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Projection of Female Agency in Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Tribhuvan Chaudhary has completed his thesis, "Projection of female Agency in Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo*" under my supervision. He has completed his research on April 2019. I hereby recommend this thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

.....

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Letter of Approval

The thesis entitled "Projection of Female Agency in Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Tribhuwan Chaudhary has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Abstract

*The major thrust of this thesis is to project female agency in Tennessee Williams's play, *The Rose Tattoo*. Most of the female characters in the play believe that they have the right to decide on the circumstances under which the sexual act should be performed. They could also determine most of the decisions that measures in their lives. This new mentality puts them on the path to self-transitions. It is awakening that consists in a pair of silk stockings that attract subjugated person into self-assertion. The esthetic and sensitive self is awakened by a simple touch. Transformation takes place. The former self of the higher social classes takes over the entire personality. An agent of awakening experiences is not only a discovery of the self but also a rediscovery of her own body. It has been entrapped and enslaved by domestic labor that has alienated her genuine physical potential. The focus is on an individual's awakening which takes place when she experiences a self-discovery achieved by means of the assessment of her own body and sexuality. Serafina duty as wife and mother causes frustration and rebellion against the oppressive system. A submissive and sentimentally coy woman has become isolated from the politics of choice. She used to feel trapped within the household sphere. But at last she gets rid of it.*

Key words: Female, agency, praises, respect

This study focuses on the projection of female agency in Tennessee Williams play, *The Rose Tattoo*. It presents almost a familiar and social problems in the life of woman and defines her for self-search. Serafina's life represents that a woman cannot discover herself without a complete support to her man. Through the character of Serafina, who is able to balance her obsession with a single ideal man in her life an appropriate. As an agency Serafina is able to gain the nature of search herself without the following of any dangerous path. Serafina is sentimental. The protagonist, who goes back to her past. She is unnecessarily idealistic. It takes a decade for her to get rid of her dead husband. Only at last she is active. She begins to make a demand for personal liberty. She is innocent to believe the false show of love. Serafina cherishes an illusion. She believes that her husband Rosario is totally devoted to her. In no way, she protects about his marital loyalty. She has a full trust in his sincerity. She is charmed by the belief that her husband is no way bad.

Serafina goes to the extent of praising her husband. But later she knows that the reality is shocking. Her husband is in an extramarital affair with another woman. This woman occasionally comes to Serafina's house. Due to Rosario's illegal involvement, he is killed on the sport when a police man shoots at him. At her husband's sudden death. She mourns as a loyal and devoted wife usually does. But after a long experience of mourning she is shocking over her dead husband. She finally comes to know the reality that her husband was a cheater.

Serafina represents herself as an important and promising character. But she leads her life in an illusion and confusing way. She tries to search for self-dramatization herself. She finds and appropriate solution to this problem. She demolishes the illusion of perfection about her marriage that does not allow the character of self. On the contrary, crisis leads her to seek an alternative mode of

existence which is a fine balance between spiritual escape from reality and an illusion. There are many complexities of that life can be resolved through simple choices with the time.

When realized that her husband was a cheater, she avoids her sentimental habit. Only she realizes the ground reality. She begins to live active and free life. Her transformation into a full-fledged mature personality shows how her agency is strengthened. Serafina mourns over him. She praise her and again she spends his marital loyalty for almost a decade caring her memories with him. Only at last she knows that her loyal husband is actually a cheater and illegal agent of underground smugglers. At the information of this reality, she finds that she was mistaken in her absolute belief in her husband.

All her conception about her dead husband disappeared when she knows about his failure as a good husband. Then forward, she stops being strict with her daughter who is verge of completing her graduation. Gradually, Serafina stops being rude as far as passionate affair of her daughter with her class mate and she is concerned. The most surprising fact is that she is also found sleeping with truck driver. The driver is friend of her dead husband's friend. After that, she stops being unnecessarily strict and difficult to her daughter. Rose is on the near of completing her graduation. Serafina takes soft approach to her daughter growing romance with her boyfriend. Finally, she comes from veil of self-deception. She escapes the nostalgia. She moves forward the positive and dynamic mode of living. Previously, Serafina is between illusion and reality. She was divided between sentimentalism and assertion. She moves from dynamism.

Serafina believes that Rosario is her loyalty. She does not move even an inch in her outlook that her husband is a pure husband devoted to her totally. After her

husband's death, she mourns for him for a long time. She secludes her secured herself from social circle and cares sentimentally to her memories of him. In a sad mood she spends a decade. Only in the end she is awake to the shocking reality that her husband whom she had treated a matchless and sincere husband was actually a cheater. He had affair with a girl and He was involved in illegal trade.

