

Tribhuvan University

Problematization of the Conventional Gender Role in Truman Capote's *The Breakfast at*

Tiffany

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Balananda Mainali has completed his thesis “Problematization of the Conventional Gender Role in Truman Capote's *The Breakfast at Tiffany*” under my supervision. He carried out this research paper from February 2017 to June 2018. I hereby recommend this thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Problematization of the Conventional Gender Role in Truman Capote's *The Breakfast at Tiffany*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Balananda Mainaly, has been approved by the undersigned members of the thesis committee.

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Abstract

The major thrust of this research is to trace the distinct brand of being a woman who flatly challenges traditional role and responsibility assigned by patriarchy. In Truman Capote's *The Breakfast at Tiffany*, Golightly demonstrates subversive, nonconformist, creative and anomalous traits. Her assertion of being a different type of freedom-conscious lady, her choices, passions and pursuits for what bring her in conflict with the established gender role. Viewed from the theoretical trajectory of gender and its fluid notion mainly propounded by Judith Butler, the present researcher comes to a conclusive finding that the traditional gender role is a problem in the development of a woman's free spirit. Golightly pursues her passions and embarks on her own subjective world. Her activities and choices are anomalous to the established mores concerning the role and position of women. The rejection of traditional role and hatred to the confining ideology of patriarchy compels Golightly think independently of existing parameter of being a normal lady of her time. Golightly's expression of gender renders her illegible within her social milieu. In her opinion, the idea of being a woman exists only as sociocultural constructions and not as the property of persons. Indeed, they are no more than a set of assumptions which people hold about each other and themselves in certain contexts. Gender is an ideology people use in modern societies.

Key Words: subversion, gender, parameter, tradition, freedom, milieu, stereotype, ideology

Problematization of the Conventional Gender Role in Truman Capote's *The Breakfast at Tiffany*

This study focuses on how Golightly's subversive acts and her involvement in nonconventional choices call into question the patriarchal rationale of subjecting a woman into fixed life pattern like being a docile housewife. Golightly challenges the idea of being happy with the assignment of reproductive role. The conventional gender is problematized in Truman Capote's *The Breakfast at Tiffany*. Golightly is dismissive of the roles and responsibilities that conventional society assigns to a woman. The patriarchal society she lived in tries to limit her within the framework of domesticity suppressing her longing to be a free individual. To come out of those confining forces of domesticity, she leaves her husband and lives separately. Challenging the rigidity of patriarchy that subjects Holly to a reproductive role, she decides to live freely without bothering about what society says about her distinct track of life.

To probe the issue, the insight of Judith Butler with regard to gender and gender identity is used. She maintains that gender is a fluid concept. It is subject to change. It is the product of "societal and cultural parameters which too are not stable" (Butler 65). In addition to Butler's notion of gender as performance, Kora Caplan's view regarding gender is also utilized to support the theoretical basis of this study. Caplan is of the view that "traditional gender role was useful and it had impacted many people in the past. But now such an outdated view is no longer put into practice" (76). In *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler further develops her "distinctive theory of gender by examining the workings of power at the most material dimensions of sex and sexuality" (54). In this work, Butler offers an original reformulation of the

materiality of bodies, examining how gender hegemony forms the matter of bodies, sex, and gender.

According to Butler, gender is non-referential. It is non-referential in the sense that it does not emanate from some inner, natural core identity. Thus, it is not a copy of the real. On the contrary, it is rather a copy of a copy, "since no real masculinity or femininity exists or predates gender performances" (Butler 78). In *Imitation and Gender Insubordination*, Butler argues that gender 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 and consequence of the imitation itself What they imitate is a phantasmatic ideal of heterosexual identity" (Butler 78). Instead, gender is created by the performance itself. Moreover, since gender has no real of which it is a copy, no one can truly possess or claim ownership of masculinity or femininity. There is, however, a "compulsion to ascribe ownership because it is necessary to sustain the theory of modern patriarchy" (Butler 3).

Golightly valorizes love above marriage. She prefers to work in the field of espionage. Her choices stand in contrast to how a lady with traditional cast of mind does. Her boldness, nonconformist mentality, denial of traditional gender role and longing for the boundlessness of adventurous experience ensure that she is no longer confined in the orbit of reproductive role. She wants to face the irresistible, the dreadful and the hazardous. Her mindset and detestation towards traditional gender role guarantee that she is a square peg in a round hole of patriarchy.

Golightly is married off to a man against her will at the age of fourteen. As a gesture of defiance, she ran away from her husband. It exemplifies how dissatisfied she is with anyone or any system of norm that imposes restriction on her. Her choices are subversive of the traditional gender roles. Far from being a domesticated and

docile woman, she is fond of exposing herself in the outer world. The social compulsion to embrace reproductive and marital role is anathema to her. She strives to acquire bold qualities which finally appear to be her signature style of addressing and exploring outer world. She is no longer docile. She longs to act as a spy. The idea of flirting with men other than her husband is very much appealing to her.

When conflict arose between Golightly and her husband, she chose to live independently far from her husband's domicile. She is not timid like other traditional girls of her time. She abandons her husband when he develops indifference to her rising demands. To explore new dimension of free life, she quits village where she used to live with her husband. She comes to New York and works as a spy of gangster. Outwardly, she pretends to be glamorous girl who is beyond the reach of ordinary men. Without disgracing and vulgarizing herself, she enters the company of rich city men. Her friendship is not limited with a single circle of rich men.

Golightly once tried to act as an actress under the directorship of O. J. Berman. But in Berman's words, she failed flatly. A man named Rusty Trawler is in affair with her. But the man who wins her heart finally is Joe Bell. Her former husband's Doc Golightly's repeated attempt to get martially reconciled with her ends in failure due to Holly's rebellious choice and preference. For her secret and doubtful involvement in a gang, she is arrested by two police officers. Shocked by such a sudden arrest, she suffers from miscarriages. Yet she handles the case patiently. The officers arrest Holly on charges of conspiracy with Sally Tomato and O'Shaughnessy. Holly's society friends are largely unwilling to help her. Holly likes to shock people with carefully selected tidbits from her personal life.

