

Chapter: 1

Introduction: Webster and His Characters in *The White Devil*

The issue and its Context have explored the causes of violence and destruction in the play *The White Devil* by John Webster. The play is a story of corruption, immorality, passion, lust and revenge. Extramarital affairs are common among the characters in the play. It is lust for social status that has led the characters to violence and finally to destruction. Lust is foregrounded in the play. Therefore, lust is the main cause of destruction as the major characters who are involved in adultery have been murdered or have murdered others.

Lust plays a major role to bring about their horrible ending. For instance, Duke of Bracciano is one of the major characters in the play to lead the events and circumstances to chaos. He is married to Lady Isabella. Though a prestigious personality with power and wealth, he is strongly infatuated by a woman named Vittoria Corombona married to Camillo, a weak, older and impotent man. It seems that Camillo's weakness invites dreadful conclusion of the drama. It is the Duke's lust for Vittoria that sets most of the tragic events of this play in motion.

Vittoria is a beautiful lady but a vicious character who pretends to be gentle and innocent from her outward show, but she is strong with passion and lustful attitude inside. She brings about the murder of her husband and Bracciano's wife. Because of her vicious character, she is nicknamed as the "white devil" in the play. On the other hand, Cornelia has been presented as a morally upright character in the play. She is the mother to Vittoria, Flamineo, and Marcello. Her role in the play, though small, is pivotal and ever inspiring. She is the moral voice of the play. Her contribution is to guide her children in their way and thoughts regarding life and its moral, values.

Count Lodovico, an energetic, powerful and somehow cruel character in the play is guided by revenge motive. He is the first character to appear on the stage of the play. His banishment forms the foundation of the play. He is a skeptical, egotistic man who is one of the responsible characters to give such a tragic and dreadful end. Cardinal Monticelso a powerful church figure. He acts both as accuser and judge of Vittoria during her trial for the murder of her husband and Isabella, so his role is of special significance. Flamineo, Vittoria's brother and Cornelia's son, is also lustful selfish man who also participates in crimes. Outwardly, he stays aloof from events in the play, but his indirect role has significance.

Zanche is such a character who is betrayed twice. She is Vittoria's Moorish maid and has physical affairs with Flamineo, who promises to marry her but later he ignores her. She also falls in love with Francisco, a deceptive person disguised as the Moor Mulinassar. She gets cheated by him, too.

Webster's play is an exemplary demonstration of desires and lustful scenario of the characters. Although they are bounded in the social values and norms of a strict society, they are strongly boosted by passion and lust. The relationship between the characters Brachiano and Isabella seems pure and white from the social outlook and so is the relationship between Camillo and Vittoria because they are husbands and wives. Although they are married, they are not satisfied with their spouses in matters of sex. They are engaged in extramarital relationship which is all against the contemporary Christian faith, beliefs, norms and values of the Jacobean period. This is because of their lustful nature especially because of their dissatisfaction and ambition. Although self-centered and selfish nature of Flamineo, dual nature of Zanche, aggressive and violent nature of Lodovico act as catalyst for destruction and tragedy of them, so lust seems fundamental cause for the disloyalty, violence, blames,

murders and destruction as a conclusive aspect of the play.

The play sounds a controversial topic, but the playwright has successfully placed the scenes and characters in such a way that it reflects the hidden unnatural and immoral thoughts, often devil like, on the surface of transparent boundary of social, moral and religious sincerity, which is often white.

The play begins with the banishment of Lodovico, a conclusive character of the drama, who is supported by Gasparo and Antoneio. Isabella is innocent in the play, but her relation with Lodovico encourages violence and destruction due to her revenge motive.

Flemineo's ambition of social climbing makes him an opportunist and plays a major role to establish a close relationship between Brachiano and with his own sister Vittoria. His desire of becoming a social climber and getting economic sustainability is the major factor to lead him to that immoral act.

The playwright has revealed the contrast in the actions and appearances of the character in the play, which has given enough space for scholars to raise arguments and criticism of the play. The characters are found to deny the structure on the moral norms and values guided by the church. Mainly, Vittoria and Brachiano are challenged in a silent manner the contemporary social and religious stands of the society because of their lust and adultery. Vittoria herself seems not to be confined by any boundaries prescribed by the social and religious values.

The major issue of present study is to explore the causes and consequences of lust. Therefore, the study focuses on the answers to the questions: Why do the major characters become so much lustful and commit adultery? And what consequences do they suffer ultimately? The major objective of the study is to explain the causes behind lustful acts of the characters and describe their consequences. It is concluded

that the dearth of morality in the characters, and monotony created by the usual sex partners have driven the major characters to destruction and chaos in the play.

Psychoanalysis, particularly, lust theory is used as a tool for analysis of the text.

Literature Review

The White Devil is regarded as one of the successful creations of Jacobean era. Some critics have commended the play while others have pointed out various loopholes in it. Though, the play is basically a revenge tragedy, the theme of lust and sexuality cannot be ignored. One of the special features in the play is dumb show. There are many dramatic scenes without proper dialogues, no more participation of characters for their roles. Isabella's murder and Camillo's death in the play reflect that Webster wants to include dumb shows. There are hidden motives, which are exposed though the characters want to keep it in secret.

The play has been analyzed in different perspectives by different critics. Some of them have reviewed it as a revenge tragedy and others as the craze for status. Curt Guyette considers the play as the world full of dishonesty, treachery and murderous attempts:

This is a brutal, blood-gorged play populated by characters that have not a trace of morality. They lie and scheme and kill. They betray each other—even members of their own family—without a second's thought. And for what? To feed their greed for wealth and power. Take for example Flamineo, a truly despicable character that stops at nothing in a desperate, ultimately futile attempt to obtain riches. He falsely flatters those in power, murders his own brother, and offers up his sister as little more than a prostitute in order to ingratiate himself to the duke, Brachiano. The duke, too, is a despicable person, willing to betray and murder in order to obtain the woman he covets.

In this sense, lust is greed's close cousin. Both are base motives, and, as this play demonstrates, blindly pursuing them leads to ruin. (415)

Guvette presents a gruesome picture of the world. The treachery, parricide, plotting against one's relatives and a lying are common among characters. These inhuman activities are manifested in the characters because of greed for status, property and sexual gratification.

