.[31]

These trends reveal that disabled women and girls are denied sexual love because of attitudinal barriers viewing them as asexual or in need of protection from sexual acts. These attitudinal barriers culminate into physical barriers when stringent efforts are taken preventing women from accessing any aspect of their sexuality.

Societal notions about body image and disabled people's internalization of such notions also make it difficult for them to attract sexual or love partners.[32] Disability is perceived as 'an antithesis of attractiveness'[33]. This perception of unattractiveness perpetuates the notion that disabled people are incapable of being in intimate relationships and are sexually undesirable.[34] Internalized by people with disabilities, this leads to a negative body image, low self-esteem and feelings of incompleteness and unworthiness of sex, love, companionship and marriage.[35] Because of high social premium on beauty and physical appearance, physical impairments of disabled persons get immediate attention. Reduced to their physical impairments, disabled people are not treated as human beings with feelings, hopes, desires and emotions like others.[36] Since the society places a higher premium on beauty for women in relation to men, concerns about body image and sexuality have greater significance and implications for disabled girls and women.[37]

Perceptions about sexuality and body image of disabled persons are false notions which act as attitudinal barriers preventing them from accessing love. Many disabled people have the same sexual needs and capacity as non-disabled people.[38] If they are unable to express their sexuality fully, that is not so much because of their disability, but due to 'restriction of their mobility, negative societal attitudes and the lack of educational, entertainment, social and health services and rights' available to others.[39] There are false assumptions about inability of disabled

people to have 'real sex', understood as penetrative intercourse culminating in an orgasm, often involving vigorous physical activity. Medical impairments may curtail some physical activity, but often do not preclude the possibility of sex. With some support and variations, disabled people can perform and enjoy sexual activities.[40] Accepting alternative forms of sexual expression poses unique problems for disabled men. Social notions of manhood discourage men from taking passive or dependent roles when performing sexual acts even where both partners derive sexual pleasure. Going against 'male values of direction, activity, initiative and control', adopting passive roles may be considered a violation of male dominance.[41]

There is a need to understand sexuality broadly, not only in terms of variety of sexual acts, but also as a form of intimacy, love and self-expression. Sexual dimension is not the only aspect of romantic love. Romantic love relationship involves a concern for the well-being of each other, which is present even when sexual activity may be absent.[42] It involves a 'shared determination of self'[43]. Forms of intimacy other than sex may be more important for many couples. Many couples feel sexually and non-sexually happy even with arousal or orgasm dysfunctions.[44] Overemphasis on the sexual aspect of sexual love, which is often conflated with body image, leads to wrongful deprivation of sexuality for disabled persons. By denying sexuality, the society also denies a whole range of aspects of sexual love, including the opportunity to enter into intimate relationships, forming romantic love relationships and developing positive sexual identity and self-expression. Attitudinal barriers operate to disadvantage disabled girls and women more, sometimes even leading to acts of oppression supported by state and law.

5. Marriage

Romantic love often leads to marriage and procreation.[45] Marriage is an important site of love. Since sexual activity[46] and procreation[47] are seen as natural aspects of marriage, denial of sexuality itself may lead to a denial of love in marriage. Moreover, for most Indian women, marriage is considered a crucial and life-changing event.[48] The intersectionality of gender and disability operates in a manner so as to deny marriage, considered a crucial—even compulsory—event for most women, to disabled women.

Disabled people are less likely to get married and have children as compared to non-disabled people.[49] Among disabled people, women with disabilities are less likely to get married than disabled men.[50] Many disabled women either remain unmarried or end up paying huge amounts in dowry to 'offset' their disability disadvantage.[51] Due to the social prejudice against marriage of disabled women,[52] parents may even hide the disability of their daughters instead of addressing it, and hastily arrange for marriage.[53] Moreover, while disabled women may be willing to marry disabled men, most disabled men prefer to marry non-disabled women,[54] finding a non-disabled woman partner being seen as a 'victory'.[55]

The legal system supports denial of marriage for disabled persons. This denial is strongest in case of persons with mental disabilities. Marriage laws deny mentally disabled the opportunity to get married[56] or permit the grant of divorce on grounds of mental disability.[57] The Supreme Court of India has even held that a sound mind is a key to happy marriage. [58] The court has recognized mental disorder as ground for divorce in Hindu marriages, provided that the degree of disorder is such that the other spouse cannot be expected to live with her/him[59] and the disorder is incurable.[60] Mental disorder to the extent 'that sexual act and procreation of children is not possible' has also been recognized as ground for nullification, since procreation is seen as the primary aim of a Hindu marriage.[61]

The provision allowing divorce on grounds of unsoundness of mind has been misused by husbands seeking escape out of their marriages.[62] A government doctor in the city of Agra was caught issuing false certificates to men who wanted to misuse this ground.[63] This provision thus infringes on both the social rights of mentally disabled persons and marital rights of women.[64]

In personal injury cases, 'loss of marriage prospects' is one of the heads under which compensation is awarded when the victim suffers permanent disability.[65] Thus, the social reality of reduced marriage prospects for disabled people, especially disabled women, is supported, promoted and recognized in law.

6. Parenthood

Denial of sexuality and marriage often leads to the denial of the opportunity to become parents and enjoy parent-child love. Literature has either ignored the role of persons with disabilities in caregiving in the form of parenting or has focused on the negative impact of parent's disability on children.[66] While motherhood is considered the ideal role of a woman, women with disabilities, especially cognitive disabilities, are stereotyped as incapable mothers.[67]

Forced sterilizations and abortions are clear examples of denial of parenthood to disabled women. In a case involving abortion of an institutionalized mentally disabled woman who got pregnant by rape, the High Court adopted the 'best interest' approach and allowed abortion against her consent, despite the risk of adverse health consequences for the mother.[68] This decision was later reversed by the Supreme Court which recognized her capacity to consent.[69] Such practices continue despite women with disabilities claiming that the denial of motherhood through sterilization or discouragement by doctors and families is oppressive.[70]

Discrimination against persons with disabilities is strongly visible in child custody cases. A study in Britain revealed that many disabled mothers live under constant worry about their competence as mothers, and sometimes face the threat of or actually experience their children being taken away by family members.[71] A US study found that disabled persons are denied child custody or adoption because of their physical and mental disabilities.[72] As per Indian law, welfare of the child is the paramount consideration in deciding custody disputes.[73] There is a general

tendency to favour mothers in custody cases.[74] Section 6(a) of the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956 provides that the custody of a child below the age of five years shall ordinarily be with the mother. It has been held the world 'ordinarily' indicates that while in 'normal' circumstances, the custody of a child below the age of five should be given to the mother, but in certain circumstances, for example, where the mother is 'sick, physically or mentally' or 'suffering from any disability', it may be desirable to give the custody to the father, who may not be suffering from any such 'negative characteristics'.[75] This negative assumption about the incapacity of disabled people to be competent parents even counters the strong presumption in law that the best interest of the infant is to be with the mother. In another custody case, the father argued that the custody of his daughter be given to him mainly on the grounds that the mother was suffering from mental ailment. Although the court dismissed the father's claim, the judgment was based on medical reports that showed that the mother was not suffering from any serious mental ailment.[76] However, there is an implicit presumption that mental disability may unquestionably lead to denial of child custody to a parent. It seems that the best interest of the child test, as well as the tendency to favour mothers, all get trumped by the fact of disability, especially mental disability.

It may be argued that living with a non-disabled parent may in fact not be in the best interest of the child. However, in most cases, providing some support to disabled people can eliminate any disadvantage that may arise as a result of disability.[77] As the social model states, the problem lies in social barriers, not in disabled persons, and eliminating those barriers is all that is required. Both disabled and non-disabled persons may turn out to be either good or bad parents. If the problem is a result of inefficiency, the first step should be to consider appropriate support systems.[78] Instead of considering support, custody cases reveal that the courts are denying disabled persons access to parenting love.

7. Conclusion

Love is a basic capability necessary for the development of every human being. Denial of access to love on the grounds of disability or gender is discriminatory. This denial poses unique problems for disabled women who are denied even the opportunity to live the gendered stereotype of being loving partners, wives and mothers.

In countries like India, where it is generally believed that 'marriage must precede sex and reproduction must follow sex', denial of sexuality and marriage lead to denial of parenthood, and '[d]enial of the reproductive role is denial of a sexual life'[79]. In sexually conservative cultures, there is need to understand love broadly, and include sexual love as an acceptable part of love and self-expression. Conservative notions about sexuality must not lead to a deprivation of romantic love, love in marriage and love as parents.

There is also the need to view disability from the social model perspective, especially in law. If the society and law can recognize that social barriers are preventing disabled persons from accessing the basic capability of love, all that is required is identifying and eliminating barriers, including false notions about the capacity and sexuality of disabled persons, and to create a positive support structure enabling disabled men and women to access and enjoy love.

