

**عدم المساواة بين الإناث والذكور في المجموعة القصصية  
لمافيس جالانت: دراسة حالة لقصتي ألمانيا والريفيرا**

**Female and Male Inequality in Selected Short  
Stories of Mavis Gallant's**

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الكلمات المفتاحية: الإناث، عدم المساواة بين الذكور، قصص مافيس جالانت، الألمانية  
والريفيرا

**Keywords: Female, Male Inequality, Mavis Gallant's Stories,  
German and Riviera**





## المخلص

تسلط شخصيات غالانت الضوء على تأثير العوامل الثقافية والاجتماعية والسياسية على تحديد هوية الكيان الأنثوي والذكوري. كما تظهر أن المكانة الاجتماعية للمرأة ظلت منخفضة حتى بعد أن حققت حركة الموجة الثانية من النسوية تقدماً كبيراً. وترى العلاقات بين الأفراد في هذه القصص كاستعارات لاختلالات القوة الأكبر في المجتمع والسياسة. وتؤكد غالانت باستمرار على الحاجة إلى تحدي تعزيز المؤسسات المهيمنة لمعايير وتوقعات الكيان الأنثوي والذكوري، مما يؤدي إلى تعرض الأفراد للضحية الذاتية ويفشل دائماً في تلبية التوقعات. وهذا يضمن استمرار إخضاع النساء والسيطرة عليهن. وتؤكد المجموعة بأكملها على أهمية تحدي تصوير حكايات السبعينيات للشخصيات النسائية على أنها خالية من الهيمنة الأبوية. ويشير هذا البيان إلى الحاجة إلى الاعتراف باستمرار وجود النظام الأبوي والحاجة إلى مشاركة النساء بنشاط في الأعمال التخريبية" داخله. غالباً ما تعاني بطلات غالانت من اضطراب مزدوج بسبب معايير الكيان الأنثوي والذكوري غير العادلة والشعور بالنفي أو النزوح. يظهر العديد من الأشخاص على أنهم غرباء في بيئة غير مألوفة أو يُنظر إليهم على أنهم منبوذون أثناء وجودهم في محيطهم المألوف (في المنزل).

## Abstract

Gallant's characters highlight the impact of cultural, social, and political factors on female and male entity identification. They show that women's social status remained low even after the Second Wave Feminist movement made strides. Relationships between individuals are seen in these stories: *German* and *Riviera collections* including, *Varieties of Exile*(1976), *The Pegnitz Junction* (1973), *O Lasting Peace* (1972) and *An unmarried man's summer* (1963) as metaphors for the greater power imbalances in society and politics. Gallant consistently stresses the need of challenging hegemonic institutions' reinforcement of female, male entity norms and expectations, which leads to individual self-victimization and always fails to meet expectations. This guarantees that women will continue to be subjugated and dominated. The importance of challenging the 1970s tales' depiction of female characters as free from patriarchal domination is emphasized throughout the collection. This statement implies the need to acknowledge the continued existence of the patriarchal system and the need for women to actively participate in "subversive" actions inside it. Gallant's female protagonists often experience a dual dislocation due to unjust female and male entity norms and a feeling of being exiled or displaced. Several people are shown as outsiders in an unfamiliar setting or are seen as outcasts while being in their own familiar surroundings (at home).



## 1. Introduction

Female, male inequality, and more specifically the political and social policing of femininity, is another theme that Gallant's novels examine, along with shifting notions of national belonging and personal identity in the middle to late twentieth century. Many of Gallant's stories were really written in the 1970s and 1980s, even though a large portion of them took place in the 1940s and 1950s, before Second Wave Feminism came into being (Moyes, 2023:51).

These stories explore various concepts proposed during that time to liberate women from patriarchal systems. One such radical feminist principle is that women should oppose male equality by totally rejecting males, heterosexual union, and motherhood. These worries are also present in Gallant's stories set in Paris and Canada (Winther, 2004:132).

In *Varieties of Exile short stories*, Gallant uses the term Red Queens to describe married women in suburban Montreal during the 1940s. This comparison is based on Muir's allusion to Lewis Carroll's "*Through the Looking Glass*" stories (1871). In her mind, wives play the role of Red Queens—dominant characters who seek and care for their partners' affairs. (Löschnigg, 2020:19).

Having seen them in their front yards wearing housecoats, she wishes to avoid their lifestyle. She worries that she will continue to sound angry and strident in the future. She saw having children as a harsh squandering of potential in relation to her individual liberty, but she would have refrained from expressing this to anybody, because it would have been deemed atypical, even abhorrent. Gallant underscores the inherent inconsistencies in definitions of femininity by subtly alluding to Linnet's future marriage. This stresses the notion that marriage might paradoxically provide Linnet a kind of liberation (Brandt, 2004:29).