The revaluation that her husband was a cheater changes her inside out. When she begins to live free, romantic and assertive life. In a state of illusion and ignorance. Serafina hardly perceives the bitter reality. She is at a loss to give certain form of purpose to her troubled life. Serafina is trapped in self- deception. Her naïve belief to explore reality is a difficulty. She does not exercise even a form of doubt. She quickly believes in the marital loyalty of her husband. That is why she had to live mournfully for almost a decade after her husband's sudden death. She is alienated from special circle. She misses many second chances and her life had offered her. Only when she knows that her husband was a cheater and illegal agent of smuggler. She is awake to the rosy pragmatic side of life.

Women are trapped in an illusion. Such an entrapment leads to self-deception. She trained to believe only her relation with her life. It is necessary for woman to explore the forbidden territory to life affirming practice. serafina is affected by different types of weaknesses which all the characters in rose tattoo are prone. Their excess of emotions is studied in relation which had developed and explained in the play was written. Then effect of the oppression of woman appears to be a noticeable issue on which I concentrate with undivided attention.

Tennessee Williams is a famous American writer of America. He is popular worldwide. William is screenwriter, dramatist, as well as film director. He holds a good position in the literature and scene maker of 1960. Many young artists are

influenced by Williams's artistic skill. He is also one of the most brilliant play writer of mid twentieth century of America. Tennessee Williams writes many plays like *The Street Car Named Desire* and *The Glass Menagerie* have received a great deal of appreciation.

Novita Devi, the Tennessee Williams play and makes the following judgment about Tennessee Williams's use of fix ideas in *The Rose Tattoo*.

To begin Serafina Delle Rose in *The Rose Tattoo*, this Italian descent woman is cast like any other southerner woman typical of Williams female characters with their high aspirations of being up worldly mobile, set in a Sicilian village on the Gulf coast between New Orleans and Mobile, the play focuses on Serafina, who terribly shocked by the death of her husband Rosario, leads a life of self-indulgence. (12)

Rose separates herself in her room according to behavior of funeral ceremony ritual. Then, she mourns over the dead husband whose ashes are kept in an urn against the law of the catholic church; and becomes over-protective to her daughter and her sentimental mentality is an examples how not to change she is. She gives up three year devotion. Her friends tell her not to waste her life in the memory of her dead husband memory. She does not give up her doing sense of sadness feeling with pleasure and affection and think happy time in the past.

Glen loney argues that biblical images are used to heighten voice of the marginalized character. And focusing on this aspect of Tennessee Williams drama of imagery turgid is used in the majority of his play.

In the early years of the Williams's success and celebrity, it was amusing to find some of the details and the imagery, as well as the character crochets of such memorable stage ladies as Amada and Blanche, in other Williams plays,

especially shorter one, and in his fiction. Naked light bulbs, it seemed, were always best disguised with the artificial prettiness and romance of Japanese lanterns. And there were other repeated noted which evoked echoes. That certain images, certain kinds of characters, certain surroundings, and certain peculiarly southern pattern of diction were the thing Williams knew and loved/hated best. (79)

The lack of clearness in Williams's language reduces in the reader's role. The use of religious imageries gives thematic supporter to his play. Certain things can be chosen easily. On the opposite, they can be accepted in the society. They are expressed by means of intellectual expression.

Ben Brantly claims that *The Rose Tattoo* is full of eroticism. The whole play appears to be a celebration of what is forbidden by the mainstream society. In this connection, Brantly makes the following observation.

-the play has an early eroticism leaved by a sense of lightheaded, improbable innocence that turns the evening into an intoxicating fairy take for grown-ups that matches Williams's own description of the play as a celebration of the inebriate god. *The Rose Tattoo* is singular in the Williams can on. While its theme of the self-deluding woman versus the man who is ID incarnate abounds in the writers work, the clash typically ends in disaster; you know, castration, arson, nervous breakdowns. (1)

The Rose Tattoo is comment for its uniqueness. The simple trust to leave Serafina from grow the ground reality. She grow and increases into an active woman.

Noorbakhsh Hooti is of the view that the major character Serafina is in search of self. Throughs her marital bonding with Rosario, she wants to give distinct tough to her self-support. According to this idea, Hooti expresses his view briefly on this side

of the play in the following idea;

However, In *The Rose Tattoo*; Williams presents almost a familiar problem in the life of a woman that Serafina cannot discover herself either. Through a complete surrender to her man, as does Stella can she experiment with many men, solution which Blanche seeks. Williams proves this hypothesis in *The Rose Tattoo* through the character of Serafina, she is able to balance her life with a realistic solution, without following the dangerous path of promiscuity.

