

The Representation of Female Psychic Individuality in K. S. Maniam's "Mala"

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the feminist insights of the female individuality K. S. Maniam's "Mala." Female individuals, in psychoanalysis visions of delirium, have to cope with their needs and aspirations as their males counterparts. Women have to prove their ability stand and ask for their equality even in patriarchal dominated societies. They are a position that renders their human potential to do their affairs independently in the light of humanistic premises. Moreover, females could improve their status by asserting their given human ability to obtain equality and right position in whatever community. Yet, women may face obstacles and hindrances which might belittle their ability to assert their rights and potential thoughts. In this regard, females could be fruitful and active in society. The male conceptualization of females, on the other hand would lead women to be different and progress towards goodness. Therefore, it will apply Carl Jung's concept of projection mechanism to explore the feminist psychic individuality in Maniam's "Mala." Thus, the study's implication lies in its interpretation of feminist psychic individuality and how it this individuality controls the behavioral reaction of women.

INTRODUCTION

Female individuality has been a subject to controversial critical debates. Being so, the women propriety triggers the orientation of female as being inferior or unequal to males. Nevertheless, defiant or accepted refusal of female "proper identity" gets into hampered convenience (Sinfield 90). The female proper identity could not be guaranteed unless women are able to construct their position as equal and active dimension of society. Women have to concern about themselves and take care of whatever leads to their appreciation of males in the same community (Cixous 293). The potential disorientation of gender relations pertains to the "cultural stereotypical incarnation of female "autonomy" felt as clearly marked colorings of consciousness (Percy 210). Consequently, females' proper position in society encompasses "a progression from misogynistic homo-eroticism" (Walker 24) takes place in psychological patterns.

The critical patterns of male-female relationship are connected with the perception of men and women and their attitudes towards each other (Walker 25). Men can be classified as the superior element in society, while women are depicted in an inferior position (25). However, females can defy this classification by imposing their human qualities.

These qualities are their psychological and physical peculiarities which emulate males in the same social status (38). In this way, women might get rid of the traditional look at them. To do so, they have to overcome their psychological hindrances by projecting, for example, their psychic complications outside their psychological limits (42). In so doing, they gradually become equal to men.

Here again, the wider circulation of psychoanalytic values lie across the landscape of popular culture, in particular patriarchal societies. It goes along with quite suddenly and intentionally provoked concerns that were very vital to establish a "feminist discipline and its consequent concepts like domestic violence, equal pay, workplace harassment, were now addressed to a vast readership" (Hunter 85). The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to analyze the manifestation of psychic projection in K. S. Maniam's "Mala" (1985) by using Carl Jung's concept of projection. Accordingly, the following section will offer a general introduction about Jung's concept of projection.

The study's problem is, therefore, the feminist individuality and its pertinent reaction towards the surrounding social milieu. That is, women are subjects to some psychic complications that make them feel a bit inferior to their men counterparts. For this reason, the study is going to examine projection

mechanism as a way of avoiding such feelings in order to empower their existence in the society. The goals of the study, consequently, involve the interpretation of women's psyches and its projection. Here, projection will be elaborated within the broad framework of psychoanalysis, especially Jung's argument about projection mechanism. In sum, projection mechanism will be discussed as a means of getting rid of the social restriction created by the inherited masculine mainstream.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Maniam's "Mala" is studied in the field of narratology. The story's narrative structure renders it a distinctive place among Malay fiction. The story's embedded narrative fabric is about the authorial narrative point of view which tells the events from an omniscient perspective. The author conveys a latent message about the nature of narrative structure which is concerned with the ability of telling stories in the light of authorial point of view (Hashim 31). Furthermore, the story is full of structural elements, such as narration, characterization, plot, and dénouement that are relevant to understanding the thematic aspects of the plot (32). Based on the structural features of the story, the narrative factor of the story carries on thematic peculiarities (32). Thematic characteristics involve the themes of recognition and reification.

The theme of recognition is treated by Ruzy Suliza Hashim, whereby recognition is specified to the multi-ethnic factors depicted in the story. The story's plot tells a tale of a female protagonist who experiences a sense of belonging to the Malaysian landscapes (31). The regional aspects of the story relates to the fact that the Maniam's tendency towards her native land, India. In this regard, "Mala" is about the author's recognition of homeland (31). Therefore, the story exemplifies the authorial nostalgic predilection to homeland which is unobtainable while staying outside homeland (32). The thematic component of the story is, thus, conveying the author interest in female identity outside homeland (32). The recognition of such identity is the "reification" of proving the female role in society (32).