David Daiches gives a general survey to the themes of Webster's works, and paints his characters with negative attributes putting everything in an episodic structure producing a poetic effect and creating terror and pathos in the readers:

Ambition, covetous-ness, and lust are the motivating factors in the cunningly cruel behavior of his villains, and sometimes we have the impression that motive is really unimportant and the interest of the plays lies in the virtuosity or the nobility with which cruelty is manifested or the nobility with which even a vicious character confronts his doom when there is no alternative. (329-330)

Structural superiority is what Daiches foregrounds in his comments. Poetic effect through his grand structures of writing remains a remarkable aspect of the play. Terror or pathos are what Webster focuses on in his plays.

Daiches does not leave space in his criticism without commenting the characteristics of Webster's characters. In this connection, he takes Webster's different characters and characterizes them with their true nature. He focuses on Vittoria, one of the major characters in *The White Devil*, and passes comments on her:

Vittoria Corombona, the heroine of *the White Devil*, is also the villain, or at least one of the villains. She is false to her husband and becomes the mistress of the Duke of Brachiano, who for her sake murders both her husband and his

own duchess. She is not, however, fully implicated in the Duke's guilt, while those who bring her to trial and condemn her for her adultery is they corrupt and ambitious men. The true villain is Vittoria's brother Flamineo ... (330)

What a vicious woman born in high status family! She has not only developed negativity in her attitudes but also encouraged others to be involved in anti-human and anti-social activities.

Daiches also talk about the characters' ambition and lust connecting them with some supernatural forces. These characters, according to Webster, are led to vagueness with their self-interest. In the spur of emotion, they do not even know what they are doing, and why these characters become over ambitious and poison every virtue of humans:

The ambitions and lusts which drive the characters in the Webster plays are beyond ordinary human compass; there is something Faustian about them - they are after they know not what. They kill and betray and contrive for reasons which, though connected with some kind of self-interest, are deliberately left vague. And surrounding all is the corruption of court life, which helps to breed ambitious and poisons the virtue in everybody. (330)

Daiches' analysis of Webster's characters is based on the selfish nature of human beings. Self-interest is what has destroyed honesty and the view of welfare in humans in his time. Their murderous nature and interest for betrayal and foolish act create undesirable situation.

Talking about Webster's play, Andrew Sanders points out some negative aspects of life:

As its title suggests, *the White Devil* is concerned with paradoxes, antitheses, and with enforced dissimulation. When Vittoria Corombona attempts to

protest at the quality of ‘dissembling men’ her brother Flamineo responds, ‘We suck’d that, sister, from a women’s breast in our first infancy’. In Act V the same Machiavellian Flamineo offers a further, but far more pained, apology for the exercise of hypocrisy. (182)

It is strange that people simply take such diverted notions of life like paradoxes, antitheses and dissembling so easily. Not only that the horrid form of the world, that is, murder is also presented as if a part of life. This is also a typical feature of the play.

Other critics like Moody and Lovett see horror, violence and bloodshed in Webster’s play in its most developed form:

His two greatest plays, *The White Devil* and *the Duchess of Malfi*, push the devices of physical horror to their farthest limit. They show the tragedy of blood in its most developed form, and employ all the grisly paraphernalia of the madhouse, the graveyard, and the shambles, as well as the agencies of moral terror, to wring from the drama all the crude excitement it is capable of giving. (134)

The play obviously gives a description of darkest side of life and presents gloomy atmosphere to create a type of moral horror. Generally, the places like madhouse, graveyard and the shambles present fearful atmosphere and as a result, people are filled with fear and horror.

Organization of the Study

The study is an investigation on *The White Devil* regarding its characters’ immoral, lustful and destructive nature. The main focus of the study is to find solutions to the problematic what causes lust to those married people and how it leads to destruction.

The main objective of the study is to explain the causes of adultery, and

describe how the characters develop it to invite destruction. Similarly, to point out the consequences of the affair is another objective of the study. For that purpose, the study goes ahead as follows:

The first introduces the study topic and elaborates on it. The chapter contains a brief introduction to the major characters and a brief critical summary of *The White Devil*. Literature review has also been incorporated in the chapter. Besides, the chapter also presents the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, hypothesis, methodology delimitation and significance of the study in brief. The second chapter is the textual analysis. This chapter opens with the theoretical discussion on lust. Available reviews on the topic have been included in the discussion. The theoretical discussion is followed by textual analysis, focusing on The lust functioning as the main factor behind the destruction. Related data from the text have been extracted and discussed in this section. The final chapter, that is, the third chapter, concludes the study. Works cited list follows the conclusion.

Chapter 2

The Theme of Lust in *The White Devil*

Psychology of Physical Activity

The White Devil presents an example of desires and lustful scenario of the characters who ignore norms and values of the contemporary society and craze about lust. In spite of the social values and norms of the society, the relationships between the characters like Brachiano and Isabella, and Camillo and Vittoria seems not to be so as given by the social rules though they seem to have developed platonic love outwardly. Although they are married, their sexual dissatisfaction, ambitious nature and lustful thoughts drive them to engage in extramarital relationship which are all against the contemporary Christian faith, beliefs, norms and values of the Jacobean period. Lust is a psychological aspect of human life though it satisfies physical need. Moreover, lust itself is a phenomenon that comes within the sphere of psychology. Therefore, it is important to discuss briefly about what psychoanalysis is. The following sections explain psychoanalysis in its essence.

Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalytical criticism is one of the most popular critical theory today. Its main focus is to analyze a text through a psychological lens to investigate the hidden motives of the writer and the characters. This approach helps explore the psychology of the writer and characters.

Every writer indirectly presents some type of orientation in his/her writing, and Psychological approach enables the readers to find out the motivation of the writer. It means through the characters and their actions or behavior, the hidden intention of the writer is revealed. Psychoanalytic theory believes that characters' speech, behavior and actions are the representation of the writer's psychology. Seldan et al. capture this

view as:

The relationship between psychoanalysis and literary criticism spans much of the twentieth century. Fundamentally concerned with the articulation of sexuality in language, it has moved through three main emphases in its pursuit of the literary 'unconscious': on the author (and its corollary 'character'), on the reader and on the text. It starts with Sigmund Freud's analysis of the literary work as a symptom of the artist, where the relationship between author and text is analogous to dreamers and their text (literature= fantasy); (163)

Literature is the manifestation of the unconscious of the writer in an indirect way. We only notice the symptoms. The literary unconscious has triangular impact- on the author, on the reader and on the text. It means literary texts reveal the psychology of the writer that causes the readers to interpret the text in varied ways.