Mavis Gallant is one of many Canadian authors whose short stories explore issues of female, male inequity and national identity. They claim that the political, cultural, and social supremacy of Canada has been maintained by white English-speaking Canadians of British descent. They also draw a connection between this and the patriarchal domination that women have faced since the middle of the twentieth century (Kapilabh Anula, 2021:211).

Although post-colonialism, postnationalism, as well as post-feminism have entered the Canadian political and cultural conversation, the regulation of identity and the perpetuation of inequities persist, as seen by the use of these narratives. The author emphasizes the experiences of exile in both rural and urban settings through the use of the Canadian style genre. She dismantles the boundaries between self and place and highlights how Settler Canadian characters fear the Other because it threatens their stable female, male identity and home (Pache & Löschnigg, 2020:21).



## 2. Subversive Possibilities

Gallant work can be interpreted as an illustration of what Judith Butler analyzed in her work "an American feminist critic", which refers to as "subversive possibilities" within the context of patriarchal norms. In her definition of patriarchy in Gallant work (Chadderton, 2018). Ann Oakley takes into account the historical practices, ideologies, and social institutions that have enabled males to create and maintain their superiority over women.

In the stories (German and Riviera Collections), Linnet expresses her discontent with Betty Friedan's 1963 book: *The Feminine Mystique* and with the idea that women in the 1940s to the 1960s Western society are unable to recognize or fulfil their basic human urge to develop and realize their full potential as clarified by Pache and Löschnigg. (Pache & Löschnigg, 2020:32).

Instead, she must pursue sexual pleasure, motherhood, and the acquisition of worldly possessions as the only available avenues for finding fulfilment. The young Linnet character has discovered that expressing her want to avoid motherhood would be considered "unnatural" and "monstrous". This designation emphasizes the impact of heteropatriarchal society and the restriction of women to traditional female, male entity roles, a matter that will be consistently explored in this study (, 1970:67).

These narratives may be used as illustrations of the sociological nature of female, male entity and the fact that masculine and feminine are social constructs rather than inherent characteristics. They may be used to emphasise the regulation of women and the proper performance of female, male entity, including the anticipated position of the wife as a mother, nurturer, and caretaker. Women were socialised by heteropatriarchal systems to embody the ideal of being a "angel in the home," a word invented by Coventry Patmore in 1854 to represent the desired qualities in a woman: passivity, empathy, selflessness, and religious devotion (Moyes, 2023:159).

The concept revolved on the idea of women being the moral overseers of the household. Gallant's stories often take place immediately after the war, a period characterised by a rejection of the push for female, male equality and a renewed emphasis on conventional female, male entity roles (P. 68). However, Gallant wrote the stories during the Second Wave Feminist movement, and the female protagonists in her short stories show early signs of exploring issues of power and female, male entity (Ng, 2004:94).

The social and political changes taking place in Canada prompted Gallant, who was in Paris at the time, to reply. Some of these shifts included middle-class women's growing political consciousness and independence as a result of exposure to political discourse, more



employment opportunities, and easier access to birth control. A hallmark of "second wave" feminism, this consciousness of female, male entity problems emerged in part because of these developments. Women and views that are seen as incompatible with the majority will inevitably be marginalized under this idea of "collective consciousness." (Côté, 2004:113).

### **2.1 Forcing Women into Unrealistic Female, Male Entity Roles**

This study also explores the absence of agreement among feminist perspectives. This is significant because both women and men uphold restrictive societal norms around femininity. Weele reviewed the Butler philosophy, and Butler emphasises the expected actions associated with femininity, which are determined by society, culture, and politics, including being a competent mother and being attractive to the other sex. She asserts that women are compelled or manipulated into conforming to unattainable female, male entity roles, resulting in inevitable shortcomings (Weele, 2021:103).

Linnet's deficiency in "innate" material instinct is a notable shortcoming, for which she would face societal repercussions. In her published articles about Ann Oakley, Crespo insists on the concept of the mother instinct does not exist. Women do not have an inherent biological need to have children or an obligation to care for them after they are born. Nevertheless, women are socialised to see parenting as an inherent part of the "disciplinary project of femininity". Violation of these standards results in social condemnation and maybe banishment. Nevertheless, these expectations are structured in a manner that ensures women are "inevitably bound to fall short," resulting in the integration of shame into women's self-identity and so facilitating the perpetuation of heteropatriarchal control (Crespo, 1995:151).

Boehmer, with references to Butler who argues that politically powerful organizations promote these failures in order to keep control over people and groups who are seen as deviating from "normal" female, male entity identities. Their ability to maintain traditional female, male entity roles is a direct result of this. This method, says Foucault, became the norm in the 17th century and has taken several forms ever since (Boehmer, 2017:215).

