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Analyzing the Impact of Gender Disparity through Psychodynamics in Women Archetypes

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Abstract

Society plays a pivotal role in everybody's life, and it is gender oriented. In the belief, value, tradition and relationship between genders in society, it is often found that political, economic, social and educational constitutions support the inequality of genders, with women at the receiving end of things. In a patriarchal society, women are inadequately praised, often ignored and portrayed as weak. Women are slaves to their emotions, irrespective of their power and position. This research paper is an attempt to study the identity of women as an individual in society. It attempts to analyse the protagonists of two popular literary works, Nina Leeds in *Strange Interlude* by Eugene O'Neill, and Tess in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy. Moreover, finding the contrast between these two characters is to understand how two different societies have difference of boundaries for women in different eras. Furthermore, by taking Sigmund Freud's psychological theory of Psychodynamics as a device, we try to trace the behavioural changes in Nina Leeds and Tess with the help of psychology, wherein every literature is a mirror of the era it belongs to. Thus, it would not be incorrect to find pointers of criticism and over- theorization of incompatible and imbalance associations between genders through these accurate prototypes.

Keywords: Society, Gender Disparity, Patriarch, Individual, Women, Psychodynamics.

Introduction

According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary the term 'Society' is defined as people in general, living together as communities. A homogeneous community that shares the common customs, traditions, laws etc. This commonness creates interdependence, elevating the importance of society. At the same time, society is differentiated by gender, social status, values, traditions and many more, making it dividend rather than unified. From the beginning, people who upheld power, position and status were the male members of the society. The women were often regarded as the weaker sections of the society and ignored. In the patriarchal society, the representation of women in both literature and in the real world has not changed much for centuries. Society states women to be subjected in their roles as they are required but must be selfless and unconscious of their rights. The two protagonists, Nina Leeds in *Strange Interlude* by Eugene O' Neill, an American writer and Tess in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles by* Thomas Hardy, a British writer, portray two different social and cultural societies. Both the characters carry importance in the literary works mentioned earlier. Their lives have been

affected by the particular social structure they belonged to so much so as their behavioural pattern and decision making in life has never been thrown light on. The boundaries they were held in caused them to be distressed in throughout their life. Despite playing the desired role, they never get the position of an individual who is important in society and family. Social circumstances and relationships are essential to build personality. The varied perspectives of two culturally different countries give an idea of the behavioural patterns also. Psychodynamics analyses the conscious and unconscious archetypes as a necessary need to help understand the present societies by study of the past. These characters are ideal examples of study as they are based on the real treatment of women in society.

Literature Review

Eugene O' Neill plays depicts the tragedy of life from the beginning–to how it affects and what its implications are in the present life. The trauma response of two people is compared and evaluated (Karim, 2010). Nina in *Strange Interlude* and Mary in Long *Day's Journey into Night*. The unpleasant memories of the past source post traumatic disorder which causes a wide range of psychosomatic issues like memory loss, anxiety, depression and even hallucinations. Memory is an important element in Eugene O'Neill's plays. It is unclear if Eugene O'Neill's own life traumas are portrayed in the character portrayal of his protagonists. The characters personality is outlined not only by their own self but also by the family and friends, culture, education, and society they live in. This is a major reason for the gender-based trauma which the two women leads may have gone through. The trauma is the outcome of social structure which forces the two women to unwillingly accept the decisions of the male-dominated household. The remaining voiceless and unheard revert the behaviour and thwarts the individual development of the person.

With the Victorian Era background, we see the status bound women to have rights but limited to households. Women took pride in being and maintaining the 'trophy' image amidst their own internal emotional strife. Most of the reasons are environment and hereditary are they are rather 'programmed' to think so. Tess created chaos in the literary arena with her characterization as she was significantly different from the other novel heroines and society women in general. Her innocence and guilt are profoundly utilised by her family to gain status in society regardless of her denial. The depiction of the fallen women as the lead was challenging not only in the social norms but also the gender inequality (Shakury, 2016). The violation of Tess by Alec does not hold him responsible but rather Tess, an abuse of duty, emotion, and her decisions. She is again held accountable for her own situation when Angel abandons Tess before marriage. Even Hardy who claims for women's rights portrayed Tess as indecisive and naive to believe in her choice of men, which represents social disdain towards women. Moreover, Thomas Hardy believed that women are feminine and delicate. This difference in treatment for their own gender psychologically dishevels them of their existence.