Literary text is analyzed in relation to the conscious and unconscious psychic parts of the characters. Pope remarks, "Psychology for our purposes can be initially defined as the understanding of mental and emotional processes as these relate to language, literature and culture. Psychoanalysis is the study of these processes in individual people" (Pope 96). Literature is the outcome of an author's psychic orientation, therefore to aptly analyze and interpret a literary text, we should try to dig out the roots of the writer's psychology. This is the application of a psychoanalytic approach to literature.

To define sexuality, Freud has invented three different layers of human psyche: Id, ego and super ego. According to him, sex is associated with the unconscious part of the human psyche. His division goes as:

Freud divided the mind initially into the conscious part and the unconscious.

Later, he proposed a new topography of ego (or conscious mind), superego (or

conscience), and id (or unconscious). He coined the word “libido” for the pleasure-seeking instinctual urges that propel us through life and that account for some of our most basic physical urges such as sexual desire. (Ryan 94)

The three aspects of human life: pleasure (id), reality (ego), and the ideal (super ego) are what determine our personality. These different parts have their own distinct functions. For example, id focuses on pleasure principle no matter whether it is moral or immoral. Super ego, that is, conscience, which focuses on the ideal. These two lie on the opposite poles. It is not possible to maintain life with only these two poles; a balancing power is required, that is ego. It brings balance between the id and superego.

Green and Lebihan also have similar views about the structure and functions of the human mind. They opine, “In this model the id applies to the instinctual drives that relates to the needs of the body: the id is primitive and needy, incapable of denying denying itself” (148). The two words are of special meaning, that is, instinctual means natural, not learned and the other is primitive, which means very strong desire that is not based on the reason and is similar to the one of the earliest period of life. It is not easy to control the primitive desires.

Green and Lebihan also talk about ego and superego and state, “The ego develops out of the id and it pacifies the drives by offering itself as a substitute for what must be denied the id... The superego is representative of external, social influences upon the drives, ...” (148). The ego functions as the controlling power over the id. Superego is the ideal form of human psyche, and focuses on the external and social factors like ethics, morality, education, etc.

Peter Barry emphasizes on the unconscious. Our unconscious guides us whatever we do. “All of Freud’s work depends upon the notion of the unconscious,

which is the part of the mind beyond consciousness which nevertheless has a strong influence upon our actions. Freud was not the discoverer of the unconscious: his uniqueness lies in his attributing to it such a decisive role in our lives (92). Barry's focus on the unconscious is what we see in the play *The White Devil*. Most of the characters are involved in immoral activities guided by their unconscious.

Sigmund Freud first elaborated the concept of sexuality. Before Freud, two explanations of sexuality were in practice. Tyson elaborates these phases:

For some psychoanalytic theorists, especially in the past, sexuality was a matter of a biological pressure that is discharged in the act of sexual intercourse. Freud called that drive eros and placed it in opposition to Thanatos, the death drive. However, Freud did not stop there. For one thing, he realized that our sexuality is part of our identity and thus relates to our capacity to feel pleasure in ways that are not generally considered sexual. (Tyson 240)

Eros is connected to the pleasure principle and opposite to it 'Thanatos' is sad causing psyche. The battle of the two is what determines an individual's personality.

Lust and Its Impact on Human Psyche

The play *The White Devil* is taken to be one of the most successful interpretations on lust and deadly bloodshed as the impact of lust. Several physical, emotional and psychological factors may act simultaneously to drive the characters to engage in lust and to commit violence. Although the relation among the characters looks as if they have been connected with each other through friendship and platonic love from outer periphery, their actions reflect the hidden lust and passion in the centre of their heart. The passion of Brachiano and Vittoria is purely a lust and desires which make them blind towards the moral values. As the chapter is based on the lust

theory, the following few paragraphs discuss it in detail.

Many studies have been done on lust, and almost all of them relate it with the psyche of an individual. Biological studies state that the desire is the product of some chemical reaction in the neuro system of the subject. In this connection, Damasio, Davidson and Panksepp claim it as, “Neuroscientists currently believe that the basic emotions arise from distinct circuits (or systems) of neural activity; that humans share several of these primary emotion–motivation circuits with other mammals; and that these brain systems evolved to direct behavior” (qtd.in Fisher et al. 413). They associate it with the emotions of other animals, which it means that lust is comparable to animal desires.

Talking about the chemicals causing this reaction, Fisher et al. state, “The sex drive (the libido or lust) is characterized by a craving for sexual gratification and it is associated primarily with the estrogens and androgens” (413). Estrogens and androgens are two sex hormones found in females and males respectively. These hormones make persons sexually excited and force them to plunge into sexual act, no matter it is legitimate or not.

This idea of love being a state of longing for oneness with the beloved is something which the psychologists have also laid stress upon. Freud, for example, claims that “at the height of being in love the boundary between the ego and object threaten to melt away” and that “against all evidence of his senses, a man who is in love declares that ‘I’ and ‘you’ are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact” (qtd. In Fisher et al. 414). People in love have such a spiritual affinity that the two feel that they are one.

Mutual bearing is what lust entices people to sexual acts. Giles quotes and elaborates Friedman’s phrase ‘mutual bearing’ and says:

Thus in sexually desiring someone, one of the things a person wants is to bare his or her body, especially the erogenous areas of the body, to another person, while at the same time having the other person's body similarly bared to him. In *so* baring our bodies to each other-especially to the touch-we are presenting ourselves in our bodily aspect to each other." In order, it would seem, to both caress and be caressed. And here it should be noted that the desire for mutual caressing also carries with it the desire for a mutual baring. For the natural object of the caress seems to be the naked body. Thus both baring and caressing are central components of the sexual act because they are concerned primarily with the experiencing of the body. This would explain why sexual intercourse is often thought to be the epitome of the sexual act.

(348)

Sight of naked body and the strange touch on the foreign body certainly brings a type of emotion that has a power of attraction. The delight of the feeling of oneness with the partner in the situation of baring and caressing finds no bound and this gives the climax of human pleasure which one cannot achieve otherwise. Therefore, people sacrifice everything due to their excessive desire of lust.

