

Stigmatization of a Transgender in Alan Rossi's *The Nature of Man*

Abstract

The current study is about the stigmatization of a transgender character depicted in the American short story 'The Nature of Man' by Alan Rossi. For the analysis of the stigmatization, critical discourse analysis by Norman Fairclough (1995) is used as comprehensive research methodology for the research study taking the experiential, relational and expressive values for analysis. The use of Critical Discourse Analysis will enable description, interpretation and explanation of the status of a transgender character in conjunction with the power relations of the society. The finding of the discursive study on the basis of naturalization, technologization and lexicalization of the patriarchal ideology in the discourse and the speech turns in power relations reveal that the transgender younger-brother-now-sister faces criticism not only from her dominant elder brother but also from society in totality as a discourse which becomes a stigma for her.

Key words: *Stigma; Stigmatization; Transgender; Critical Discourse Analysis; Power Relations; Alan Rossi; The Nature of Man*

INTRODUCTION

Stigma refers to “bodily signs designed to expose something unusual and wicked about the moral status of the signifier” (Goffman, 1963, p. 10). These signs in ancient times were cut or burnt into the body to present the beholder as “a slave, a criminal, or a traitor. Such a blemished or ritually polluted person was usually avoided in public places” (Goffman, 1963, p. 10). In later times, stigma was considered as a holy sign or the bodily disfigurement because of which the stigmatized person was banished from public places and termed as ‘disgraced’ (Goffman, 1963, p. 10). Human beings focus on appearances to anticipate the category and attributes of the person, his ‘social identity’ or ‘social status’. Goffman ascribes these categories as ‘demands’ or an imputation made in potential retrospect and characterization ‘in effect’ or a virtual social identity (Goffman, 1963). While the stranger who does not

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possess the socially accepted demands of personality, in the extreme, is considered as quite thoroughly wicked, or dangerous, or weak (Goffman, 1963), thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted, discounted one. Such an attribute is a 'stigma', also called a 'failing', a 'shortcoming', or a 'handicap' constituting a special discrepancy between 'virtual and actual social identity' (Goffman, 1963, p. 12). While, the stigma attached with Transgenders is comprehended by analyzing the socially constructed ideological system stigmatization of transgender community is a phenomenon which still requires the world's attention to be directed to Transgenders' basic human rights.

Despite the fact that Western countries have taken legislative measures to allow inter-sex marriages, the marginalization of transgender seeks to be dealt with in an effective way. Transgenders are people whose sense of the socially assigned gender differs from the biological sex characteristics with which they are born. They are identified as a trans-woman being transitioned to live as a woman despite having been born with male genitalia while a trans-man, or one who has transitioned to live as a man, or non-binary connotes a sense that one is not strictly a man or a woman. According to the Glossary of Gender and Transgender Terms, "some groups define the term more broadly (e.g., by including intersex people) while other people define it more narrowly (e.g., by excluding "true transsexuals")" (2010, p. 3). Such variety of gender or sexual identities are taken as stigma or tabooed roles in the set ideological patterns of society. While, the transgender people face disgrace and isolation as compared to other people and hence marginalized as the taboo.

In the current research, Critical Discourse Analysis is used as a comprehensive research methodology. According to Teun A. Von Dijk, it is "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Dijk T. A., 2001, p. 354). According to *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (2001), 'power', 'dominance', 'hegemony', 'ideology', 'class', 'gender', 'race', 'discrimination', 'interests', 'reproduction', 'institutions', 'social structure' or 'social order', besides the more familiar discourse analytical notions (Dijk T. A., 2001, p. 354) are a few common terms used in Critical Discourse Analysis. Alan Rossi's *The Nature of Man* (2019) is a short story which features characters who suffer, experience stigmatization and prejudices, perform the traditional roles of patriarchal society and then suffer from an identity change which transform them into different persons. It comprises an elder brother, a younger brother transformed into a sister, a pregnant wife of the elder brother, a black father of three sons, a white motor bike rider and the parents of the elder brother. There is no name given to any character thereby describing the author's intention to criticize the gender and its role by hiding the names.

