

## **THE MYTH OF MALE DOMINATED PATRIARCHAL TYRANNY IN SOCIETY FROM “THE STORM BY MCKNIGHT MALMAR” SHORT STORY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The world is too complex to explain and deconstruct without a thorough objective, fair, and deep research. Simplification of meaning becomes the alternative to thorough research. Something would be easier to understand if people could make the meaning simple. It is easier to understand if a case that involve a man as a perpetrator and especially the woman as a victim is a case of patriarchy. But there are many factors to be considered in order to judge a problematical case. This is the case for the short story Storm by Mcknight Malmar, the story suggest that it was liberating for female to given up and left to seek a better love. It is a good solution if the lover or in this case the husband is an evil person with evil personality. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method analysis to deconstruct the myth of male dominated patriarchal tyranny in the story. Using the reader-response theory can be usefully integrated with narrative psychology by situating personal narratives at the top of an individual's knowledge hierarchy.

**Keywords: Patriarchy, Male, Female, Tyranny, Simplification**

### **INTRODUCTION**

According to Sidiki (2018), female have always been being seen as second-class citizen, object, and uneducated. Female has been told to not explore the world but rather focus on their looks and their homes with their husbands. When that fact might be true for a long time, it is what happened until the modern time. While the female always regarded as the victim, the male on the other hand has always been subjugated as the perpetrator. Men has always been being seen as the source of destruction, the torturers, the worst villain in story, the source, and the object of patriarchy. Patriarchy is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominate in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property (Walby, Sylvia. 1990).

Feminists believe that women's rights are severely limited in the society. The culture within society limited women to only take care of housework and family, prohibit women to pursue their desire. While some of the inequality is real and must be solved, there are instances that factually says otherwise. In education, Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) report shows that the percentage of the Indonesian female population aged 15 years and over who has a college diploma is higher than the male population. The percentage of women who have completed college will reach 10.06% in 2021, while men will reach 9.28%. This debunked the notion that women do not have the same right as men in access of education.

The problem arises when there is no thorough, fair, objective, and detailed research to the argument. There are many factors that must have when people create an

argument, if the only or the top of the factors is the sentimental or personal narratives than it will create more problem than the solution. Of these instances, Maridyani and Tamawi (2022) stated that God creates Humans with advantages and disadvantages in each gender, thus they must collaborate and respective towards each other's.

The storm is a short story written by Mcknight Malmar that illustrates the fight of a middleclass woman named Janet Willsom with her life and the relationship between her and her husband. Janet feels that there is an emptiness in her heart, she feels a heartbreaking dilemma. Her husband has many good qualities according to Janet, but then she found out that her husband has a psychopathic tendency to him. Thus, make him a bad person, personally.

This research aims to dig at the argument of not every case of crime that being done by a man has some kind of tendency to male patriarchy, that every man has always have inner thought and intention of being evil to woman because it is within man nature to objectifying woman. But rather that every man has capability to do evil but there are factors behind them that not all cases are patriarch.

Objectively, men and women are capable to fell into the life of crime. In 2019, 74% of individuals dealt with by the Criminal Justice System in UK were male, and 26% were female (gov.co.uk). The numbers of men are higher than female indicates the probability of men breaking the law and committed egregious behavior are higher than women.

According to the publication, the journal,i.e: it is critical to recognize that violence cannot be reduced to a single cause. Instead, there are many factors that can lead to aggressive behavior.

Biology is one component that could have a role. Persistent aggressive behavior has been linked to minor brain damage and some psychiatric problems, including psychopathy, according to research.

Childhood trauma is a second aspect that could play a role. There is significant evidence that severe childhood neglect and violent assault are high risk factors for adult violent behavior. It is obvious that severely dysfunctional parenting can lead to serious developmental issues in children, which can lead to problematic behavior, including violence.

The influence of groups on individual behavior is a third potential contributory factor. Thugs who use violence to resolve disputes; xenophobes who blame others for their problems; sympathizers who become involved through peer pressure; and politically motivated offenders, who are usually educated and engage in violence in pursuit of their political beliefs, according to research into group violence like racial assaults.

With all the consideration, this research is focused on to proof that the crime that happen on the story "Storm" is not because of the tendency of man are patriarch but rather to proof that the man is a criminal with psychopathic tendency.

## **METHODS**

The method that is used by this research is of descriptive qualitative using the Reader-Response theory.

Qualitative descriptive analysis is a qualitative-based research technique using data descriptions, the data that usually obtained can be in the form of interviews, photos, videos, articles, documents, and others. Qualitative descriptive itself is used to answer

questions or problems that occur so that it can be found what is the source of the problem and the consequences of those problems (Kim, H., Sefcik, J. S., & Bradway, C., 2016).