### **2.2 False Sense of Security**

McCarthy & McCarthy (2020), said that the Canadian government should stay out of people's private lives and relationships, and this remark is in line with that. Nevertheless, Foucault contends that the emphasis on sex did not proliferate independently from or in opposition to power, but rather as a mechanism for its exertion. Despite publicly promoting the separation of the state from female, male entity and sexuality practices in the traditional household domain, the regulation of these behaviours and



the control over female, male entity identification and national identity in Canada persisted (McCarthy & McCarthy, 2020:33).

During the time when Gallant was writing these pieces, she was in Paris, providing an outsider's viewpoint. Her exiled "outlawed" characters, who might be of European, British, American, or Canadian origin, provide many perspectives on these concerns and include a transnational, cross-cultural outlook. Goldstein argues that during the Second World War, many women were confined and silenced, leading them to have a false sense of security in their luxurious living conditions, which may be examined as a way to understand the issues of confinement as well as silencing of women. Gallant writes in opposition to this covert imprisonment (Goldstein-Shirley, 2018:97).

Success or failure, according to the author's depiction of her female characters, is contingent upon how strictly they conform to the social conventions and expectations linked to the feminine mystique. These characters exemplify the ways in which women during this period were influenced by society and politics, including their families, social circles, popular culture, educational institutions, and the government. They were taught to associate their identity and position in society with parenthood and marriage, as well as with the domestic sphere and the need to present their bodies in a way that would make them desirable for marriage (Onega, 2005:62).

Peirce & Edwards with reference to Butler that dominant power groups' adoption of female, male entity norms—which she calls a "regulatory practice of identity" (GT 44)—can be exposed via the actions of individuals who engage in female, male entity-normed activities that are not conventional. The stories examine the connections between female characters and their environment, which is often unfamiliar and makes them feel like outsiders. This is linked to their restricted economic and occupational status, as well as their lack of control over their own bodies due to societal expectations of motherhood as a natural and unavoidable role (Peirce & Edwards, 1988:393).

### **2.3 Women as Male-Dominated Victims**

Gallant includes female characters who victimize themselves. Since Gallant rejects “the traditional choices and limitations associated with female experience”, (Peirce & Edwards, p. 52) detractors like Janice Keefer say she “cannot be described as a feminist”. Gallant must portray women as victims of male domination to be a feminist writer. Keefer further links this to Gallant's fear of political participation as a public author. Readers in “a world profoundly altered by the advent of feminism” (Peirce & Edwards, p. 61) may passionately disagree with Keefer's limited options for her female characters, their limited strengths and numerous faults (Leinarte, 2010:39).



Some female characters are constrained and imprisoned by male authority, while others may attain power and independence, which relates to Gallant's "locked situation" (Navarro Pérez, 2020:119). Within patriarchal contexts, some people engage in "subversive activities" and advocate for personal choice in the face of political and social policing. Gallant often responds negatively to feminist rhetoric as her character grows into a more nuanced understanding of feminism and female, male entity equality.

Instead of acting as if women's servitude has ended, Gallant's feminism highlights it. Her tales enable the reader to connect with the stories and their political connotations without unnecessary teaching, allowing subtlety rather than didacticism so the reader may understand feminism for themselves (Derrick, 2000:136).

#### **2.4 The Prevalence of Imposed Expectations of Femininity**

Crespo believes that Gallant, as a writer, experienced persistent female, male entity injustice. Reviews of her work throughout the 1960s as well as 1970s specifically emphasize the female, male entity-based demands that were imposed on female authors during that period. Robert Taubman, in 1965, characterizes her as "unsatisfactorily intelligent" and "heartily dislikeable" Similarly, William Pritchard, in 1973, contends that her writing is "too clever, too oblique, too arty for its own moral and human good (Crespo, 1995:38).

Leron & Hazzan in( 2011) that Gallant's writing is not influenced by male perspectives and ideologies, but rather characterised by feminine and intuitive qualities. On the other hand, Robertson Davies asserts that Gallant's work does not exhibit the traditional feminine qualities of compassion, nurturing, circumspection, as well as deference typically associated with proper ladies and women writers (Leron & Hazzan, 2011:263).

In 1974, Robert Weaver, a prominent advocate of the Canadian short story, asserts that Gallant exhibits a sense of detachment towards her characters, characterized by a "gloating nastiness" (qtd in Keefer 37). A prevalent critique of Gallant's work is that her tone towards her characters is "detached" and "disinterested," as noted by Keefer (64). According to Schaub, Gallant's views are characterized as "detached" and "disparaging" (Mavis: 244). This indicates the continued existence of enforced standards of femininity, especially the idea that women are nurturing and emotional, which Gallant's literature aims to dismantle (Meadow, 2018:188).