(86)

Serafina influences her social life in the past time. Fully, she praises her husband without testing his marital faithfulness. Her trustworthy nature is apparent. Her mind fulfill to maintain the southern local government image is easy to see in the present. In this regard, it can be argued that she is divided inwardly and secretly.

Although several different critics examined in the play, *The Rose Tattoo*, from different perspectives and arrived at different conclusion and findings, none of them to remain upon the projection of emergency. Up to a long period, after her husband's death, Serafina lives a lonely life. She relies on her memories of him. She lives a passives and boring life. She does not think about handling her free life. She acts rudely. She is unpleasant to see her daughter who wants to enjoy her romantic life with classmate. Only when she is convinced that her husband was a cheater and whole her outlook of him disappeared.

Serafina leads of happy life with her husband and daughter. Unfortunately, the actual crisis is an arisen in her life when her husband, Rosario, who was the defining character force of her identity, was shot to death by police in connections with smuggling. As she loves him very much, she likes to surrender before him. But to establish herself as a strong figure in the society after the death of her husband, she

presence herself to a difficult situation. Most of the women exhibit the different possibilities of female identity in the presence of men in their lives. Therefore, she moves on in her life trying to respect with this loss and seeks a practical outlet to her grief in the form of her encouragement to another people.

Female agency is the ability of a woman to act for herself. It is the capacity of a woman to make the choice to act. It is prevalent in her work. According to Ruth Robbins, agency as “the ability to act on the world on one’s own behalf or the extent to which one is empowered to act by the various ideological framework within which one operates”(5). Robbins also argues that “The capacity of subjects for self-reflection and self-determination is essential to personal agency” (21). To overcome their struggle, according to Butler stresses that “women cannot afford to see themselves only as victims because of their own survival depends on their ability to overcome their emotional pain” (46). Thus an important part of woman reclaiming her agency is recognizing. The level of its success with relation to circumstances is another point of disagreement between Butler and Robbins to circumstance is another point of disagreement.

Butler views “The significant societal role that norms play in the formation of the subject” (46). While victimization in women cannot be unaccepted. It is very essential that “women bond on the basis of shared strengths instead of weakness” (Feminist Theory 46). According to her, it is only shared strengths that black women can overcome victimization. “The woman acknowledge that identity matters, but they push beyond its power to affirm a dynamic of belonging that defies identity” (Butler 66). Reclaiming of agency is an important step for a woman on her journey to self-projection.

Third-wave feminism makes three important way to go and turn the flour

ground. These moves respond a series of theoretical problems. In this response, it is collapse of the category of women. The third wave “foregrounds personal narratives that illustrate an intersectional and multi perspectival version of feminism second, as a consequence of the rise of postmodernism, third waves embrace multi vocality over synthesis and action over theoretical justification”(Snyder 175). No longer has imagination of gender appeared to be foundation.it is bound to change over time. To the oppose of the sex wars in the response, third-wave feminism prioritizes “an inclusive and non-judgmental approach that refuse to police the boundaries of the feminist political. In other words, third-wave feminism rejects grand narratives for a feminism that operates as wide array of discursive location (Snyder175). Such an approach replaces attempts in the unity with dynamic and welcome to political coalition.

In the opposite, the first glimpse of Serafina shows her on film in the earthly surroundings of a small grocery store and wearing close fitting cloths but ordinary road dress. Here, she is not concerned about meeting her husband’s marital needs, but angry with acquiring the best eggs to cook for his breakfast. She is much deprived of much her sexual power. The lack of the rose is another indicator of how the film down plays her active sexuality. The opening scene hints the toward her procreative faculties. Magnani fulfills her stomach after refusing to discuss with the priest about the secret of her pregnancy. The emotional range of Serafina’s character undercuts the extremely fall of her into depression on the loss of her husband, Rosario.

The neighborhood women and father De Leo come to tell Serafina. Rsario has been killed. Serafina acts in the defiance of the church’s strictures. She decides to cremate her husband’s body and to keep his ashes. Three years later, Serafina try to control by women who have prayed her to sew graduation of her daughters; Serafina

is confused. Rosa is locked up in the house naked because of Serafina learned that she met a sailor who is her daughter's boyfriend in the high school. By the time, Miss Yorke arrives and persuades Serafina to let Rosa offend the graduation ceremony. The following extract is illustrative. Serafina has encountered the cruel structure of a local priest when the debate on how to give funeral to the dead body of Serafina's husband.

FATHER DE LEO: what have you come here for?

ESTELLE: To say good-by to the body.