The psychodynamic deals with the elucidations of psychological processes and their behavioural symptoms, which affect the individual's belief, opinions, emotions, and experiences (Pitman & Knauss, 2020). It also affects how a person perceives things and reacts to it. The contemporary psychodynamics includes social circumstances; past experiences; personality and behavioural patterns that are interconnected and interdependent. Biological and genetic deliberations can be explored to treat people for anxiety and related issues. To identify and differentiate conscious, unconscious, and recurring patterns of human actions

assist to widen defence mechanisms to survive situations. The contemporary psychodynamics is a part of Psychodynamics therapy that studies interpersonal relationships within families, groups, communities, and systems.

A study conducted by Lerner in her book *The Creation of Patriarchy* quotes, "Women's history is the primary tool for women's emancipation". The volume explores how systematically patriarchy was adopted and women subordinated in structured ways, as it became responsibility rather than obligation (Lerner, 1988). She states reasons and responses to support her research. The codes of Hammurabi were the earliest codes to be codified and written. The division was task based as men hunted and women were progeny bearers. This distinction was more psychological than biology. Gradually the power custom of man, practiced on women, and then on the entire race. Women were judged by their sexual relations with the man. The figurative depreciation of women as symbols of deity and owning, subjugating and assuming women to be incomplete further pushed them to the lower order of the society as described by Aristotle.

Through wide investigations, the book by 'Fine' challenges the thought of biology differences in gender to be the reasons of personality diversity. The culture, society and other external factors are rational enough to supply a string of arguments for inherent differences in psychology. She explores through Neurosciences to find answers. Cultural stereotypes and prejudices influence the dissimilarities (Fine, 2011). Even in 21st century we try to be neutral parents, but results are not long lived. The experiments are not clear enough and data vague to reach a consensus. Without a positive result we can only console that male and female brains work differently and do get influenced at the peripheral.

Significance

In the structural framework of a society the position of women is hard to understand. They even do not have the right to be responsible for themselves. They are taught etiquette and asked to behave in particular ways. The position of women in society who have the chance to change the course of society is few, but the price they pay even to be women is beyond everything. It is through the study of these two women characters, one could also analyse the societal conventions of a male dominated community. The behaviour patterns of these characters are not in isolation, but rather in combination, as they are socially bounded. The woman must be obedient yet resourceful, mature yet delicate, and ignorant yet capable of raising brilliant children. Moreover, she must be exquisite yet not a rebel. It is since the Victorian era, women's standing in a society has been degraded, limiting their involvement. The shaping structure of society and culture carries a lot of responsibility especially when it comes to authority. The gender inequality portrayed in the two novels is just mirror images and true depictions that outlined the basic instincts derived due to conscious and unconscious behavioural interactions of personality in real life.

Objectives

- To understand the behavioural patterns and position of women through studying two prototypes of different socio-cultural backgrounds
- To access the gender discrimination with reality mirrored through literature

Methodology

The present study included both primary and secondary literary resources. The primary sources comprised of two textbooks and secondary sources included books, journals, reference materials, websites and other online resources would be explored. The study will also opt for observing the characters and real-life behaviour patterns of women as objects of study through the theory of psychoanalysis, wherein various clinical theories are also evaluated.

Discussion

The following were the discussions undertaken for the said research analysis. As Plato rightly said, "If women are expected to do the same things as men, we must teach them the same things" (Plato, 2002).

Theory of Psychodynamics

Understanding the theory of psychodynamics is important to comprehend the foundations of human behaviour. Psychodynamics or psychoanalysis is a psychology theory by Sigmund Freud (1956-1939). This consists of number of theories put together to evaluate the system of human behaviour and the reason for there so. The human behaviour is instinctual and often subjected to society's norms and cultural stimulations. The spontaneous actions of an individual are prone to changes and influences. Between the conscious and the unconscious, the patterns are divided as visible and invisible. The two words 'psychoanalysis' and 'psychodynamics' are frequently confused. Sigmund Freud's theory was based on psychoanalysis, but his disciples and theories were called 'psychodynamics.' Psychoanalysis is used both as theory and therapy. Personality is divided in three parts- Id, Ego, and Super-Ego. The Id is the genetic instincts we have acquired; called as 'primal energy' (Freud, 1923). It is the cause of innate actions mostly unconscious in nature. They are natural needs or desires as thirst, cold, sex etc. The body institutions instantly try to make –up for these needs, with no concern for actions beyond normal. The Ego helps to maintain balance between the id and the real outer world. If not for the ego, the id would succumb to the desires and urges of the world. This helps to keep in check the mind rational and coordinates the actions and behaviours which are socially acceptable.