The use of qualitative descriptive on the problems raised by arguments based on examples of patriarchy in writing the "Storm" lies in the things that happen in this short story, such as finding what are considered symbols of persecution against women or the discovery of unfavorable phenomena that occur. In this research itself, the data are obtained from articles, journals, and digital writing media sites on the Internet.

Carlisle (2000) characterizes reader-response theory as one that underscores the reader's creative involvement. He highlights the interactive and expressive essence of this theory, aligning with its aim to prompt critical thinking and comprehension in readers. In essence, reader-response theory posits a reciprocal relationship between the text and the reader. The reader's comprehension and perspective significantly shape the interpretation of the text. According to Becker (1999, 104), the text presents various linguistic, conceptual, and referential cues, which the reader, conscious of the context, imbues with meaning. Early in the reading process, the reader consciously or subconsciously adopts a primary perspective. This theory rejects the notion of text as static and independent of reader influence. Instead, it encourages readers to engage critically with the text, drawing upon personal experiences, prior knowledge, and individual viewpoints during interpretation.

Spirovska (2019) also highlighting the benefit of using Reader-Response theory for student, there are several ways to engage students with literary texts, including increasing their awareness of critical reading, creating context that makes the text more relevant and meaningful, and encouraging student participation.

## **RESULTS**

McKnight Malmar's short story "The Storm" has garnered attention for its exploration of themes such as isolation, fear, and the unknown. However, some readers have interpreted the story through a feminist lens, suggesting that it serves as a commentary on gender roles and the societal constraints placed upon women. While this interpretation may seem plausible on the surface, a deeper analysis utilizing reader-response theory reveals that the feminist aspect of "The Storm" is not as prominent as it may initially appear. Since the data is a narrative text, it is represented by quotes. The quotes chosen contain the issues of feminism and patriarchy. The main idea of "The Storm" is that no one should accept a life that does not make them happy. Janet claims to be content with her life with her husband Ben throughout the short story, but she felt confusion and uncertainty whether her choice is the right one, especially when she started to question everything.

## **DISCUSSION**

*"She breathed a sigh of thankfulness at being home again and in time.  
In rain like this, the crossroads always were flooded. Half an hour later her cab  
could not have got through the rising water, and there was no alternative route."  
Then, in "...All the way home-she had been visiting her sister-..."*

This quote describes that Jane went to her home alone, with cab or taxi. It means that she has the freedom to go out alone without the supervised of men, notably from family. Common perception is that in the patriarchal world, women can't never go outside beyond their own home that they should always within their home. While it is factually

correct that many cultures only allow women go outside alone if they have the agreement from the man of the house, it is still farfetched from the notion that women cannot go out at all, especially from the time the story taken place. Understanding "The Storm" within its cultural and historical context provides further nuance to its interpretation. While gender undoubtedly influences the protagonist's experiences, the broader societal dynamics of the time period contribute to the complexity of her narrative. By contextualizing the story within its cultural surrounding, readers can appreciate the interplay of various factors that shape the protagonist's journey.

*" She had thought nothing of the lonesomeness. It was perfect here--for two. She had taken such pleasure in fixing up her house--her very own house--and caring for it that she had not missed company other than Ben. But now, alone and with the storm trying to batter its way in, she found it frightening to be so far away from other people..."*

This excerpt from the story encapsulates the protagonist's visceral experience of isolation and impending danger. The sense of existential dread conveyed here transcends gender-specific concerns and speaks to the broader human condition. By focusing solely on feminism, readers risk overlooking the universal themes of fear and vulnerability that permeate the narrative. From other perspective it could be inferred that the *lonesomeness* is caused by the traditional social construct that women should be dependent, not independent, thus when this example happened, she feels lonely. But the feeling of lonesomeness can be felt by everyone regardless of gender, it can be because the storm and the weather or silence where her home present, those lonely feeling happened.

*"But he was a good husband. She sighed unconsciously, not knowing it was because of youth and romance missed. She repeated it to herself, firmly, as she sipped her coffee. He was a good husband. Suppose he was ten years older than she, and a little set in his ways; a little – perhaps – dictatorial at times, and moody. He had given her what she thought she wanted, security and a home of her own; if security were not enough, she could not blame him for it."*

Janet expresses her sadness and dissatisfaction in this chapter, but she convinces herself that she is wrong and should be happy with what she has. The belief that women are meant to pursue a domestic life—a hardworking spouse, a family, and nothing more. Janet felt bad about not sticking to this ideal. She is used by the author to demonstrate that we do not have to force ourselves to play the roles that society assigns to us; instead, we should do what makes us happy, regardless of what is expected of us.

But the problem arises when there's no limit to the notion that we should do whatever makes us happy. Because there should be a stopping point as a reminder that what we do might wrong. And it is absolutely fine to reject the offer of something that we do not want or in worst case scenario, something bad happened. If that is the case than it is lawfully, objectively, and morally right to get out of that situation. But, if the case was, she wanted to leave just because she was not happy then is there no such thing as working it out, fixing the relationship, or even just communicate what you want with the person you are with. Giving up is not a solution, it is leaving on only one term. But thankfully, this is not the whole case with Janet because later in the story she found an understandable situation that morally, objectively, lawfully needs her to leave.