Notes

[1] Parts of this section have been drawn from my previous article: Raadhika Gupta, 'Twin Tracking for Women with Disabilities in Disability Legislation', Viewed 16 June 2013, <http://www.disabilitystudiesnalsar.org/bcp-wwd.php>.
[2] Maria V. Reina, Meera Adya and Peter Blanck, 'Defying Double Discrimination', *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 8 (2007): 95.
[3] Jenny Morris, 'Feminism, Gender and Disability' (paper presented at a seminar in Sydney, Australia, February 1998), Viewed 16 June 2013, < http://disability-studies.leeds.ac.uk/files/library/morris-gender-and-disability.pdf>.
[4] Amita Dhanda, 'Sameness and Difference: Twin Track Empowerment for Women with Disabilities', *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 15(2) (2008): 212.
[5] Aldred H. Neufeldt and Maureen S. Milligal, 'The Myth of Asexuality: A Survey of Social and Empirical Evidence', *Sexuality and Disability* 19(2) (2001).
[6] Dhanda, 'Sameness and Difference', 212.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Dhanda, 'Sameness and Difference', 225.
[9] See Kelleen P. Forlizzi, 'The Mommy Myth: Perfect Mother or Maternal Monster; Press Coverage of Women Who Kill their Children' (Sr. Hons. thesis, Boston College, 2006), 22, Viewed 17 June 2013, <http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/cas_sites/communication/pdf/thesis07.forlizzi.pdf>.
[10] *See* Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Random House, 1999).
[11] *See* Martha Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 41-2.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Stephen Moore, *Social Welfare Alive!* (Cheltenham: Nelson Thomes, 3rd ed. 2002), 402.
[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid.
[16] Tom Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 168.
[17] Raja Halwani, *Philosophy of Love, Sex, and Marriage* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 7.

[18] Ibid., 9, 49.
[19] Ibid., 49.
[20] Ibid., 9, 18.
[21] Sarah P. Harris, et al., 'Current Issues, Controversies, and Solutions', in Tamar Heller and Sarah P. Harris, *Disability through the Life Course*, edited by Gary L. Albrecht (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012), 58.
[22] 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', Working Paper (New Delhi: Tarshi, 2010), 7, Viewed 16 June 2013, <http://www.tarshi.net/downloads/Sexuality_and_Disability_in_the_Indian_Context.pdf>.
[23] See World Health Organization, 'Gender and Human Rights', Viewed 17 June 2013, <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/gender_rights/sexual_health/en/>.
[24] 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', 32.
[25] Ibid., 19.
[26] Nisha, 'Regulation of disabled women's sexuality', *InfoChange*, February 2006, Viewed 17 June 2013, <http://www.wwda.org.au/nisha1.pdf>.
[27] *See* Harris, 'Current Issues', 58; 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', 49.
[28] Vanessa Volz, 'A Matter of Choice: Women with Disabilities, Sterilization, and Reproductive Autonomy in the Twenty-First Century', *Women's Rights Law Reporter* 27 (2006): 212. *See also* Gupta, 'Twin Tracking for Women with Disabilities'.
[29] Anshika Mishra, 'Is Hysterectomy the Final Solution?', *Daily News & Analysis*, 30 January 2008, Viewed 16 June 2013, <http://www.dnaindia.com/mumbai/1148211/report-is-hysterectomy-the-final-solution>.
[30] Kalpana Kannabiran, *Disability Rights Monitor (DRPI): Written Report* (Toronto: Disability Rights Promotion International, 2009), Viewed 16 June 2013, <http://drpi.research.yorku.ca/sites/default/files/files/IndiaLawsRep.pdf>.
[31] Beth Warren, 'Mother chooses sterilization over murder trial', *Free Republic*, 10 February 2005, Viewed 16 June 2013, < http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/1340154/posts>.
[32] *See* George Taleporos and Marita P. McCabe, 'Body Image and Physical Disability: Personal Perspectives', in *Disability and Society: A Reader*, ed. Renu Addlakha, et al. (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009), 162.
[33] Taleporos and McCabe, 'Body Image and Physical Disability', 156.
[34] 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', 45.
[35] Ibid., 48.
[36] 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', 26.

[37] Ibid., 48.
[38] Robert F. Murphy, 'The Damaged Self', in *Disability and Society: A Reader*, ed. Renu Addlakha et al. (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009), 140.
[39] 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', 4.
[40] Sophie Morgan, 'Can you still enjoy sex if you're severely disabled? This bride-to-be, who has no feeling from the chest down, gives a resounding yes, yes, YES!', *Mail Online*, 9 March 2013, Viewed 16 June 2013, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-2290711/Can-enjoy-sex-youre-severely-disabled-This-bride-feeling-chest-gives-resounding-yes-yes-YES.html>.
[41] Murphy, 'Damaged Self', 139.
[42] Halwani, *Philosophy of Love*, 27-8.
[43] Robert Solomon, *Love, Emotion, Myth, and Metaphor* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1990), 155 quoted in Halwani, *Philosophy of Love*, 38.
[44] Shakespeare, *Disability Rights and Wrongs*, 168-9.
[45] Halwani, *Philosophy of Love*, 10.
[46] For example, non-consummation of marriage can be a ground for divorce or nullification of marriage under Section 25(i), Special Marriage Act, 1954; Section 2(v) (impotency of husband) of Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939; Sections 30 and 32(a) of Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1939. *See also Vinita Saxena v. Pankaj Pandit*, AIR 2006 SC 1662, where the court recognized that '[m]arriage without sex is an anathema' and disappointment in sexual relationships can be fatal to a marriage (referring to the case of *Rita Nijhawan v. Balkrishan Nijhawan*, AIR 1973 Delhi 200, 209).
[47] For example, impotency can be a ground of divorce or nullification of marriage as per Section 12(1)(a), Hindu Marriage Act, 1955; 19(1), Indian Divorce Act, 1869; Section 24(1)(ii), Special Marriage Act, 1954. *See also Vinita Saxena v. Pankaj Pandit*, AIR 2006 SC 1662, where the court held that procreation is the primary aim of Hindu marriages (referring to the case of *Rita Nijhawan v. Balkrishan Nijhawan*, AIR 1973 Delhi 200, 209).
[48] Shalini Grover, *Marriage, Love, Caste and Kinship Support: Lived Experiences of the Urban poor in India* (New Delhi: Social Science Press, 2012), 1.
[49] Alexander L. Janus, 'Disability and the Transition to Adulthood', *Social Forces* 88(1) (2009): 99-120, cited in Harris, et al., 'Current Issues, Controversies, and Solutions', in Tamar Heller and Sarah P. Harris, *Disability through the Life Course*, edited by Gary L. Albrecht (Los Angeles: Sage, 2012), 56.
[50] See 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', 21.
[51] 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', 21.
[52] Nisha, 'Regulation of disabled women's sexuality'.

[53] *See* Ronald E. Barrett, 'Self-Mortification and the Stigma of Leprosy in Northern India', in *Disability and Society: A Reader*, ed. Renu Addlakha et al. (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009), 173-174.
[54] Renu Addlakha, 'Gender, Subjectivity and Sexual Identity: How Young People with Disabilities Conceptualise the Body, Sex and Marriage in Urban India, New Delhi: Centre for Women's Developmental Studies, 2007, Occasional Paper No. 46, cited in 'Sexuality and Disability in the Indian Context', 25.
[55] Nisha, 'Regulation of disabled women's sexuality'.
[56] *See, e.g.*, Section 4, Special Marriage Act, 1954 and Section 5, Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, according to which persons of unsound mind, persons suffering from mental disorder of an order that they are unfit for marriage and procreation, and persons who have been subject to recurrent attacks of insanity or epilepsy are not eligible for marriage. Under Muslim law, a mentally disabled person may marry only with the consent of the guardian. (Paras Diwan, *Family Law* (Faridabad: Allahabad Law Agency, 9th ed. 2009), 45.
[57] *See, e.g.*, Section 27(1)(e), (g), Special Marriage Act, 1954 and Section 13, Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, which provide that unsoundness of mind, or suffering from mental disorder or leprosy are grounds for divorce; Section 2(vi) of Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act, 1939 which provides husband's two years insanity or his suffering from leprosy are grounds for divorce; Section 19(3), Indian Divorce Act, 1869, which allows divorce in Christian marriages if either party was 'a lunatic or idiot at the time of the marriage'; Section 32, Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act, 1939, which allows divorce on the ground of unsoundness of mind or mental disorder.
[58] *Sharda v. Dharmpal*, AIR 2003 SC 3450.
[59] *Ram Narain Gupta v. Smt. Rameshwari Gupta*, (1998) 4 SCC 247, para 20.
[60] *Sharda v. Dharmpal*, AIR 2003 SC 3450.
[61] *Vinita Saxena v, Pankaj Pandit*, AIR 2006 SC 1662, (referring to the case of *Rita Nijhawan v. Balkrishan Nijhawan*, AIR 1973 Delhi 200, 209).
[62] Shruti Pandey, Priyanka Chirimar and Deepika D'Souza, *Disability and the Law* (New Delhi: Human Rights Law Network, 2005), 375.
[63] Ibid., 376.
[64] Ibid., 376.
[65] *Atish Kumar Nischal v. Jasmer Singh*, MAC. APP. No. 162/2009, decided on 23 September 2009 (Delhi High Court); *Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd. v. Vijay Kumar Mittal*, 2008 ACJ 1300; *Harinder Kaur v. Add.District and Sessions Judge*, 2012 VII AD (Delhi) 227; *Imran Khan v. Mohan Bhoyan*, 190 (2012) DLT 580; *Sunil Kumar v. Inder Singh* and *Bajrang Lal v. Sehdev*, 2013 ACJ 294. *See also Santhi v. The Managing Director Cholan Roadways Corporation*, 1988 ACJ 568 (Madras), where after a female child suffered disability from a motor vehicle accident, the

court noted that '[h]er future is completely bleak because this disability will stand as an obstacle for getting herself married'.

[66] Harris, 'Current Issues', 63.

[67] Elizabeth Scott, 'Sterilization of Mentally Retarded Persons: Reproductive Rights and Family Privacy', *Duke Law Journal* (1986): 830-831.

[68] Judgment and Order dated 9 September 2009 and 17 July 2 009 of the High Court of Punjab and Haryana at Chandigarh in CWP No. 8760 of 2009, cited in *Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Administration*, AIR 2010 SC 235.

