

Maria vs. Maria

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Abstract: *Maria is said to be submissive, less-opportune, and portrayed as women only at home throughout the years. This study compared the women in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's The Yellow Paper and Nick Joaquin's May Day Eve to unleash Marias' portrayals at home and society. It also exposed on Maria's conflicts with women, men, and society and lastly, it explored Marias in fiction vis-à-vis Marias in the Philippine setting. The research study is qualitative in nature using descriptive design which was being analyzed with the use of the theories of Feminism and Mimetic. The findings of the study revealed that: (1) Maria in May Day Eve is strong while Maria in The Yellow Paper is mentally-ill; (2) Marias are both obedient while men are aggressive and highly centered as patriarchal society; (3) Marias sometimes in fiction and in real situations portray mentally-ill and outspoken. In conclusion, Marias are submissive, but sometimes outspoken. Women have to be more available-ready in order to battle strongly in each trials.*

Keywords: gender issues, Literature, Maria, women

1. Introduction

Maria, as commonly referred and described as women with much more responsibility, stability and dependability. They are mostly called to be soft-hearted and inferior to men, capable of absorbing many changes, handling household errands and coping with long-term challenges, a quality that comes from a woman's natural ability to carry an embryo and develop life within her.

However, globally, the status of women has risen significantly over the last few decades, but in many parts of the world male domination and rising state of oppression continues. Most women were labeled as less and inferior in various contexts and have been enslaved by men and frequently treated as mere property themselves. In literature, both Philippine and American short stories examined and talked on the oppressive nature of gender roles, specifically for women.

The short stories entitled *The Yellow Paper* revealed the conventional nineteenth-century middle-class marriage, with its rigid distinction between the "domestic" functions of the female and the "active" work of the male, ensured that women remained second-class citizens and *May Day Eve* depicted the status of Filipino women during Spanish era as subordinate and have no opportunities in educational setting.

By analyzing the comparison of women in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Paper* and Nick Joaquin's *May Day Eve* that sees Marias' portrayals at home and in society, the readers especially students will be aware and understand on the uprising gender issues. Consequently, it awakens the minds of the society of how we should look on various gender roles and gender sensitivity.

2. Literature Review

Feminist critics look at how characters, female characters and portrayals underpin or demoralize gender stereotypes. It also emphasizes the gender of the reader and how it affects to the target audience. Furthermore, it gazes the relationship between men and women in society as unequal and patriarchal beliefs dominated.

In the study of Yadav (2018) entitled *Aspects of Feminist Writing: A Presentation of Common Issues*, feminist literary criticism is a literary criticism knowledgeable by feminist theory, or, more broadly, by the politics of feminism and emerged as an important force in the western world in the 1960s when women realized the attitude of their male colleagues who swore about equality, was actually the strategy used by them to keep women subservient, then a revolution by women to fight against them, and against racism and sexism was felt. It is very important for us to know that these women writers are what they wrote and what the sources of their writings were.

According to the Cambridge online dictionary feminism is "the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state." The word feminism comes from French word féminisme and the term 'feminism' itself is used to describe a cultural, political or economic movement aiming for equal rights for both women and men. Nonetheless, the terms 'feminism' and 'feminist' did not gain widespread meaning use until the 1970s when they started to be used in the public parlance more frequently Rana (2018).

As mentioned by Halířová (2016) women since 1990s are more recognized in society and not only in the United Kingdom but also in other countries all over the world. In Britain women have the same opportunities for education and can have the same occupations as men and most importantly their opinions are valued and respected. However, in Philippine context, feminism today is still combating for the women's rights and non-stop campaigning. As added by Halířová (2016), even though, the campaign is being criticized as for being run by women exclusively, the publicity that was drawn on the feminist issue is gradual again which is a good sign, hitherto there is no country in the world where women are absolutely equal to men.

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3. Methodology

In order to strengthen the grounds of this study, the proponent deploys two theories which guide the design of this *study* and the interpretation of results. These include *Feminism* and *Mimesis*, and on some concepts of various scholars which provide ideas to the research.

Feminism

This theory informed by using ideologies and ideology of feminism to critique literary works. It sought to examine texts through analysis and understanding the symbol of women's writing in order not to perceive by men as dominant in the aspect of literature. In addition, it increases our awareness towards sexual political, sense, and style.

Tyson (83) said that Feminist criticism is concerned with the ways in which literature and other cultural productions undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women. It clearly looks at how aspects of our culture are inherently patriarchal (male dominated) and aims to expose misogyny in writing about women, which can take explicit and implicit forms.

In addition, Tyson (92) added that gender issues play a part in every aspect of human production and experience, including the creation and experience of literature, whether we are consciously aware of these issues or not. Moreover, it gazes to discern the relationship between men and women, the power relationships, and the roles defined.

Furthermore, Abrams (93) said that images-of-women study remains the single most effective academic tool for bringing about feminist awareness in readers. Many so-called great literary works image women only as items in male fantasy, or in ways that confirm their social subordination.