Giles further describes how a male experiences during the act of intercourse: Moreover, if we consider intimate acts of baring and caressing which involve penetration, we see how they can suggest the notion of vulnerability for both sexes. Here the man's penis is submerged into an environment where, despite his nakedness, it is lost from sight, where it loses its boundaries, and seems to become swallowed up or absorbed into the woman's body. We can see then how this situation could carry with it the idea that the man might lose possession of part of his body and so suggest the notion of his being

vulnerable. This awareness of the male's vulnerability in sexual intercourse is possibly one of the reasons for the existence of the common cultural myth of *vagina dentata*, or the toothed vagina. (350)

Giles' description of the sexual act reveals the greater power of females and it is the males who lose their selves after their penis is submerged into female body. There is no limitation of the degree of pleasure as it easily lures them to be involved in this ecstasy at any cost. This is the reason why so many people give up to their lust.

There are many who are confused between love and lust and may take both of them to be the same. However, they are not the same thing though there are some features common to them both. Jens Forster, Samina Ozelsel and Kai Epstude quote Mikulincer, Mikulincer and Shaver and remark: "Romantic love is usually associated with attachment goals and "foreverness", the long term goal of commitment and sharing a life time together; lust, however, exists more in the "here and now" and does not necessarily involve a long-term perspective, which is for example reflected in the notion of a "one-night stand" (237). It is clear that the structures of involvement in the activities and feelings that the partners of love and lust are different. As pointed out by the critics, love is long lasting and there is more spirituality to each other but lust is short lived and corporeal.

It is a mystery what drives humans to lust; Nakedness, caressing, smell, taste whispering sound and movement all pile up in our memory and we happen to have the visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, olfactory and kinesthetic images that encourage us to set forth for lust activities. Not only that, even old people if they have not been suffering from sexual apathy, they remember the sexual activities during their youths and get erotic. When one of the partners is fed up with the other, they try to go out for new partners. S. B. Levine posits:

While young and single, we often feel an intense and desperate need to connect intimately with others as we search for an ideal life partner. After that connection is firmly established, we may celebrate it with exuberant sexual behaviors. Soon, however, despite the cultural expectation to continue regular and frequent sexual behavior, one or both members' sexual desire lessens.

When the couple wants to get pregnant, sexual motivation returns to the bedroom. When we want to reaffirm our love or commitment or to convey our remorse for our past bad behavior, sexual desire may intensely reappear.

When we grieve for a partner and then if no replacement is available, desire may slip quietly away, only to awaken when a partner materializes. (41)

Levine's description shows how married partners lose interest from each other sexually, and set out for new partners. This is the major cause why people are involved in extramarital affairs.

Levine furthers his view on the reasons behind the craze for adultery:

Partner loss also can induce more motivation for sex. In the midst of bitter divorce processes, numerous men angry at their wives seek sexual behavior at a great rate with a large variety of partners, keeping secret from those partners and from themselves how much private anger at "women" they are discharging through sex. After divorce, some women worry that they have become "oversexed," because they think about sex far more than they have in many years. They have been reawakened to sexual possibilities that they long felt were dead with their husbands. (42)

Sex is a type of therapy. It functions as the soothing agent for those who are disappointed by their sexual life. It is hard to live with agony caused by the sexually deprived excitement. This disappointment drives people to excessive desire for sex

that helps them forget the bitter experiences at least for the time being.

Extramarital affairs are the result of sexual dissatisfaction with their partners. What is repeated causes weakening effects to the interest. The same partners, the same activities and the same taste do not arouse newness, but naturally humans always run after experiencing something new. In this regard, Levine quotes McCoy's views:

Youthful sex is intense, impatient, and a bit clumsy; older age sex is quieter, more skillful, and often biologically limited. In middle age, between these eras, many people explain their decrease in desire by invoking partner familiarity or boredom. Repetition with the same partner is a factor but so is the weakening of the power of desire. Many, but not all, men in their fifties report an increased comfort in not having sex as often. Many, but not all, women, experience a decrease in aspects of their desire within 1 to 2 years of their natural menopause. (43)

It is natural that sexual desire decreases with the age and sameness of the experience. This sameness increases monotony and causes negative impact to the intensity of sexual desire.

Levine further explains why people become so much crazy about establishing extramarital affairs even after their married life: "Passion can and does occur after young-adult life. It is just harder to come by and often takes place in the context of extramarital experiences or new relationships that occur after a period alone. Its intensity provides us with the illusion that we are young again" (44). How wonderful human psychology is. Dead interest and lost strength are regained with the possibility of newness in contact. The possibility rejuvenation of desire and power is purely a psychological aspect.

Love- Lust Difference

Lust and Love are the same or similar aspects of human life, but Giles finds difference between love and lust. By quoting Freud, he mentions:

This idea of love being a state of longing for oneness with the beloved is something which psychologists have also laid stress upon. Freud, for example, claims that ‘at the height of being in love the boundary between the ego and object threaten to melt away’ and that ‘against all evidence of his senses, a man who is in love declares that ‘I’ and ‘you’ are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact.’ (Giles 340)

Love is established with a view of becoming one, that is, the lovers negate themselves, sacrifice their selves and feel that they are one. There is no evil will against each other. Both the partners try to understand each other and attempt to make each other as comfortable as possible.

James Giles, distinguishing between love and lust, questions what then the relation between being in love and the psychic complex that is sexual desire is: “The problem is that while love seems to be a network of desires referring to vulnerability and care, sexual desire is a desire intimately concerned with the body...” (348). Love is a type of feeling of care for the opposite sex, but lust demands physical action. Giles adds, “This does not mean of course that sexual desire will operate independently of other desires or factors that are not directly related to the body, but only that central to sexual desire itself is the desire to become physically intimate in certain ways with the other person’s body” (348).

The discussions above make it clear that lust is inherently the outcome of selfish interest, in which both the partners try to take as much emotional advantage as they can. There is little consideration of other’s welfare. Self-satisfaction is at the

centre of lust. If there is slight distortion in the vested interest, there is a possibility of ending that temporary relation, which may result in the revelation of the lustful acts in the spur of emotion. It brings a question in the image of the person. To avert this damage, there is the interest of destroying the source of defamation, thus leading to violence and destruction.