Golightly develops a type of fondness for profession which does not suit a lady with a typical cast of mind. Her longing to act independently and boldly in the

external world brings her in conflict with her husband. Her decision to get involved in espionage without knowing much about the consequence of her extreme action drags her in police case. The set of actions, choices and preferences of Golightly gives rise to troubles. She had not anticipated. In this condition, she rarely hopes to integrate herself harmoniously to the society she lives in.

Golightly does not fit in the procrustean bed of traditional gender role as she is indifferent to domestic chores. She longs to explore pleasure beyond the bond of marital relation. Even her professional choice is subversive of traditional gender role. She does the job of a spy enthusiastically without harboring a qualm. Her hunger for the diversity of experience and unrestrained sense of freedom put her in conflict with those who want to see her limited in cramp and confinement of domesticity. She acts boldly. She turns her back to any stereotypical role. She is driven by the urge to cross the liminal radically. Gender role and the challenge faced by it are examined in the novel. The interrogation of gender role is the objective of this study. Many real and fictional women contributed to the construction of traditional gender role. It is basic to the task of how patriarchy originates favoring male dominion. When the traditional gender role begins to suffocate women, questioning of this role starts. It is helpful in undermining unfair social practices

Capote's *The Breakfast at Tiffany* is a novella that evokes much emotion through universal appeal. The leading ladies and their plights are raised in this novella in a crystal clear way. Peter Greyer makes the following remarks:

The psychological struggle between the need for stability and the desire for freedom is perhaps the central concern of *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. The conflict structures the relationship between the narrator and Holly, who are opposing forces. While the narrator is happy to

have his first home, Holly is consumed by her need to constantly escape from places, people and things. Even Holly's identity is in a constant state of flux. (12)

Holly assumes the name Holiday Golightly. It includes her strategy of avoiding stability. With it she aims at quitting relationships and responsibilities. They threaten to spoil her freedom.

Capote's protagonist shares some humor with urban men. By casting the two main characters on opposite sides of the stability/freedom divide, Capote suggests that each has something to learn from the other. Concentrating on the typical feature of the protagonist, Richard Preston makes the following observation:

The mutual influence of the two friends is demonstrated by their Christmas gift exchange, in which Holly gives the narrator a bird cage and the narrator gives her a medal of St. Christopher. Each gift illustrates a median between stability and freedom: Holly's gift is a cage, but it will never imprison a bird, and the narrator's gift is a medal of the patron saint of travel, but it comes from Tiffany's, Holly's personal symbol of home. (45)

The narrator feels a constant outsider. Holly is convinced that she is a wild thing. She is unsuited to a proper place in society. Thus, Holly and the narrator are similar insofar as for both of them. Home has become a charged object of fantasy and longing.

Capote's style in *The Breakfast at Tiffany* is praiseworthy. With this style, he strikes a note of intimacy with readers. Dwelling on this side of the narrative, Emily Cappel makes the following remarks:

Truman Capote's style is like the smooth flow of a river. Or like a sophisticated car gliding down the road, when one does not feel the friction of the road and the car seems to be floating-gliding on the surface. He strikes a note of great intimacy with the reader as if with a close personal friend, and a sense of total honesty is sought. This style – witty, observant, nostalgic, and exact – was Isherwood's great contribution to modern literature. (24)

Capote's style could not stop highlighting passages in nearly every page of the book. It explores the depths of the human soul and its ability to triumph over loneliness, alienation and loss.

HM McHale notices elements of erotic transgression in Capote's *The Breakfast at Tiffany's*. An individual always holds the possibility of transgressing his erotic influence no matter how unfavorable the situation. Addressing this view, McHale argues:

Capote's own erotic scenes, by contrast, are virtually always brief and figurative. Capote seldom describes actual body parts or identifies any particular sexual activity. The reader may assume that Capote is describing sexual intercourse, but in most cases, Capote chooses to represent the physical act through the pain of lost virginity, or by a vague phrase such as making love that encompasses any of a number of possible scenarios. (12)

Desire in Capote's novels appears in different guises from book to book. Eros gives meaning to Capote's characters. This does not mean that sex is a life-giving font of positive energy. In many cases, the role of sex is that of sin. He instructs us to better a world tormented by sin than a world devoid of consequences.

Octavio R. Gonzalez is of the opinion that Capote's celebrated novella, *The Breakfast at Tiffany*, highlights the importance and value of the exchange of gifts on Christmas. In this regard, Gonzalez makes the following revelation:

The motif of Christmas appears to be most linked to Holly, as her two pseudonyms - Holiday and Holly - are references to the "holy day" and the traditional plant of Christmas, respectively. Within the Christian tradition, Christmas is a symbol of rebirth, as the birth of the Messiah enabled His followers to be "born again" through His teachings and the ritual of baptism. (13)

Christmas heralds the beginning of the Western New Year. On this occasion, many feel holds the possibility of new beginnings. Holly's narrative presents her as re-born into different personae and attitudes at several key points.

Although all these critics and reviewers examined the novella, *The Breakfast at Tiffany*, from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, none of them notice the issue of problematization of conventional gender role. Because the topic of the problematization of gender role is new and fresh, the researcher claims that it is researchable. Holly is very bold. She is revengeful. She is determined to take revenge on her husband who once brutalized her. Her choices are not in keeping with the tradition. She acts run counter to the traditional gender role. She struggles to make a sense of her plight no matter how patriarchal psychopaths hated her. The social compulsion to get involved in a narrow domestic role and patriarchal domain is flatly challenged by her. Pure preparation for love and patience in hope of romantic reconciliation are her good quality.