#### **2.5 Equality between Male And Female Entities, Achieved Through the Focus on the Female Body**

The author's use of language is often characterized by irony, her tone is dry and her word selection is concise. According to Keefer, Gallant doesn't look for ways to communicate that are not stifled by patriarchy and



that may convey boundless potential, regardless of female, male entity, or that are indicative of the biological and psychological characteristics of being a woman. This viewpoint confuses female, male entity, which refers to the socially, culturally, and politically learned behaviors associated with femininity and masculinity, with the biological distinction between males and females (Kulyk Keefer, 1993:209)

Patriarchal ideas of femininity place limits on women, as shown by Gallant's characters. It ignores the persistent male viewpoint that controls and monitors women's bodies when it suggests that women may attain equality via their own bodies. The male gaze, as proposed by Laura Mulvey, is characterized by the simultaneous perception and presentation of women in their conventional roles as objects of display. Women have also been deeply embedded with this gaze via institutional and societal means. They engage in self-policing, internalizing the practice of monitoring and sanctioning their own behavior (de Vries, 2015:21).

According to Irawaty, it is impossible to develop a language that is completely free from patriarchy. This is because human beings in Western societies are constructed as subjects via discourse within a system that is based on patriarchal authority. Language and patriarchy are inseparable in this context. Talebizadeh et al ,(2006) consider that Butler asserts that female, male entity is the linguistic and cultural methods by which a "natural sex" is created and recognised as existing before cultural influences ((Talebizadeh et al., 2006:675).

She claims that societally accepted norms of understanding are the root cause of the idea that people's female, male entity identities are intrinsic, unchanging, and unbroken. The language employed within the political system, according to Butler, shapes and defines women, even if it is designed to assist them attain freedom and equality. She advocates for examining actions that have the potential to challenge and disrupt power structures, particularly in relation to sexuality and identity. Some of Gallant's female characters exhibit these traits.

### **3. The Riviera Stories**

Gallant's collection of (Riviera) portrays the Riviera as a location of banishment, and her portrayals of English expats imply the fading of British empire. The rising tide of Canadian nationalism in the '60s and '70s might be a factor here. Not using rural locations or small communities on the Riviera, these stories depart from the Canadian Gothic genre and diverge from Gallant's use of the "dark city" idea. However, memories, the ever-present presence of movement across borders, a sense of dislocation, personal loss, and post-traumatic stress disorder are all threads that run through her stories (Herman & Szabo, 2014:67).

In contrast to the powerful impact of British settler colonialism inside Canada, these colonists are now a component of a global system that



is dwindling in power. British settler colonialism in Canada sought to subjugate, conquer, and eventually replace the indigenous inhabitants. Kapilabh Anula identifies "foreigners" and "outlaws" as one of the "submerged demographic groupings" connected with the short story form; Gallant's British characters represent this category in this context. These people, like Peter in "Ice Waggon," feel privileged and superior, yet they are politically powerless because of their dwindling fortune and outmoded social standing (Kapilabh Anula, 2021)).

The looming realities of the Second World War further diminish their power and pose a growing threat to them. In addition to addressing the ever-changing challenges of rootlessness and homelessness, these characters also serve as symbols of the shifting perspectives on feminist thought and female, male entity roles in the latter half of the twentieth century. They explore the potential for female characters to engage in "subversive" actions that challenge the restrictive and stifling expectations placed upon femininity (Bosak & O'Connor, 2023:173).

### 3.1 The Invented Past in "An Unmarried Man's Summer"

Set in the post-war era, "An Unmarried Man's Summer" (1963) investigates the allure of marriage and family in the context of The End of the World (1974). British ex-soldier Walter's family has seen a decline in income since he was injured in the war. He constructs a metaphorical representation of family life, referred to as a "mosaic picture," which seems to be beyond his reach owing to his suggested homosexuality and the societal constraints of that era (Quindeau, 2018:132).

His fictionalised domestic life sharply differs from the narratives he fabricates about his own history to amuse the British settlers residing on the French Riviera and support himself financially. He depends on their favourable view since he is reliant on them for housing. The fabricated history he created sharply contrasts with the conventional family structure of his sister Eve, who pays a visit. Foucault argues that the exercise of political and social power over the family necessitates the domination of "any deviant or unproductive sexual orientations" . (Dari et al., 2023:114).

This encompasses gays as well as women who engage in sexual activity without bearing children. Walter's father ingrained in him the belief that heterosexual fatherhood is a holy responsibility. Although the tale is narrated from Walter's point of view, the constraints imposed on Eve in her capacity as a mother and wife are consistently examined. The representations of Eve as a "giantess" who is "jolly and loud" reveal the accepted notions of feminine female, male entity identity that arise from the control and regulation of the female body. During their upbringing, it was suggested that she should have been male (Mukherjee & Bhattacharjee, 2023:61).