FATHER DE LEO: The casket is closed; the body cannot be seen. And you must never come here. The widow knows nothing about you. Nothing at all.

GIUSEPPINA: we know about you!

PEPPINA: Va Via! Sporcacciona!

VIOLETTA: puttana! (20)

Serafina is excessively proud of her husband. She seems to think that his glory reflects on her. This is shown in her boasting. She boasts about Rosasio's beauty, rarity and family. she claims that he was a baron in the Sicily. In the one level, serafina is ridiculous of her boastful pride and her weakness. Her change of heart comes about partly because she accepts that her husband was not perfect after all.

Female friendship stresses that without feeling a sense of belonging, women risk feeling alienated. Female friendship provides not only reciprocal emotional comfort and support but also, physical care and healing when needed. Hudson-Weems states that "female friendship consists of a special bond due to shared experiences. In comparison to female friendship bonds, other bonds do not provide a similar freedom"(27). Race is also a shared bond that strengthens female friendship. Female friendship among women is of particular emotional comfort because women bond not only on shared female experiences. Butler thus offers what she herself calls "a more

radical use of the doctrine of constitution that takes the social agent as an object rather than the subject of constitutive acts" (270). In other words, a given individual can be said to constitute him- or herself. She follows postmodernist and poststructuralist practice in using the term subject in order to underline the linguistic nature of our position within the symbolic order.

Unlike theatrical acting, Butler argues "we cannot even assume a stable subjectivity that goes about performing various gender roles; rather, it is the very act of performing gender that constitutes who we are" (78). One effect of such coercions is also the creation of that which cannot be articulated, "a domain of unthinkablsse, abject, unlivable bodies that, through abjection by the normal subject helps that subject to constitute itself" (Butler 35). This repudiation is necessary for the subject to establish identification with the normative phantasm of sex.

Serafina embodies a mix of strength, aggressiveness, immodesty and passion. Her animalistic appearance represents an extreme psychological deterioration. It is represented by her altered performance of femininity. In addition, a more one-dimensional portrait of Serafina removes the basis of much of the play's humor. Rosario appears unresponsive to his wife. He is fond of demonstrating neither physical nor emotive signs of arousal. There is certainly nothing in this scene that might stimulate the lower and baser element. Rosario's appearance further works against the erotic overtones of the play. Serafina's decision to have sex with Alvaro in response to her husband's infidelity would have directly challenged the Code's general principle. Alvaro's animalistic urge and Serafina's erratic passion clearly preface their lovemaking.

Serafina learns the truth about Rosario's unfaithfulness in a telephone call. This revelation occurs outside the home. Alvaro accompanies Serafina to gambling.

Their encounter ends with a clichéd fight. It is provoked by Estelle ripping open her blouse to display *The Rose Tattoo* on her chest. This disclosure provokes Serafina's frenzied attack. She slaps Estelle. She beats her with a handbag. None of the club's male patrons come to Estelle's defense. Instead they prevent her from effectively resisting Serafina's assault by holding her back. There is one instance when the religious sense of the term is heightened by moving the scene in which Serafina describes the glory of her marriage. Serafina's steady departure away from the Church is noticeable in the end.

When Serafina is visited by Estell Hohengarten, she agrees to make a rose-colored shirt for Estelle's sweetheart. Serafina is too innocent to act without realizing that Estelle is loved by her husband. Then news comes that Rosario is a smuggler who is involved in smuggling narcotics in his truck under a load of bananas. Surrounded by police, he has been killed in a fight with the police. The following extract foreshadows the tragic shock and jolt that is scheduled to happen in the life of Serafina:

ROSA: Twenty lightning bugs, Mama!

ESTELLE: Little girl? Little girl?

ROSA (resentfully): Are you talking to me?

(There is a pause.)

ESTELLE: Come here.

(She looks ROSA over curiously.

You're a twig off the old rose-bush.--Is the lady that does the sewing in the house?

ROSA: Mama's at home.

ROSA: Mama?

SERAFINA: Demi?

ROSA: There's a lady to see you.

SERAFINA: Oh. Tell her to wait in the parlor. (14)

Serafina is broken hearted after the untimely death of her husband. To cope with the tragic shock, she locks herself in his house. Sentimentally enough, she always cherishes her dead husband's ashes in an urn. She regresses constantly further into her melancholia. One day Flora and Bessie call for a blouse they have ordered. In a moment of irritation, Serafina is rude to them. Out of the sheer sense of revenge, Flora repeats to her the common gossip about the unfaithfulness of her husband. The words of Flora jolts Serafina in attention. She is shocked by the unbelievable news told by Flora. Having heard fact about her husband's infidelity, she becomes even more sullen and brooding.