Both themes of recognition and reification help us understand the inherent meaning of nature in the story (Hashim 32). Nature gives us a panoramic visualization of how people could interact with their natural surroundings. In this regard, the relationship between nature as a non-human elements and human beings could be reconciled by the theme of recognition. Human beings could recognize their psyches and internal complexes through interacting with nature. Mala, the protagonist, interacts with nature to be serene and peaceful (34). Here, the theme of reification is interpolated in the story to trace the ways by which the protagonist reverts to nature in order to be isolated from other distracting people (34).

A CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF PROJECTION

"Life can be cruel." This is the primal premise of projection. As such, to protect the ego from a sometimes unbearable reality, we erect defense mechanisms, unconscious strategies of

the ego to distort reality and lessen anxiety (Bird-Pollan 61). For example, if we feel we are lazy, we might unconsciously attribute laziness to a coworker in self-protection. This defense mechanism is called "projection." Many of the defense mechanisms that Jung identified, such as "denial" and "rationalizing," are part of our everyday linguistic registers (Simon 48). Though we all use them, they become a problem when used excessively or inflexibly, as in the neuroses. Jung focused on repression as an all-inclusive defense, the cornerstone on which psychoanalysis rests (Boag 93). Later, the concept of projection got significance in the field of a classic psychoanalytic text, expanded and systemized the defense mechanisms (Abu Jweid and Sasa 62). Thus, psychic projection takes place in other defense mechanisms.

Therefore, projection is a means of attributing one's own unacceptable and disturbing thoughts and impulses to others. "The thief thinks everyone else is thief," says an El Salvadoran proverb. A man preoccupied with doubts about his own heterosexuality may become homophobic and frequently accuse others of being homosexual. In addition to explaining homophobia, projection explains racial prejudice when one group accuses another of its own unacceptable impulses or characteristics (Jung 210).

Repression is another aspect of projection. To reduce psychic disorder, our brain shunts from consciousness—represses—a dangerous impulse, idea, or memory. For example, a man forgets to attend the nuptials of his brother to a woman to whom he was attracted, repressing his continued romantic interest in her (Abu Jweid 43). In another example, a student of mine had, over a two-year period, cared for her terminally ill husband, to whom she had been happily married for twelve years, but after his death she had no memory of getting married or of her life with her husband before his illness. Photos of her marriage and their life together seemed like a dream or something from a past life; they jiggled no recall of the photographed events. Her husband's long illness and death had been so traumatic that she had to repress the good times, because she couldn't bear to think about the happiness she had lost (Jung 124).

While repression blocks internal thoughts from conscious awareness, denial blocks external events whose perception threatens our ego. Here, denial develops to be one of the defense mechanisms like projection. For instance, as the husband lies dying, the wife continues to set his place at the table; she denies his impending death. All of us deny reality to some extent. Smokers and junk food eaters deny the potential health risks of their habits. Gamblers keep taking chances that the slot machine will pour out thousands of quarters or that one of the hundreds of lottery tickets they purchased will be the winner, denying the extremely slim likelihood of winning a fortune. While denial can be dangerous, as in continuing to smoke or overeat, it can also be adaptive. Denying that you have terminal cancer may keep your mood more upbeat and might actually facilitate healing rather than allowing you to become deeply depressed and lose all hope (Jung 158).

Reaction formation takes place at the same time with repression. For example, when people overemphasize the

opposite of a dangerous impulse, they are employing reaction formation: "I love him" becomes "I hate him"; timidity becomes daring; inadequacy becomes conceit. For instance, a man who is terrified of his dependency says he doesn't need anyone. Some nuns and priests may have entered the clergy in reaction to a fear of their own sexual urges (Jung 162). We all devise extremely reasonable explanations of our behaviors to protect our self-esteem. For instance, we go off our diet and eat a huge slice of birthday cake at our friend's birthday party rationalizing that we don't want to be rude. We down three martinis to be "sociable." A wife explains her husband's repeated infidelity as a result of his unfortunate upbringing or an overly seductive environment (162).