Their mother expressed remorse over the fact that Walter had physical attractiveness but Eve did not, as she questioned the practical value of beauty for a guy. This concept aligns with Butler's notion of "the boundaries of the body reflecting the limits of the socially dominant power." (p. 110) politically influential narratives support the idea that heterosexuality and conforming to traditional femininity are essential for women, since they ultimately lead to marriage and reproduction. Compared to gay and non-reproductive couples, this procedure is often seen as more socially and economically stable .

According to this myth, it is assumed that women need to be beautiful in order to attract a partner and have children, whereas men do not need to be beautiful since their socially desirable qualities are related to wealth, prestige, and influence. Eve expresses her envy towards Walter's schooling, stating, "They would not provide the same educational opportunities for a female." "I used to desire that we could have exchanged," (Boehmer, p. 68).

Walter who was in the military, has extensive travel experience, worked for a bank, and acted on stage. He has been free to do things his own way, which is something Eve has never had the chance to do. Instead, she entered into matrimony, bore two offspring, and has been confined to a predetermined role as shown in the narrative. The irony comes in Walter's "unmarried" position, as indicated by the title, which denotes a lack of achievement that is also connected to his homeless, unsettled, and wandering way of life (Boehmer, 2017:175)

### **3.2 Gallant Implicitly Supported Feminisms**

This narrative showcases Gallant's tacit involvement with the feminist movements of that era. Gynocentric feminism advocates for the supremacy of ideals associated with traditional feminine experiences, such as the promotion of life, the ability to nurture, and a feeling of social collaboration. This narrative may be seen as a critique since it conforms to the restrictions placed on women inside patriarchal systems. These constructs of femininity are derived from characteristics such as nurturing, physical beauty, lower standards for success and self-reliance compared to males (Dallos & Dallos 19:136). Although gynocentric feminism has had significant impacts on literature, it also perpetuates the traditional notion of the "angel in the house" and restricts women to a narrow and restrictive set of female, male entity-based roles, both sociologically and politically.

### **3.3 Gallant's Story, the "Sacredness" and Motherhood Role**

Nevertheless, Gallant's narrative challenges the notion of the sanctity of motherhood by examining Eve's connection with her offspring. She is neither "bad" nor does she fit the stereotypical mould of a "nice wife and mother" who always puts her family first. From South Africa, the family is making their way back to England after a fruitless foray into



agriculture. Mary and Johnny are equally outraged by this forced move. Eve informs Walter that they have relocated the individuals from their place of residence (Brandt, 2004:142).

They have no regard for the notion. "They will overcome it," (p.39). She embodies and questions the archetype of the "angel in the house" as a character. While Angelo is mostly responsible for taking care of the children, she assumes control over managing the household. The deeply rooted assumption about the structuring of female, male entity roles is reflected in the narrative's statement that Angelo now obediently follows Eve's commands. There had never been any deliberation on the matter; she held the position of authority in the household, being the mother (Crespo, 1995:43).

The reference *Ann Oakley* contends that the act of "mothering" - the inclination to foster and attend to children and the family as a whole - is seen as a fundamental component of femininity. Its absence is viewed as pathogenic, posing a danger to the primary objective of the family, which is the generation of robust offspring (p. 69). This categorization of pathogenicity serves as a means of exerting authority over women's decisions and restricting their actions. According to Ann Oakley (2005:180), women are expected to fulfil the role of providing emotional warmth as well as stability for the whole family, fostering harmonious connections between family members, and ensuring the family remains together (Oakley, 1995:152).

Eve's emotional aloofness towards the children contradicts her stated desire for the position of a mother. She asserts that she has always aspired to be nothing but a mother and that she would safeguard anybody in need of protection, even Walter. This is due to the fact that femininity is shaped in a manner that categorises the responsibility of taking care of family members as a characteristic of women (p. 134). Eve has been socialised, notably via the family institution, to embody the role of a mother figure.

Foucauldian ideas highlight the connection between the enforcement of discipline on the physical body and the functioning of certain institutions such as the school, the industry, and the jail (Bartky 285). This narrative illustrates the notion that the longing for motherhood is influenced by culture, and the capacity to be a mother is acquired through learning (Oakley, 2005:152).

Eve challenges the notion of nurturing as well as motherhood as being inherent by proposing to her husband that they temporarily separate from their children during their relocation to England. Eve's deviation from some conventional feminine ideals might be seen as a defiance against the notion that rejecting the role of nurturer or caretaker is harmful. This exemplifies the concept of "subversive confusion" (Butler, 46) about



female, male entity norms, emphasising the societal and political nature of these standards and their inherent volatility and changeability .

### **3.4 Constructed Idea of Femininity**

The portrayal of Eve's connection with her daughter Mary emphasises the transmission of female, male entity standards between generations, both within the family and society, which impose limitations on femininity. Eve refers to Mary as a "volatile collection of feminine charms." "She is perpetually pursuing something," (Curti , p. 290). Angelo is being cautioned to be cautious with Mary due to her high level of cunning and deceitfulness. It is believed that she would manipulate him in some manner, as she is known for strategizing her desires and pursuing them without verbalizing her intentions (Dari et al., 2023:171).