Problem Statement

The short story *The Nature of Man* describes the conflict faced by the transgender character ‘the younger-brother-now-sister’ who is born with male genitalia but upon realization of her transgender nature she transforms herself into a girl. The likeness for the same gender still persists. Her family refuses to accept her transformed sex and criticizes her. The antagonism and hostility she faces after transformation is the problem of the study. The main purpose is to analyze the story in the backdrop of transgender movements in the Western world. Why does the western culture consider the sexual transformation as a taboo? What conflicts does the main character face in the short story *The Nature of Man*? How does the gender transformation affect her personality and stigmatize her existence in the patriarchal society? and how does the author portray this conflict in particular, are the major concerns of this study conducted by using critical discourse analysis.

Objectives

The objectives of the current study are:

- a. To identify the conflict in the discourse due to sex¹ transformation
- b. To bring out the stigmatization of the main character using critical discourse analysis² for the interpretation of *The Nature of Man*
- c. To extrapolate the stigmatization of the character on the basis of experiential, relational and expressive values by applying critical discourse analysis on *The Nature of Man*

Research Questions

- a. What conflict arises in the discourse in Alan Rossi’s *The Nature of Man*?
- b. How does the author portray stigmatization of the transgender in *The Nature of Man*?
- c. How does critical discourse analysis assist in revealing the stigmatization of a transgender in Alan Rossi’s *The Nature of Man*?

¹ In 1965 psychiatrist John Oliven introduced the term transgender to replace the older transsexual. By the mid-1980s, transgender became the common label for people whose gender identity or gender expression does not match their sex assigned at birth. In Pakistan the word sex is taken more as a verb than as a noun in linguistics terms.

² Authorial intention is forbidden to analyse as mentioned by Roland Barthes in “The Death of the Author” but in twenty-first century, it is necessary to understand the politics of language and discourse and the intentional use of some specific words in the produced texts. (Thomas Bloor & Meriel Bloor 106) also Fairclough (1995) writes, “Discourse makes people, as well as people make discourse.” (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 40)”

Significance of the Study

The current study is a multidisciplinary research endeavor which exposes the critical gender segregation as well as the discrimination and prejudices against the transgender community in America. The social construction of Western society especially American patriarchal culture in which despite all its legislation for the rights of Transgenders, the social stigmatization is evident by the hands of power relations through language and literary texts. Such tabooed representation of transgender community creates a visible gap between the reality and the myth. The study is of great significance for the researchers of gender studies and literature especially for those who are interested in studying the politics behind language and discourse and their psychological aspects in a cross-cultural background.

Delimitation

Since, the study in hand deals with the transgender character and her stigmatization by the power relations of society, only one short story has been chosen to delimit the research to the main character ‘the younger-brother-now-sister’ in *The Nature of Man* by Alan Rossi.

Research Gap

Since, there appears to be no study conducted previously on Alan Rossi’s short stories published in 2019, the current multidisciplinary research study is conducted to fill the gap and explore the prejudices and stereotypical attitudes towards the transgender community through the use of critical discourse analysis. The main purpose of the study is not only to analyze the speech acts but also to explore the veiled purpose of such discourse and its relation with the power and dominance factors of society which Fairclough has clearly mentioned in his *Critical Discourse Analysis* (1995). He writes, “The implicit content of a text is a sort of halfway house between presence and absence” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 5). Fairclough asserts that an important objective for critical discourse analysis is the elision of power/ domination in theory and analysis (1995, p. 17)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Abdul Ghafoor Awan and Muhammad Yahya (2016) have conducted research on Ahmed Ali’s Novel *Twilight in Delhi* using Norman Fairclough’s *Critical Discourse Analysis* as a theoretical framework to uncover the hidden cultural ideologies especially those which distinguish the East from the West. By using Fairclough’s *Discourse and Language use* (1992) and *Language and Power* (1989), the researchers determined that “the strategies of Critical Discourse Analysis can also be applied to

novels and it highlights different aspects of real life” (Awan & Yahya, p. 2051). According to Awan and Yahya, “Critical discourse analysis is a very useful technique to illustrate cultural differences and their effects on society” (Twilight in Delhi CDA, p. 2051). This article highlights the fact that the people living in divertive cultural environment face multi-dimensional problems which affect their personal and social life. The threat to identity and rights of humans especially females, lesbians, gays, homosexuals and transgender communities are better ascertained by Michele J. Eliason. She mentions in her article *Identity Formation for Lesbian, Bisexual and Gay Persons: Beyond a ‘Minoritizing’ view* (1996) that the major limitations of sociological and psychological theories of sexual identity formation have been in their narrow focus on sexuality and their ahistorical, apolitical stance. With the current poststructuralist and multicultural movements, the need is identified in the article for more fluid and comprehensive models of development that examine the interrelatedness of various aspects of the individual identity and the role of the sociopolitical/historical context in which the individual negotiates her/his identity (Michele J. Eliason, 1996, p. 56).