The consciousness generated acts of understanding the primal desires and regulating the required manners is the Ego working its part. The Super-ego assists the values and experiences to be incorporated in the behavioural channels of one's personality. The development stage of the mind from 3-5year-oldcauses awareness of right or wrong to set in. They learn from parents, and extends to people they admire, like teachers, peer groups and relations. Commitment and desire to be acknowledged, regulates the patterns of mannerisms. The feelings of guilt and understanding of failure not only brings awareness but also impacts unconsciously. We have anxiety, stress, and uneasiness at various levels probably because the conscious and unconscious have been in conflict with each other. "The ego is not sharply separated from the id; its lower portion merges into it...but the repressed merges into the id as well and is merely a part of it. The repressed is only cut off sharply from the ego by the resistances of repression; it can communicate with the ego through the id" (Freud, 1923).

French neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1835-1893) influenced Freud to reassess the psychology theory he believed, wherein both observed Charcot's patients (mostly women) and found-what they experienced and shared did not have any biological raison d'êtres. It is during treatment that these women have been found as victims of some or other sexual abuse as children. If the patients could vent out their emotions their symptoms were reduced, and they appeared visibly relaxed. Thus, they concluded that, the problem was more psychological than physical. However, Freud was not completely convinced. He was trying to find answers for these disturbances. He derived that the reasons and motivations that control the behaviour patterns are generally external in nature. The human mind is unaware of the unconscious hence, unguarded of the forces which affect the actions. These unconscious actions are highly volatile and susceptible to human intuitions affected by the moral obligations and demands by the society (Freud, 1923).

Human emotions are complex and need to be regulated and controlled. Urges and influences are reality checks. They need to be countered by morally and socially accepted activity patterns. The theory of Freud about Psychodynamics is only psychological and not biological. Though the application is partially successful, yet its impact in understanding the human mind and mannerism is important. The structures of Id, Ego and Super-ego are not exactly structures, rather multifaceted human traits. They come in contact with various other elements, becoming catalysts in their modifications. To negotiate and adhere become an unconscious impulse. A healthy mind creates an all-rounded and balanced personality. The stuck between the realistic ego and idealistic Super-ego, the id is indeed suppressed to behave. This also minimises and abridges the multifarious human behaviour and simplifies the human nature.

The term Patriarchy is a Greek term meaning 'father or chief of a race'. In a patriarchal society the norms are autocratic generally decided by the male. The institutional structure is defined by what the male think as progressive and sustainable. This often leads to exploitation of social benefits and control over others (Bhasin, 2006). Moreover, when one defines power as authority, then it is a privilege, wherein woman is exempted from this privilege. Historians describe such societies to have power passed down through generations from one male member to the other. This hierarchy is also patrilineal, allowing women no share in the property and deeds of the family (Sultana, 2012). These acts of ideology are justified by highlighting the natural biological differences and shortcomings between genders. But history also says, this gender inequality was not set from the beginning. The society was divided by work division, where women maintained the households and community, by childbearing. Some socio-biologists argue that the differences between genders have caused the man to overpower woman through dominance. Through social, religious, political, legal and financial organizations, man-controlled woman making their actions justified. That is, they left no other way out (Lerner, 1999). The stereotypes which were generated with the growth of such power were not only oppressive but also unjust. Over the years patriarchy has undergone its own evolution. There is nothing natural for a group of people to stay submissive or inferior. The differences and exposure to uneven social structure makes the situation depressing giving no scope for healthy environment. The women are forced to feel marginalised, inferior, and conditioned to constrictions.