Elizabeth Jane Burns refers to her critical approach of the female body and voice. She attempts to “redefine femaleness in its relation to representation stemming from a desire to undermine the binary oppositions of phallogentric logic” (8). Burns clarifies that “body-talk is not something that authors consciously or not-- make their characters do, rather that it is something that feminist readers can choose to hear” (7). Her method is informed by Luce Irigaray's contention that “the female body, as the site of patriarchy's construction of the feminine, also constitutes a locus of possible revision” (4). Burns offers that the female body is “the direct empirical referent for all that has been theorized about femininity, it can also be interpreted as a strategic location from which to “begin constructing a powerful, speaking female subject on different terms” (4). Sexualized descriptions of an attractive female body and erotic imagery function as symbols of power. Burns analyzes how female characters fashioned specifically by male authors speak problematically from their

bodies. They do so in order to redefine their roles and ultimately reshape the narratives in which they appear. Agency is not a personal trait. It is an emergent feature of social situations. It is treated as a means of legitimating one of the most fundamental divisions of society. It is considered achieved and more or less stable after it is acquired in early childhood. It is treated as an activity of utilizing normative prescriptions and beliefs about sex categories based on situational variables.

Serafina has been freed from the mental shackles of a primitive religious faith and empowered by surmounting her grief through the successful pursuit of Alvaro. Thus, she can celebrate the conception of a child who religious and social convention would consider illegitimate. Serafina's life will remain determined by Alvaro. Alvaro holds these privileges on masculinity in the society of Sicilian-Americans. Consequently, his union with Serafina could result in her individual destiny being determined by the values of her new lover.

On the day of Rosa's graduation, Serafina has refused to give her the dress that she has made for her big day. The women of the neighborhood are there to get the dresses she has made for their daughters. But she refuses to answer the door when they knock. She does not want to give the women their dresses. Rosa has a fit, and scratches her arm. It prompts Serafina to run from the house in a panic thinking that Rosa has tried to commit suicide. A teacher from the high school who had been standing outside offers to help and realizes that Rosa is just trying to scare her mother. She steps in to convince Serafina to give Rosa her dress. Assunta, who is at the house, convinces Serafina to give the women the dresses?

Agency is non-referential. It does not originate from some inner, natural core identity. It is a kind of imitation for which there is no original. In fact, it is a kind of imitation that produces the very notion of the original as an effect. Agency is a much

contested concept. It is as slippery as it is indispensable. But it is a site of unease rather than agreement. While men's and women's biological difference is an inescapable fact, inequalities between them stem from culturally generated biases concerning the gendered categories of masculinity and femininity.

The next morning Alvaro arises in a hangover. In a mood under the grip of hangover, he makes advances to the sleeping Rosa. Rosa had meanwhile returned from a date. In this scenario, Serafina is quick to remove confusion and maintain the aura that nothing bad has actually happened. She is encouraged by the support of the driver. She blesses Rosa's marriage with Jack to the contrary. Life has achieved victory over the death in the household. Serafina's long dead love has been reborn in the person of the handsome Alvaro. The following extract reveals how sentimentally Serafina throws herself into the void of emptiness:

(She rushes out on the porch. SERAFINA gazes after her with arms slowly drooping from their imploring gesture and jaw dropping open in look of almost comic desolation.)

SERAFINA: Ho solo te, solo tes--in questo mondo!

MISS YORK: Now, now, Mrs. Delle Rose, no more excitement, please!

SERAFINA: (suddenly plunging after them in a burst of fury): Senti, senti, per favorer!

ROSA: Don't you dare come out on the street like that!--Mama! (26)

Serafina is pragmatic. She undergoes awakening. She is natural, sensual lady. The bitter experiences of the past taught her a golden lesson of life. She emerges as conqueror at the end. There is also a marked change in her disposition and viewpoint on the rosy side of life. Serafina has not been damaged by the outmoded proprieties and repressive culture. She is shown as a healthy woman who knows instinctively that

sex is the only varied expression of life and understands perfectly that the opposite of passion is death.

In *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millet argues that patriarchy is a political institution. It relies on the subordinate roles of women. Western social institutions are indirect ways of manipulating power. Millet believes that women were reduced to artificial ideas of the feminine. All aspects of society and culture worked according to a sexual politics that encouraged women to internalize "their inferiority until it became psychologically rooted in them. Literature is a tool for political ideology because it recreated sexual inequalities and reinforced patriarchal values of society" (76). Millet examines the work of four 20th century male authors. Millet exposes a celebration of masculine sexuality. She challenges a misogynistic presumption of female passivity. She praises the gender politics of homosexual author. She is also noted for her issue of female agency In the large measure.