According to Eliason (1996), it is “important to develop more interdisciplinary models that draw on personal experiences and personal accounts of identity, as well as more theoretical work. For an identity formation theory to “work,” it must make sense to the people whose identities are at issue” (Michele J. Eliason, 1996, pp. 56-7). Elizabeth Boskey mentions in her findings that “their (Transgenders’) rates of sexual victimization are much higher than those of cis women. (Cis women have female body parts.)” (Boskey, 2019). She suggests that the best way to deal with the discrimination based on moral panic is to reduce the legal acceptance of discrimination and segregation rather than enabling or tolerating it”. Jaclyn M. White Hughto, Sari L. Reisner and John E. Pachankis delineate that “Stigma is the social process of labeling, stereotyping, and rejecting human difference as a form of social control (Link and Phelan, 2001; Phelan et al., 2008) (p. 222). Link and Phelan (2001) describe stigmatization as “entirely contingent on access to social, economic and political power that allows the identification of differentness, the construction of stereotypes, the separation of labeled persons into distinct categories and the full execution of disapproval, rejection, exclusion and discrimination. (Link & Phelan, 2001, p. 367)

The current research aims to explore the stigmatization of a transgender/ gay character in Alan Rossi’s short story using critical discourse analysis to highlight the main aspects of language and discourse for political or social implication whereby the transgender community is considered as a societal taboo in the Western patriarchal society.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Fairclough's model of experiential, relational and expressive values to ascertain the stigmatization of the Transgender character. According to Norman Fairclough, (1995), "The critical approach has its theoretical underpinnings in views of the relationship between 'micro' events (including verbal events) and 'macro' structures" (CDA, 1995, p. 28). Fairclough describes the "orderliness" of discourse as, "the feeling of participants in it (which may be more or less successfully elicited, or inferred from their interactive behaviour) that things are as they should be, i.e. as one would normally expect them to be" (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 28). According to Thomas Bloor & Meriel Bloor (2011), the language is taken as a means of representing the world (s), perceived or imagined for practical purpose. The ambiguity in the meanings; and the use of active and passive voice change the position of immediate actor or doer of the action, hence, creating the power relation by focusing more on either the doer or the receiver of the action (Bloor & Bloor, 2011, p. 109). Such relationships as asserted by Thomas and Meriel Bloor, deal with the representation of 'real world' relationships handling the power relations through discourse. The participants are the performers of the actions or the entities" (In case of the text the entities are the humans, males, adults or elders, and Americans) and sometimes, referred by different names, forms or titles (Bloor & Bloor, 2011, p. 109). According to Norman Fairclough (1995), "the tendency in the literature to conflate all of the 'taken-for-granted' under the rubric of 'knowledge' is an unacceptable reduction" (CDA, 1995, p. 31). Focusing on the four items of the text i.e. "incorrigible, defiance, lack of responsibility, delinquency", Fairclough (1995) delineates, "these belong to a particular lexicalization of 'youth', or more specifically of young people who do not 'fit' in their families, their schools, or their neighbourhoods." (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 34) "Alternative lexicalizations" are proposed by Fairclough which can be "generated from divergent ideological positions. Lexicalizations is more or less naturalized in the discourse to the extent that 'its' IDF achieves dominance, and hence the capacity to win acceptance for it as 'the lexicon', the neutral code (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 34).