Most of the major characters in the play are involved in adultery. For example, the relation between Brachiano and Vittoria is extramarital. Brachiano is not satisfied with his own wife Isabella and Vittoria is always unfaithful for her husband Camillio. Vittoria fulfils her passion secretly with Brachiano at first, through which they indulge in their lustful activities in such a way that they maintain their moral status in the society. But the extramarital lust between men and women is a violation and has certain limits. It is sure that the limits are crossed one day and this leads to the revelation of that immoral act. This results in defamation, so the people do not hold back to commit even very serious crimes. The same has happened in *The White Devil*.

It is often thought that if there is love, the hidden interest behind that love is lust. It is the desire for sex that brings people so close to each other. In this sense, love and lust go side by side, and both can lead to destruction, but this is not true as if there is true love, there is self-sacrifice not selfishness, and there is no interest in causing any type of harm to the love partners. Just contrary to this, lust is a relationship selfishly established to fulfil sexual desire and it is transient. In case of slight disagreement or contrast in interest between the sex partners, there is a big issue of danger regarding moral or social images. This makes the person lose their face in the society, and to save this face they set for even serious violence as in the play.

Lust, Intrigue and Murder

In *The White Devil*, most of the major characters get involved in lustful

activities. They make secret plans to finish those whom they think are the obstacles on their way to adultery. There are others, like the relatives of those lustful characters, who try to ruin those who have enticed their relatives to lustful activities. For example, Brachiano has an illicit relation with Vittoria. Here, Brachiano tried and had Ishabela, his own wife, and Camillo, Vittorie's husband killed. On the other hand, Lodovico and his ally Casparo killed Brachiano to avenge Ishabella's murder as Lodovico was in love with her.

Although the characters like Brachiane, Vittorie, Lodovico, Ishabella, Flamineo and others are married, their lustful thought, dissatisfaction and ambitious nature drive them to engage in extramarital relationship which is against the contemporary Christian faith, beliefs, norms and values of the Jacobean period.

Disloyalty, violence, blames murders and destruction function as conclusive aspect of the play; however, lust is to be the fundamental cause. At the same time, self-centered and selfish nature of Flamineo, dual nature of Zanche, and aggressive and violent nature of Lodovico also act as a catalyst for the destruction and tragedy in the play.

Webster has successfully placed the scenes and characters in such a way that it reflects the hidden unnatural and immoral thoughts of the characters. They are often devil like in reality, but on the surface they act as if they have obeyed the boundary of social, moral and religious sincerity which is often white.

The play begins with the banishment of Lodovico, who is a conclusive character and is supported by Gasparo and Antoneio. The role of Isabella is innocent in the play but her relation with Lodovico is leading to violence and destruction in the name of revenge.

The over ambitious nature of Flamineo, who is striving for social rising finds

the relation between Brachiano and Vittorie, his own sister, a great opportunity to implement his plan, so he plays a major role in establishing the intimacy between the two. The dream of bold career and economic sustainability are the factors for Flamineo to do so. He looks so pleased while talking to Brachiano about Vittorie:

BRACHIANO. Are we so happy?

FLAMINEO. Can it be otherwise? / Observ'd you not to-night, / My honour'd lord, / Which way so'er you went, she threw her eyes? / I have dealt already with her chambermaid, / Zanche the Moor, and she is wondrous proud to be the agent for so high a spirit.

BRACHIANO. We are happy above thought, because 'bove merit.

FLAMINEO. 'Bove merit! / We may now talk freely: 'boVe merit! / What is't you doubt? Her coyness! / That's but the superficialities of lust most women have; yet why should ladies blush to hear that named, which they do not fear to handle? / Oh, they are politic; they know our desire is increased by the difficulty of enjoying; / Whereas satiety is a blunt, weary, and drowsy passion. / If the buttry-hatch at court stood continually open, there would be nothing so passionate crowding, nor hot suit after the beverage. (II.4)

Flamineo, the brother to Vittoria, is such an immoral character who arranges meetings for Brachiano and his sister, who has been married to Camillo. His treachery to his own brother-in-law, Camillo, is an immoral act, but he does it to fulfil his desire of being promoted in his job. He is a controversial character, and constantly views women with a negative or cynical viewpoint. Here, he criticizes women as having two-faces, virgins and whores, which suggests that even below innocent faces, sin hides.

The smell of passion and lust can be observed in the conversation of

Brachiano with Flamineo which reflects their thought and devotion towards lust silently:

BRACHIANO. Sweetly shall I interpret this dream? /You are lodg'd within his arms / That shall protect you from all the fevers of a jealous husband, / From the poor envy of our phlegmatic duchess. / I'll seat you above law, and above scandal; / Give to your thoughts the invention of delight, /And the fruition; nor shall government Divide me from you longer, than a care to keep you great: you shall to me at once Be dukedom, health, wife, children, friends, and all.' (I. ii. 10)

The dissatisfaction in the relationship and eager to establish the relation that is extramarital can be concluded in the statements of Brachiano with Vittoria. The dialogue proves the affinity of Brachiano towards Vittoria.

The extramarital relationship and Brachiano confess the love to the Vittoria (who is already the wife of Camillo) through Flamineo (brother of Vittoria) In Act I, the objective of Flamineo towards Brachiano is clear whatever he is doing for the arrangement the union between Brachiano and Vittoria is guided by the dream of money that is the money of the Brachiano. However, the indulgent of Vittoria with Brachiano though in the dark and immoral fundamentals on the norms of contemporary beliefs brings some bright side in Act I, which can be marked through the conversation of Flamineo and Cornelia, the mother of Flamineo and Cornelia as:

CORNELIA: The lives of princes should like dials move, / Whose regular example is so strong, / they make the times by them go right, or wrong.

FLAMINEO. So, have you done?

CORNELIA. Unfortunate Camillo. (Act I, Scene II, page11)

This dialogue completely elaborates the pure and moral thought of mother who only

not refuses on the meeting, but also for science about the further bitter and destructive. Consequences so, Cornelia's role in the first act wants to guide the drama towards the positivity i.e a white and pure morality.

The positivity of mother Cornelia is again ignored by her son Flamineo who not only blames for his dead father for poverty but also humiliates his own mother by preferring to have a prostitute as a mother rather than having Cornelia as his mother, which becomes clear through the given conversation in the play between Cornelia and Flamineo as:

CORNELIA. O that I ne'er had borne thee!