Butler argues that power operates to constrain sex from the start, delimiting what counts as a viable sex. She offers a clarification of the notion of performativity

introduced. Gender is non-referential, according to Butler. It does not originate from some inner, natural core identity. Thus, it is not "a copy of the real, but rather a copy of a copy, since no real masculinity or femininity exists or predates gender performances" (Butler 76). In *Imitation and Gender Insubordination* Butler argues "Gender 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 and consequence of the imitation itself" (21). Gender is created by the performance itself. Since gender has no real core. It is a copy. No one can truly possess or claim ownership of masculinity or femininity. There is a "compulsion to ascribe ownership because it is necessary to sustain the theory of modern fraternal patriarchy" (3).

In the introduction to their book *Genders*, David Glover and Cora Kaplan make the observation that: 'gender is a much contested concept, as slippery as it is indispensable, but a site of unease rather than agreement' (Glover and Kaplan, 2000, ix). Gender can be viewed as a behavior, a learned or conditioned response to a society's view of how men and women should act. The motivation behind much of the twentieth century feminist movement stems from such a view: "the belief that, 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" (77).

The interest of the narrator, Joe Bell, Yunioshi and the African in Holly's fate indicates many things. It informs about the continuing power of Holly's charisma. The African refuses to part with his carving. Yunioshi is willing to pay "a seemingly unlimited amount of money for it. The narrator travels across the city in the rain. He does so at the mere suggestion of news of Holly. Holly has faded into rumor" (87). She maintains a potent hold on the imaginations of the men. Their lives intersect with

her. Holly Golightly lived in the apartment beneath the narrator. Despite a downpour of rain, the narrator takes a taxi to the bar, where he finds Joe alone on the premises. The narrator peeks into the stairwell and finally sees Holly. She is a thin, well-groomed 18-year old woman. She has a short, multicolored hair.

Gender is a fluid notion. It has to be studied in totality. Several attempts have been made to examine it. Any organized, systematic and analytically lucid approach to study the notion of gender is called gender reading. Gender reading concentrates on "what it is, how it originates and how people accept it. It observes how the idea of gender is picked up by people. Both masculine and feminine concept of gender needs to be studied in gender reading" (86). Some theorists believe that gender is given whereas others challenge it. In the past, it was believed that gender is a fixed, naturally given category. It was treated as essential category. It was considered as an unchanged notion. With the onrush of deconstructive feminism and postmodern feminism, this sort of conception has undergone change. Now days, scholars believe that gender is a changeable notion. It is bound to change over time. It is contingent. It is determined by plenty of contradictory, conventional, social, cultural, economic and educational factors.

Judith Butler is a prominent theorist who writes a lot about the fluid notion of gender. Her view on the fluidity of gender and sexuality carry huge relevance here. It is worthwhile to quote her view briefly. Regarding the way notions of gender and sexuality appear to be problematical, Butler makes the following assertion:

Whether gender or sex is fixed or free is a function of a discourse which, it will be suggested, seeks to set certain limits to analysis or to safeguard certain tenets of humanism as pre-suppositional to any analysis of gender. The locus of intractability, whether in "sex" or

“gender” or in the very meaning of “construction,” provides a clue to what cultural possibilities can and cannot become mobilized through any further analysis. (13)

The limits of the analysis of gender presuppose the possibilities of imaginable and realizable flexibility. But that does not mean gendered possibilities are open. On the contrary, the boundaries of analysis suggest the limits of a conditioned experience. These limits are always set within the terms of a hegemonic cultural discourse. This discourse is predicated on binary structures.

Holly thanks for seeing her home. She shuts out of her apartment. He argues with her through the door. He picks up the check for her and her five friends. Holly advises Sid that the next time a girl asks him for powder-room change. He should give her more than twenty cents. He finally leaves. The following extract throws light on the subversive choices and priorities of Holly:

She kept her promise to Mr. Yunioishi; or I assume she did not ring his bell again, for in the next days she started ringing mine, sometimes at two in the morning, three and four: she had no qualms at what hour she got me out of bed to push the buzzer that released the downstairs door. As I had few friends, and none who would come around so late, I always knew that it was her. But on the first occasions of its happening, I went to my door, half-expecting bad news. (3)

Holly has the tendency to change locations, lifestyles and identities. She does so without hesitation or guilt. Her temporary presence in any single location or relationship is noticeable. Moreover, it alludes to the country song the narrator observes Holly singing on her balcony. Occasionally, she displays jolly disposition. It contains the line: "Don't want to sleep, don't want to die, and just want to go a-

traveling' through the pastures of the sky" (6). In the song, travel is presented as an alternative to death. Holly's calling card suggests that she travels as a way of escaping the deathlike banality of conventional existence.

Gender can be studied from various perspectives. Each perspective yields different findings. No finding can be satisfactory. The approach to study gender from the constructive perspective yields fruitful finding. That is why it is of huge importance. When society moves from one phase to the other, old norms and values associated with gender begin to change. As a society turns away from its traditional mold to the pole of modernity, development and social reform, the traditional idea of gender shakes. It cannot work effectively. It loses its relevance gradually. It rarely supports the new desires and demands of people.

No position can be made clear with regard to the study and analysis of gender. Concerning this, Butler argues "The interpretive possibilities of gender are in no sense exhausted by the alternatives suggested above. The problematic circularity of a feminist inquiry into gender is underscored by the presence of positions" (16). Gender is a secondary characteristic of persons. The very notion of the person is a masculinist construction. It is derogatory which effectively excludes semantic possibility of a feminine gender. The consequence of such "sharp disagreements about the meaning of gender establish the need for a radical rethinking of the categories of identity within the context of relations of radical gender asymmetry" (16). Applying poststructuralist position on the subject of gender Butler argues:

Gender is a complexity, whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time. An open coalition, then, will affirm identities that are alternately instituted and relinquished according to the purposes at hand; it will be an open assemblage that

permits of multiple convergences and divergences without obedience to a normative telos of definitional closure. (22)

It is troublesome to grasp the actual essence of gender as it does not have solid foundational base. It is in the process of undergoing successive change. As the level of education increases the old idea of gender falls apart. Along with the introduction of the programs of empowerment of women, the significance of gender reading has carried big importance. If women are enabled educationally and economically, they can give out their services in a better way. All these possibilities can be understood only when we apply the theoretical approach of gender reading.