Her feminine traits are clearly visible. Greater authority should be bestowed to her. Because of her sexuality, selfishness, and idealized conception of femininity, Eve views Mary's "power" in a negative light. She casts doubt on Mary's intelligence, confidence, and will to achieve her goals. The figure of Eve represents how patriarchal ideas of femininity are internalized by women and how these values are perpetuated from generation to generation by women, particularly mothers who pass them on to their children (de Vries, 2015:28).

According to Connell, children are subjected to strict female, male entity expectations even before they reach reproductive age. This educates individuals on the biological and innate nature of female, male entity, particularly emphasizing the need to regulate femininity. The portrayal of Eve in the text implies that marriage and reproduction are closely associated with the idea of being a successful woman. It suggests that if Mary does not conform to these expectations, she may end up being an unmarried woman with no children (Derrick, 2000:29).

According to Caroline Ramazanoglu, the nuclear family, which consists of heterosexual parents (a man and a woman) and one or more children, is depicted in Western societies as being "natural, prestigious, and desirable" (148). Mary, on the other hand, is regarded as being resistive to these societal standards. She believes that cats are more attractive than humans since they are indifferent to others' opinions, indicating her disregard for conforming to societal female, male entity norms (Goldstein-Shirley, 2018:98).

Mary's tendency towards quietness and seclusion is also associated with her hesitation. Like many of the young women in Gallant's books, she uses her silence to challenge rigid female, male entity norms and traditional conceptions of femininity. In response to the new feminist ideas that emerged in the '60s and '70s, these characters appear in new modern stories as well .

## **4. German Stories and Writing About the Role of Women**



According to Doris Wolf, Gallant focused his research on the contributions of women throughout the 1960s and 1970s in Germany in relation to the creation of Holocaust memorials (p. 7). During the Great Depression of the 1930s, many German women followed Hitler's agenda of returning to traditional German values, represented by the triarchy of "kinder, Küche, Kirche" (children, kitchen, and church), in an effort to escape the economic crisis (2005: p.16).

In contrast, the Weimar Republic's "new woman" emerged in the aftermath of World War I, advocating for female, male entity equality, particularly in terms of work, education, and suffrage. The Nazis advocated for the advancement of "traditional" values because to their perception of being more secure, morally superior, and easier to manage. A decline in birth rates and the patriarchal link between women and their "obligation" to procreate and put family life first were also linked to this occurrence (Herman & Szabo, 2014:89)

Wolf argues that this aligns with the "Nazi vision of a tightly-knit society," which disintegrated during World War II due to the mass migration of millions of East Germans to West Germany from 1945 to 1950. Nevertheless, what persisted were "persistent remnants of ideological superiority and government actions that created divisions among Germans" (p.36). Following the war, the government implemented conservative measures towards women and emphasized the importance of the traditional nuclear family structure, specifically advocating for mothers to remain at home (p. 10).

The concept of motherhood has been framed as a "political obligation" for women, representing the responsibility that women have towards the state in terms of supporting and nurturing children, which includes providing prenatal care and child allowances. It is said that radio programs backed by the government aimed to encourage "good parenting as a component of good citizenship." Additionally, marketers targeted women as both homemakers and customers. Gallant explores these themes in her German tales, indicating the presence of transnational patriarchal systems and the post-war control of identity across different locations. This is done in the context of the urgent need to foster peaceful and cooperative citizenry (Wolf,2020: p.59).

#### **4.1 The Nostalgic Image of Women and Mothers**

Many post-war German tales presented female Nazi party sympathizers as the passive "other" to the dominant male characters, regardless of whether they supported the party before or after the war. The National Socialist Party was quite patriarchal, and they felt they had been victimized by it. They denied any wrongdoing. A nostalgic image of mothers and women persists, completely oblivious to the historical moment in which they live (Irawaty, 2022:8).



They are shown as being morally superior and embodying love, generosity, and tranquilly, regardless of the social or moral circumstances. Nevertheless, a significant number of individuals were actively involved in the dictatorship. The concept of female victimization may be associated with the victim attitude, which can be seen in relation to both Canadian national identification and feminine female, male entity identity. Gallant's pieces, written from Paris, reflect a common Canadian literary topic, indicating her translation of this problem to a European context (Kapilabh Anula, 2021:215).

The stories of exile and the terror of fitting in are depicted in Gallant's works set in Canada and Paris. She investigates in her German fiction the possibility that post-war trauma and a persistent sense of being encumbered by the past contribute to the victim mentality, which is not exclusive to Canada. Additionally, these stories show how the victim mindset highlights women's perspectives inside patriarchal systems. The tales in question could be related to Regan's theory that, after WWII, the Canadian short story genre highlighted the ways in which individuals and families reflected national issues. Along with Millet's claim that patriarchal institutions like the family may stand in for patriarchal governments, this could be argued.