FLAMINEO. So would I; / I would the common'st courtesan in Rome / Had been my mother, rather than thyself. / Nature is very pitiful to whores, / To give them but few children, yet those children / Plurality of fathers; they are sure / They shall not want. *Go, go,* / Complain unto my great lord cardinal; / It maybe he will justify the act. / Lycurgus wonder'd much, men would provide / Good stallions for their mares, and yet would suffer their fair wives to be barren. (Act I, Scene II, Page 12)

Thus, in Act I, the writer has illustrated about the bitterness in the conjugal relation between husband and wife, destruction in the moral values of the characters like Flamineo, Vittoria and Brachiano and strong intension towards sexual indulgement of which are not other than the feeling of lust in the characters. The set up in second act seems like experimental as if the characters and incidents go smoothly and accordingly to the plan.

Trust of Isabella, the wife of Brachiano collapses and appeals for help in court in Act II. Francisco, the brother of Isabella tries to set up the things to go well. So, warns Brachiano for his sister. These incidents in the play can be the sign of the

strong violence and tragic ends in the drama. The cruelty of Brachiano towards Isabella will be the cause or beginning for the violence and destruction in the play and the formal 'divorce' agreement between Isabella and Brachiano is going to open a door for the easy access towards the relation of Brachiano and Vittoria

In Act II, the nature of Brachiano is very cruel towards his wife. His passion for Vittoria drives him even to commit murders of those who oppose his strong lust towards Vittoria and wants to prove himself a trusty lover in the heart of Vittoria. In fact, from Act II, we can generalize the scene of the play, which is taking the characters from lust to destruction and the major responsible character is Brachiano who is blindly driven through lust towards Vittoria.

The events in Act II are the sequel to what happened in Act I. The consequences of the murders of Isabella and Camillo should be compensated. The blame goes to Vittoria as she was in affair with Brachiano with strong affectation towards Brachiano.

Generally, in Act III, the playwright wants to continue the play by creating settlements on the consequences of the incidents according to rule and laws of the existing Jacobean period. The playwright wants to drive the characters towards the suffering and punishment that is necessary for their deeds. Thus, in the absence of evidences of the murder of the Isabella and Camillio, Bracchiano is set free. However, Vittoria is tried to charge on the cause of murders and adultery (her extra marital indulgement towards Brachiano) but she is favored from getting punishment due to the lack of evidences of her murder. Flamineo is set free through the payment as fine. This is not the end of the play. Another part of the play is focused on the revenge of the murder of Isabella and Camillo. Therefore, more horrible events are still to come.

In Act IV, Brachiano releases Vittoria from prison, and they flee to Pauda.

Their conversation in the play is a single strong lust motive which can be analyzed through the conversation between Brachiano and Flamineo. It reflects about the Brachiano's strong lust desire to marry Vittoria and Flamineo's strong support to make the plan successful as:

BRACHIANO. Soft; the same project which the Duke of Florence, (Whether in love or gallery I know not) /Laid down for her escape, will I pursue.

FLAMINEO. And no time fitter than this night, my lord. /The Pope being dead, and all the cardinals enter'd / The conclave, for th' electing a new Pope; / The city in a great confusion; / We may attire her in a page's suit, / Lay her post-horse, take shipping, and amain /For Padua. (Act IV, Scene II, page 54-55)

The secret plan that Brachiano and Flamineo make for a runaway is the consequence of their strong bond established by lust.

Francisco and Cardinal Monticelso also go through secret plans, trying to find the way to take revenge of Isabella's death. Vittoria is the target here. Francisco's intention of sending the fabricated letter to Vittoria is to cause misunderstanding and conflict in between Brachiano and Vittoria. However, Vittoria's strong affinity towards Bracciano and her strong desires to develop firm bond with him finally convince him. This is clear from the conversation given below:

BRACHIANO. I have drunk Lethe:

VITTORIA. My dearest happiness! Vittoria! What do you fail, my love? Why do you weep?

VITTORIA. Yes, I now weep poniards, do you see?

BRACHIANO. Are not those matchless eyes mine?

VITTORIA. I had rather they were not matches.

BRACHIANO. Is not this lip mine?

VITTORIA. Yes; thus to bite it off, rather than give it thee. (Act IV, Scene II, page 52)

Thus, the love and extramarital affair originated from lust is going to take these couples towards destruction. Meanwhile, the arrival of Lodovico in Act IV surprisingly creates chaos in the play. Again, the relationship of Lodovico (confessed by Lodovico himself) with Isabella is also clearly noticeable as lust.

MONTICELSO. You have o'erta'en me.

LODOVICO. Sir, I did love Brachiano's duchess dearly, /Or rather I pursued her with hotlust, though she ne'er knew of't. /She was poison'd; / Upon my soul she was: for which I have sworn / T' avenges her murder.

MONTICELSO. To the Duke of Florence?

LODOVICO. To him I have. (Act IV, Scene III, page 58-59)

Lodovico promises to Francisco that he will definitely take the revenge of Isabella's death by the murder of Brachiano. Thus, the violence in the play is again going to be started and the conversation between the characters makes us easy to trace the strong repulsion and hate of Lodovico towards Brachiano.

In between these lust and violence scenario of the play, the role of Montecelso is very dramatic and unclear. His intension looks quite different than his appearance in the play. Although, Montecelso is facilitating the up going disorder and destruction in the play, but he appears very polite and lawful because of his position of pope. He indirectly assists upcoming murders either by financial funds or by bringing the "Black book", a book with list of contemporary criminals.

Finally, the unnatural and illegal affair and their lust lead Brachiano and Vittoria to engage them in marriage. In Act V, Scene I opens with the marriage

ceremony of Brachiano and Vittoria followed by Flamineo, Marcelo, Hortensio, Cornelia, Zanche and the ambassadors which is the consequences of lust of Brachiano and Vittoria. Meanwhile, the surprising mode in the play where there is a dreadful destruction is going to take place due to lust is yet to come. The relationship of Hortensio and Flamineo with Zanche becomes the key issue for discussion and violence between these characters which signifies that they are also riven by lust sense in them.

From the conversation between Hortensio and Flamineo, it is known that Flamineo is lustfully crazy about. Flamineo wishes he had a chance to sleep with Zanche but he does not trust her and says he cannot marry her. It means that the affinity and good will that Flamineo shows to Zanche is not the expression of real love but of lust. The possibility is also that Zanche herself is only lustful towards Flamineo or she is not loyal which is clear from conversation below:

HORTENSIO. Look you, yonder's your sweet mistress.