Regression is another form of projection. Regression means retreating to an earlier, more primitive form of behavior to avoid pain or threat. Jung made this comparison to "a stream of water which meets with an obstacle in the river bed, is dammed up and flows back into old channels which had formerly seemed fated to run dry." Whenever confronting a tough decision or a threatening situation, a friend's mother lapses into baby talk with her grown daughter, for instance, telling her that she has to "go pee pee." After a fight with your husband, you lap up a pint of ice cream, regressing to the early oral phase of development. A person has sexual difficulty in a relationship and retreats to masturbation, regressing, according to Jung, to the projection stage of development (Jung 176).

Moreover, displacement and sublimation are other forms of projection. As for displacement, we all have experienced shifting or *displacing* an impulse from a threatening to a nonthreatening object. For instance, a husband angry at his boss because of a demotion goes home and argues with his wife. Sublimation, on the other hand, involves adaptation and acceptance of new things. For example, living in civilized society requires that we channel socially unacceptable impulses into acceptable, even admirable behavior that we sublimate (Abu Jweid and Kaur 8). The surgeon channels aggressive energy into constructive medical work; the artist employs the libido to produce a masterpiece. And of course there's all the screaming, yelling, and chest pounding at the Sunday football game. Freud viewed Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Madonna as a sublimation of his longing for intimacy with his mother, who left when he was very young (Jung 232).

PROJECTION MECHANISM IN "MALA"

In Maniam's "Mala," the protagonist is a female character. She is brought up by her parents who taught her the essence of good life. The story portrays her early life when she is a student at school: "When Malati left school he came into full encounter with her family. Having dreamed and drifted through her education, she came to roost in her home. The neighbour woman soon branded her lazy and called her 'Mala', and abbreviation of the Malay word 'malas'. The neighbour repeated it with the relish of an insult the more she saw the girl idle and happy" (67). Her parent named her after the Malaysian name: "She was stuck with the name when her family began calling her Mala. There was an ugly sound to it

whenever they were angry with her" (67). Here, Mala does not interact with other people who may cause depression for her.

Mala's parents take much care of her. They are concerned with raising her on good ideals: "That was often enough. For some reason they felt offended if Mala hummed a tune in the bathroom or sat in the doorway reading a magazine. The father was a thin, tall man who only straightened from his stoop to deliver some unctuous reprimand. His colleagues at work never knew this side of him for he was always smiling. Mala's mother clattered through her housework with a solemnity that made desecration of a temple seem like a prayer" (67). Mal has two brother in the same family. She is the only female: "Her two brothers, constantly running errands for their stout mother, looked at Mala with a sense of achievement" (67). Mala enjoys warn treatment by her parents.

Mala's parents show great affectionate love for her: "Parental love pursued a twisted path here: it was expressed through a terrifying ritual of silence. Her indifference grated on self-gratifying sense of diligence. The boys spent their afternoons desultorily digging at an unyielding plot of ground. Mala, watching them, noticed how the handles of the changkhul flew away from them. There was a dull thud as the changkhul bit the ground" (67). Mala enjoys the goodness of her family life: "Their bodies [parents' bodies] were covered with a lackluster glow. Mala's father clucked at the chickens; they squabbled restlessly, refusing to be housed for the night" (67-68).

Additionally, Mala's parents used to punish her mildly if she does wrong: "The punishment began the day they learned she had failed her final school examinations. There was no show of anger or of disappointment. They withdrew into silence that froze her movements and her spirit. No talk passed between them. If they saw her they turned their heads away. Meals were swallowed in utter silence, beds made in rustling quiet" (68). The parents are serious about attending to Mala's house life: "Outside the house they resumed interrupted conversations with their neighbours as if nothing had happened (68). Mala does not feel any psychic upset. She is contended with her family life.

Family life is the heavenly atmosphere for Mala's living: "They only placed their fingers on their lips and rolled their eyes in the direction of the family niche. Here resided not only pictures of gods and goddesses but also photographs of a pantheon of dead relatives. Even on ordinary days the sight of these photographs revolted her. Now they produced a darkness in her mind. Not a day passed without their genuflecting before the staring, vacant eyes" (69). Mala's house surrounding landscapes make her happy. They are part of her life: "Garlands, a week old, bordered the picture frames of these departed men and women. Mala had never helped the family string the flowers" (69). She is still dependent on her parents.