After Rosa leaves, Serafina tries to pull herself together. So she can attend the graduation. But she is a mess. The priest's predictions have proven true. She has been recalling the loss of her husband for the past three years. While she is trying to get ready, two women, Flora and Bessie, show up to pick up a blouse that Serafina was supposed to make for Flora. The blouse is not ready, and this causes Flora and Bessie to become comically agitated. Before too long, all three women are angry. Flora and Bessie begin to fight. In their anger, they tell Serafina that her husband, the man she loved so much, was having an affair right under her nose with Estelle Hohengarden.. Serafina knows they are telling the truth.

Rosa returns from the graduation with a young man named Jack Hunter. Rosa has a crush on him. They believe that Serafina is out because the house is dark. Rosa cajoles Jack into kissing her. She aims at producing an impression that she is attracted

to him. Serafina hears them in the house. She comes to see them. Upon her mother's arrival, she looks disheveled. Rosa tries to make her look more presentable. She and Jack try to improve her spirits by telling her about the graduation. She learns that Rosa received an award. The crowd thought she looked lovely. Her daughter recited a poem. Serafina is finally more confuse. Serafina begins to question Jack about his intentions toward her daughter. She is worried because he is a sailor. But he is adamant that his intentions are honorable. When Serafina finds out that he is Catholic, she makes him swear to the Virgin Mary that he will honor her daughter.

Serafina fights against serious odds. She comes as a natural, sensual and authoritarian character in the end. She chooses to live in accordance with her own point of view about life and love. She can find a meaningful existence and refuge from desire. She is a woman who knows how to survive in a cruel world. She follows her own different code to achieve her desired goal. She is a stronger sex. She is full of passion. She is also possessive about her husband. She appears as a woman for whom sex is religion. In her sexual devotion towards her husband, there is a sense of a jubilant trust in life. She is excited with the pleasure of knowing that a new life is flowing inside her. Jack's love for Rose expressed in general is manifested in every word she utters:

JACK: (humbly): You are beautiful, Rosa! So much, I . . .

ROSA: You've changed, too. You've stopped laughing and joking. Why have you gotten gotten so old and serious, Jack?

JACK: Well, honey, you're sort of...

ROSE: What am I "sort of"?

JACK: (finding the exact word): Wild! (She laughs. He seizes the Bandaged wrist.) (38)

According to Serafina, the basic truth about a married life is the fulfillment of life. She obeys the purity of a man-woman relationship. The love for her husband is richly extended to the fruit of his love. Serafina believes in the human cycle of life. She is proud. She is content in the knowledge that she has dutifully done her part in the procreation of human species. The character of Serafina is a symbolic representation of the unfettered sexual instinct. This affirmation of sex in the play is a direct reference to the philosophy of sex.

The third-wave feminism is a rebuilding of feminism on new theoretical basis. It marks a change from second wave feminisms. In this regard, Elizabeth Dyhossuse makes the following claim:

Feminists in the third wave are particularly careful to acknowledge and thank second wave feminists, but in the same breath, they argue that young people today live in times and under conditions that make political activity and cultural critique difficult to engender. Instead, they consider that the politics of issues such as beauty, sexuality, fashion and popular culture are more complex than that has been represented by earlier feminist analyses. (26)

This wave is more individual. It is more complex. It is imperfect than previous waves. It is not strictly defined. It is about personal choices. Truly, girls have had more control over their lives. They have had control over bodies and sexuality. They may have more freedom when it comes to education. In the same spirit, they are concerned with employment and the management of their own finances. They still face the age-old double-standards of sexual morality.

Serafina wanders around in the garden by herself. Rosa and Jack have left toasted a graduation party. Serafina is lamenting the fact that her husband had an affair. Father De Leo tries to help her by telling her to get her act together and stop

this nonsense. She wants him to tell her if he knew Rosario was having an affair, but he refuses. Finally the neighborhood women have to intervene and get her away from the priest. Serafina prays to the Virgin Mary. In a sober mood, she asks for a sign. Just as she is praying, a traveling salesman shows up at her door. He is soon accosted by every handsome Italian truck driver, Alvaro. He is angry that the salesman's reckless driving forced him off the road. The trucker is so angry that he wants to fight. The salesman's response is to knee him in the groin. Before we know it, Serafina and the truck driver are both crying and lamenting their situations. She notices that his jacket is ripped and offers to sew it for him.