The narrator's observations of Holly reveal that many of her distinctive characteristics are the product of conscious self-fashioning. The narrator finds hair dye. It tends to indicate that her unique multicolored hair is self-induced. The remains of Melba toast and cottage cheese suggest that her fashionably thin figure is the product of dieting. And viewing Holly on her balcony, the narrator observes that Holly plays obscure country songs on her guitar. He notes that these are the songs that seemed to gratify her the most. It is suggestive of an unexpected rural background for the seemingly urban socialite. Holly guards her identity because it is a construction. It is an artificial creation. It masks her more pathetic true story. Her fashionable choice and involvement makes her a unique and unconventional figure which is depicted in this extract:

And she wore a slim cool black dress, black sandals, and a pearl choker. For all her chic thinness, she had an almost breakfast cereal air of health, soap and lemon cleanness, a rough pink darkening in the cheeks. Her mouth was large, her nose upturned. A pair of dark glasses blotted out her eyes. It was a face beyond childhood, yet this side of

belonging to a woman. I thought her anywhere between sixteen and thirty; as it turned out. (3)

The narrator's conversation with Holly confirms his observations that she earns her living through unconventional means. She lives off the money her male admirers give her. The money is given not exclusively for sexual activity, but for her charming company in the bars and restaurants of New York. This candid discussion of sex indicates Holly's progressive sexual politics. It positions her outside the strict definition of femininity.

Butler introduces the idea of discontinuity as she is inspired by the mode of analysis invented and applied by Foucault. She holds clear view in this connection. Simplifying how the idea of continuity becomes necessary, she says "Intelligible genders are those which in some sense institute and maintain relations of coherence and continuity among sex, gender, sexual practice, and desire. In other words, the specters of discontinuity and incoherence go on creating unrest in the notion of gender" (22). Only when certain norms and practices are prohibited and produced that the notion of gender can be stabilized.

In the socialization process, children are introduced to certain roles. These roles are typically linked to their biological sex. The term gender role refers to society's concept of how men and women are expected to look. It is also concerned with how they should behave. These roles are based on norms. They are rooted in certain standards. They are created by society. Masculine roles are usually associated with strength, aggression, and dominance. On the contrary, feminine roles are usually associated with passivity, nurturing, and subordination. Role learning starts with socialization at birth. Even today, our society is quick to outfit male infants in blue and girls in pink. Butler takes a simplistic notion related to gender and puts forwards

the view that goes: "Gender is the linguistic index of the political opposition between the sexes. Gender is used here in the singular because indeed there are not two genders. There is only one: the feminine, the "masculine" not being a gender" (27).

Holly asks the narrator if he is a real writer. Her response is that a real writer is one whose writing makes him money. Holly is a fictional person of her own making. She is a woman who sells her time, affections, and even her body for money. She views herself as a commodity. She does not feel any qualm for considering herself as something that can and should be bought and sold. She extends this reasoning to the narrator's writing. The narrator resents her implication that the value of art is limited only to its success on the commercial market. Holly's visit to the narrator's apartment demonstrates the quick bond between the two characters. It foreshadows the friendship to come. Her affectionate description of her brother Fred is followed by her decision to call the narrator by this name. It indicates that the narrator, like Fred, is someone with whom she feels comfortable and safe. The following extract is expressive of Holly's search for comfort and luxury which almost depends on the exchange of sexual favors:

She smoked an esoteric cigarette called Picayunes; survived on cottage cheese and Melba toast; that her varicolored hair was somewhat self-induced. The same source made it evident that she received V-letters by the bale. They were always torn into strips like bookmarks. I used occasionally to pluck myself a bookmark in passing. Remember and miss you and rain and please write and damn and goddamn were the words that recurred most often on these slips. (4)

While Holly is in the shower, Berman explains to the narrator that Holly is a phony. He tells him the story of how he met her. At fifteen, she had been living with a horse

jockey in Santa Anita. Berman spots her potential as an actress. He gets her work as an extra in films and gave her French lessons to smooth out her hillbilly accent. Berman secures her an audition for a large part in a film. She flees to New York the day before the audition, telephoning Berman only to tell him that she does not want the part. Holly joins them in the living room. Berman tells the narrator that Holly is planning to marry a man named Rusty Trawler.

One way children learn gender roles is through play. Parents typically supply boys with trucks, toy guns, and superhero paraphernalia. They are active toys that promote motor skills, aggression, and solitary play. Daughters are often given dolls. They are dressed-up in apparel. It fosters nurturing, social proximity, and role play. Studies have shown that children will most likely choose to play with gender appropriate toys. This image is of a kneeling man with a small child who is learning to play baseball.

Fathers like to get involved when their sons engage in gender-appropriate activities such as sports. The drive to adhere to masculine and feminine gender roles continues later in life. Men tend to outnumber women in professions such as law enforcement, the military, and politics. Women tend to outnumber men in care-related occupations such as childcare, healthcare and social work. These occupational roles are examples of typical male and female behavior. They are derived from our culture's traditions. Obedience to them shows fulfillment of social expectations. It is not always necessarily a personal preference. The system of hierarchy and shifting essence of gender are both realized and admitted by David Glover and Cora Kaplan. They jointly make the following illumination in this connection:

Gender has figured as a chameleon-like category, a name for a constantly changing phenomenon that can sometimes be more and also

sometimes rather less than an identity: a system of hierarchical relationships, for example, or at the other extreme, the glimpse or trace of a style on a busy urban street. This is not to say that gender has not historically been a major component of people's sense of who they are or what they would like to be. (182)

Gender has not always been understood as the naturally occurring foundation of an identity. Gender has varied according to a number of different principles in both modern and pre-modern societies. Gender variance may be determined primarily by a woman's marital status. It may be directly measured on the body.