#### **4.2 Women's Victimization Within Patriarchal Culture**

Gallant's narratives provide a counterargument to the feminist viewpoint, which asserts that women in literature should be portrayed as victims of male authority and patriarchal systems, a stance endorsed by critics like Fiamengo, as cited in the Introduction. These tales challenge the idea of having one single perspective and instead argue for the intricate and ever-changing nature of power interactions. Elizabeth Schneider argues that feminist work has often been influenced by a limited and unchanging perspective of women as either victims or actors (Lee & Wu, 2019:64).

The author contends that a narrow emphasis on women's victimization fails to provide a comprehensive view and is restrictive as it disregards women's ability to act and engage in proactive actions (p. 387). The categorization of experience into "victimization" and "agency" is too simple and neglects to include the oppression, struggle, as well as resistance that women encounter on a daily basis inside their continuous relationships (p. 389).

Exaggerating the concept of women as victims in a patriarchal society serves to weaken women's power and ability (Schneider 395). These stories delve into themes of victimization, specifically focusing on domestic environments and societal expectations associated with femininity. They examine how these issues intersect with the broader concept of exclusionary thinking, fear of diversity, the process of marginalizing others, and a general unease about defining boundaries and



fitting in. Gallant's literature explores the potential reasons for the rise of Fascism by examining individual personalities and their experiences in daily life. Additionally, Gallant connects this growth with the persistence of fascist beliefs inside household settings during the war (Leinarte, 2010:40).

One such piece is "*O Lasting Peace*," a 1973 short tale that first published in *The Pegnitz Junction*. Hilde, the protagonist of the novel, plays the stereotypical "angel in the home" role—a victim who gives her everything to her family—in a Bavarian setting, most likely Munich. She currently lives in Berlin, where her father has moved in with a new partner. As far as Hilde is concerned, no one else can take care of her depressed mother, her irrational aunt Charlotte, or her crafty uncle Theo (Löschnigg, 2020:16).

When her father isn't around, Hilde steps in as the family's de facto masculine authority figure; she works at the Civic Tourist and Travel. Additionally, she is anticipated to serve as a surrogate mother figure. As an example, on Christmas Eve, "individually, they gradually drift into slumber while seated in their chairs." p. 322, the author describes the act of waking up others and instructing them to go to bed, while also mentioning that the late news forecasts the weather for the next day (Meadow, 2018:189).

Although she fulfils the duty of a nurturer and caretaker within her family, she also exhibits racist tendencies and lacks compassion for post-war immigrants. For instance, she expresses indifference and prejudice against East German refugees residing in the next flat. They have infiltrated every aspect" (p. 316). In "From the Fifteenth District," the refugees are portrayed as "these people" (p. 321), which emphasizes Hilde's dread of diversity, her creation of identity in contrast to marginalized individuals, and her intention to uphold her authority by perpetuating their oppression (Moyes, 2023:68).

### **4.3 Female, Male Entity Inequality Persists Despite Everything**

Despite the progress achieved by Second Wave Feminism in the 1970s, the story highlights how female, male entity inequality persists. Without considering the differences between the two roles and the fact that the binary portrayal of female, male entity is too constant and homogeneous, the remark indicates that female characters should not be depicted as either victims or active players. There is a steady erosion of Hilde's power and influence throughout the book. By introducing the reader to Hilde, the author hopes to draw attention to the persistent subjugation of women (Navarro Pérez, 2020:115).

She highlights her own predicament of being overlooked for promotion due to her female, male entity, and being surrounded at home by elderly children who struggle to remember their own pasts (p. 324). In



addition to this officially endorsed institutional manifestation of female, male entity inequality, the perpetuation of male-dominated authority inside the family structure and at an interpersonal level is also emphasised. Initially, her uncle Theo was portrayed as being extremely afraid of her (Onega, 2005:56).

However, as the story progresses, it becomes evident that he holds a position of power in society and politics, and he exhibits a dominant and misogynistic attitude. This is evident when Hilde reveals that her uncle Theo took it upon himself to find a husband for her without her consent or even asking her opinion. This indicates the ongoing process of seeing women as objects and assessing their value based on their desirability in the context of marriage. This assessment is mostly conducted by males, emphasizing the transactional nature of the process. Theo described her as "youthful", "gracious", "modern", and "delicate" (p. 325).

Eventually, a guy responds to the advertisement and Theo encourages him to examine Hilde. Hilde, feeling ashamed, observes him with a clouded perception (p. 325). She has a combination of intense anger against her family's actions and extreme distress at the notion that they are capable of managing without her assistance. She questions, "How would you manage to pay the rent for this place in my absence?" "Do you not comprehend that I am unable to depart from you?" (p. 326).