When she enjoys her natural surroundings, Mala begins to set her own ritual: "Mala began her own rituals. Getting up before the others did, she took a cold bath and went out into the unfenced compound. The dawn air hit her then, causing a

hiver to course through a body that had just risen from sleep. The skin on her face seemed to peel away and reveal a new self. She stood under the mango tree and watched the sun rise over the hills" (68). Mala also enjoys the natural elements around her: "As the land emerged from the darkness and mist she felt herself torn up and rushed toward the brightening clumps of trees and hill slopes. Perhaps to replace the stinging silence of the family there rose, beyond, a resonant clamour. She turned abruptly – a door had slammed inside – towards the house" (68). Now, Mala like her family life very much.

After a while, Mala is introduced to Sanker. She is well prepared to her new life with Sanker: "They took turns placing kumkum and oil and holy ash on the part in Mala's hair. She was led to her room, where she barely succeeded in keeping down the bile that rose to her mouth. For the whole week she hardly left her room, suffering a depression that left her convinced she really belonged to the dead" and "One evening she escaped to Susi's house, where she listened to Sanker who had come on a holiday from Kuala Lumpur.... A different kind of word passed around this time. The neighbour woman was then at the peak of her career: no men came to Mala's house although it had been recurtained, redecorated, refurnished and, in some other ways, restored. A fresh string of mango leaves hung over the front doorway" (73). Sanker is the new male person in Mala's life.

Then, different men came as suitors for Mal. At this point, she is still clung to the natural surroundings around her house: "Weeks passed. The mango leaves had curled and turned brown when a man, accompanied by his son, called at the house. Mala's father hurriedly put on a shirt and ushered them in.

"Is there anyone else coming?" Mala's mother asked, noticing the absence of women.

The man looked around him unhurriedly and shook his head.

"Aren't we enough?" he said.

His son, clothed in tight pants, a broad belt and tapering-collar shirt, examined the various articles in the room. he paused a long while at the collection of tapes, scratched his head as he read the titles and then turned, with a puzzled expression on his face, to Mala's father" (74).

Other suitors to betroth Mala again: "The next suitor came alone. From the minute he stepped into the house he would not sit down. His face was pockmarked, his eyes red and his hair bristled like the back of an unruly bull" (74). One of the suitors introduces himself as a widower: "I'm a widower," he said. 'I've three children. I've a lot of money. The children need a mother and I want a woman. I know all about your girl. She needs someone like me to tame her'" (74). Mala is not satisfied with these suitors and begins to hate them. She begins seriously thinking of committing suicide: "Mala heard the negotiations and, humiliated, thought of suicide. The eyes of the ancestors seemed to stare at her. She saw herself pinned between glass and wood, withered flowers garlanding her memory – a monument to sacrifice for the good name of the family. In that cold, hazy hour between night and morning, she let herself be peeled and

revealed" and "She lived again, fiercely, stubbornly, in the light that spread over the country, knowing, instinctively that there could be no greater darkness than despair" (75).

Sanker is one the men who were part of Mala's life "There was certain breeziness about Sanker that she liked. She had only seen him briefly, but his confidence and sense of responsibility were evident. She put her thoughts away as she approached her house. Her mother stood talking with the neighbour woman and barely gave her a glance" (75). Vasu is also another man who come to suit Mala. He is so rich and lead a good life: "Then, Vasu, a relative of Mala's father, arrived accompanied a group of people crammed into two cars. It was an impressive show and even the neighbour woman was silent. Perhaps she had met her match in Vasu. He had a reputation for lying, scrounging off on liquor, a habit of exaggerating, and possessed as well a sense of drama. He also had a son, of marriageable age, born out of wedlock;" whereby "He got down from the car, smiling, and waited for the others to bring up the rear of the procession to Mala's house" (75-76).

Here, marriage is introduced to Mala's life: "The marriage, without any fanfare, was performed at the registry office. Mala's father gave his unwilling approval. No one else was present at the official occasion. As they travelled down to Kuala Lumpur in a second-hand car Sanker had recently acquired, Mala looked at the country flashing past her. All her mornings, after those baths, she thought, had not been useless. She was coming into her own at last (76-77). Here, Mala "couldn't suppress a sense of triumph" (77). Marriage is considered the strenuous beginning in Mala's life.