Holly invites the narrator into her apartment. Then she tells him she will take him out to lunch to celebrate. Waiting in Holly's bedroom, the narrator sees that it has "the same camping out atmosphere of the rest of the apartment, with no real furniture beyond the rather flashy bed" (16). Through the bathroom door, Holly tells the narrator about her decision to take Mag on as a roommate. While Mag is not a lesbian, Holly explains, she is a "perfect fool" who had agreed to take on the lease and the burden of housework. Mag's modeling career means that she is out of the apartment most of the time" (16). Moreover, Mag is engaged. It means that she and Holly will not be in direct competition for men. Holly explains that while Jose is a nice guy. There is a difference in height.

Holly is immaculately dressed. She is elegantly groomed. She treats the narrator to Manhattans at Joe Bell's bar. Joe Bell hears the good news of the narrator's story. Joe Bell offers them both champagne cocktails on the house. Holly and the narrator spend the rest of the day watching a parade on Fifth Avenue. They eat lunch in the cafeteria park. They enjoy relaxing on the park's wooden boathouse porch. Holly asks about the narrator's childhood. She then relates the details of her own. The

narrator notices that her own story. He suspects that she is not telling the truth. He has heard that Holly had run away from home. The following extract brings into light how she is secretly involved in the underhand dealing of a mafia gang:

Well," she said, with a mouthful of apple, "you may have read about him in the papers. His name is Sally Tomato, and I speak Yiddish better than he speaks English; but he's a darling old man, terribly pious. He'd look like a monk if it weren't for the gold teeth; he says he prays for me every night. Of course he was never my lover; as far as that goes, I never knew him until he was already in jail. (6)

The narrator asks Holly if she had really run away from home at the young age of fourteen. She admits that it is true. Her previous story is a lie. It is made up because she does not want to compete with the narrator's own tragic tale.

Gender issue refers to any issue or concern determined by gender-based and/or sex-based differences between women and men. Gender issues include all aspects and concerns related to women's and men's lives and situation in society. It deals with the way they interrelate. It makes as its focal point their differences in access to and use of resources. What matters most in gender reading is their activities, and how they react to changes. Gender is embedded in our institutions. It is rooted in our actions. It is shaped by our beliefs. It is patterned by our desires. It appears to us to be completely natural. It is our job to look beyond what appears to be common sense regarding gender. It is precisely because gender seems natural that we need to step back and examine gender from a new perspective. Rather than gender equality, it is the idea of gender uniqueness that both Glover and Kaplan foster. Their view is presented here:

Women can display great activity in various directions, men are not able to live in company with their own kind unless they develop a large amount of passive adaptability.' 'Even if,' he argues, one was to say that psychologically femininity gave preference to 'passive aims', 'a passive aim may call for a large amount of activity. (27)

The evocation of abject feelings by women themselves hints at "something stubbornly intractable in the negative inflection of femininity, something not easily shifted by the removal of legal, political and economic impediments to equality" (32).

Yet even this residual negativity serves as a powerful force. It a motive for further exploration. It is a basis for analysis of just what makes female gender such a difficult identity. The following extract casts light on this aspect of reasoning:

Any attention to the life of a woman, if traced out carefully, must admit the degree to which the effects of lived gender are at least sometimes unpredictable, and fleeting . . . Can anyone fully inhabit a gender without a degree of horror? How could someone be a woman through and through, make a final home in that classification without suffering claustrophobia? (33)

Gender reading brings the challenge to uncover the process of construction. It creates to study gender not as given, but as an accomplishment. It is not simply as cause, but as effect. It is not just as individual, but as social. The results of failure to recognize this challenge are found in in the popular media. Gender is social construct. The essentialist concept of gender is not acceptable. There is no innate inherent and essentialist basis that gives rise to gender. Certain roles, gestures, desires, manners, instruction and injunctions are repeated by females and males as well. It is the interiority that nurtures the notion of gender. The internalization and assimilation of

desire, gestures, norms manners, social codes and cultural injunctions create interiority. The concept of gender is affected by the interiority of that individual. Gender is disciplinary production. It produced through the circulation of social discourses.

Holly remembers that she wants to send her brother some peanut butter. The two spend the afternoon haggling with grocers for jars of the wartime scarcity. The following extract illustrates their budding intimacy:

Over time, Holly and the narrator have found six jars of peanut butter. It is dark, and the narrator takes Holly to the antique shop to point out the palatial bird cage he has been admiring. Holly admires it, but points out that still, it is a cage. Spotting a Woolworth's, Holly drags him in, convincing him to steal something. The narrator feels watched, but, while the saleslady is occupied, he and Holly slip Halloween masks over their faces and exit the store without paying. (11)

The narrator feels exhilarated. The pair runs a few blocks for dramatic effect. The narrator asks Holly if she had ever stolen before. She admits that she used to. She still steals from time to time for practice. The two wear their stolen masks all the way home.

Mildred was a humorless, practical introvert. Holly is a lighthearted, irrational extrovert. The narrator considers them Siamese twins. While most personalities are malleable and ever shifting, Mildred and Holly "had been given their character too soon" (17). As a result, they would never change. Like caricatures, both Mildred and Holly are "disproportionate embodiments of distinct "types": Mildred the realist, and Holly the romantic" (17). After Holly leaves, the narrator walks over to her reading table. He sees that she had been consulting travel and political books about Brazil.