[69] *Suchita Srivastava v. Chandigarh Administration*, AIR 2010 SC 235.

[70] Volz, 'A Matter of Choice', 212.

[71] Carol Thomas, 'The Baby and the Bath Water: Disabled Women and Motherhood in a Social Context', in *Disability and Society: A Reader*, ed. Renu Addlakha, et al. (New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2009), 260.

[72] David Crary, 'Disabled Parents Often Lose Custody Of Children, Report Finds', *The Huffington Post*, 26 September 2011, Viewed 18 June 2013, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/26/disabled-parents_n_2190725.html>.

[73] *See Veena Kapoor v. Varinder Kumar Kapoor*, (1981) 3 SCC 92; *Syed Saleemuddin vs. Dr. Rukhsana*, (2001) 5 SCC 247; *Rajesh K. Gupta v. Ram Gopal Agarwala*, Appeal (crl.) 633 of 2005 (SC).

[74] *Minocher Dinshaw Irani v. Keki Rustomji Irani*, II (1998) DMC 298.

[75] *Himanshu Mahajan v. Rashu Mahajan*, AIR 2008 HP 38.

[76] *Rajesh K. Gupta v. Ram Gopal Agarwala*, Appeal (crl.) 633 of 2005 (SC).

[77] Crary, 'Disabled Parents Lose Custody'.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Nisha, 'Regulation of disabled women's sexuality'.

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Women's Rights, Prenatal Harm and Non-Identity Problem

Łukasz Dominiak and Łukasz Perlikowski

Abstract
The main purpose of this chapter is to show the relationship and conflict between women's rights and foetal rights in the context of abortion law and the new types of lawsuits such as e.g. prenatal harm cases. Despite the fact that in many Western legal systems a woman enjoys a right to terminate her pregnancy on demand at the early stage of gestational age (g.a.), a remarkable paradigm shift in law concerning women's procreative liberty and status of a foetus has taken place. This change has occurred outside the abortion framework in a form of wrongful life suits, preconception and prenatal harm lawsuits and foetal homicide laws. Creating a conspicuous discrepancy between status of a foetus in the abortion context and its standing in other branches of law, those legal solutions considerably infringe on women's rights.[1] We propose the *Metaphysical-Biological Split Account* (MBSA) as an explanatory framework for the legal and cultural conjuncture mentioned above. The MBSA hypothesises that the incongruity in question stems from more rudimentary failure to discern a crucial difference between metaphysical (theory of identity) and biological (concept of biological causality) dimensions of justification employed in legal and moral debates over maternal-foetal conflict. We content that the attempt to set aside metaphysical considerations while justifying new types of legal claims is doomed to failure.

Key Words: Reproductive rights, procreative liberty, women's rights, abortion, prenatal harm, wrongful life, Non-Identity Problem, Metaphysical-Biological Split Account.

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1. Prenatal Harm, Preconception Harm and Wrongful Life Lawsuits

In the legal context one deals with the so called prenatal harm lawsuits when a pregnant woman or third party inflicts by action or negligence harm on a foetus who subsequently is born with a disability and sues a wrongdoer.[2] In the United States the first case of this type was *Grodin v. Grodin*. The plaintiff sued both his mother and her physician for malpractice and negligence during pregnancy. It was alleged that the physician had ensured the mother that it is impossible for her to become pregnant and recommended the treatment with tetracycline. As a result of the misdiagnose, a wrong decision to proceed with the prescribed treatment was made by the mother and consequently her child was born with discoloured teeth. The main point in this case was the category of reasonableness as a mother's duty. In another famous case, *Bonbrest v. Kotz,* the core of justification was the category

of viable foetus. The child who suffered because of the physician was authorized to get recovery or redress even though injury was caused to foetus. The reason given by the court was that foetus cannot be treated merely as a part of his mother.

A different type of cases is constituted by the so called wrongful life lawsuits. Generally speaking, one deals with this sort of cases when a woman or third party acts or omits an action in such a way that it makes a future person's very existence a harm inflicted on her or him. In the United States of America the first such lawsuits was the case *Zepeda v. Zepeda* where the plaintiff was a biological son of a man who promised to marry the plaintiff's mother but did not keep his word. Similar lawsuits were motivated by the claim that harm was done to the child who as a result of a given action led a life of decreased quality. In most cases of this type the plaintiff was the child or parents on behalf of the child while the defendant was usually the physician who by the negligence or malpractice caused the injury. Other famous cases include: *Gleitman v. Cosgrove*, *Park v. Chesin*, *Becker v. Schwartz*. In the first case the physician's malpractice consisted in the assurance that mother's disease (rubella) would not have an influence on the infant. In *Park v. Chesin* medical personnel was found legally responsible for inflicting a wrongful life on a child. As we can read: 'The court, asserting the right of a child to be born free of anomalies as a fundamental right, therefore ruled that the Lara Park's wrongful life claim was valid.'.[3] In *Becker v. Schwartz* the court ruled that legal institutions are not competent to compare between impaired life and non-existence.[4]

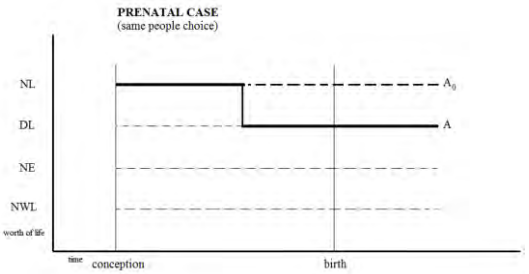
2. Terminology

As aforementioned considerations show one can distinguish between different levels of harm that is conceptualised within the legal framework described here. First, there is a level of normal existence where no harm was caused. Second, there is a level of a more or less disabled existence where harm was inflicted either preconceptionally (preconception harm lawsuits) or prenatally (prenatal harm lawsuits) but where a disability in question does not make the claimant's life not worth living. Third, there is a level of an existence disabled to such an extent that the life with this disability is not worth living (wrongful life lawsuits). So, by implication there is also the forth level of harm, namely the harm of non-existence. Of course killing somebody is on this level. As the case of wrongful life lawsuits shows there can be more severe harm than killing – making someone's life not worth living.

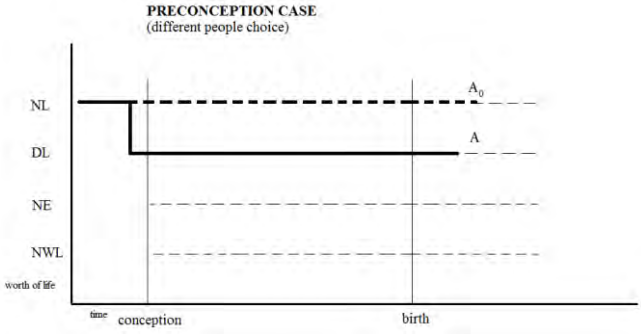
Following this distinctions, we have established the analytical framework for our considerations, based on the concept of four relevant levels of existence. The first one is described as *life which is not worth living* (NWL) – disability on this level is of the highest acuteness. This level of existence should be understood as 'containing more harm' or worse than the second level i.e. *non-existence* (NE). We can find a life with a disability on a higher level (level of disabled life – DL) within

our conceptual framework. Finally, on the highest level is this kind of existence that is commonly called the normal life (NL), which we define as a life without any disabilities.

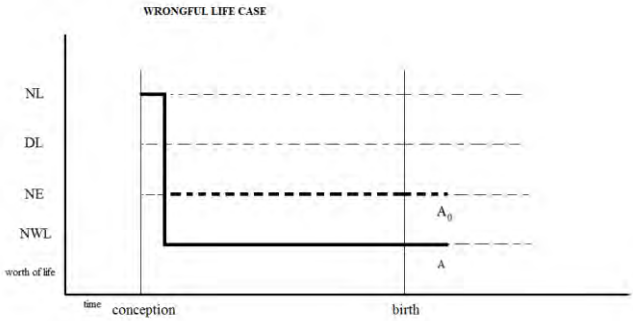
Using our analytical framework we can say that the concept of prenatal harm denotes the act of harming a (future) human being after conception but before birth to such an extent so as to make his life a disabled life (DL) yet worth living. The diagram 1. depicts the category of prenatal harm.



In turn, the concept of preconception harm denotes the act of inflicting harm on a future human being preconceptionally that makes his life a disabled life yet worth living. The diagram 2. illustrates the category of preconception harm.



The concept of wrongful life, understood in a traditional way, does not distinguish between harm inflicted preconceptionally and prenatally; what is important in wrongful life cases is the level of harm which must be so severe to make life not worth living. The diagram 3. illustrates the category of wrongful life.



Another important point of reference for our considerations is the Non-Identity Problem (NIP). To put the matter schematically, there are two possibilities of inflicting harm on people: 1) our choice to inflict harm affects the same person; 2) our choice to inflict harm affects different people. The difference between these two choices can be illustrated by the following thought experiment. Imagine that there is a girl A who is planning to have a child but gets to know that her child will be moderately disabled if she gets pregnant this month. Notwithstanding this information she decides to conceive a child immediately and as predicted the child is born moderately disabled. Now imagine another scenario. A girl B is pregnant (let's say it is 30th week of gestational age) and gets to know that her child is going to be moderately disabled. Fortunately, there is a pill that if she takes, her child will be cured. She decides yet not to take the pill and gives birth to a disabled child. In the first scenario the choice made by girl A does not affect her actual future child. If she had waited a month with conception, her actual child would not have been born at all. There would have been a different child, conceived from a different sperm and egg. This is a typical example of Different People Choice (DPC). In the second scenario, on the other hand, girl B's decision affects her actual future child. If she had taken the pill, her child would not have been disabled. There would not have been a different child but the same child without disability. This is a typical example of Same People Choice (SPC).