Sanker remains the only man in Mala's life. He owns shops, and he is a tradesman: "They came to a busy row of shops, above which were flats. Sanker rented part of a flat he had slept until in his one-room office as a requirement of the businessman making his first million. The dust, the noise and the traffic assailed Mala even as she mounted the steps, behind Snaker, to the rooms upstairs. They had to share the hall and the kitchen with a woman and her child" (77). Mala begins to live in Sanker's house "Only the bedroom provided some space for a marriage to breathe, grow and acquire some purpose.... But, looking out of the dirty window, Mala saw what had once been jungled hill and remoteness had been cut level and made a home. She smiled at Lucy and the boy, about three, whose face was still covered with the remnants of his breakfast" (77). Furthermore, Mala lives in a very blessed life: "He opened the door to the bedroom, to an unmade, stained mattress and the barest of furniture. He ran down the steps and returned with some packages of food and hot tea in a plastic bag" (77). At this stage, Mala begins repressing her disordered psyche.

By time, Sanker recruits Mala for work: "Sanker was at his office most of the day or out on assignments. Mala didn't know exactly what he was doing. He thrust some money into her hands at night, after they had made love, and told her to buy the things necessary for a home (77). Then, Mala begins to adapt to her life with Sanker: "Mala had adjusted a little to the situation. A meal was there if Sanker wanted it. The days he followed his business out of his office, she ate alone. Lucy

had made it clear from the first day that she didn't want her son fed by any stranger. She was, however, pleasant about other matters. Mala derived fascination just watching Lucy's transformation in the evenings. She ceased to be the sloppy, flabby woman she was in the mornings" (78). Moreover, Mala enjoys her first life with Sanker: "A smart dress emphasized her suddenly ample, firm breasts, the make-up gave her a new-found vitality. The boy had an old woman to look after him on some days. When there was no one he cried and tired himself and lay curled on the cold terrazzo floor of the hall. It was from there that Lucy picked him up, grumbling, in the early hours of the morning" (78).

However, Sanker changes and becomes different. He stopped being gentle with Mala: "The advice was unnecessary. Sanker had taken Mala to a doctor who put some metal inside her. After that Sanker ceased to be gentle in bed with her. She was reminded of the way her mother had punished her with water. The slapping, the bending down and the humiliation had followed her into marriage. There was the lethargy too, the following morning" (78). Mala gradually becomes a subject to household affairs: "She cleaned the pots and the pans, saucers and cups, sometimes more than once in the course of the day. She gave Sanker his tea when he ran up the stairs and burst into the hall. Dinner was soon prepared and then the waiting for her husband began. He swayed in some nights, reeking of liquor, mumbled something about 'contacts' and fumbled for her in the dark" (78).

Sanker negative personality provokes Mala's feelings. But she bears his for he is providing the house with the basic needs, like television: "He got a colour TV for her, raking up the money from somewhere. Once she went down to the office to clean it. It was so bare that she wondered how business could be conducted in it at all. Lucy surprised her as well" and "There was something common between her and Sanker. Lucy never mentioned the work she was doing but when she stayed home she displayed her fatigue as someone proud of having slogged away. She fed her boy something that made him sleep for hours. Lucy then sat on the floor, in a thin, loose dress, flipping through a pile of glossy magazines" (78-79). Again, Mala represses her agitated feelings caused by Sanker's negative treatment.

Mala gets accustomed to her life with Sanker and his work: "Mala passed on the word. Sanker and Lucy came to an agreement and the sofa, armchair and coffee tables arrived. Lucy spent whole mornings on the sofa, under the dust-blackened fan that was never switched off. One afternoon a man delivered a sound system Lucy had ordered. It was an expensive, complex set. From it came all kinds music, but mainly Chinese songs that filled the flat with militant resonance. Lucy never allowed the boy near it" because "One she smacked his fingers for touching it and she wiped off the mark with a velvety, thick cloth. Mala had to distract his from his howling" (79). Then, Mala tries to take Sanker to recreational places to belittle his anxious behaviors caused by drinking: "Sanker took her to an English film one night, sitting beside her with restless absorption. While she sighed in wonder, she watched with embarrassment the couple on the screen, half naked, embrace then dance in a nightclub led

on by a bare-breasted woman who wriggled sensuously, and finally make love with unashamed hunger" (79).