Gender remains stable and takes the form of discipline. Gender is stabilized by the construction of hetero sexuality. Norms associated with hetero-sexuality have to be stabilized to create the notion of gender. Gender is a style. It is not a substance. Styles are subject to change. Gender as a style is fundamentally unstable. Genders are neither true nor false. Genders are produced as the truth effects of discourse. With the view to clarify this point further, Glover and Kaplan take the following position:

As some aspects of the biological bases of gender inequality came under increasing critique in the twentieth century, feminists have given renewed attention to the way in which women's mental and emotional life has been theorized. In the past twenty-five years a debate among feminist theorists both about the origins of femininity and, more generally, about the meaning of mental life, has focused on whether that distinctively modern 'science' of psychoanalysis has helped or hindered an understanding of sex and gender. (35)

The process of the construction of gender involves three aspects. There are anatomical sex, gender identity and fulfillment of the given roles. Anatomical sex refers to the biological differences between man and woman. The identity that a man or woman acquires from anatomical sexual difference is called gender identity. Anatomical sex is different from gender identity. The concept of gender arises from the repetitive act.

Holly tells the narrator that there is a present for him in the bedroom. On her bed, he finds the birdcage he had admired. It is decorated with a red ribbon. He is surprised by the amount of money she has spent on it. The amount of price is three hundred and fifty dollars. She shrugs, explaining that it just took a few extra trips to the powder-room. Holly makes him promise that he will never put a living thing in the cage. The narrator hands Holly her present. Holly tells the narrator that she convinced

Mag that she had not slept with Jose. Furthermore, she confesses that she is a dyke. Mag had believed her. She tends to avoid "sharing the same bed as a lesbian was now sleeping on an army cot into the living room of Holly's apartment" (17). The narrator gives Holly a backrub while she tells him that she passed along his short story. It is published in the university review, to O.J. Berman. She says that while Berman had been impressed with his writing, he thought the narrator was on the wrong track.

Holly and the narrator have a conversation at Joe Bell's bar. She explains that she does not need to divorce Doc. She was only fourteen when she married. The marriage was not legal. She confesses that she never intended to return to Texas with Doc. She slept with him the night before, since he gave her confidence as a child. She explains that she took him to the bus station that morning. Over the summer, Holly becomes a recluse. She lets her hair darken. In this season she likes to put on weight. Jose moves into the apartment. He is often in Washington. Nevertheless, the narrator explains. Holly seems happier. She is content learning to keep house. Unconventional attributes like flirtatious and promiscuous disposition can be traced in the anonymity of Holly's secret life. The extract cited from the text, which is mentioned below, clarifies the case in point:

Passing a Woolworth's, she gripped my arm: "Let's steal something," she said, pulling me into the store, where at once there seemed a pressure of eyes, as though we were already under suspicion. "Come on. Don't be chicken." She scouted a counter piled with paper pumpkins and Halloween masks. The saleslady was occupied with a group of nuns who were trying on masks. Holly picked up a mask and slipped it over her face; she chose another and put it on mine; then she took my hand and we walked away. It was as simple as that. (13)

Holly cooks elaborate, unsuccessful meals for Jose and the narrator. He begins talking about her future as Jose's wife. Holly confesses to the narrator that she is six weeks pregnant. Elaborating on her devotion to Jose, Holly tells the narrator that though she has only had eleven lovers. She is happy to be leaving her promiscuous lifestyle behind. She tells him that she is tired of pretending to love men that she knew were "rats and that excluding Doc, Jose was her first non-rat romance" (18). While Jose is not Holly's ideal man, she loves him. Caring for him gives her a sense of satisfaction.

What woman is or can be is interpreted in terms apparent differences. This difference can be biological. It can be bodily difference. The perceived difference is of huge importance. Elaborating on this issue, both Glover and Kaplan affirm "The lines of race and class that divide women themselves are marked by distinctions of feeling also: humanist and democratic arguments at this time need to assert what is not deemed to be apparent" (39). All women have maternal emotions. Sensibility and sentiment are the operative categories of feeling. Women were trained to negotiate must negotiate. It is useful to distinguish them. Sensibility refers to those emotions that seem instinctive or physical. Sensibility in women can be a dangerous force. It is easily corrupted. It can fire the utopian imagination. It derails or deforms its purposes. Further reasoning is revealed below:

Gender, but especially femininity and its proto-feminist revisions, in this early Victorian period has, interestingly, been the site of impassioned critical debate in the second half of the twentieth century, as if the trope of emotion that structured the theory and representation of femininity in the nineteenth century itself has acquired a second life in its critical reconstruction in our own time. (42)

Gender equality is a goal. It has been accepted by governments. It got recognition by international organizations. It is valued in international agreements. It has its own commitments. There are many ongoing discussions about what equality means. There is various ways to put it in practice. There are ways about how to achieve it. It is clear that there are global patterns to inequality between women and men. For example, women tend to suffer violence at the hands of their intimate partners. Women's political participation is questionable. Their representation in decision-making structures lags behind men's. Women and men have different economic opportunities.

Through the final weeks of summer, the narrator and Holly become closer. So far they learnt to communicate in silence. When Jose is out of town, he and Holly take walks to Chinatown. He watches ships from the Brooklyn Bridge. Holly tells him that, one day in the future, she will return to New York on one of those ships. She confesses that she loves New York. The city does not belong to her and she does not belong to it. The narrator explains that he felt suddenly left out as Holly continued on her lifelong travels. Holly's immoral, unacceptable and ignominious life style pushes her to the path of loneliness:

Holly was alone. She answered the door at once; in fact, she was on her way out -- white satin dancing pumps and quantities of perfume announced gala intentions. "Well, idiot," she said, and playfully slapped me with her purse. "I'm in too much of a hurry to make up now. We'll smoke the pipe tomorrow, okay. She took off her dark glasses and squinted at me. It was as though her eyes were shattered prisms, the dots of blue and gray and green like broken bits of sparkle.