As we now see, for prenatal harm to occur it is not enough that harm is inflicted prenatally and is not so severe to make life not worth living. There is one more condition and a crucial one. A harm inflicted on a foetus cannot represents an instance of DPC. In other words, it must be possible for a given person that he or she would have existed if this very harm had not been inflicted[5].

3. Main Problem

With the use of our analytical framework, we can identify several recurrent discrepancies in the judicial approach to prenatal harm and abortion. In America, for instance, it is legal to terminate pregnancy before the 24th week of g.a. At the

same time prenatal harm inflicted before the 24th week of pregnancy is recognised as breach of law and may become a basis for complaint. Thus it can be inferred that the comparison between a child that could have been born if the foetus had not been aborted and a child that was born with a defect as a result of prenatal harm seems groundless. This means that authorising abortion before the 24th week of pregnancy is equal with the assertion that only after this period we see foetus as a person with unique identity founded, for example, on a pain or brain development criterion. Nevertheless, in spite of the above conclusion, doing harm to a foetus on the earlier stage of pregnancy is treated as equivalent to doing harm to a person. As Bonnie Steinbock writes:

> one court maintained that it is 'incongruous' to allow a woman the constitutional right to abort and yet hold a third party liable to the foetus for merely negligent acts. Another held that there would be an inherent conflict in giving the mother the right to terminate the pregnancy yet holding that an action may be brought on behalf of the same foetus under the wrongful death act,[6]

let alone under the prenatal harm lawsuit.

There are different strategies of dealing with this inconsistency between the status of the foetus in the abortion context and its position in the tort law. Mainly they refer to the concept of biological causality which, according to these strategies, explains that it is not a foetus who is harmed in this sort of cases but a future person whom foetus gives rise to.

The logic behind the Biological Causality Account (BCA) looks as follows: foetus at e.g. 15th week of g.a. is not a person and cannot be harmed. Hence, an abortion harms nobody. But if the same foetus is later born and becomes a person it is this very person who is harmed by the action taken prenatally.

In other words, an action performed on a foetus in 15th week of g.a. is a cause of a disability existing in a person who developed from this foetus some time later. Scientifically confirmed, biological causality that holds between a foetus and future person is a basis for the claim that this prenatal action is an actual cause of a disability in the future.

Our main thesis in this parer is an assertion that BCA is tenuous and suffers from serious metaphysical flaw. To see how it happens consider the following line of argument. There are two possible metaphysical identity relations that can hold between the foetus at e.g. 15th week g.a. and a future person at e.g. 30th week of g.a. They can be the same person or different entities. The first option is quite awkward for the proponents of prenatal harm lawsuits since it assumes that a foetus is the same kind of being that you and me. This assumption leads in turn to a plain inconsistency with the abortion law which does not regard a foetus as a

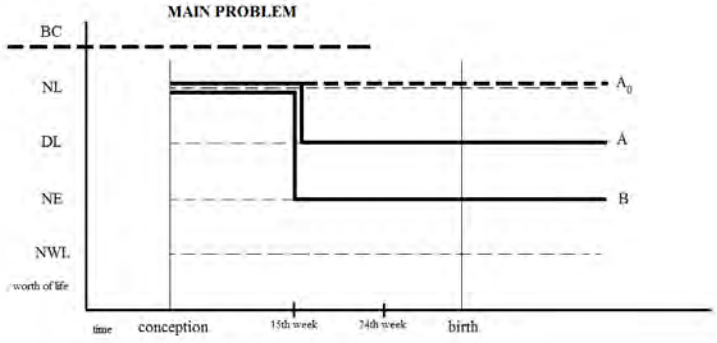
person. Moreover, this is exactly for the reason of abandoning the claim that a foetus is a person that BCA has been introduced in the first place. In other words, it cannot be personhood of a foetus that justifies prenatal harm lawsuits because it would mean undermining women's rights to abortion.

There is then the second option and a more interesting one, namely that there is no relation of identity between a foetus and a harmed person. But if there is not an identity relation between a foetus at 15th week of g.a. and a person at 30th week of g.a. then a choice to inflict some kind of harm on the foetus cannot by definition represent SPC but DPC. In other words, it is not like harming somebody who could have been existed without being harmed (there is nobody at 15th week of g.a.) but rather like deciding between two different people we want to have in the future: disabled one or one without disability. But then it is not possible to harm neither a foetus nor a future person that will develop from this foetus since the point of reference for comparison here is the non-existence, not an existence without disability. For this very disabled person there has been no other option then being disabled. Unless disability this person would not have existed at all; and the non-existence is worse than life with disability providing it is not an acute disability making life not worth living.

This line of argument can be criticised in the following manner. This is true that a foetus at 15th week of g.a. and a person at 30th week of g.a. are not identical with each other but it does not make the choice to inflict harm on the foetus a DPC. For a choice to be an instance of DPC it is necessary that the difference between a factual person and counterfactual person that would have been existed if the harmful action had not been performed is so considerable that makes thinking about these persons as about different people justified. In other words, what is crucial in deciding if we are dealing with DPC or SPC in a given case is not a question about what kind of relation holds between two people (entities) temporarily (i.e. at two different points in time, e.g. between foetus and infant) but factually/counterfactually. For example, for Derek Parfit the difference between factual and counterfactual person is deemed considerable when enough amount of genetic material is altered.

Unfortunately, this criticism does not work. The answer to the question what kind of difference is so considerable as to make thinking about factual and counterfactual persons as about different people depends on the theory of identity we actually espouse. The answer to the question what sort of difference between two persons, factual and counterfactual, justifies treating these persons either as different or as identical depends on what we believe to be crucial for identity. It can be genes as in the case of Parfit's criterion; it can be the same embodied mind as in the case of McMahan's theory. But what our answer to the question always boils down to is some explicit or implicit theory of identity. Hence, any justification for prenatal harm lawsuits, even this which abstracts from metaphysical considerations on personal identity and employs some kind BCA

presupposes some theory of identity that bestows a moral status on a foetus and in this respect contradicts its standing in the context of abortion law; this in turn means that any attempt to justify prenatal harm lawsuits weakens justification for women's rights.



4. Conclusions

Any justifications in prenatal harm lawsuits presuppose a variety of identity theories regulated by such conceptual categories as, for instance, genetics, psychology and embodiment. Regardless of their content, such theories are a necessary prerequisite for legal argumentation in cases dealing with wrongful birth, wrongful life and prenatal harm. This means that we only have a limited choice between explicit rationally justified accounts of identity or implicit and often inconsistent or irrational metaphysics.

Our conclusions are of primary importance for legal definitions of reproductive rights in general, not only limited to women's right to abortion. It is predicted that future developments in reprogenetic techniques may cause new problems arising from reproductive freedom, including such issues as limiting the autonomy of parents or modifying their progeny's genetic make-up. If the perspective of biological causality is accepted as valid, then some practices should be forbidden even before the conception. Parental autonomy may also be reduced as a result of a particular social consensus model. A recent example of recontextualizing reproductive freedom with regard to the type of offspring conceived is the case of achondroplasia[7]. After discovering the gene responsible for this illness, apart from parents ready to abort zygotes with the gene, there were parents who wanted to eliminate zygotes without the gene. Identity theory should address the new developments in reprogenetics that allow parents to radically change the genetic make-up of the zygote.

To decide if a given act is a harmful act, we have to have some points of reference. In other words, we should establish what would someone's life have been like if a given act had not been performed. This speculation necessitates a comparison of a factual line of life with a counterfactual line of life and if the latter is no worse than the former there is no reason to consider this act harmful.

Notes

[1] More about this issue: Kate Wevers, *Prenatal Torts and Pre-Implantaion Genetic Diagnosis* In Harvard Journal of Law and Technology, 24, 1 (2010); John A. Robertson, *Children of Choice:Freedom and the New Reproductive Technologies*, (Princeton Academic Press, 1996).; *Preconception Injuries: Viable Extention of Prenatal Injuty or Inconceivable Tort?*, Val. U. L. Rev. 12, 1 (1977), 143-178; Peg Tittle, 'Permitting Abortion and Prohibiting Prenatal Harm: Reconciling the Contradiction'. Accessed October 20th, 2013. http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Bioe/BioeTitt.htm.

[2] A peculiar version of this type of cases is the so-called preconception harm lawsuit where a harm is inflicted on a future person preconceptionally by action or omission detrimental to her or his health. Since these two types of lawsuits are similar from the vantage point of MBSA because both of them assume some implicit theory of identity under the guise of biological causality we shall not deal with them separately but will construe them just as different versions of the same 'genre'.

[3] Mark Zhang, *Park v. Chessin (1977),* 'Embryo Project Encyclopedia', http://embryo.asu.edu/handle/10776/2318.

[4] Wevers, *Prenatal Torts*, 265.

[5] It cannot be the case that the line of this person's existence with disability (DL) can be compared with the line of non-existence (NE) because then disability would not be a harm. Disability can be considered a harm only when it is compared with the line of a normal life (NL); or more generally, disability can be considered a harm only when it is compared with a line of existence which is higher on the worth of life axis.

[6] Bonnie Steinbock, *Life Before Birth*, (Oxford University Press, 1996), 122.

[7] Rita Shiang et al.,'Mutations in the Transmembrane Domain of FGFR3 Cause the Most Common Genetic Form of Dwarfism, Achondroplasia', *Cell* 78 (1994), 335-42.