Lucy, who is another female, does not feel happy with Sanker. She enjoys herself by putting make-up to console herself with Sanker's bad temperament: "As Lucy removed the make-up, Mala's face felt cool and then shrunken. She cried on returning to the flat, after Sanker had her hair cut. The hairdresser had handed her the snipped her in a bag that carried the salon's name and logo. She laid out the truncated length, once a part of her, which had reached down to her waist" (80). Then, Sanker brings a typewriter for Mal to work: "He bought her a second-hand typewriter and a manual on typing. Mala spent her mornings getting in practice. The process was typing her fingers flew all over the keys. She aimed for speed, but only achieved mistakes. A frustrating garble met her gaze during the first weeks" (81). Mala is so tired of this work "Though Mala was tired, her typing gradually showed some improvement. Sanker gruffly acknowledged her progress. She kept at it. The traffic roared past her flat. Lucy's boy bawled for attention. Lucy herself would prattle away from the sofa, but Mala heard none of this. She was glad that she didn't have the long hair that would fall over the machine" and "She had learned to write formal, pleasant letters and correct simple mistakes when Sanker announced that she could go down to the office" (81). Lucy is also is not satisfied with Sanker's work: "Lucy bustled about Mala. She made Mala put on a dress, then take it off. She tried various tones of lipstick, eyebrow pencils and make-up. Mala saw in the dresser mirror a girl stiff and frightened. Lucy had done good work – Mala hardly recognized herself. And she wanted to be that way" (82). At this point, Mala remembers her past life with her family and mango trees: "For a moment she recalled the dawns she had stood under the mango tree, up north. She had changed, she realized, but into someone not of her making" (82).

Mala's remembrance of natural surroundings is a kind of projection used to make up for Sanker's exploitation of her for work: "Sanker ran a packaging business. He had the rates drawn up neatly on a card. The firm that provided the boxes had its phone number underlined in red and pinned on the wall facing the typewriter. Lorry owners' phone numbers were listed in a separated card. A little black book, indexed, contained clients' names. When Sanker sat at his table on the other side of the small office, he was a different man" and "He briefed her on the work at the end of which he relapsed for a moment into the Sanker she knew. In bed that night he was affectionate to her.... Mala lay, consoled, on his heaving chest. When he talked about business a certain thickness entered his voice and he moved restlessly on the bed. She had to talk to him then, guessing at his ambitions, agreeing and sympathetically massaging him into sleep" (82). Such remembrance is the sublimation phase of projection. Mala projects her feelings on family and natural life to get rid of her depression.

When Mala has to adapt to Sanker's bad treatment, she has to be patient, just like her previous life with family. This is the essence of projection in the story: "Mala had learned to adjust herself according to his criticisms. Always, he gave

her an encouraging hug, just before they descended the steps to the office. Mala was careful to earn that affection. Though most of the time she could understand his ferocity or that distant expression on his face, she treasured these moments of nearness” and “They compensated for the silence of the family she had left behind and the scorn of that gossip, the neighbour woman” (83). Furthermore, “Mala began to enjoy the activities of the day. Whenever she answered the phone she sensed the pleasant pause at the other end. She gave the rates, the kind of services available and took down times and dates if the client wanted to hear from the ‘boss’. It was strange hearing Sanker referred to as ‘boss’; he became someone important and unreachable in her life” (83).

Mala’s adaptation to work is a kind of psychic projection in order to recall her past serene and ideal life: “The office changed its atmosphere in the few months that Mala attended to its secretarial demands. Sanker was out most of the time, hunting down that first major contract. He spoke to her over the phone from various parts of the city. He described an individual in detail and asked if the man had shown up at the office” (83). Mala also becomes accustomed to the men who deal with Sanker’s goods: “In Sanker’s absence, a few men called at the office. These were lorry drivers or packaging subagents. They sat on the oblong, backless settee Sanker had installed against the wall. They flicked cigarette ash in the potted plants on either side of the settee” (83). Mala’s adaptation into new life the displacement of her memories upon her previous life.

Then, Sanker advises Mala to be gentle and well-dressed when she treats clients while he is absent: “At night he persuaded her that she must learn to take care of herself when he was absent. He emphasized how important it was for her to be courteous to them” (84). When time passes, Sanker teaches Mala how to deal with his office work: “Sanker had stacked the folded-up cartons behind his desk. An almost empty filing cabinet stood behind Mala’s desk. Labels of his company were pinned on the walls along with posters of various foreign scenic landscapes. Sometimes there were busy mornings. Men came and went” and consequently “Mala typed invoices, rang up lorry drivers and made entries into the office ledger. Sanker stayed in the office on those days... he [Sanker] paid more attention to her clothes and appearance during that daily inspection. She wore a tight dress he recommended. Even Lucy came out of her room on hearing Sanker talk excitedly. She whistled on seeing Mala” (84). Sanker’s attention to Mala’s clothes is an implication of his concern with his work without taking care of her. Here, Mala again complies with his work rules and adapts to his work: “The flowers, arranged in a boat-shaped container, gave the office a cold, formal colour. Whenever the phone rang Sanker leaned forward quickly. At last, a nasal stream of broken English came over the line. Mala handed the phone to Sanker” (85). Mala is now depressed by Sanker’s actions.