Another theme is the idea that no event is isolated; each thing that happens is a small part of a larger chain of events. This idea comes to Janet with the following:

*“Slowly something beyond the mere fact of murder, of death, began to penetrate her mind. Slowly she realized that beyond this fact there would be consequences. That body in the cellar was not an isolated phenomenon; some train of events had led to its being there and would follow its discovery there.”*

As he writes the catastrophic narrative of "The Storm". McKnight Malmar brilliantly conjures up a twisted nightmare of events. What begins as a late night alone at home during a storm ends horribly as a wife is preyed upon by the one and only consolation she had been urgently seeking—her husband. It started out as a rocky relationship that would eventually get better, but it swiftly devolved into a living nightmare.

When this narrative takes place, Janet and Ben have only been married for fifteen months. At the age of thirty-one, she marries later in life. Janet had been alone for a long time and was in dire need of a masculine figure in her life to look over her and provide her with the protection she requires, much like a father. She was a small girl craving protection...”. This explains why she is constantly needing Ben and Ben alone to save her. He appears to her as a fatherly figure who can ease any of her concerns. This confirms the possibility that she was a naive and still not understanding how the world works, she does not believe that she could fight and struggle on her own, maybe that because in the time of the story women were not being able to have a proper education or the same level of education as men. But that does not mean that there is some big force from the patriarch to “made her stupid” but rather the culture of its time that led to her not understanding the concept of thinking critically.

She imagines herself making a grandiose arrival, being welcomed by a loving husband and embraced by the warmth of the fire. She takes *“delight in picturing his happy surprise in seeing her, (as she returned) home a week earlier than he had expected. She (knows) just how his round face would light up, how his eyes would twinkle behind his glasses, how he would catch her by the shoulders and... kiss her resoundly on both cheeks...”*.

This indicates that she has an emotional attachment to his husband, because she thinks that her husband will love her the way she thinks she loves her. And that was a realistic belief of a lover to their lover, wanting something more or expecting things that would make her happy. And this is not the example of the thoughts that women were constructed as a being who only wanted to be pleased like some kind of pet by the society.

Janet's imagined beliefs go in the opposite way, much to her dismay. Despite the fact that her marriage is already in trouble, "The Storm" closes with her waking up from her fantasy. Ben is the first character to have a name assigned to him. Janet's name does not appear until the conclusion of the story since it was included in Ben's conversation. Janet cites her marital name, Willsom, but never associates it with her given name. This represents their relationship's breakdown. Even though it indicates that they spend weeks in awkward silence at the dinner table because of his prone to rage, Janet keeps mentioning how she wishes Ben was home for his comfort. From beginning, Ben actually showing his evil side to her, but Janet still patient and continues to support him even until too late when he showed his true color that Ben is a psychopath and made an evil act by murdering a woman. It is very important to a woman to know her husband's true character and nature even before marriage so that a woman can avoid misery, and what Janet did in the end, just leave even in the middle of the storm it is better than to stick around with an evil person.

“...the storm held its breath for a moment, and in the brief space of silence she heard footsteps on the walk...”, “the wind helped her and slammed the door resoundingly”, “The blessed wind snatched the front door from her and flung it wide, and she was out in the safe, dark shelter of the storm”.

When Ben neared the home, the only sound was the howl of the wind, which alerted Janet to the danger. Following the discovery of the body in the cellar. In another example, the storm was a "gift" for Janet, as Malmar phrased it. Comforts do not always live up to expectations. Ben was Janet's solace until she realized he had murdered someone and was prepared to do it again to protect himself. Her wishful thinking that their marriage may be saved was misguided. Their marriage was already in trouble before the murder. And the best way for her is to leave.

## CONCLUSION

The author's message here is that with each event that happens, we need to consider what happened before and what will happen after to truly understand and analyze the situation.

Not all cases of bad thing done by men are some kinds of patriarchal motives behind them, an evil man do an evil act maybe because he has an evil intention. Evil is capable of being done by men and women, but the numbers are higher being done by men than women. It is important to recognize types of evil and the signs of it, in hope that no woman will be subjected to the evil.

While gender dynamics undoubtedly shape the experiences of the characters in "The Storm," reducing the story solely to a feminist critique overlooks its broader themes and complexities. By exploring the narrative through a psychoanalytic lens, considering universal human experiences, and contextualizing it within its cultural and historical backdrop, readers can appreciate the richness and depth of McKnight Malmar's work beyond a singular interpretive framework. "The Storm" emerges as a haunting exploration of fear, isolation, and existential dread that transcends narrow feminist readings and invites readers to delve into the complexities of the human psyche.

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