Fairclough (1995) has given the set pattern of relational value purposed to identify the perceived social relation between the producer and the recipient (Fairclough, 1995, p. 43). He asserts that "Language use is always simultaneously constitutive of (i) social identities, (ii) social relations and (iii) systems of knowledge and beliefs" (Fairclough, 1995, p. 134). He gives the necessary conditions for action by calling the "Verbal interaction" or turn taking as 'a mode of social action', which reflects the presupposed language structures in the 'knowledge base' (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 35). He asserts that "discourse makes people, as well as people make discourse" (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 40). Michael A. K. Halliday in his book *Language as a Social Semiotic: The Social Interpretation of Language and Meaning* (1978), "By

their everyday acts of meaning, people act out the social structure, affirming their own statuses and roles, and establishing and transmitting the shared systems of value and of knowledge". (Halliday, 1978, p. 2) Fairclough describes the naturalization of discourse as, "the interests of the dominant class at the level of the social formation" to maintain their continued power which "must be constantly fought for, and is constantly at risk through a shift in relations of power between forces at the level of the social formation and in the institutions." (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 41). He further adds, "Seeing all background material as 'knowledge' is tantamount to attributing it to each participating person in each interaction" (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 44). To sum it up in Fairclough's words, "what speakers do in interaction is under their conscious control," (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 46).

'Stylisticity' of the text 'measures the extent to which the non-ideational, interpersonal meanings of secondary discourse are represented', and 'situationality the degree to which the context of situation of secondary discourse is represented.' (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 60) Whereas, 'the technologization of discourse' is a 'top-down intervention to change discursive practices and restructure hegemonies within orders of discourse (in places of work, for instance)', which Fairclough (1995) asserts 'as one element within wider struggles to reconstruct hegemonies in institutional practices and culture'. (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 87) It is a technology of government in a Foucaultian sense, and linked to what Gramsci calls the 'ethical state' - the state as involved in engineering its subjects to fit in with the demands of the economy (Forgacs 1988) (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 87). Such hegemony and power assertion by white males' supremacy in Western patriarchal system is ascribed by Catharine A Mackinnon in her book *Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law* (1987) as "a specific politics" (Mackinnon, 1987, p. 3). She asserts that "the social relation between the sexes is organized so that men may dominate and women must submit" (Mackinnon, 1987, p. 3). Treating gender as a difference poses it as a bipolar distinction, "each pole which is defined in contrast to the other by opposed intrinsic attributes...obscures and legitimizes the way gender is imposed by force." (Mackinnon, 1987, p. 3) Such supremacy of men in the Western patriarchal system accepts only the binary system of gender roles and refuses to adjust the elaborated gender roles i.e. the Transgenders and other mixed gender roles leading to their marginalization and stigmatization. According to Link and Phelan (2001) "labeled persons are placed in distinct categories so as to accomplish some degree of separation of 'us' from 'them.'(Link & Phelan, 2001 p.367) which represents the ideological background of the society. Hence, such biased ideology makes its way in the discourse which is critically analysed in the current study.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research is a qualitative with Critical Discourse Analysis as method and the theoretical framework for the inquiry. The sample of the research is a short story *The Nature of Man* (2019) by Alan Rossi. According to Fairclough (1995), “the method of discourse analysis includes linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and the social processes. (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 97) Fairclough designates textual analysis as excellent insights about what is 'in' a text, but he also ascribes the significance of the ‘absences’ ‘from the perspective of sociocultural analysis” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 5). Critical Discourse Analysis is taken as the research method in the current study which, according to Fairclough (1993), aims to explore opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, and wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power. According to Fairclough (1995), the analysis and “distinction between what is explicit and what is implicit in a text is of considerable importance in sociocultural analysis” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 6).

The 3D-model of critical discourse analysis proposed by Norman Fairclough, comprises the description, interpretation and explanation. Description is the stage which deals with formal properties of the text. Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction; viewing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation. Explanation is concerned with the relationship between interaction and social context with social determination of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

The analysis of the characters in the selected short story is ascertained to bring forward the “otherness” of the younger-brother-now-sister and the idea of manufacturing a product to attain benefit from it by raising the voice and awakening the target readers.

Taking the younger-brother-now-sister’s identity as a change from brother to sister and reallocating it a position as a sister in the patriarchal society where the elder brother performs his duty to act as elder and patriarchal force for the whole family and stigmatizes her transformation. The resistance shown by the elder brother and the conflict which the younger-brother-now-sister faces create the notion of her stigmatization. The cause behind stigmatization is actually transcending the biological

boundaries of one sex and reside in between the two binaries by performing mixed gender functions, which is a critical debate in contemporary times.