Mimesis

The theory of mimesis stated that literature as a form of art truthfully and powerfully imitates nature. It attempts to explain how human behavior develops within social systems and how these creative works account for a wide range of cultural phenomenon. So, mimetic analysis is used for fiction is a dramatized version of life and represents a pool of human experience and how the status of women is realistically imitated.

Gilbuena (8) mentioned that mimesis helps to understand the roles and reflections of the stories to the lives of the people since cautionary tale in its very nature promotes conformity to a society. Moreover, Aristotle said that human beings are naturally "mimetic beings." Denoting, people have this urge to create something, like text (art) that both reflect and represent reality.

In this theory, literature has to be an art of mimicking especially on how society treated as individual and of women as Girard (186) posited that all learning is based on imitation; if human beings suddenly ceased imitating, all forms of culture would vanish, and writing is a major mode of documenting cultures through stories and narrations.

The research study is qualitative in nature using descriptive design in which it unveils Maria's portrayals at home, society, in fiction, and in Philippine setting.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Maria's portrayals at home and society

Short Story	Home	Society
May Day Eve	Strong	Compliant
The Yellow Paper	Mentally-ill	Fragile

According to Abad (1), Filipina has many dimensions of face and that is not known to solely as the "perfect, submissive mate." Ford added that features the changes that have happened to this face as she tells stories through time and across the islands. With that, the Faces of Maria is continuously changing over time and these various influences and factors have brought to live in a matriarchal society.

In Joaquin's May Day Eve, the strong woman Agueda showed as a girl ahead of time. She was bold and liberated unlike the girls in her age and stood out from the broad range of disciples. However, her strong character did not bring her to receive a formal education, but only men still have the opportunity and remained powerful. Society but still then look women as docile as stated in the lines: *The old people had ordered that the dancing should stop at ten o'clock but it was almost midnight before the carriages came filing up the departing guests, while the girls who were staying were promptly herded upstairs to the bedrooms, the young men gathering around to wish them a good night..*

Maria's face at home is described as mentally weak. It gives an account of a woman driven to madness and prescribed period of inactivity thought to cure hysteria and nervous conditions. Her character unveils the really feeling while the literal text goes either talk like men or not talk at all. Society looks Maria as fragile by men and they were repressed and controlled by their husbands as well as other male influences. As supported in the following lines: *There comes John, and I must put this away – he hates me to have me write a word...*

Consequently, If Rizal's Maria Clara presents woman in character as submissive, innocent and tragic in a corruptive social system, in Ford's woman character is different, the submission of women is the kind of resilience of the Filipino woman of the post-colonial era. Similarly, if May Day Eve's Maria is strong, compliant, but not well-educated, the Maria's The Yellow Paper is totally opposite since she is mentally-ill, not well-educated, but obedient.

4.2 Maria's conflicts with Men and Society

Short Story	Men	Society
May Day Eve	Aggressive	Patriarchal
The Yellow Paper	Forceful	Male-domination

Maria versus Men

Men have an innermost and noteworthy role to take part in. Women's improvements have never come through women's hard work alone. It is still a most serious challenge of the inequality of women and afflict of violence. It is mostly men who have critical role and can play, politically and religiously. They are more aggressive and forceful where these enlightened male leaders at the highest levels of supervision, many-sided institutions and companies to become full participants in the progression of women's empowerment.

Maria versus Society

Women struggled with society to gain status equal to men. Society stared women as not important and males are as much wiser and more important than any, which is the way that society treated males during this time period. Women were discouraged from joining the work force and were thought to be better suited as a mother, and wife rather than an employee. This is the common stereotype that women tried to overcome on the women's movement.

4.3 Marias in Fiction vis-à-vis Marias in Philippine Setting

Short Story	Fiction	Philippine setting
May Day Eve	Outspoken Empowered	Well-educated Empowered
The Yellow Paper	Depressed Mentally-ill	Emotional difficulties

Maria in Fiction

Women in fiction are tremendously faced with various challenges and differences. Some contents of the stories may present women in inferiority or empowered. In May Day Eve, the woman is outspoken and empowered while the woman In the Yellow Paper is depressed and mentally-ill.

Maria in Philippine setting

In real setting, some women at the present time are well-educated and more empowered, but still high in difficulty of handling emotional difficulties. Filipino women may generally benefit from a relatively high status, but unquestionably, there are some still areas where they are considered mediocre to men. Women are still trying to be progressing and excelling in various domains. They emerged to be enlightened Filipino women, sensitive on the needs of individuals and society and wakefulness as a perfect human being competent of taking part as full task in the progress of the society.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In conclusion, Marias are subservient, but sometimes outspoken in some aspect. However, women are still enduring the continuous struggles among men and society. Individuals have to entirely eradicate the ideology of gender biases, gender issues and social insensitiveness by imparting the positive and necessary ways in changing into a transformative society. It is further recommended that women have to be more available-ready in order to combat bravely in every society's trials and issues. Lastly, women

must show full-active participation in any movement and be empowered as great leaders by their own.

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