(16)

Holly is implicated in a drug smuggling operation as an accomplice to Sally Tomato. O'Shaughnessy is also arrested. He is revealed to be not a lawyer but a defrocked priest with a history of arrests for mafia activity. According to the press, Holly had been accused of acting as a liaison between Sally and O'Shaughnessy. She had to convey coded messages between the two men that allowed them to maintain control over a world-wide narcotics syndicate.

Women are over-represented among the poor. Women and girls make up the majority of people trafficked. Large numbers of them are involved in the sex trade. These issues need to be addressed in efforts to promote gender equality. Achieving greater equality between women and men will require changes at many levels. Such takeoffs include changes in attitudes and relationships. It envisions changes in institutions and legal frameworks. It anticipates changes in economic institutions. It welcomes changes in political decision-making structures.

Gender is an issue because of the fundamental differences. It has become a hot cake due to inequalities between women and men. These differences and inequalities are seen themselves in different ways in specific countries or sectors. There are some broad patterns that point to questions that should always be considered. Women are under-represented in political processes throughout the world. It is important to look at and understand gender differences in power within formal decision-making structures. Women often have different priorities, needs and interests. National, regional or sub-regional priorities are often defined without meaningful input from women.

Gender inequality is also found in gender-based violence. Gender inequalities are not only economic, but are also reflected in other ways. These ways are difficult to measure and change. Ideas about appropriate behavior are rooted in gender

stereotypes. There was also recognition that inequality between women and men was a relational issue and that inequalities were not going to be resolved through a focus only on women. More attention needed to be brought to "the relations between women and men, particularly with regard to the division of labor, access to and control over resources, and potential for decision-making" (Butler 87). There was increased understanding of the importance of seeking out male allies and in working with men to jointly redefine gender roles and relations. Thus there was a need to move away from 'women' as a target group, to gender equality as a development goal.

At custody, Holly changes topic. She begins discussing her plans to sue the state for inducing her miscarriage. When the narrator pleads with her to be reasonable and make plans, Holly confides that she is planning on skipping bail that Saturday morning. She asks him to escort her from her apartment to the airport. She still has reservations on a flight to Brazil. When he refuses, insisting that she stick it out. She explains that the state has no interest in prosecuting her. They are only interested in her testimony against Sally Tomato. She is unwilling to give. The unyielding, obstinate, secret and nonconformist mindset of Holly makes her gender role sharply departed from the traditional gender role. This unconventionality pertaining to her role is reflected here:

Now, too, she rarely spoke a sentence that did not begin, "After we're married --" or "When we move to Rio --" Yet José had never suggested marriage. She admitted it. "But, after all, he knows I'm riggers. Well, I am, darling. Six weeks gone. I don't see why that should surprise you. It didn't me. I'm delighted. I want to have at least nine. I'm sure some of them will be rather dark -- José has a touch of le merge, I suppose you guessed that? (19)

Holly wishes to escape public scrutiny. Certain shades of limelight wreck a girl's complexion. Even if a jury found her innocent, she would have no future in New York. Her livelihood depends on her evading the trial. Before the narrator leaves, Holly asks him to find her a list of the fifty richest men in Brazil and to search her apartment for the St. Christopher medal he gave her. She believes she will need its luck for the trip.

In the telephone booth in Joe's bar, the narrator phones O.J. Berman, who is unavailable. Mag Wildwood picks up the phone, and informs the narrator that neither she nor her husband will have anything to do with that degenerate girl. She tells him that she always knew Holly was an immoral drug addict. The narrator considers phoning Doc Golightly, but then remembers Holly's warning that he never reveals the secret of her marriage. The crisis in Holly's marriage is hinted in the following textual citation:

She plumped out to be a real pretty woman. With something smart to say on every subject: better than the radio. First thing you know, I'm out picking flowers. I tamed her crow and taught it to say her name. I showed her how to play the guitar. Just to look at her made the tears spring to my eyes. The night I proposed, I cried like a baby. She said: 'What you want to cry for, Doc? 'Course we'll be married. I've never been married before. (16)

She admits that she has become involved with a wealthy married man. She writes that she will send an address once she finds a place to live. However, the narrator does not receive the address. It disappoints him. He wishes to let her know that he had sold two of his stories. He had heard of the Trawlers' divorce. Moreover, he wants to tell

Holly. He has found her cat, behind the window of a cozy-looking home in Spanish Harlem. He wonders if Holly finally does, too.

Holly intends to act nonchalantly about discarding the cat but soon becomes frantic. She tells the cat to beat it. She urges the driver to speed away from the street where she has left him. The narrator expresses his disgust at this callous act. Holly explains again that she and the cat never belonged to each other. Nevertheless, her affection for the cat indicated that Holly's attitude toward the animal was ambivalent. While they were both independents, they shared a home and a relationship. In fact, the cat is the only consistent presence in Holly's life. By rejecting the animal completely, Holly indicates that she is again unwilling to accept a close relationship and to let something belong to her. The following extract throws light on this side of Holly's temperament:

Come on, she said, when she found me awaiting the postman. Let's walk a couple of horses around the park." She was wearing a windbreaker and a pair of blue jeans and tennis shoes; she slapped her stomach, drawing attention to its flatness: "Don't think I'm out to lose the heir. But there's a horse, my darling old Mabel Minerva -- I can't go without saying good-bye to Mabel Minerva. (19)

The psychological struggle between the need for stability and the desire for freedom is found in the choices and longings of both the narrator and Holly. The conflict structures the relationship between the narrator and Holly. The narrator is happy to have his first home. Holly is consumed by her need to constantly escape from places.

Even Holly's identity is in a constant state of flux. She goes to the extent of abandoning relationships and responsibilities when they threaten to jeopardize her freedom. For Holly, the distinction between stability and freedom is of utmost

importance. Holly despises the caging of animals. She refuses to name her cat. As a wild thing, she feels he does not belong to her. Jose desires Holly sexually. Rusty needs Holly to fulfill his quasi-sexual infantile complex. Mag desires to share Holly's social contacts and apartment. Berman seeks to profit from Holly's potential as an actress. Conversely, Holly desires what these people can offer her in return. Such relationships appear solid. All crumble, more or less. Holly is incarcerated and no longer able to fulfill her companions' desires.