Relational Analysis of the Discourse

In the story, the actor is the elder brother whose act is to speak while the goal is the younger-brother-now-sister towards whom the discourse is directed. Nevertheless, the elder brother's role as an agent and the secondary position of the target is clear from the discourse where the younger-brother-now-sister is talked with "in the rearview mirror" (Rossi, 2019). Alan Rossi writes, 'But, internally it was not a change for him, the older brother, personally, because his younger brother, whether a younger brother or younger sister would always and only be, no matter what, in the older brother's heart, irrevocably, his younger brother' (Rossi, 2019). The grammatical metaphor "younger-brother-now-sister" is not replaced by any other pronoun in the story asserting that there are no pronouns for transgenders in English language. The consistent use of the same noun as a lexicalized process, professes its importance in the discourse as the performed action referring to a process (Andrew Goatly, 2007) of transformation. The elder brother uses 'him' instead of her by which, Rossi writes, he "tried to gauge the expression on his, shit, her face, and he said inwardly her, her, her." The repetition of 'her' for the younger-brother-now-sister demonstrates the elder brother's intention to transform her into a minor individual whose identity is confused and transformed. The elder brother thus makes the younger-brother-now-sister "able to *feel* it, for the change to be real to him: *her*" (Rossi, 2019).

Lexicalization is also a reminder for the transgender that she has transcended the insurmountable boundary of society since there is no clear demarcation of her gender. The construction of the sentence giving secondary or passive position to the younger-brother-now-sister and active position to the elder brother "he heard the younger-brother-now-sister say from the backseat" (Rossi, 2019)", describes the lower hierarchical power position of the transgender character which according to Norman Fairclough (1995) is the "technologization of discourse as an important resource in attempts by dominant social forces to direct and control the course of the major social and cultural changes which are affecting contemporary societies." (Fairclough, 1995, p. 91) The elder brother's resistance to accept the transformation of his younger-brother-now-sister depicts his chauvinistic nature in the Western patriarchal society which is evident from the discourse between them. Mackinnon asserts that for the domination of men and women's submission, "the social relation between the sexes is organized" (Mackinnon, 1987, p. 3).

Rossi states that the younger-brother-now-sister is welcomed with ridicule when his elder brother's wife "mock-whispered" (Rossi, 2019). The dominant elder brother is,

therefore, concerned and anxious of the consequences of the transformation of the younger-brother-now-sister whereas the younger-brother-now-sister herself accepts the phenomenon and allows the elder brother to feel anxiety. The construction of the sentence makes the elder brother the sufferer on whom the action is performed (Bloor T, & Bloor M., 2011, p. 111). He is the goal here, “Look, the older brother said to his younger-brother-now-sister, looking at him, *her*, in the rearview... Fuck. You’re my brother, the younger-brother-now-sister said from the backseat. You can say brotherhood” (Rossi, 2019). The younger-brother-now-sister shows disgust towards the dominant force of the elder brother using the negative word “Fuck” to exude her emotions. The elder brother responds by saying “Your nature is just exactly what it is, your nature, and I’m sure you know better than anyone that your nature is just exactly the same nature it always was” (Rossi, 2019). The focus is on the word “nature” which is repeated five times and taken as a ‘shortcoming’ or a ‘handicap’ constituting a special discrepancy between ‘virtual and actual social identity’ (Goffman, 1963, p. 12).

Thus, the change or transformation in the transgender character is taken as a social discrepancy by family and society. The baffled elder brother exerts his power and dominance’ his disgust towards his transformed younger-brother-now-sister comes to the forefront when he uses the technique of looking in the “rearview mirror at the person who had once been his brother, who still looked like his brother, except for longer hair with bangs, sort of hiding his, *her* face, glasses, too, doing the same hiding” (Rossi, 2019). The passive representation of the younger-brother-now-sister positions her as the signified (Bloor & Bloor, 2011) thus depicting the lower hierarchical position in the discourse instead of the equal status required for turn taking as mentioned by Fairclough in *Critical Discourse Analysis* (2019, p.32). The author has reserved no speech turn for her in *The Nature of Man*. The transgender character, according to Rossi, “had opened her mouth to speak several times while her older brother was talking” (Rossi, 2019). While “the older brother was the older brother and that when he spoke he was the one speaking and that there could be no other voices until his voice allowed room for another voice” (Rossi, 2019) which Fairclough describes as “a matter of conformity on the part of both elder brother and the younger-brother-now-sister to a framework of discursal and pragmatic rights and obligations, involving the taking of turns, the control of topic, rights to question and obligations to answer, rights over meta-communicative acts and so forth” (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, p. 32). For the younger-brother-now-sister, Rossi writes “You’re probably dealing with all kinds of marginalization and difficulty in the workplace, not to mention difficulty with our little family ... friends, and then just out in the world, just being othered out in the world” (Rossi, 2019). The younger-brother-now-sister is “othered out” as a stigmatized person by friends and family because of the gender role being different from the normal binary system. Such interpersonal stigmatization