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Appendix

Abbreviations:
A – Factual line of life
A^0 – Counterfactual line of life
B - Abortion
BC – Biological causality
NL – Normal life
DL – Disabled life
NE – Non-existence
NWL – Life which is not worth living

Part VI

Gender, Love and Postfeminism

Gender in Recent Romance Novels: A Third Wave Feminist Mills and Boon Love Affair?

Eirini Arvanitaki

Abstract
Nowadays the global background is constantly evolving; economy, globalisation, gender, love, feminism and sex are getting more complicated. The perspective on femininity has changed and new images of beauty, sexuality and career have arisen. In the past, romantic love was a goal of life and existence for women. Women were once characterised only in relation to men. Today women are emancipated and, according to third wave feminism, love is an individual choice. With regard to gender construction modernisation, individualism, independence and autonomy have replaced the view of women as 'destined to be wife and mother.'[1] Popular romance novels are familiarly known for their traditional formulas and conventional formations of gender. A typical popular romance plot usually entails a heroine in a troubled dilemma and a feisty, handsome hero coming to her rescue. The reciprocated gratitude shown by the heroine then results into an act of social bonding, which turns to heterosexual romantic love. The climax of the story personifies the pursuit and retrieval of romantic love. This chapter takes a third wave feminist perspective and through a selection of very recent novels written in a new global and economic context it endeavours to examine whether romantic love plays a key role in the production of gender and to what extent have the novels adjusted to the twenty-first century images of womanhood. It also attempts to identify influences and changes in the representation of gender and to discover if these narratives are updated to fit in the modernised world or whether they continue to offer a traditional image of femininity.

Key Words: Popular romance novels, third wave feminism, love, gender, representation, production.

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1. Twenty-First Century Novels and Third Wave Feminism

The twenty-first century is an era of global and continuous change. The economy is going through a major crisis, society is being reconstructed, love is redefined, gender roles are reconsidered, and feminism and sex are being revisited. Traditional ideals and beliefs are altered and/or put aside in search of new and updated notions to match the change of global environment. This chapter takes a third wave feminist perspective and seeks to investigate romantic love and the role it plays in the production and representation of gender in popular romance novels (2012-2013). It also aims to examine whether these narratives are updated to fit this modernised world or whether they remain faithful to the archetypal standards.

Despite the numerous attempts towards modernisation of their contexts, popular romance novels have been heavily criticised by a mainstream of literary critics (Germaine Greer, Kay Musell, Jeanne Dubino to name a few) for their conventionality and traditional formations of gender. Recently, steps towards the modernisation of these narratives have been taken. Although the heterosexual relationship between the hero and heroine still remains the central element of the story, Mills & Boon authors attempt to make the novels as less utopic as possible. The heroine embodies the modern woman: she is no longer passive and not characterised only in relation to the hero. On the contrary, similarly to the woman of the twenty-first century she 'has [...] a socially recognised identity, constructed through the ideals of increased levels of individualization and autonomy.'[2] She now reminds little of the view of women as 'destined to be wife and mother.'[3] According to second wave feminism, women were 'encouraged to embody forms of femininity that might situate them as submissive to boys and men.'[4] Now new forms of femininity are employed 'as a discursive tactic to disrupt gender hierarchies.'[5]

For the purposes of this article a selection of very recent popular romance novels (*The Fallen Greek Bride* – Jane Porter, 2013, *A Girl Less Ordinary* – Leah Ashton, 2012, *The Darkest of Secrets* – Kate Hewitt, 2012 and *First Time Lucky?* – Natalie Anderson, 2012) will be examined in an attempt to shed light on the changes that occur in the representation of love and the construction of gender in a third wave feminist context. In more details, all four novels are literature agents which signal elements of modernity. This chapter is divided in three parts: part one, 'Signals of Modernity', focuses on social class, wealth, education, professional occupation and technology. Part two, 'Representation and Production of Gender', discusses the reconstruction of the hero and heroine's representation and attitude. Part three, 'Sexual Behaviour and Contradictions', draws attention to the sexual behaviour of the novels' protagonists.

Prior to the analysis of these novels a definition of third wave feminism should be given. This is a difficult task since as a concept it is quite varied and contains a whole range of feminist positions some of which are even contradictory. Third wave feminism can be characterised as 'a form of inclusiveness'[6], uniqueness and individuality since it acknowledges the differences (racial, ethnic, economic, social, religious etc.) between women as well as the dissimilar and distinct personalities within each individual. As a result it aims to 'embrace a multiplicity of identities, accept the messiness of lived contradiction, and eschew a unifying agenda.'[7] Nevertheless, there are four main points onto which third wave feminists focus: popular culture production (i.e. beauty and representation of women), sex equality and interaction, the pursuit of sexual pleasure based on women's desire and performance of femininity. For Naomi Wolf third wave feminism is 'tolerant of other women's choices about sexuality and appearance'[8] and embraces multivocality, positionality and the individual's personal choice. A constituent of

the third wave feminism is the 'girl power' or 'girlie culture'[9] (i.e. the desire to actively play with femininity). It is an expression of third wave feminism which challenges the 'definitions of what it means to be a feminist by foregrounding the contradictions and conflicts shaping young women's experiences.'[10]

On the other hand, second wave feminism proponents have negatively criticised third wave feminism and claimed that 'girl power' does not go with empowerment since they believe that 'sensuality cannot coincide with seriousness.'[11] Therefore, it is thought that what this combination does is to ridicule and mock feminism and its goals for equality. The diversity between the second and third wave feminism lies in the fact that the latter accepts life as a 'messy and self-contradicting concept, but also encompassing, enlightening and empowering'[12] in which each individual has to develop their own feminist perspective.

2. Signals of Modernity

In the past, the majority of the novels presented the hero as an heir of an influential and wealthy family and the heroine as a woman who belonged to a lower social class. In the recently published romance fiction narratives the social class boundaries have started collapsing. In the very first pages of *A Girl Less Ordinary* (*AGLO*) the first hint of modernity appears. Both the hero (Jake) and the heroine (Ella) come from very poor backgrounds in the same deprived neighbourhood. They were 'the only two students on scholarships at their fancy private school – low socio-economic ones [...] who lived in government-subsidised housing, and [...] with eccentric new-age parents –hers- or a drug-addled verging-on-neglectful mother-his.'[13]The power and fame resulting from the hero's social status in many of the older novels is now lost. Here, the hero is pictured as a down-to earth and humble individual.

Additionally, in the past the hero's wealth traditionally was a product of family or blood line unlike the heroine who was un- or less educated, and with a less prestigious occupation. In the case of *AGLO* the aforementioned elements lose their significance towards the characterisation of the protagonists. Despite their troubled childhoods and the lack of means Jake now owns an IT company while more importantly Ella is a successful image consultant with an extensive list of clients and a respectable reputation. Money and therefore the sense of superiority that comes with it is no longer an issue here. Conversely, both of their professions are results of hard work and determination to deviate from the past and poverty.

Worth noting is also the choice of their occupations which signal modernity, attract the readers' interest and suggest romance fiction belongs to the present. Professions such as these did not exist thirty years ago. Following the trends of the twenty-first century, the author offers additional up-to-date elements such as image and its significance in the modern society (see heroine's occupation). In the novel, the hero is represented as a computer geek in the style of Bill Gates. The heroine, in an attempt to explain the degree to which image can influence an individual's

life, states: 'a person's image, and by that I mean their clothing, their grooming [...] has a massive impact on their lives. It's about self-esteem and self-confidence - and even perceptions of capability and credibility.'[14] In other words, the novel discusses the artificial versus natural image and self and suggests a compromise between the two. Ella learns to be more natural and Jake realises that expertise and image sometimes go together.

Correspondingly, *The Darkest of Secrets* (*TDS*) is also enriched with features which reflect today's society. Khalis is a self-made businessman who at the age of twenty one renounced his father's legacy and inheritance as he was a corrupt and ruthless entrepreneur. Grace is an art appraiser who has been called to his service to examine and evaluate paintings found in his father's vault. The heroine's profession is of great interest and one that is not regularly found in the stories of romance novels. It indicates the higher level of education that she holds in comparison to the hero. She holds a PhD degree in fifteenth-century Leonardo da Vinci paintings and forgeries, which gives her an intellectual superiority to him. This should not come as a surprise. Women are no longer dependent on men or imprisoned to the house and child rearing. The novel shows that although she is an emancipated, modern and educated woman she still was completely dominated by her husband.

The inclusion of references to technology is another method used by these popular romance authors to adjust the settings and context of their plots to better mirror reality. In *AGLO* as well as in *TDS* the texts overflow with such references to modern technology devices: SLR digital cameras, multi-touch capability phones, API support and laser technology, sterile laboratories and fingerprint activated security.

3. Representation and Construction of Gender

Popular romance readers were accustomed to reading about a handsome and strong-willed, independent and oftentimes aggressive alpha male hero and a beautiful, young and inexperienced heroine. However, in the recent Mills & Boon novels this image of the hero is being reworked (more attention is paid to his emotional evolution) and the heroine is gradually becoming more independent and emancipated.

The Fallen Greek Bride (*TFGB*) is the story of Morgan Copeland, daughter of a wealthy man, and her husband Drakon Sebastian Xanthis, a Greek shipping tycoon. Five years after their marriage, Morgan abandoned him. But after a wrong investment, her father left the family penniless and is held prisoner by Somali pirates in exchange for ransom. Morgan has no other option but to return to Drakon and ask for his help.