When Garner Lerner was by interviewed Jeffrey Mishlove, the American psychologist on 'Thinking Aloud', dated 29 August 2010 she was quite vocal to describe her work on patriarchy:

"Other groups that were subordinated in history — peasants, slaves, colonials, any kind of group, ethnic minorities — all of those groups knew very quickly that they were subordinated, and they developed theories about their liberation, about their rights as human beings, about what kind of struggle to conduct in order to emancipate them. However, women did not, and so that was the question that I really wanted to explore. Thus, in order to know this, I need to understand really whether patriarchy was, as most of us have been taught, a natural, almost God-given condition, or whether it was a human invention coming out of a specific historic period. Well, in Creation of Patriarchy I think I show that it was indeed a human invention; it was created by human beings, it was created by men and women, at a certain given point in the historical development of the human race. It was probably appropriate as a solution for the problems of that time, which was the Bronze Age, but it is no longer appropriate, all right?

Tess Durbeyfield and Nina Leeds: Archetypes

Thomas Hardy belonged to the times when the old Victorian Society was moving from pastors to industry. Most of the women Hardy created are rather weak and subjective of unfair. This was probably because of society pressure which showcased Tess, as one who had no control of her own life. In other ways, she was rather helpless and could do little to cease her struggles. Tess in character was very different from the other heroines of Hardy. Where other women were aware of their limitations of family, surrounding and heredity, Tess was left to fate and chances outside her control (Hardy, 1992).

As one critic remarks:

Mr. Hardy's heroines are characterized by a yielding to circumstance that is limited by play of instinct. They are never quite bad. It seems, indeed, that this quality in them, which shuts them out from any high level of goodness, is precisely that which saves them from ever being very bad. They have an instinctive self-respect, an instinctive purity (Shakury, 2016).

The novel was sexual theme oriented and appeared desolate (Follett, 1967). The protagonist Tess was a commoner, who was not outstanding enough to be the heroine of this great classic. When her father John came to know their noble lineage, he intended to send his daughter Tess Durbeyfield to the family of d'Urbervilles. Going to another branch family of the nobles, meant someone has to be there as a breadwinner of the family and in return, Tess will be sponsored.

In the late 19thcentury, there was no denial that women had no right to decline even though the task was against their own will. Tess was considered as a tool to earn money for her family. Mrs. Durbeyfield, mother of Tess, was only excited to gain what her daughter had to offer her. Tess was a relatively simple girl, with no idea of socialization and intends of the society. She had no objection towards the pattern of society, as a maiden who is sent away to be sold. Tess lacked maturity and it was even harder for her to understand the morality of society. Also, regardless of the situation, a woman must take responsibility of her family when needed. When Tess got to understand her responsibility in the d'Urberville's household, she was always teased by Young Master Alec. She was conscious of the mistakes, yet in the end she gave up when Alec offered her a ride in the early winter morning. In furtherance, both were unknown to the path and Tess was defenceless, Alec violated her in the middle of the Woods. Although she tried to refuse and struggle, her young mind chose to trust Alec at the moment. As she was

violated in the household, she could no longer stay there and facing Alec's home made her miserable. She told her mother that she must return, and said,

"Why didn't you tell me there was danger in men folk? Why don't you warn me? Ladies now what to fend hands against because they read novels that tell them of these tricks: but I never had a chance to learning, in that way and you did not help me!" (Hardy, 1992).

Tess's mother's negligence and failure to educate her about the society's ruthlessness leaves her shocked and helpless. Tess's tragedy did not end there. When she got pregnant with Alec's child, she was abandoned. She has taken refuge in the church requesting for help to treat her sick child, but nobody helped her but the child did not survive. Victorian society's idea of pure women is untouched by any adultery, scandal, or foolishness. It was never her fault to be violated by Alec, who left her pregnant, and yet demanded her return. Tess, who was merged in guilt, bowed down to her family's needs in which she lost her own mind. The child was named 'Sorrow' and she refused to be baptised before his burial. Her dead child was not buried in the church backyard; he was buried in the place where the murderers were buried. She lost her sanity, happiness, and individuality to this cruel world.

Regardless of response, society perceived her worse than any criminal. When she was working in the dairy farm, she was pursued by a man named Angel. Considering her gratification towards his love, she felt guilty as she was considered as a woman not worthy of receiving happiness. But when Angel convinced her, she was worried about being happy. Although Tess was loved by Angel and proposed by him, she was unsure of her own defensive attitude. The trauma she had before due to Alec was difficult to forget. Angel promised to marry her and assured her of his affections.