is the harassment and the verbal attack on her with the specific charged words i.e. “othered out”, “his instead of her” etc. It is the technologization of discourse which according to Fairclough is the technique to present the absences in the presences of the text (Fairclough, 1995, p. 85) and naturalization of the discourse prevalent in the patriarchal setup. The choice of the lexical items in the sentence foregrounds the future hurdles which are the backgrounded reality of Western society.

Being ‘othered’ and facing ‘marginalization and difficulty in workplace’ or isolated because of changed identity, foreground the backgrounded knowledge or ideology (Fairclough, 1995) of patriarchal society’s values and stigmatization associated with the transformed character whose nature is the same as before but the gender role which she will perform later in life has become more feminine. The imposition of rules as politicization of the younger-brother-now-sister’s identity in the textual discourse, is the crucial phenomenon which the author has used to arouse empathy and compassion among his readers for the Transgender character. The elder brother, is the “the oldest son, a privileged white male in a culture that demanded oldest sons and privileged white males to take care of their dependents, keep things in order, and be the symbolic personage who kept the family together” (Rossi, 2019) He performs his patriarchal role as Kamla Bhasin puts it referring “to male domination, to the power relationships by which men dominate women, and to characterise a system whereby women are kept subordinate in a number of ways” (Bhasin 2006:3).” He demonstrates his strength by fastening “a seatbelt onto the younger sister’s chair at the dinner table” and strapping “her in until she finished her food?” (The Nature of Man, 2019). He blames the younger-brother-now-sister for she has chosen the gender for herself and has the “tendency...to only look at the bad things” (Rossi, 2019). It describes the family’s oversights and their skeptic nature towards the transformed character and her identity because of the fear associated with such transformations and stigmatization of Transgenders in society. All these biased words are deliberately selected by the author (Bloor & Bloor, 2011) to depict the transformed character’s predicament as the ideological mind set of the society. The relational value of the discourse is analyzed on the basis of specific compound nouns to gauge the relation among characters as designed by the author. The first person narration in the story is 9% performed by the elder brother; second person narration is 11.5% while third person narration is 78%. There are 319 sentences and total words in the story are 8628.

TABLE 1.

Words	Frequency
Younger Brother	9
Younger-brother-now-sister	27
Sister	48

Younger sister	37
Older brother	89

Table 1- Showing relation between words and their frequency (percentage)

According to Table 1, the noun ‘older brother’ appears 89 times proving his hegemonic role while ‘younger brother’ appears 9 times. The compound noun ‘younger-brother-now-sister’ which acts as a noun in the sentence and represents the action of the character, is used 27 times in the story. Four utterances by Younger-brother-now-sister prove the fact that the transgender character whose identity is under scrutiny is not given speech turns. The noun ‘younger sister’ for the transformed character is used 37 times which shows that the author has intentionally given voice to the powerful relations mentioned in the story. The powerful male character prefers to call the transgender character the ‘younger sister’ considering her womanish which Fairclough (1995) delineates as being in “the interests of the dominant class,” (CDA, 1995, p. 41) the elder brother does not give any chance to the transgender character to explain their position but asserts the dominant ideology of binary set up of the Western Patriarchal society (Mackinnon, 1987, p. 3).

Experiential Value of the Discourse

The author has not used any euphemistic expression to build a positive relation between the ‘younger-brother-now-sister’ and the elder brother or his wife. The markedly formal conversation portrays them more as strangers. There is no name given to any character. The words “gay” and “younger-brother-now-sister” and “her” are gender specific words. The performance of the transgender character in society is measured by the verbs used by the elder brother to gauge the younger sister’s role, some of which are: “The family black sheep. The rebellion against hetero-normative ways of living, participating in nude run.” (The Nature of Man, 2019)