Alvaro tranquilizes the widow. He is strong but he is a child. This combination of traits conquers him also the trust of the community of women, who end up approving his relationship with Serafina. The chorus-like presence of the women serves multiple functions. It announces the death of Rosario. It comments on the widow's jealousy. It becomes antagonistic in occasion of the school dance and finally contributes to awakening on the part of a once sentimentally lost widow. Serafina pushes Rosa at the first irruption of the goat, and she even slaps her when the daughter blames her for thinking of herself as a baroness, but she also hugs her, with animal-like tenderness, and embarrassment.

In one way Serafina is presented as a typical woman of the first generation of Immigrants: she keeps her traditions, speaks Italian, goes to church, and does not trust modernity and America. This feeling is expressed in the fight she has with her daughter about going to school, or actually, to the school dance. She is so mad about losing control of Rosa that she screams. Women expressing their sexuality as freely as their male counterpart is still very much taboo. A disproportionate number of girls suffer more from bullying and sexual violence. She refers to the literature on how the

language of empowerment' used in an attempt to mobilize young women today is something of a double-edged sword. Liberal discourse promotes girl power and choice is merely a smoke-screen by which deep-seated inequalities and oppressions can be obscured.

Serafina lives the life of abstinence. Her exotic self is naturally not in agreement with her present state. She loses all control of life in the course of time. Serafina's condition is painful. This is very clearly seen when Serafina expresses she self:

I count up the nights I held him all night in my arms, and I can tell you how many.And I am satisfied with it. I grieve for him. Yes, my pillow at night's never dry — but I'm satisfied to remember. And I would feel cheap and degraded and not fit to live with my daughter rounder the roof with the urn of his blessed ashes, those ashes of rose — if after the memory, after knowing that man, I went to some other, some middle-aged man, not young, not full of young passion. (40)

Serafina has the undying love for her husband. This love is so intense that she demands other people also to respect the urn which contains the ashes of her dead husband. Even when the two middle aged spinsters, Flora and Basie, carry on indecent conversations in her house, Serafina shouts at them: "Get out on the streets where you kind a women belong — this is the house of Rasario Delle Rose and those are his ashes in that marble urn and I won't have — improper thing going on here or dirty talk, neither!" (37). But after three years of isolation, Serafina is brought back to reality when she learns the bitter truth that her husband had a mistress.

Diana Tietjan Meyer argues that "Women's agency matters at three levels. It has intrinsic relevance for women's individual wellbeing and quality of life. It has

instrumental relevance for actions that improve the well-being of women and their families" (54). It is required if women are to play an active role in shaping institutions, social norms, and the well-being of their communities. Women's ability to influence their lives matters in and of itself. The following extract sheds light on the inner dynamics of the search for agency:

A person's ability to make effective choices and exercise control over one's life is a key dimension of well-being. Women and men can contest and alter their conditions only if they are able to aspire to better outcomes, make effective choices, and take action to improve their lives. Women's ability to influence their own lives also matters for other aspects of well-being. Agency determines women's ability to build their human capital and access economic opportunities. (121)

Family formative decisions are critical for women's investments in education. Indeed, delays in marriage are strongly associated with greater education, earnings, and health-seeking behavior. Serafina associates the school with the possibility of Rosa losing her innocence. But she is not against school as learning and as a form of social mobility: she is so proud of the diploma that she tells Rosa to put it alongside her father's clothes.

In this respect Williams depicts one of the most interesting and recurring family conflicts among Italian immigrants: going to school, considered as especially problematic for girls. Another instance of the juxtaposition Sicilians/Americans is revealed in the conversation between Serafina and Jack, which explicitly addresses cultural diversities, in terms of blood temperature and men's behavior. Millette explains the discourse on gender. She focuses mainly on the dichotomous views. She also goes into great depth of radical and revolutionary/Marxist views on gender and

patriarchy. Millett gives examples of the gender ideologies/discourses. Serafina is satisfied just to remember she is satisfied to remember the love of a man that was mine - only mine! "Never touched by the hand of nobody! Nobody but me! - Just me!" [She gasps and runs out to the porch. The sun floods her figure. It seems to astonish her. She finds herself sobbing. She rummages her purse for her handkerchief" (40). Her fanatical worship of her dead husband has been shattered by the strong suspicion of his infidelity. The memory of her husband becomes as self-deceptive to Serafina. The arrival of Alvaro Mangiacavall changes the entire complexion of the play. Frustration and pain drive Alvaro to Serafina's house where he seeks refuge from his miseries.