One of the first striking changes which occur in this novel is the apparent extension of the traditional masculine and feminine images. Although he is still the alpha male there are evident hints of his sensitivity and bond with family: 'He'd

refused to grant her a divorce [...] Marriage vows [...] were sacred and binding.'[15] Later on, when the heroine asks for a loan to save her father she proposes that a legal document should be drafted. His response carries evidence of a man's loyalty and a woman's disloyalty 'Just like you promised to love me?' and 'I promised five and a half years ago to be loyal to you, and I have been.'[16] He also adopts a form of traditionalism '[h]e wanted children, a family. He wanted his wife back where she was supposed to be – in his home, at his side.'[17] These feelings described above are usually believed to characterise a woman and her personality.

The novel also plays with feminist ideas. Morgan opposes to manipulation by men, rejects any act of being managed and sees marriage as an act of domination by and subordination to the hero 'next time you marry, ask your bride what kind of home she wants to live in. [..] That way your poor wife might actually like her cage.'[18]

The hero in *AGLO* could also be described as more emotional and thoughtful than the heroine. After they have spent the night together, their public kiss has made the headlines of the gossip websites and the press. Embarrassed and terrified that her past would be revealed Ella states 'have worked so hard.' Soon after, the hero realises that 'it wasn't their relationship – or whatever this was – that she wanted to protect. It was herself.'[19] Under the impression that Ella is more interested in saving her professional image rather than their relationship from the media, the hero is hurt. This is another misconception of beautiful and successful women of this century: '[t]he assumption is that women who are striving for self-expression, power and success are lacking in both knowledge of love and desire to love' as well as 'they are narcissistically self-centered.'[20] In this case, as the heroine tries to protect herself from the past, hides her original self so that she is socially accepted and desired, she seems as a selfish woman to the hero. Celebrity culture or the ability to create a public image and recreate oneself is a feature of modern society.

In *TDS* after a romantic night in a tent on a small and deserted island, the hero offers to use his lawyers and find information on Grace's ex-husband to use it to help her get her daughter back. Terrified that her dark past, an act of infidelity, might be discovered she erupts in anger and states that she doesn't 'like to be bossed around.'[21]Threatened by any sort of male domination she portrays acts of self-protection; opposition to do what she's told and distances herself from the hero. His reaction is what would usually be expected from a sentimentally hurt heroine: 'I thought we had something special.'[22]

All three novels provide a reconstructed image of gender and attitude. The heroines of these very recent novels are to some extent emancipated from traditional forms of femininity. They are rebellious against any kind of oppression. In addition, the representation and construction of the heroes have also been influenced. They idea of the aggressive and macho man is to some extent lost; they now demonstrate far greater signs of sensitivity, willingness to give a second

chance and at times even appear more traditional than the heroine. Nonetheless, changes in personal attitude are not enough to draw a conclusion on whether genders are under reconstruction. Sexual behaviour will also be taken into consideration in the following section.

4. Sexual Behaviour and Contradictions

In the twenty-first century, where sex is demystified and gender attitudes are metamorphosed, the sexual behaviour of the characters in the story could not remain unaltered. The more independent and strong-willed a heroine becomes the more sensitive and conventional the hero gets, especially on the subject of sexual behaviour. For instance, although Morgan in *TFGB* is against any kind of subordination to Drakon, she is willing or better yet seeking for sexual domination when she admits that she 'wanted to be ravished. Stripped. Tied up. Taken. Tasted. Devoured.'[23] Here, she is a described as a contradictory character: an independent woman who voices a need of sexual dependence.

Sexual liberation is one of the core patterns in the novel *First Time Lucky?* (*FTL*). Roxie is a young, twenty two year old woman who wants to gain experiences and see the world. On her list, first and foremost, comes her desire to get rid of her virginity as for her it is a mere practicality. In an attempt to debunk the myth of virginity as chastity, she states that it 'ought to have nothing to do with whether a girl is 'good' or not.'[24] She sees virginity as a social construct for controlling women's sexual emancipation 'I always figured the pain thing was a way of trying to put a girl off. Trying to keep us 'good.''[25] Her lack of sexual experience does not stop her from expressing a feminist view on female sexuality. She tempts the hero in an attempt to lure him into bed and get what she wants. She also emphasizes the misconception that all women want or ought to be in a relationship to fulfil their sexual desires 'all that matters to me is having it good'[26] and refuses to give up her independence. For her, the way forward is by not being submissive to anyone but rather have a 'playmate every now and then.'[27] Moreover, she refuses to accept the fallacy of inequality in sexual behaviour between genders: 'Why? Because you're a man and it's different for men? Why can't I have sex just for the pleasure of it, for the curiosity? Why can't women have the same sex drive?'[28]

This quotation makes a point about sex, love and third-wave feminism. It highlights the fact that love has lost its glamour and significance while sex, as a desirable commodity, does not necessarily associate with relationship and commitment. Women have now realised that love, as it was traditional conceived, 'was simply a form of obfuscation. The grand and magical meanings [...] were there in part to distract us [women] from the paucity of pleasure.'[29]

Gabe, on the contrary, appears more traditional and conventional and considers romantic love a significant component for a sexual relationship: 'you should want someone who's in love with you and who you're in love with.'[30]

Here, the novel slips back into older perspectives and makes a conservative point which contradicts the heroine's views. Maybe, after all, the author is trying to portray sex and love in a twenty-first century context and recreate their forms to fit modernity. Without devaluing any of accomplished women's achievements thus far, the message embodied in this novel is that love should be an equal and shared act, feeling or commitment between two people and free from any trace of subordination.

5. Conclusion

Modern times and globalisation have become an inseparable part of our lives. As the world develops concepts such as economy, society, gender are being redefined. The above analysis of the selected novels demonstrated a reconstruction and representation of gender and displayed the novel adaptation to twenty-first century as well as the entailed progressive images of womanhood and the updated forms of masculinity. The concept of sex has also changed and is no longer thought as inseparable part of romantic love and commitment. There is clearly a consideration of third-wave feminist ideas in the romance narratives. Nevertheless, popular romance novels always have a happy-ever-after which indicates that romantic love still functions as a socialisation towards heterosexuality and monogamy. Furthermore, literary devices regarding modernisation and technology begin to appear in the novels. But it should not strike readers as strange. If Mills and Boon heroes and heroines are under an updating and reconstructing process then the contexts and settings of the stories should follow in the same steps and depict the progression of modern social reality.

Notes

[1] Rosie Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 235.

[2] Shelley Budgeon, *Third-Wave Feminism and the Politics of Gender in Late Modernity* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 53.

[3] Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, 235.

[4] Mimi Schippers & Erin Grayson Sapp, 'Reading Pulp Fiction: Femininity and power in second and third wave feminist theory', *Feminist Theory* 13.1 (2012): 32.

[5] Ibid., 32.

[6] Leslie Heywood, Introduction to *The Women's Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third-wave Feminism. A-Z* by Leslie Heywood (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), xx.

[7] Claire Snyder, 'What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay', *Signs* 34.1 (2008): 177.

[8] Naomi Wolf, 'Two Traditions', *The Women's Movement Today: An Encyclopedia of Third-wave Feminism. Primary Documents*, ed. Leslie Heywood (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006), 13-19.
[9] Stacy Gillis and Rebecca Munford, 'Genealogies and Generations; The Politics and Praxis of Third Wave Feminism', *Women's History Review* 13.2 (2004): 172.
[10] Ibid., 172.
[11] Naomi Wolf, *Fire with Fire: The New Female Power and How It Will Change the 21st Century* (London: Vintage, 1994), 149.
[12] Roxanne Harde and Erin Harde, 'Voices and Visions: A Mother and Daughter Discuss Coming to Feminism and Being Feminist', *Catching a Wave Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century*, ed. Rory C. Dicker and Alison Piepmeier (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003), 122.
[13] Leah Ashton, *A Girl Less Ordinary* (Mills & Boon Riva, 2012), 35-36.
[14] Ibid., 100.
[15] Jane Porter, *The Fallen Greek Bride* (Mills & Boon, 2013), 8.
[16] Ibid., 13.
[17] Ibid., 27.
[18] Ibid., 137.
[19] Ashton, *A Girl Less Ordinary,* 195.
[20] Bell hooks, *Communion: The Female Search for Love* (New York: Perennial, 2003), 150.
[21] Kate Hewitt, *The Darkest of Secrets* (Harlequin, 2012), 129.
[22] Ibid., 132.
[23] Porter, *The Fallen Greek Bride,* 95.
[24] Natalie Anderson, *First Time Lucky?* (Mills & Boon Riva, 2012), 86.
[25] Ibid., 113.
[26] Ibid., 14.
[27] Ibid., 181.
[28] Ibid., 75-76.
[29] Barbara Ehrenreich, Elizabeth Hess and Gloria Jacobs, *Re-making Love: The Feminisation of Sex* (New York: Anchor Press, 1986), 195.
[30] Anderson, *First Time Lucky?*, 75.

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Postfeminism, Consumerism and the Reclamation of Love

Franka Heise

Abstract
Instead of regarding love as private emotion or personal affect, this chapter examines heterosexual love as social and political institution and argues that its meanings are increasingly mediated. Through an analysis of an advertising campaign by the diamond company *De Beers*, this chapter sheds some light on what can be regarded as some of the most fundamental shifts in the discursive construction of love and romance: firstly, the commodification of love and romance in popular consumer culture, and, secondly, the emergence of postfeminism as a dominant frame to articulate discourses of love and romance.[1] The intermingling of postfeminism with discourses of neo-liberal consumer culture, this chapter argues, has led to a reclamation of love as a central and politically acceptable means for the constitution of gendered identities. Where postfeminism postulates that the construction of female subjectivities through heterosexual appeal and romantic desirability is unproblematic from a feminist point of view, contemporary consumer culture has propelled an understanding of love as something that can and should be expressed via practices of consumption.