Expressive Value of the Discourse

Fairclough offers the framework that helps reveal the expressive value of the discourse. He allows us to disclose the author’s design to reveal the stigmatization of the transgender identity of the main character. The character of elder brother has been designed as the counselor who wins the younger-brother-now-sister’s consent, and achieves a precarious equilibrium undermined by parents and other societal relations. He, thus, struggles to gain desired results of subjugating the transgender sister. The discourse provides a matrix of hegemony at the societal level requiring a degree of integration of local and semi-autonomous institutions and power relations, so that the latter are partially shaped by hegemonic relations (Fairclough, 1995, p. 78). Thus, the elder brother uses “an apparently nondirective, nonjudgmental, and empathizing way of talking” (Fairclough, 1995, p. 81) to the younger-brother-now-sister about herself

and her problems as a 'counselling' method to ensure trust. He gives limited and controlled space to the 'younger-brother-now-sister' treating the discourse as ciphers, making counselling appear to be a counter-hegemonic practice for subtly drawing aspects' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 81) of her private life into the domain of power. She is a 'contradictorily positioned' (Fairclough, 1995, p. 82) character in the lattice of societal norms. Fairclough (1995) describes this phenomenon as the 'technologization of discourse' performed by the elder brother and his wife (Fairclough, 1995, p. 85). 'Structural transformation' or psychological and physical transformation of gender in the public sphere of politics (Habermas) (Fairclough, 1995, p. 89) is unacceptable in patriarchal society ultimately leading to labelling of stigma on the younger-brother-now-sister.

The elder brother has constituted "hegemonic power" as the concept introduced by Gramsci (1926) and referred to by Fairclough (1995), through substantial discursive practice in patriarchal society (Critical Discourse Analysis 94), whereby he takes advantage of being the elder son in the family. Rossi referred to him as, "...the older brother, the most intelligent, the most talented, the most successful" (Rossi, 2019) as a satire on the patriarchal norms to demonstrate the ideology of the Western patriarchal society and the submission of women and feminine genders (Mackinnon, 1987). The patriarchal society's set norms in the form of 'ideology' which Fairclough (1995) describes as being a part of linguistic features, resist younger sister's acceptance even by her parents after transformation into an 'other or banished' self. The harassment verbal or physical faced by her when Rossi feminizes the younger-brother-now-sister (by illustrating her as performing the tasks like apologizing and getting up to clean up the dampening carpet), marginalizes the transgender character since her appearance is taken as an object of repugnance and the adjectives and ornaments or jewelry items she wears are used as objects of defamation for her transformed gender role. It describes the ideological framework of patriarchy intertwined in the word choices of the elder brother.

Despite the liberty and modernized style of life, the author's intention of delineating the patriarchal system and the marginalization of the transgender character are clearly visible; the elder brother's discourse clearly depicts the stigmatization of the transgender character as part of the ideological background knowledge of Western society. The younger-brother-now-sister's discourse with her elder brother, calling her "black sheep" and rebellious reveals her stigmatization and 'separation into different category' (Link & Phelan, 2001). Her tacit non-performance of gender roles and failure to cope with the societal norms confine her within a closed marginalized position. The elder brother's wife in the passenger seat says that the older brother does not understand that "his sister needs an ally, someone to be on her side...one did not feel like a boy, er, male, anymore, that one felt like a female... and then asking

them to please call him, her, a different name, the name the parents had given now gone” (Rossi, 2019). Such verbal mockery and psychological harassment as a part of discursual technologization leads to her marginalization and stigmatization. The description of the ‘family name’ as ‘gone’ shows that gender transformation is a defaming act and the younger-brother-now-sister who has not asked for any help understands that she has lost her support and ally. Since, she has transformed her gender, she is treated as an alien and a stigmatized malicious being not only by the elder brother’s wife but also by the ‘anxious’ elder brother whose reputation in society is at stake because of this transformation. The interpretation of their power relation here indicates that the elder brother maneuvers the sister’s meek and docile position and dominates her as the only man of the house which is the dominant ideology to make her realize her ‘tainted personality’ in the patriarchal society. “On the freeway, one officer was checking a box for Male and one for White and one for Female and one for White and another officer was checking a box for Male and then a box for Black and was making notes, making notes.” The question that arises is where the younger sister will be put. Her confused gender and transformed role has made it difficult for her to fit into society and its binary standards. There is no box mentioned for transgender or gay people. ‘Then what about gay people? Just straight gay people? Or regular gay people?’ (Rossi, 2019). Here Fairclough (1995) depicts the importance of interpellation of the society’s norms and discursive practices in the performatives as the ideological-discursive formation (IDF) (Fairclough, CDA, 1995, pp. 35-44).