"I agree to the conditions, Angel; because you know best what my punishment ought to be; only - only - don't make it more than I can bear!" (Hardy, 1992; Hardy 2003).

Yet he annulled their marriage, abandoned her, and escaped to Brazil when the truth of her past came to light. The hypocrisy of Angel which refuses to hold Alec accountable regardless of his sins and makes Tess pay the price for his gratification.

The relationship between Tess and her parents was one of insecurity, worthlessness, and ignorance. Not knowing her value and the right things made her a victim of a tragic incident which may have made her brave, but she never learnt what was correct for and she was suppressed and used by others. Alec persuaded Tess to comeback as she needed employment and was bound by the master-slave relation. He violated her constantly, and this gave Tess constant frustration, yet she was unable to do anything. The helplessness turned her aggressive when she finally lost her psychological balance and killed Alec. The decision she took as she progressed made her accused in the society. She was psychologically tormented by not being valued enough, leading to pressure and anxiety that came with the reality. Her indecisiveness and frequent failures are also a result of cultural stigmas. We also get an insight of Hardy's acute understanding and analysis of the complex human mind with all its psychological shortcomings. The masculine attitude is well displayed in the character portrayal of Alec and Angel. Tess is portrayed as weak and impulsive. She is also the first women character who strikes Alec to his death. She is naive and her morality makes the reader forgive her for her crimes. When she decides to tell Angel the truth, she is guilt ridden.

“Mother! I do not know how to tell him, mother! You said to me, and wrote to me, that I was not to tell him. But I did tell him – I could not help it – and he went away!” (Hardy, 1992; Hardy 2003).

Hardy writes about her beauty, which becomes a curse for her in life. She is the only character, who self –sacrifices herself.

“What is it, Angel?" she said, starting up. "Have they come for me?"

“Yes, dearest”, he said. “They have come”.

“It is as it should be”, she murmured. “Angel, I am almost glad—yes, glad!”. “This happiness could not have lasted. It was too much. I have had enough; and now I shall not live for you to despise me!”

She stood up, shook herself, and went forward, neither of the men having moved.

"I am ready," she said quietly” (Hardy, 1992).

The concepts of good and evil are highly debated when it comes to Tess. Her biggest flaw is probably that she was a ‘woman’. Her morals and purity make her stand out in Hardy’s Sea of woman characters.

Colonialism had an impact on the society where male dominance was projected. Women were neglected and their involvement limited to household activities. This very fact was also reflected in literature during the time. The social structure only allowed a man to take any decision even if it was related to the female. The presentation of characters in literature also reflected the objective issues related to women’s representation in society and how they were perceived by others. This was specifically when society’s frame of women affected character, position, and individuality. With industrialization came changes and it was expected that gender stereotypes also change for better. At large women were given the so-called freedom, with the cage becoming bigger and better, but nonetheless still a cage.

American writer Eugene O'Neill had been the representative of contemporary plays in American society. His plays were popular and extremely thought provoking. Building the portrait of Nina Leeds for *Strange Interlude,* as the central protagonist of the play was also a challenge to move from the set norms of the society regarding women projection. It is also to be noted that, most of O’Neill’s women characters, are generally carriers of disaster in his plays. Moreover, the exception of Nina Leeds and Anna Christe, the women in his plays are depicted as harbingers of dysfunctional family relationships and crisis (Alexander, 1992).

Through Nina Leeds in *Strange Interlude*, O’Neill sets his ambitions to be a success at theatre. He depicts a woman from her childhood to maturity and after. He uses the concept of interior monologues to shift between Nina’s thoughts both conscious and unconscious. It was clear he was influenced by the Freudian psychology and Jung’s concept. The literary endeavour again awarded him the Pulitzer Prize in 1928.*Strange Interlude* is indeed strange in its conception. The protagonist is the prized daughter of Professor Leeds, a well-known man in the society. She is the fiancée of Gordon Shaw, who passed away in World War. Both these men held great

importance in Nina Leeds life. Her father had always tried his best to model Nina as the best woman in society, a model daughter, and a supposed exemplary wife after her marriage. The interventions of War changed the course of fate for Nina forever. After Gordon's sudden death, she finds herself incomplete. She was not able to consummate her love to her deceased lover and that is her greatest regret. Nina is obedient towards her father and has emotional attachment towards him. She is dependent on him for her happiness. Probably Nina finds her father and her fiancé to complete her life. The absence of one becomes increasingly difficult for her to reason. As Gordon Shaw, accepts Professor Leeds request to marry Nina after returning from war, she holds him responsible for this state of dejection. His obsession to hold on to Nina, gives us complex thought of jealousy. Nina on the other hand finds him an obstacle in life (O'Neill, 1995).