When Sanker monotonously treats Mala, she projects her memories and feelings over her previous life. She lives in his house the same as she used to live with her parents’ house: “He put down the phone and rushed out of the office. By the time the client arrived, Sanker had brought a smaller table

from the adjoining room. a caterer delivered some savoury, covered dishes, three glasses, a bottle of whisky and a jug of cold water. The man himself came soon after, a confident smile greeting them” (85). Such monotony compels Mala to be depressed. Consequently, she starts again remembering her serene past. This past is recalled through projection.

Moreover, Mala’s adaptation to her new life is her compliance with Sanker’s life manners. This compliance is an embodiment of Jung’s argumentation of psychic projection: “Mala got used to refilling their glasses unobtrusively while they talked endlessly and the man swallowed the balls of meat or bits of steamed fish. He drank more than Sanker, but he didn’t stumble on a single word. At last he rose, smiled at Mala and moved toward the door, which Sanker held open for him. Sanker took some time returning from seeing the man off” (85). This compliance is her repression of her disordered psyche.

Lucy is also getting used to Sanker’s life. She does not care for his negligence. She begins taking care of herself alone: “Lucy stopped at a boutique and looked at the dresses draped over the mannequins. The dummies had blue, vaguely starring eyes. As the two women peered through the pane of glass, a man entered the case and stripped a mannequin with brutish efficiency. There she stood, bare, imperturbable, while the man arranged the latest dress over her shoulders and between her cleftless thighs” and “When the man had finished, he twisted her arms into a new posture. The dummy had acquired a fashionableness which Lucy praised” (86). Mala’s careless reaction towards Sanker’s negligence is an implicit notion of her repressed agitated feelings.

Lucy’s psychological case is similar to Mala’s disordered psyche. But she greatly got adapted to Sanker’s life. This is because she projects her past happiness over her current life. Yet, she suffers from hard work and negligence: “Mala was tired, but she dragged on after Lucy. They sat, at last, in a low-ceilinged snack stall. The tables were small, neat pieces resting on a thick, stained carpet. Lucy picked a dirty well-thumbed menu and taught Mala how to choose her food. Mala went through the motions suffused by the steady, dull light and the cold that poured in via the air-conditioning vents” (86). In the long run, Mala recognizes her marginalized state by projecting and comparing her life with Lucy’s miserable life: “Mala recognized in the gestures of Lucy and in the pale smile of the special customer the day before the silent pressure of a force from which there was no escape” (86). Here, Mala’s projection of her previous happy life and her current miserable life is a representation of psychic disorder in her feminine personality. This projection takes place when she sublimates her previous life and displaces it upon her current life with Sanker.

CONCLUSION

This study concentrated on the concept of projection and its manifestation in Maniam’s “Mala.” The study has identified the latent impetus of the psychic projection in the story. The analysis of this projection has shown that the female character, or protagonist - Mala, is the embodiment of female

sufferings. Thus, the projection of her own memories is found in her new life with a male character, Sanker. Therefore, the study has examined the gradual development of Mala's plight in her work that exemplifies the notion of exploiting women for labor. As such, the scrutiny of her work has revealed that she does not feel the equal relationship with other males in her social peripheries. She is marginalized and not given an equal job as males. This life imposes on her new conceptualization of her position. Thus, the exploration of these somber feelings lies in the analysis of the projection of her new life over her past memories and new work. Such memories and work are tackled by using Jung's concept of projection to discuss Mala's psychic disorder.

The study's goals and findings lie in the exploration of projection mechanism as a remedial response to the seemingly social discrimination against women. It has accentuated feminist psychic process to unravel their desire to be equal to men. Projection mechanism, accordingly, has been accentuated as the main contribution of the study since it reflects women's rejection of any form of social persecution. Thus, the main goal of the study has been to pinpoint this mechanism as an empowerment of women's subjectivity.

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