The absence of a particular place for different degrees of performatives in the ideological framework has created a visible gap for the younger-brother-now-sister. The resultant insecurity about identity has made it a stigma for being a visible difference in Goffman’s words (1963) between an ‘attribute and a stigma. The tendencies of liking the people of the same gender is posed as a confused role of the younger-brother-now-sister by the author which is a societal taboo. The author also stresses this fact by stating “how you could feel you were a girl and then still like girls. Didn’t that mean you were just a boy?” (Rossi, 2019). The transformation has changed her gender and identity from the acknowledged ‘boy’ to an unacknowledged ‘girl’; merely announcing that now ‘he’ is a ‘girl’ or the mere performance of the action is not enough for people to accept the fact of becoming a transgender especially after having a male acknowledged identity already pronounced by the doctors as the sex of the younger-brother-now-sister. Such strangeness and misfit characterization after transformation, therefore, frightens the younger-brother-now-sister. She exudes her feelings and cries at her alienation. Her presumption is different from the reality. Her changed gender is questioned not only on the road but inside her house also. Her mother collapses thinking that her ‘boy’ has changed her gender and has become a daughter. The elder brother’s ‘ife laughs and says, “I thought your Mom was going to just collapse all of a sudden” (Rossi, 2019). The “pained

expression” on the younger-brother-now-sister’s face portrays her realization of the stigmatized and baffled self. She faces ridicule among her family members as well as in the outer world which is the outcome of stigmatization. Her hybrid gender is the outcome of her own will to live like a transgender, stigmatized and marginalized. Thus, the author of the story successfully portrays the transgender character as the stigmatized person in the society facing insult and hatred from every corner. The author challenges the norms of society and questions the ideological framework to raise awareness and make readers realize the plight of Transgenders.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study uses Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis to study Alan Rossi’s transgender character the ‘Younger-brother-now-sister’ in *The Nature of Man*. The younger-brother-now-sister is portrayed by the author against the ideological framework of Western society and the consent of the dominant power relations. Fairclough’s CDA (Fairclough, 1995) reveals the stigmatization of the transgender character through experiential, relational and expressive values of discursive practices. The study provides references from the text to highlight Western society’s biased treatment towards the transgender character despite all advancement. The role of the author is also crucial as he has written the story in the time period when gender debates are at their peak. The purpose of the author is to highlight the stigma attached with the undefined gender roles and ultimately ‘othering’ the Transgenders by attaching a ‘stigma’ to their personality. Goffman (1963). The realization of the fact that gender is not a biological fact but a socially constructed identity enables this phenomenon to allow every transgender to perform their tasks without any bound. Such ‘liquidification’ or ‘fluidification’ of gender provides space to the humans to survive without any stereotypical discrimination. Giving others the chance to explore their hidden possibilities of intelligence are barred by the West itself by using such discourse markers in the conversation which hinder their performance. The ideological development of gender roles needs more time to create space for the ‘others’. The need of the time is to understand this reality and to provide help to such Transgenders to help them play their role effectively.

According to the Human Rights Campaign, in 2018, advocates tracked 26 deaths of transgender persons in the U.S. due to violence. The majority of the victims were Black transgender women who were killed by acquaintances, partners and strangers. Some of the culprits have been arrested and charged, while others have yet to be identified. These cases involve a clear anti-transgender bias. The victim’s transgender status makes them prone to violence in the form of forcing them into unemployment,

poverty, homelessness and/or survival sex work.³ Hence the story raises questions regarding the legal status of not only transgender characters but also for the rights of black transgenders and segregated racial communities.

The researcher has tried to explore the norms and practices in the Western patriarchal society in relation to the acceptance of transgenders and other queer communities by analyzing discursal practices. However, there are still many fields of knowledge which need to be discovered. This story can be analyzed using the race lens to gauge the racial discrimination portrayed by the black and white characters of the story. The psychoanalysis of the characters is also a facet which needs to be evaluated critically to elucidate psychological dimensions and Freudian concepts of the background of characters' actions and feelings as well as the trauma the stigmatized or marginalized characters face in the western patriarchal society.

³ Information taken from <https://www.hrc.org/resources/violence-against-the-transgender-community-in-2019>

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