Nina was impulsive, insecure, and demanding when it came to relationships. She believed Gordon could fulfil all her happiness and relationships. Also, both the factors are interdependent in the case of Nina. She was only aware of the feelings and experiences when she came from being with Gordon and her father. Being conscious of someone else's presence also takes an individual's sense of self, as the person thinks they feel a certain level of satisfaction and validation in their presence. He always took the decisions on her behalf, and she never objected to it. When Gordon left for war, Nina was looking forward to him coming back and starting a new life with him. Even though she was not married to him, she considered herself his wife. Unconsciously, she fantasized that it was her duty to be his wife, the mother of his children. Only then would she be happy.

The distress she felt when Gordon died resulted in her denial of his death. She felt guilty that she couldn't do enough to make him happy. His death was too sudden for Nina's desire to get married and submit herself to Gordon and the pleasure she felt thinking about carrying his children were left unfulfilled. She was conscious, endlessly, and hopelessly hanging on the person who is no longer with her. Her collective memory of being able to live a harmonious life with Gordon turned into an unfulfilled image. As a teenager Nina was more cheerful than anybody else and irrevocably in love with her hero, Gordon. With his death her cheerful personality was gone. She was in a state of denial and frustration. When she came to know that her father was responsible for Gordon's denial to marry her before he left leaves her disturbed. Nina felt betrayed by her father's decision on her behalf. The emptiness she felt in the absence of Gordon is now filled with feelings of guilt and self-loathing about not being able to be with him because of her father. These lines from Act I show her contempt towards her father.

NINA— (again with the strange intensity) I must pay! It's my plain duty! Gordon is dead! What use is my life to me or anyone? But I must make it of use—by giving it! (fiercely) I must learn to give myself; do you hear—give and give until I can make that gift of myself for a man's happiness without scruple, without fear, without joy except in his joy! When I've accomplished this, I'll have found myself; I'll know how to start in living my own life again! (Appealing to them with a desperate impatience) Don't you see? In the name of the commonest decency and honour, I owe it to Gordon! (O'Neill, 1995)

Nina refused to interact with her father any longer and decided to work as a nurse in the war camp. She felt she was compensating for the sin she had committed. She engages in uninhibited sex with the wounded soldiers of the war when she decides to become a nurse in the war camp. She is psychologically disturbed and is acutely aware of her state of mind. She understands

that she did all this just to forget Gordon, but she never acknowledged herself equally important to be able to live a life beyond his existence. Nina is most of the time accompanied by one or the other men in her lifetime. We find Charles Marsden, her father's friend to be in love with Nina. He considered himself the only man in her life as she listens to him. Her self-destructive behaviour is frightening for him to handle. There are two other men: Sam Evans who loves her and Ned Darrell, a friend. She met both of them in the war camp. Evans was truly in love with Nina and confesses to her. Marsden advises Nina to marry Evans and she agrees to it.

Professor Leeds is dead, and Nina has once again become dependent and incomplete, and she has no feelings of grief for his death. Nina eventually marries Evans, with the hope that she would be free from her current misery. She tries her best to understand Evans, but her psychopath self, simply compares him to Gordon. Nina was a victim of not only her own agitated thoughts but also her manias to possess what she thinks. She is the classic example of women living in patriarch society. She was conditioned to behave in particular ways as etiquette. She was made to realise her whole self only with a male presence. The gradual societal norms and regulations suppressed her innate behavioural instincts. When she finds release, she still feels caged.