Holly considers herself a wild thing. She is inherently unsuited to the rules that govern human culture. Holly is more than willing to be domesticated when she is offered the right price. She settles down more or less happily with the wealthy Jose. She relies on fine things and entertainment. Holly's appetites are not those of an animal. She is a woman remarkably invested in the products of American culture. This ambivalence is suggested by another recurring animal motif.

Now Holly let me steer her toward it. At the door, she hesitated; she looked past me, past the boy still offering his cat ("Haifa dollar. Two bits, maybe? Two-bits, it isn't much"), and she shuddered, she had to grip my arm to stand up: "Oh, Jesus God. We did belong to each other. He was mine. Then I made her a promise, I said I'd come back and find her cat: "I'll take care of him, too. I promise. She smiled: that cheerless new pinch of a smile. "But what about me?" she said, whispered, and shivered again. (25)

In each case, Holly has emotional or sexual control over the male character in the episode. When the narrator bolts and runs away wildly, it prefigures Holly's loss of Jose when she is arrested later that day.

While Holly associates herself with nature and the "wild things" she identifies with, the novella presents Holly in a more complex relationship with the natural world. In her relationships with men, she acts the part of both wild animal and trainer, achieving emotional and sexual control over her male admirers while evading responsibility and commitment. Holly's fanciful, irrational and fickle taste which counters and questions the modest traditional gender role is reflected here:

She picked apart the butts in an ashtray, she mooned over her fingernails, as though longing for a file; worse, when I did seem to have her interest, there was actually a telltale frost over her eyes, as if she were wondering whether to buy a pair of shoes she'd seen in some window. "Is that the end?" she asked, waking up. She floundered for something more to say. "Of course I like dykes them. They don't scare me a bit. But stories about dykes bore the bejesus out of me. I just can't put myself in their shoes. (5)

The horse is a long-established figure for human control over nature and animal instinct; for Holly, horses appear to represent her control over men. Her first boyfriend after running away from Doc is a horse jockey. She keeps volumes of books about horses on her bookshelf as research for her involvements with male suitors, and she fantasizes about running off to Mexico. There, she plans to train horses with her brother Fred. She marks the end of her friendship with the narrator with a horseback ride, in which she demonstrates her skill as a rider.

The appearance of Doc Golightly re-establishes the ties between the narrator and Holly. The narrator acts as a liaison for Doc and Holly. It reveals to the narrator the secret of Holly's early life. Thereby it makes her vulnerable to the narrator. Not only does the narrator learn of the poverty and abuse of Holly's childhood but he also

learns her real name which no one else seems to know. Holly's true story is exposed to the narrator. She cannot afford to maintain a grudge.

Holly's conversation with the narrator in Joe's bar indicates she has not been affected by the return of her secret past. She admits to having slept with her husband again, not out of love, but because she felt she still owed him for having rescued her and her brother. She put her hand on "my arm, a fragile touch careful not to waken." "Poor Fred," she whispered, and it seemed she was speaking to me, but she was not. "Where are you, Fred? Because it's cold. There's snow in the wind." Her cheek came to rest against my shoulder, a warm damp weight" (6).

It is not a stereotypical idea that has remained the same over time. It is a disciplinary product which is likely to change over time. The assigned reproductive role on the part of a woman is no longer accepted uncritically across the world. In Capote's *The Breakfast at Tiffany*, the fluid and dynamic notion of gender and the problematization of the traditional gender role are kept at the center of the narrative. The positioning of masculinity and femininity as a dichotomy is dismissible. Instead of being at opposite poles of the same axis, they are actually in different perpendicular dimension. Holly's expression of gender is directed toward women. It initially renders her illegible within her social milieu.

Holly's contrary appearance and predilections appear to be outside the available sex/gender narrative. Gender, together with the terms of masculinity and femininity, is an ideology people use in modern societies. With this dogma, they too imagine the existence of differences between men and women on the basis of their sex where there is none. Genitals and biological capacities aside, men and women are not different. The construction of indebtedness grows particularly pronounced. The insistence on compulsion gives to affect and desire. As a consequence male and

female have no intrinsic biological reality. They are better understood as metaphors through which identity is constructed. An essentialist male and female dichotomy cannot account for the ways people are gendered in different places at different times. The idea of being a man can no longer be treated as universal.

Holly is a nonconformist and somewhat rebellious lady who want to go beyond the limitation imposed by traditional society on women. As a child bride she escaped her impoverished Texas roots at the age of fourteen. Holly makes a living as a companion to various wealthy and important men. They lavish her with money and expensive presents. As her name suggests, she is flighty and unstable. With the aid of the narrator, Holly escapes New York after she has been arrested for conspiracy with a Mafia-backed narcotics ring. She is all the time on the lookout for new lease of time. Any idea of confining life in a fixed domain of gender role is anathema to her. So she acts audaciously and eccentrically challenging the conventional gender role.

Traditional femininity is seen to be based on a very fragile foundation and what is needed is male liberation. This shows a renunciation of the chasing after impossible female goals. Only by questioning masculinity themselves will men understand who they are, how they came to be that way and what they can now do about it. It is a risky undertaking to generalize about the impact of these kinds of changes. The enactment and experience of masculinity is very different at the end of the twentieth century from the beginning.

In a nutshell, the depiction of gender role in Capote's novel is doubtless problematical. Holly rejoices in the tragedy of her marriage which is imposed on her against her will. She is joyous and jubilant in breaking the imposed reproductive role which she assumes as binding to the point of subordination. Only in the affirmation of

free life and unrestrained free pursuit can ennoble and uplift women to the high level of success and liberation.

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