Individual identities evolve in the context of enculturation. Interpersonal bonds of affection and interdependency produce effect. Unconscious attitudes and wishes must not only give due weight to each individual's unique desires, capabilities, values, interests, and goals. But it must also accommodate these intra-psychic, interpersonal, and social realities. Meyers makes the following remarks about the search for agency:

They shape an individual's identity. In patriarchal cultures, women internalize oppression, for regnant narrative schemas, themes, and figurations provide the default templates for their self-portraits and self-narratives. Women's appropriation of these default templates reproduce subordinating norms and crowds out alternative understandings of who they are and what their lives are about. Thus, patriarchal cultures impede women's agency. In contrast to existing value-neutral, value-saturated, and self-narrative approaches to autonomy, this account stresses the need for a well-developed, well-coordinated repertoire of agented skills. (65)

Skills enrich women's self-knowledge. It extends their emancipatory potentialities. It strengthens their ability both to define themselves in their own terms. It enacts their identities as they understand them. Skills bring women's voices into alignment with their individual identities and their lives.

Serafina has known happiness with a lover. When he does not meet her needs, she dumps him in a Gulf Coast town where he must take his chances with some citizens who know him very well because of his treatment of other female partner. The suffering of Serafina who has known and lost a mate who gave her complete sexual happiness is the core component of the entire text. Serafina is completely devastated upon learning that her truck-driver husband has been killed in an automobile accident. In spite of the needs of her children, she loses touch with reality, and life has no further meaning for her. After three years of isolation, Serafina is shocked back to reality when some of her neighbors tell her that her husband had been killed while smuggling dope and that, furthermore, he had had a mistress. Shortly afterwards, she finds another mate. She has known sexual happiness with him. Having known reality and meaning in life through her happy relationship with a truck driver, she is one of those women who will waste no time in trying to re-establish a satisfying sexual relationship.

Meyers is of the view that various factors contribute to the empowerment of female agency. In her view "Even where gender gaps in human capital and physical assets are narrowed, differences in gender outcomes could emerge because girls and boys, and later women and men, have unequal capacity to exercise agency" (87). By agency "we mean an individual's (or group's) ability to make effective choices and to transform those choices into desired outcomes. Agency can be understood as the process through which women and men use their endowments" (Meyer 67). Females

take advantage of economic opportunities to achieve desired outcomes. Thus, agency is basic to understanding how gender outcomes emerge. The following extract throws light on the role of positive environment in the promotion of female agency:

They are equal to unequal. Across all countries women and men differ in their ability to make effective choices in a range of spheres, with women typically at a disadvantage. These outcomes are related and often compound each other; as a result, a women's ability to choose and act at any point in time partly reflects foundations laid earlier in her life, often starting in childhood. (87)

The sufferers find harmony in their common misery. Child like warmth grows between them. Serafina laments that the time of Rasario is over, for her Rosario is dead. Alvaro assumes her that not only for her but for everyone it is always a time of roses. Alvaro reveals to her the dream of his life which is on the verge of fulfillment:

Serafina: Somebody's--in my house? (Finally, in a hoarse, tremulous whisper)

What are you doing in here? Why have you come in my houses?

Alvaro: Oh, lady--leave me alone!--Please--now!

Serafina: You--got no business--in here . . .

Alvaro: I got to cry after a fight. I'm sorry, lady. I... (59)

Alvaro is as shrewd as fox. He exposes Rosario's infidelity to Serafina. She is confronted by the inescapable truth. She goes into an impassioned rage. She breaks this urn that contains Rasario's ashes. Serafina has returned back to reality and life. Álvaro honestly offers "love and affection! — In a world that is lonely — and cold". Álvaro also reminds her, unlike Rosario, of the vital force that keeps everything in the world going on: ". I know — I know that's what warms the world that is what makes it the summer!" (113). Serafina is attracted to Alvaro. The bonds of matrimony prevent her from responding to him. An older frustrated woman meets a younger. He

is a vital man. Rosario's adulterous relation with another woman is exposed. She yields to her temptations. She breaks free from sexual repression that finally raises Serafina from her pitiable state. She realizes that the Madonna icon was "Just a poor little doll with the paint peeling off" (125). She accepts Alvaro as her lover at the end.

Serafina realizes that life is too important to reject for a memory. It comes victorious in the end. Serafina's husband is the mark of his superior virility. Roses are tattooed on Rosario's mistress. A mystic rose appears on Serafina's own breast twice. It is because of Alvaro's gift of love to Serafina that she can escape the sadness of the past and the folly of the present. Serafina's self-inflicted abstinence of sex is a kind of sin against everything that is natural.

To sum up, Serafina was lost in frustration and disappointment. She is thrown into attention when she is told in a scredible way. This lapse into her sentimental and nostalgic preoccupation enables her to look at the rosy side of life. sIt proves that gender is not a fixed conceptual category. It is subject to change over time in the wake of shifting societal, cultural and economic practices.

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