Evans tries to keep her happy as he himself is aware that, he does not have the heroic qualities of Gordon. Nina suppressed her guilt when she got to know she was pregnant with Sam's baby. She convinced herself to give the marriage a chance and compromise. She hides her pregnancy from Sam Evans. Her mother-in-law told her that she must abort the baby, as the Evans family has a history of 'insanity.' She could conceive with a lover and have a child, live her life with Sam, and raise the child as Evans. The past losses come knocking back to Nina in that very instance as she knew she would lose her baby and the trauma she felt when losing her fiancée triggered the thought of uneasiness and instability in her. She fails to notice Sam Evans efforts when he offers divorce to her due to his failing business. The decision to leave this marriage was declined by her mother-in-law as she was Sam's wife and needed to do everything in order to keep him happy. The very notion that the wife needs to do not matter, everything on others' behalf was important. This delineates Nina in the coop of an unwanted marriage even though she was conscious of her choice and decisions. She felt immense guilt after aborting the child. She conceived another child from Darrell, according to her mother-in-law's suggestion. Nina rationalized her love for Darrell and who is ready to leave her family behind.

The only living life is in the past and future - the present is an interlude - strange interlude in which we call on past and future to bear witness that we are living (O'Neill, 1995).

Darrell leaves and Nina again feels the trauma of losing someone again. Nina prioritized her son Jr. Gordon and lived her life only for her son. This incident was known to Marsden, yet he was patient as he waited for Nina to tell him in person as he could bear to put Nina in trouble. In a soliloquy, Nina delights in being desired by all three men. Nina considered her life was complete, having Marsden as her best friend, Sam as her husband, Darrell as her lover and Jr. Gordon as her son. Her behaviour was different when it came to these four men. She was unwilling to lose Marsden for her own comfort. Sam gave her security. Darrell, gave her passion and Jr.Gordon, fulfilled her desire to have a child.

Nina was always surrounded by four men, but always protective of her son. Losing her son was her worst nightmares. She was like her father, wanting to control her son unconsciously.

When she wishes to confess to her son about his birth father to be Darrell, he refuses. When Evans passes away, Jr. Gordon is state's his stance. He knew of the affairs between Nina and Darrell, and he never approved of it. He also has high regards for both Nina and Darrell, for they decided to suppress their love for Evans. When Darrell requests Nina to marry him later she refuses. She confesses to Marsden of her love him, and the two agree to marry. Gordon frees himself from Nina and leaves. Nina also realises her dependency on her son which is not necessary. She can be independent. But we still see her married to Marsden in her later days.

Traces of Contemporary Psychodynamics in Strange Interlude and Tess of the d'Urbervilles

Strange Interlude gives us a glimpse of psychologically disturbed characters from the very start of the play. We see Nina influenced by her father, then her fiancé to extremes. Her desires self-analyses themselves and gives reasonable explanations for their actions. She is severely irrational and has two purposes to fulfil- she should receive what she wants, and then all her action is reasonable. She reflects and differentiates her behaviour patterns between the men around her. Her dependence on the male characters, let's her lose her own self as a woman. She makes efforts to shadow her sexual desires and justifies her acts of promiscuity with emotions of guilt and emptiness. The duality of character is evident in Nina. She was trapped in her own ideology of the hero figure Gordon. Moreover, her obsession of abandonment triggers an emotional and sexual fantasy, which made her suffer in Alexithymia.

Alexithymia is a personality trait characterized by difficulty identifying and describing subjective emotional feelings, a restricted imagination, and an externally oriented style of thinking (Luminet et al.2018). The individuals with high levels of this characteristic are at risk of developing several common psychiatric disorders and this trait is seen in Nina. In married life she was not the person in charge of her own choices, showing the authority of society. Her anxiety to be an ideal wife opposite the latent desire and wishes governed her behaviour. This leads the unconscious dynamics of her memories, and trauma of loss to go on with an extra marital. Also, to have an affair and conceive a child after abortion displays revolt against the authority of society and culture. The memories of the past can evolve into a core fundament where the unconscious mind takes a decision towards an intense turn of events. Here O'Neill presents Nina's character when she is unable to reframe the beliefs of a man who she is obsessed with till the very end. Though she became mother of another man's child she still named the child Gordon Jr. Moreover, her situation as a daughter, wife and mother made her psychological state intensely complicated where she developed an instinct to protect herself from being abandoned. The situation was caused by her father, who compels her marriage to Sam Evans though he was aware of her mental state (Sabreen, 2016). When the researcher analyses *Strange Interlude*, one can find O'Neill use a lot of techniques to put up his work. Electra complex, Oedipus complex, Interior monologues, the prototypes of conscious and unconscious minds is his attempt to find his own answers through this masterpiece.