Key Words: Postfeminism, femininity, popular culture, gender, love, romance, consumption, advertising, *De Beers.*

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1. Introduction

This chapter provides a semiotic and discursive analysis of an advertising campaign by the diamond company *De Beers*. The campaign promotes a 'right-hand-ring' for women as a quasi-feminist equivalent to the engagement ring/wedding band, which is usually worn on the left hand. It illustrates palpably how cultural notions of love and romance are inextricably intertwined with discourses of (post)-feminism, gender and consumption.[2] The *De Beers* campaign is treated here as an example of larger shifts in contemporary Western media culture with regard to the discursive framing of love and romance. The main argument of this chapter is that the emergence of postfeminism has permitted a reclamation of romance as a central and politically unproblematic means for the constitution of gendered, more specifically feminine, identities. As this campaign highlights, postfeminism functions as a framework in which women are defined primarily through heterosexual appeal and romantic desirability while still appear as powerful, confident and independent agents. In short, postfeminism allows women to construct themselves as feminine and feminist at the same time. The

deployment of a feminist rhetoric, however, works here primarily as a means to market products to women while actually promoting retrogressive models of romance and femininity, which ought to be regarded critically from a feminist perspective. The campaign illustrates well how postfeminist frames function to depoliticise the patriarchal and capitalist dimensions of love and romance. As this chapter asks how we can make media texts fruitful for the analysis of romance and love in connection to feminism and gender, a historical contextualisation of different feminist positions towards love and romance is indispensable.

2. Feminism and Love

What is described here in a quite generalising manner as second-wave feminism[3] – that is the Western feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s – has always had a fraught relationship with heterosexual love and romance.[4] Critics like Shulamith Firestone, Kate Millett, and Germaine Greer understood heterosexual love not as private emotion or personal affect, but as patriarchal institution that placed limits on women's sexual, emotional, and financial freedom. Critics like Adrienne Rich saw discourses of romance and love as crucial to the production of 'compulsory heterosexuality'.[5] Betty Friedan criticised in her landmark work *The Feminine Mystique* the role of romance in producing post-war domesticity and the 'problem that has no name'.[6] Feminists of the second wave argued that the 'romantic ideology' is a product of patriarchal power structures and is responsible for trapping women in a binary gender system built on idealised notions of traditional femininity and hegemonic masculinity. Germaine Greer claimed, for example, that romance is ''dope for dupes'' and a means of 'brainwashing women into subservience'.[7] Polemically, second wave feminists claimed that women start by sinking into 'his' arms and end up with their arms in his sink.

Moreover, it was argued that romance is particularly dangerous as it does more than naturalise a patriarchal gender system on a discursive level. Because marriage was seen as the institutionalised, officialised, and publicly legitimised form of love, romance was also blamed for luring women into what was seen as the most perilous form of legal, emotional and sexual dependency: marriage.[8] Romantic ideology was seen as crucial to this oppression because it subjectivises the collective political implications of love by transforming 'its inherently public, political nature into something magically personal, private, and inevitable'.[9] Feminists like Kate Millet and Shulamith Firestone argued therefore that romanticism is 'emotional manipulation'[10] and 'a cultural tool of male power to keep women from knowing their real conditions'.[11]

This stands very much in contrast to the reclamation of romance within postfeminism – of which the advertisement campaign of *De Beers* is emblematic. Within postfeminist discourses, romanticism is not only rendered acceptable, but indeed necessary for the constitution of 'modern' femininity. Instead of assuming a critical stance towards romance and its intricate relationship to patriarchal

ideologies, postfeminism provides opportunities in which feminism and romanticism can now not only exist alongside one another, but actually become mutually constitutive.

3. Contextualising Postfeminism

Postfeminism has emerged in the late 20th century as a buzzword in different social arenas and purportedly describes a cultural environment in which the incorporation of traditional second wave feminist claims into broader mainstream culture is achieved. As traditional feminist goals such as reproductive autonomy, sexual discrimination, and equal pay had been (to some extent) institutionalised by the end of the 1980s, the message that patriarchy has been overcome gained cultural currency across a variety of media spheres. Media and politics began to usher in the message that women are finally liberated from the social constraints of traditional gender roles and can now function as 'autonomous agents no longer constrained by any inequalities or power imbalances whatsoever'.[12] Instead of seeing traditional forms of hegemonic femininity as a product of unequal, patriarchal power relations as second wave feminism did, postfeminism started to celebrate femininity as empowered form self-expression and individuality. Popular postfeminism follows and perpetuates the assumption that the goals of traditional feminist politics have been attained, so that sexualized self-representation and conservative models of femininity (e.g. that of the mother, bride, wife), are now not only politically unproblematic, but actually pleasurable.

In a postfeminist cultural climate, where the notion of patriarchy is relegated to the past, heterosexual love and romance are presented as separate from political conditions of power and subordination. Feminist criticism about the political ramifications of love and romance can then be cast as outdated and no longer necessary. Angela McRobbie thus understands postfeminism 'to refer to an active process by which feminist gains of the 1970s and 80s come to be undermined' with the aim to suggest 'that equality is achieved, in order to install a whole repertoire of new meanings which emphasise that it [feminism] is no longer needed, it is a spent force'.[13] Instead of regarding traditional life choices like marriage and motherhood as results of a patriarchal system of subordination, they are presented as a matter of personal choice, individuality, and self-determination.

4. The *De Beers* Campaign

The *De Beers* campaign illustrates how advertisement constructs a certain version of romantic feminine identity that corresponds with what Stéphanie Genz describes as the 'PWF' – the postfeminist woman.[14] Characteristic for this postfeminist woman is that feminism and romanticism are not presented as mutually exclusive categories, but as constitutive of one another. The postfeminist woman constructs herself through heterosexual appeal. Being romantically desired by a man is crucial to her identity, but she also embodies notions of empowerment,

independence, and confidence. All the different versions of the campaign depict conventionally attractive, slim white women with a body language ushering different statements.

- 'Your left hand says you are taken, your right hand says you can take over. Your left hand celebrates the day you were married. Your right hand celebrates the day you were born. Women of the world, raise your right hand.'

- 'Your left hand says 'we', your right hand says 'we'. Your left hand loves candle light, your right hand loves the spotlight. Your left hand rocks the cradle, your right hand rules the world. Women of the world, raise your right hand.'

- 'Your left hand is the sensible one. Your right hand is the crazy one. Your left hand does what it should. Your left hand does what it pleases. Your left hand will support you. Your right hand will surprise you. Women of the world, raise your right hand.'

- 'Your left hand is your heart. Your right hand is your voice. Your left hand says 'I do'. Your right hand says 'I did what?'. Your left hand knows the answer. Your right hand asks the questions. Women of the world, raise your right hand.'

- 'Your left hand sees red and thinks roses. Your right hand sees red and thinks wine. Your left hand believes in shining armor. Your right hand thinks that knights are for fairytales. Your left hand says 'I love you'. Your right hand says 'I love me, too'. Women of the world, raise your right hand.'[15]

The campaign constructs the right and the left hand as visual and physical signifiers for the different sides of the postfeminist woman's identity: feminism and romantic femininity. The left 'thinks roses', it 'says 'we'', it 'believes in shining armor', it 'wants candle light', it 'rocks the cradle', it states 'I love you'. The right hand, in contrast, 'rules the world', it says 'me', it 'loves the spotlight', it is a sign of independence. It says 'I love me too', it can 'take over' and thinks that 'knights are for fairy tales'. In short, while the left hand symbolises the commitment to traditional forms of femininity and romance, the right hand symbolises commitment to the feminist principles of self-determination, power, and independence. In combining romance and love with a rhetoric of

empowerment, confidence, and independence, this advertisement challenges claims in which 'believing in shining armor' is diametrically opposed to feminist identity. Genz describes this paradoxical identity of the postfeminist woman with the following words:

> [T]he PFW navigates the conflicts between her feminist values and her feminine body, between individual and collective achievement, between professional career and personal relationship. She inhabits a nondualistic space that holds together these varied and often oppositional stances and thus, she provides multiple opportunities for female identification. The PFW wants to ''have it all'' as she refuses to dichotomize and choose between her public and private, feminist, and feminine identities. She rearticulates and blurs the binary distinctions between feminism and femininity, between professionalism and domesticity, refuting monolithic and homogeneous definitions of postfeminist subjectivity.[16]

What makes this advertisement distinctly postfeminist, is the central point of the quote above: the fusion of feminism with femininity. Although romantic femininity and feminism are constructed as sometimes even contradictory binaries ('Your left hand believes in shining armor, your right hand thinks knights are for fairytales'), they are presented to exist alongside each other in harmonious ways and are reconciled in the identity of the 'PFW'. The campaign illustrates how postfeminist frames destabilise, but simultaneously confirm, binaries between right and left, personal and political, public and private, emotion and ratio. But rather than presenting them as mutually exclusive categories, they are reconciled in the identity of the 'PFW'. The postfeminist body functions here as visual and discursive centre ground through which these contentions are negotiated and resolved.