FLAMINEO. Thou art my sworn brother: I'll tell thee, I do love that Moor that witches, very constrainedly. She knows some of my villainy. I do love her just as a man holds a wolf by the ears; but for fear of her turning upon me, and pulling out my throat, I would let her go to the devil.

HORTENSIO. I hear she claims marriage of thee.

FLAMINEO. 'Faith, I made to her some such dark promise; and, in seeking to fly from 't, / I run on, like a frightened dog with a bottle at 's tail, that fain would bite it off, and yet dares not look behind him. / Now, my precious gipsy. (Act V. Scene I: Page 64- 65)

Although, Flamineo made a false promise to Zanche that he would definitely marry her but now he was about to betray her by avoiding the marriage. Thus pure and white

love lacks in between these two characters, too, and whatever behavior they show, it is guided by their lustful nature.

The character of Zanche is also very immoral and lustful as she engages herself with two brothers Flamineo and Marcello which becomes the key issue for the conflict among the two brothers. Although, she looks truly attracted towards Flamineo but her attachment with Marcello has created the trouble in the relation between the brothers. Zanche is assaulted with the word 'whore' means the lust of Zanche is beginning of the destruction and bloodshed between the two brothers because she was not like where or if she was very loyal and faithful towards a single men, then she couldn't have been categorized and insulted in such away.

Flamineo and Zanche both become very lustful, which leads him to the murder of Marcello, his own brother. This crime brings Bracciano and Lodovico together in the same place where another horrible murder is going to take place. Lodovico poisons Brachino very soon. Brachiano realizes that he has been poisoned which is fatal. The death of Brachiano does not look sufficient for the revenge of Isabella death. Meanwhile, the flirt of Zanche and Francisco again explains about the lustful scenario of the play where they talk about their dream, a lustful dream. Francisco very humorously cajoles Zanche stating a dream he had about her, in which he put blanket over her naked body to ward off cold:

ZANCHE. Methought, sir, you came stealing to my bed.

FRANCISCO. Wilt thou believe me, sweeting? by this light I was a-dreamt on thee too; for me though I saw thee naked.

ZANCHE. Fie, sir! as I told you, Me thought you lay down by me.

FRANCISCO. So dreamt I; And lest thou shouldst take cold, I cover'd thee with this Irish mantle.

ZANCHE. Verily I did dream You were somewhat bold with me: but to come to't (Act V, Scene. III, page 76-77)

This flirt opens the truth of murder of Isabella and Camillo. Zanche shares every event of the murders of Isabella and Camillo with Francisco. The lustful and loveable pretending of Francisco towards Zanche built up the trust in the eye of Zanche towards Francisco, which reveals the secrets of murder.

Finally, Francisco and Lodovico become aware of actual truth. The grave of Marcello, the sorrows and pains of Cornelia and horrible death of Brachiano makes Flamineo to realize about the whole destruction and the reason behind the destruction. The lust of Brachiano and Vittoria, the unfaithfulness in the relations shown by Vittoria and Zanche and his own self centered and lustful and aggressive behaviors becomes a matter of thought and realize about whatever happened and is happening later. Flamineo, Zanche and Vittoria realize their bad deeds.

Thus, Vittoria assures Flamineo that he should kill himself at first then Vittoria and Zanche would follow him. Flamineo seems agreed to shoot himself, so he instructs Zanche to shoot him. Zanche follows the instruction and Flamineo becomes injured, Vittoria and Zanche change their mind. Actually, they just wanted to see Flamineo dead, protecting themselves safely. This is another example of treachery.

The violence and destruction due to lust do not end up here, but yet is going to be started. The entry of Lodovico, Gasparo, Carlo and Pedro are going to create the climax of the play. They give their true identity to in front of Flamineo, Vittoria and Zanche and reason behind why they are murdering everyone who are responsible for the murders of Isabella and Camillo. The huge tussle begins. These newly entered three men stab Flamineo, Vittoria and Zanche simultaneously. In this way, Zanche

dies, and then Vittoria and finally Flamineo dies. Here, the Flamineo ugly character is exposed in this act.

The play ends with the success of plans of the character. The conspirators Lodovico and his allies are quickly arrested and imprisoned for their deeds. Thus, this crime took place through the initiation of lust in the characters and dreadful destruction in the play is evil crime in the name of revenge.

Lust leading to Deaths

Several scenes have been presented in the play. They create a type of horror in the readers mind, which remind the readers of Shakespearean tragedy. The first dumb show in play is the death of Isabella. The death of Isabella involves no dialogue but how she died is mentioned as:

Enter suspiciously Julio and Christophero: they draw a curtain where Brachiano's picture is; they put on spectacles of glass, which cover their eyes and noses, and then burn perfumes before the picture, and wash the lips of the picture; that done, quenching the fire, and putting off their spectacles, they depart laughing. Enter Isabella in her night-gown, as to bedward, with lights, after her, Count Lodovico, Giovanni, Guidantonio, and others waiting on her: she kneels down as to prayers, then draws the curtain of the picture, 25 does three reverences to it, and kisses it thrice; she faints, and will not suffer them to come near it; dies; sorrow expressed in Giovanni, and in Count Lodovico. She is conveyed out solemnly (Act II, Scene II page 24)

The treachery here is unimaginable. By using poison on her husband's photograph, the cruel conspirators kill her.

The second dumb show in the play is the death of Camillo. The death takes place in a silent way with no involvement of dialogues as:

Enter Flamineo, Marcello, Camillo, with four more as captains: they drink healths, and dance; a vaulting horse is brought into the room; Marcello and two more whispered out of the room, while Flamineo and Camillo strip themselves into their shirts, as to vault; compliment who shall begin; as Camillo is about to vault, Flamineo pitcheth him upon his neck, and, with the help of the rest, writhes his neck about; seems to see if it be broke, and lays him folded double, as 'twere under the horse; makes show to call for help; Marcello comes in, laments; sends for the cardinal and duke, who comes forth with armed men; wonders at the act; commands the body to be carried home; apprehends Flamineo, Marcello, and the rest, and go, as 'twere, to apprehend Vittoria. (II, ii.26)

What a heartless person Flamineo has been painted in the scene. A normal human cannot easily imagine such a murder of person who is a close relative, that is, brother-in-law.