In Thomas Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles, the heroine Tess is purposefully used by her father to gain social status in aristocrat family. The women in the Victorian age were presented as weak. Society intends to capitalise on women where they have to suffer the tragedy of being violated and generalizes it as negligible in the metres of social morality. Rather, it was Tess's fault for being raped, and birth to child without wedlock. The trauma she undergoes led her to

be a different self in her unconscious mind by repressing the matter and become mature to adapt to the blame of society. These two things, repression, and adaptability are a form of ego defence which is taken by a person when trying to process conceptualized society and the complex reality. The frustration and aggression hypothesis proved quite correct in the case of Tess, as her frustration with society and the physical, emotional, and mental abuse she had been through at last made her to take extreme measures (Safnidar, 2017). Also, committing the murder ended her social life. She is strong, and this stubbornness is difficult to balance for men around her. Hardy also represented women going to the overwhelming pressure of society even though it is not her fault. Moreover, the external environment and biology influence the cognitive balance of individual.

The two characters had been portrayed in two different societies. Nina Leeds by Eugene O'Neill is portrayed in American society during World War I and Tess Durbeyfield is portrayed in a British society in the nineteenth century. It was as if Tess and Nina lived in a parallel universe, away and different from each other. The world of women was not given much freedom to have their own opinion stated. Society's denial to accept an abandoned woman is a rare concept; rather the belief to create an imaginary structure of a woman who is not broken, untouched and obedient is fitting into the environment preached by a society which is not for women. A woman's self as a daughter, lover and mother, her superego framed by the objective relationships experienced in society. They are never sufficient to define her greater identity as a human. Women's resolution to either submission to authority or to be free and independent is her decision. Also, bringing rebellion against the external controls of society to establish what is natural affects her rationality as an individual and a human. Also, Gloria Steinem, American journalist, and socio-political activist quotes, 'A gender-equal society would be one where the word gender does not exist: where everyone can be themselves'.

Suggestions

Tess of d'Urbervilles generates a sense of pity in us. She was determined and stubborn but all for the wrong reasons. It is ironical that she could have many merits but could not shape her own future. Hardy could have elevated her ending to give more standing in society. The depressing life should change for better. Tess herself could have aimed for a better life. The suggestion is that she should have explored the world beyond men, family, religion, and society in her life. The notions of the chaste women and dominance over them should be confronted. It is progression when one tries to humanly satisfy themselves. Ethics of right and wrong cannot only be burdened on the woman, wherein the man needs to take responsibility for his own actions. The standards of society need to be evaluated and balanced for the progress of human race. The *Strange Interlude* allows us to rethink the parenting techniques of an entire era. One cannot live beyond society, but not at the cost of one's own child. Professor Leed's love and expectations for Nina hold her captive rather than giving her the much-needed freedom to live her life and she is dependent on him for everything. The importance of nurturing a child to a free-thinking individual is lost in the cause of social standards. The hero worship for Nina just shifts from her father to Gordon. These are clear a sign of mental imbalance. Nina's possessiveness is inherent from her father and none of the men in Nina's life actually help her in any ways. Nina's psychological pride should have been in her own self not on the men in her life. The behavioural patterns could have been exploited to find a mature and stable environment for the character to survive satisfied. The future researchers could consider other factors, which accounts for women behaviour and social maturity.

Conclusion

A society prospective of an ideal human who is not treated equal on the scale of gender establishes the age-old concept of dominance over women through structured patterns. Although Nina Leeds got the opportunity to voice her opinion, her choices were never independent. Tess never knew how it was to be validated by her own family, being loved and respected. She suffered even when she was morally correct. However, she failed to impress the morality of the society. Also, both women had their own share of struggles. The society they lived in was not only places apart but also generations and cultures apart. Moreover, the fate they share is eerily similar. Moreover, both are pushed to their wits end, were forced to compromise, were never acknowledged, both did not receive the deserved respect just as a woman. Socially and psychologically, these women and their behaviour are questionable. Furthermore, their defence mechanisms are traits seen as sin in society. The psychodynamic theory proves that the behaviour pattern seen in such women are created by the unconscious mind to protect her trauma and abuse pattern she has experienced in the conscious world. Also, gender differences are the rules of life to birth progeny. The instability in their sustainability, questions the institution itself. In furtherance, autonomy and identity may appear small in comparison to society and traditions, but they free individuals from anxiety and apprehensions.

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