Statements like 'knights are for fairytales' illustrate how postfeminist romance is characterized by knowingness and irony.[17] The acknowledgement of the social and gendered construction of romantic narratives, however, does not lead to a rejection of them. Indeed, it serves as a justification for the participation in these narratives. By presenting themselves as knowing and informed agents instead of 'romantic dupes', women can now unproblematically embrace romance as a central part of their lives without feminist guilt about the political corollaries of their traditional choices. As Anthea Taylor argues, women 'are no longer indoctrinated into believing a man will make them happy, they now (apparently) actively *choose* to believe he will, and this is seen as cause for postfeminist celebration'.[18]

Choice is indeed a central, albeit ambiguous and complex, trope in postfeminist discourses. Quite in contrast to second wave feminism's claim that the personal is political, postfeminist discourses postulate that choices are apolitical, precisely *because* they are personal. McRobbie desqcribes postfeminism therefore as a 'double entanglement', characterised by the 'co-existence of neo-conservative values in relation to gender, sexuality and the family life, with processes of liberalisation in regard to choice and diversity in domestic and sexual relations where objection is pre-empted with irony'.[19] Within this postfeminist 'entanglement', postfeminist choices, as retrogressive they might be, are located outside of political struggles around gender, power, and equality as long as they are made 'out of love'.

5. Postfeminist Exclusions

We also ought to be critical about the collective and inclusionary claims postfeminist romance tends to make. Through the injunction 'Women of the world, raise your right hand!'[20], we as viewers are not only constituted as individual subjects, but also as members of the group 'women of the world', as if it were a collective with homogenous goals, opportunities, and ambitions. In critical ways, the advertisement homogenises and individualises women simultaneously. Moreover, it constitutes us as viewers as members of a group that is not only able, but also willing, to be part of the postfeminist ideology it promotes.

To 'raise' is usually a positively connoted term that implicates movement, activity, and empowerment. One raises one hand if one has to announce something; to raise means also to stand up for or against something. This nod to feminist rhetoric is likely not a coincidence. But, critically, the campaign equates 'raising' here with the act of buying. In doing so, consumption is presented as a liberating, empowered act through which one can display one's feminist principles to the outside world as much as one displays one's romantic involvement with the left hand. According to this rationale, empowerment becomes something you can literally buy into. This logic reflects a key paradigm of postfeminist culture, which requires women in neo-liberal manner to be productive citizens and consumers while simultaneously expecting them to wilfully embrace their traditional duties as mothers, wives, caretakers, and brides.

Furthermore, this campaign highlights how advertising and consumer culture has identified women as a growing and increasingly affluent target group. The postfeminist woman does not wait until she is given diamonds by a man; she can now buy them for herself. This also draws our attention to the inherently consumerist and neo-liberal logic of postfeminist romance: empowerment and love become something that can be bought. This commodification of love and romance is described by Eva Illouz as the 'romanticization of commodities' and the 'commercialization of romance'.[21] These processes, however, go hand in hand with some critical exclusions. 'Women of the world, raise your hand!', for example, is a

misleading claim that fails to acknowledge that only a fraction of the women worldwide are able to purchase such a ring and buy into the empowerment this advertisement promises. Gill highlights the normative dimensions of postfeminism when she describes it as a sensibility that

> include[s] the notion that femininity is a bodily property; the shift from objectification to subjectification; an emphasis upon self-surveillance, monitoring and self-discipline; a focus on individualism, choice and empowerment; the dominance of a makeover paradigm; and a resurgence of ideas about natural sexual difference…These themes coexist with and are structured by stark and continuing inequalities and exclusions that relate to 'race' and ethnicity, class, age, sexuality and disability –– as well as gender. [22]

These postfeminist exclusions become very evident in the *De Beers* campaign, as it tells us that you have to be white, heterosexual, married, attractive, young, able bodied, and economically privileged to not only 'rule the world' and 'take over', but also to be loved. By constructing this hegemonic template as pre-requisite for being romantically desired, the advertisement reinforces normative ideas about who is entitled to romantic love and who is not. Women that fall out of the narrow framework of acceptable femininity, because they are too old, too poor, or too 'ugly', are excluded from the romantic discourse.

We must also view the suggestion that women can now 'have it all' sceptically. Postfeminism, despite its appealing and easy-to-market rhetoric of choice, agency, and power, does not actually expand the possibilities for women or the range of roles from which to choose. Critically, it tells them, they not only *can* have it all, they *have* to have it all. In this regard, it is also interesting that the 'right-hand-ring' is not marketed on its own, but only as a supplement to the 'left hand ring', suggesting that only when romantic commitment is secured, women can start to 'rule the world' and 'take over'.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have argued that love and romance play a central role in shaping (gendered) identities. One is prompted to ask though why love plays such a crucial role in contemporary social life that is otherwise characterized by a diversification of life models, rising divorce rates, and a general increased fluidity with regard to the formation of intimate and family relations. Why is it that love has become the '*primary ground for identity formation*, rather than wider kinship networks or social position'?[23] Why is it that despite processes of secularisation and liberalisation love has become 'the meaning of life' and a form of 'secular religion'?[24]

Ulrich Beck and Elisabeth Beck-Gernsheim offer an explanation for this. They argue that in the face of the break-down of identity-providing meta-structures such as community, religion, and extended family, people perceive the modern social condition as increasingly fragile, impersonal, uncertain, and often threatening. Romantic love, they propose, compensates for the loss of traditional identity sources and provides individuals with a feeling of belonging and stability. Pearce and Stacey, however, argue that the continuing success of romance as cultural institution lies in its 'ability to change'.[25] I agree, and what I have been trying to outline in this chapter is how one of the most fundamental changes, namely the emergence of postfeminism to articulate discourses of love, can be understood as at least partly responsible for this uncontested continuity. Love, in its modernized, postfeminist version, has such a cultural potency because it corresponds with, has adapted to, and reflects larger shifts in the social fabric of modernity, like egalitarianism, feminism, and changing conceptions of gender roles.

Notes

[1] In this chapter I am referring to contemporary Western conceptualizations of love and romance. The increasing commercialization of love began in the late 19th early 20th century and was already fully underway with the emergence of consumer culture and the spread of mass communication devices in the post WW II era; c.f. Eva Illouz, *Consuming the Romantic Utopia. Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Postfeminism as a phenomenon emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s; cf. Rosalind Gill, *Gender and the Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007).

[2] The *Women of the World Raise Your Right Hand* campaign was launched in 2003 for *De Beers* by the advertising agency JWT; cf. Juliann Sivulka, *Ad Women. How They Impact What We Need, Want, and Buy* (New York: Prometheus, 2009), 364.

[3] Herewith I acknowledge that the use of the terms 'second-wave', 'postfeminism' as well as the general categorization of feminisms in distinct waves presents a problematic generalization. There have been and are many different forms of feminisms that escape those generalizing, Western-inspired periodizations and conceptions, ontologically, historically, as well as geographically.

[4] If not otherwise specified I am referring to Western construction of *heterosexual* love and romance.

[5] Adrienne Rich, 'Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 5 (Summer 1980): 631-60.

[6] Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (New York: Norton, 1997 [1963]).

[7] Cited in Stevi Jackson, 'Women and Heterosexual Love: Complicity, Resistance and Change' in *Romance Revisited*, eds. Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey (New York New York University Press, 1995), 50.

[8] C.f. Friedan, *Mystique*; Rich, *Heterosexuality;* Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics (*London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1971).
[9] Jaqlyn Geller, *Here Comes the Bride. Women, Weddings, and the Marriage Mystique* (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 2001), 18.
[10] Millet, *Politics*, 37.
[11] Shulamith Firestone. *The Dialectic of Sex* (New York: The Women's Press, 1979), 139.
[12] Gill, *Gender*, 153.
[13] Angela McRobbie, 'Post-Feminism and Popular Culture' in *Feminist Media Studies* 4,3 (2004), 255.
[14]Stéphanie Genz, 'Singled Out: Postfeminism's ''New Woman'' and the Dilemma of Having It All', *The Journal of Popular Culture* 43, 1 (2010), 98.
[15] For the photos of this campaign see http://www.adme.ru/creativity/diamond-is-forever-1212. Accessed 10.07.2013.
[16] Genz, *Singled Out*, 98.
[17] Knowingness and irony are key features of postfeminism according to Angela McRobbie. Angela McRobbie. *The Aftermath of Feminism. Gender, Culture and Social Change* (London: Sage, 2009), 17.
[18] Anthea Taylor, *Single Women in Popular Culture. The Limits of Postfeminism*. Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 16, italics in original.
[19] McRobbie, *Post-Feminism*, 255.
[20] The constitution as subjects works through a process that Louis Althusser describes as interpellation. Interpellation describes the process that occurs when media and advertisement address us directly in a *''Hey, you there!''*; we recognize ourselves as subjects. At that very moment of recognition, we become part of the ideological structures through which our subjectivity is constituted; Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essay* (London: Monthly Review Press, 1971); 174f..
[21] Eva Illouz, *Consuming the Romantic Utopia. Love and the Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 26.
[22] Rosalind Gill, 'Postfeminist Media Culture. Elements of a Sensibility', *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 10, 2 (2007): 147-166, 147-149.
[23] Wendy Langford, *Revolutions of the Heart. Gender, Power and the Delusions of Love* (London: Routledge, 1999), 2, italics added.
[24] Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim. *The Normal Chaos of Love* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), 168f..
[25] Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey, 'The Heart of the Matter: Feminists Revisit Romance' in *Romance Revisite,*eds. Lynne Pearce and Jackie Stacey (New York New York University Press, 1995): 11-45, 12.

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RE/PRESENTING GENDER & LOVE

This volume presents interdisciplinary explorations aiming to understand the interaction and interconnection between the concepts of love and gender. Throughout the chapters, the reader can pursue various representations of gender and love and explore how their meanings are produced in different periods and geographies. These representations produce embodied individuals and shared meanings in which gender and love mutually construct each other. As you will see in the following chapters, what we set out to understand, most of the time, was not individual relationships but the relations of power. Thus, these essays show how gender and love are represented in various discourses; produced in knowledge -- in philosophy, psychology, literature and popular culture; and regulated by the discursive practices and disciplinary techniques of different societies.

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