The lustful desire of Flamineo to Zanche takes him towards the murder of his own brother Marcello. This murder brings the character Bracciano with Lodovico in the same place where the horrible murder is going to take place. The last word of Marcello is:

MARCELLO. Oh, mother, now remember what I told /Of breaking of the
 crucifix! /Farewell. /There are some sins, which heaven doth duly punish /
 In a whole family. /This it is to rise /By all dishonest means! /Let all men
 know, 67 / That tree shall long time keep a steady foot,/ Whose branches
 spread no wider than the root. [Dies] (Act V, Scene II, page 67)

The lust drives the murders of the characters with more violent climax. Lodovico very soon poisons Brachiano 'who realizes that he has been poisoned which is fatal.

The murder scene of Brachiano with his last words is as follows:

BRACHIANO. He will be drunk; avoid him: th' argument/ Is fearful, when
 churchmen stagger in 't. /Look you, six grey rats that have lost their tails
 /Crawl upon the pillow; send for a rat-catcher: /I 'll do a miracle, /I 'll free
 the court /From all foul vermin. /Where's Flamineo? (Act V, Scene III,
 page73)

The entry of Lodovico, Gasparo, Carlo and Pedro are going to create the climax of the play. These newly entered three men stab Flamineo, Vittoria and Zanche simultaneously. In this way, Zanche dies, and then Vittoria and finally Flamineo dies.

Here, the Flemineo ugly character is exposed in this act and the last dialogues while they were dying are given below:

ZANCHE. I have blood /As red as either of theirs: wilt drink some? /'Tis good
 for the falling-sickness. /I am proud: /Death cannot alter my complexion,
 /For I shall ne'er look pale. (Act V, Scene VI, page.89)

Zanche, though not a character of good image, tries to show her audacity at the last moment. Satirically she calls her murderers as blood thirsty, and accepts death comfortably.

VITTORIA. Oh, happy they that never saw the court /Nor ever knew great
 men but by report! [Vittoria dies.] (Act V, Scene VI, page 90)

FLAMINEO. I recover like a spent taper, for a flash, \And instantly go out.
 /Let all that belong to great men remember th' old wives' tradition, to be
 like the lions i' th' /Tower on Candlemas-day; to mourn if the sun shine,
 for fear of the pitiful remainder of winter to come. /'Tis well yet there 's
 some goodness in my death; / My life was a black charnel. /I have caught
 An everlasting cold; /I have lost my voice /Most irrecoverably. /Farewell,

glorious villains. /This busy trade of life appears most vain, /Since rest
breeds rest, /where all seek pain by pain. /Let no harsh flattering bells
resound my knell; /Strike, thunder, and strike loud, to my farewell! [Dies.]

(Act V, Scene VI, page90)

At this point of his life Flamineo comes to realize his sinful activities back in his life.

His words indicate that he prefers death to life as he says “My life was a black charnel”. It is surprising that he remembers all his black deeds and curses himself.

Even while near to his death, he uses satirical rhetoric.

To conclude the discussion, it is clearly noticed that most of the characters are overcome by id and cannot control their eros. They keep extra-marital affairs to satisfy their lustful desire. The consequence is that either they kill others or they are killed. Lust is the major cause of all destruction in the play.

Chapter: 3

Conclusion: Lust as the Cause for Tragedy

Webster's play, *The White Devil*, is one of the successful interpretations on lust and deadly bloodshed. He combines physical, emotional and psychological factors that are acting simultaneously, driving the characters to engage in lust and commit violence.

The characters in the play do not act morally. They do not seem to follow any of the social norms and values. One of the reasons for their not following the social rules is that most of them come from so called high social class and are confident that they can use their power to avert any type of unpleasant consequences, so they feel safe and do not hesitate to commit any type of crime. The characters are not in pure love indeed; their lust is not only guided through the expectation of pleasure or sexual indulgent, but they also have selfishness and self-centered motives as well.

The emergence of crimes is the consequence of lust. These are the people who are corrupt and dishonest. Their appearance and real motives are at opposite poles. For example, the Duke of Brachino, though a person from the high social class gets involved in lust and murder. Similarly, other characters like Lodovico, Flaminio and Vitoria also behave in a similar way.

The White Devil is a tragedy about murder and lust. Sexual desire is perceived as a force that is almost impossible to control but destructive. To maintain a normal, moral life lust is to be curbed, restricted and repressed to some degree, that is, to the extent our psyche can withstand it.

The play is about moral decay. It is natural that every person has got the desire for sexual act. As said earlier, the desire is animal desire, in which; 'id' plays a major role. If this role cannot be controlled, the consequences are dire. The murder of so

many characters in the play is the outcome of the characters' inability to control their id. Because of their weak ego they could not bring balance between the id and the superego. Imbalance in the two psychic forces invited chaos and destruction.

The play presents darker aspects of human nature. The characters have forgotten who they are and what their images in the society are. Almost all the characters demonstrate their degraded status of both private and social life, keeping the value of emotions over reason. They have given higher priority to ambition than to morality. They put more importance on surface appearances than on moral values. Overcome by temptation and emotions, they slide into corruption.

This study has analyzed the play on the nature and behavior of characters through psychoanalytic point of view. The study has tried to enter the psyche of the characters to investigate why these characters become so blind towards sexual acts. Meanwhile, the study has also tried to find out different ploys the characters have employed in the play. The psychological study of the play has clearly indicated that characters' id has been dominant over superego because we see that the characters of the play are led by lust and become blind to their moral values and humanity. They do not seem to accept what their education or morality instructs them. As a result, the consequences are so dreadful that the events in the play create a type of horror in the readers. On the background of all the consequences, there are those lustful characters who take adultery as a normal human behavior.

Most of the critical studies hitherto have focused on Webster's exploits of the conventions of revenge tragedy in the play. The characters outwardly seem to take revenge upon their adversaries, but it should not be forgotten that all these revenge activities are the sequel to their adultery.

Finally, sensational horror is presented in this play; it is horrible that the three

major characters are killed towards the end of the play. A sight of the three corpses makes the readers' blood run cold. Earlier, the other characters like Ishabela, Brachiano and Cammilo have already been murdered. When we look into the causes of these murders, we find that it is the lustful nature of these characters. Lust drove them to an extramarital affairs eventually leading them to their death. Therefore, the present study has proved that Lust is the main cause of the violence and destruction in the play.

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