Although she wants to maintain her maternal position within the family and the associated influence and prestige, she also wishes to pursue the possible suitor fervently, exclaiming "Come back!" (p.326). According to Wolf, Hilde is characterized as "domineering" and she instills feelings of worry and panic in the other family members. Additionally, Wolf suggests that power dynamics and racism are deeply ingrained in the current home environment, symbolizing the lingering effects of historical events (Pache & Löschnigg, 2020:132).

#### **4.4 The Link Between Freedom and Independence**

The article "An Alien Flower" (1972), published in October by The New Yorker, delves into the connections between women's freedom and independence and post-war Fascist "continuities". Similarly, "O Lasting Peace", published in January and also included in the collection of *The Pegnitz Junction* (short stories), explores these themes. The topics in these two pieces are closely intertwined, focusing on the examination of female, male entity and power disparities inside the home sphere for female characters, as well as the officially endorsed patriarchal dominance within post-war German community (Peirce & Edwards, 1988:393)(Gallan,1972).

The "An Alien Flower" is a narrative set in Cologne and is told from the perspective of Helga, who recalls the events of the tale. She is used to depict a government-approved system of oppression in connection with the



atrocities of the war, portraying a vision of a Gothic "sinister metropolis". The protagonists are tormented by a shared history that is scattered about them in piles of burnt rubble. The streets harbored an apparition, or an immobilized existence, or a sinister enigma. There was no one who was considered inferior, since everyone was on an equal level (Quindeau, 2018:223), (Gallan,1972).

Helga and Julius, although believing in equality, are shown as developing their identity via excluding other people and upholding the "Nazi obsession on superiority" (Wolf, "Beyond" 8). The narrative explores the portrayal of Helga's "informal" female authority inside the home sphere, juxtaposed with Julius' "formal" male patriarchal dominance. Helga is shown as trying to conform to the traditional role of a submissive and obedient wife, but she also exhibits a feeling of helplessness or lack of control over her own life (Winther, 2004:132).

In a similar manner to Hilde in "O Lasting Peace", Helga strengthens her position of authority and social standing within her immediate community by exerting control over Bibi, a female character, while also being Julius's wife and Roma's mother. Bibi's lack of authority stems from her impoverished condition and, similar to several other characters in Gallant's works, her vulnerable position as a post-war immigrant without official papers or a stable sense of belonging. Nevertheless, upon Julius's realisation of Bibi's scientific talent, he hires her in his corporation, so granting Bibi more influence and prestige within the male-dominated hierarchy (Mukherjee & Bhattacharjee, 2023:62).

This hierarchical system, overseen by Julius, serves as a microcosm of the larger political and social framework on a global scale. In a similar manner to the characters Jack and Netta in "The Moslem Wife", Helga deeply reveres her husband, and the reader becomes aware of his extramarital activities before the character herself acknowledges them. The author illustrates the impact of institutional and societal support for male dominance by portraying the protagonist's admiration for her husband, despite his abusive behaviour against her (Boehmer, 2017:49).

This is evident in the quote: "I was aware that Julius occasionally lied, but this is a common trait among all deities" (p. 331). She depends on him to provide her with a fresh feeling of liberation, safety, and individuality, which, in her perspective, is closely linked to acquiring a "new, exquisite residence". According to her, this would enable them to progress as a family and avoid a perpetual state of devastation. In contrast, Barbara in "The Remission" depends on a masculine figure to provide her with a sense of belonging and safety, represented by the home (Bosak & O'Connor, 2023:178).

## Conclusions



The Canadian-born Gallant uses her characters to portray a transnational, cross-cultural, and sometimes repressed sense of shame about one's heritage and place in the world that pervaded the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the expansion of the Second Wave Feminist movement, the female protagonists in Gallant's works demonstrate how women's social status remained confined. One way to do this is to see female, male entity identity as something that emerges from a complex web of political, cultural, and social pressures. These stories concentrate on how the relationships between people might be seen as symbols of broader power inequalities in society and politics. Gallant emphasizes, on a constant basis, the need of challenging unified conceptions of feminism as well as restricted female, Male entity norms and expectations. These are the kinds of things that dominant hegemonic systems promote, making failure an unavoidable reality and presenting it as an individual's victimization of themselves. It is thus ensured that women will continue to be controlled and subjugated. When it comes to the tales that take place in the 1970s, the stories stress how important it is to fight the image of female characters as being free from the grip of patriarchy. Specifically, it implies that it is essential to acknowledge the fact that the patriarchal system continues to exist and that women are required to participate in "subversive" activities within it. These unequal female, male entity norms, in addition to a feeling of exile and rootlessness or displacement, often cause Gallant's female characters to feel doubly uprooted on several levels. Either the majority of the characters is designed as exiles while being "at home" or are outsiders who are living in an alien world.

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