



Master's Degree
In
European, American and Postcolonial
Language and Literature

Final Thesis
A Discourse Analysis of the
Representations of Gender Issues in
John Cassavetes

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Academic Year

2019/2020

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INTRODUCTION

‘Cinema has been studied as an apparatus of representation, a machine developed to construct images or visions of reality and the spectators’ place in it. But insofar as cinema is directly implicated in the production and reproduction of meanings, values and ideology, it should be better understood as a signifying practice, a work of semiosis: a work that produces effects of meaning and perception’. (De Lauretis, 3) The statement above emphasizes the functions and significance of cinema in a modern society and its history, a historical review of a period cannot be carried out without a close study of the kind of entertainment that mirrored a part of the norms present in the popular culture that existed within that frame of time. This is because entertainment does not serve only as an escape route from the harsh reality, rather, it also represents a normative status-quo, which comprises of the utopian and dystopian views of a society. This research is a discourse analysis of the gender issues represented in the films of an independent 1970s director John Cassavetes. It will involve a sociolinguistic analysis of Cassavetes’s portrayal of men and women and how they managed the social issues that affected their existence as members of a gender group in the 1970s America.

The European Institute for Gender Equality (2014) defines Gender Issues as ‘all aspects and concerns related to women’s and men’s lives and situation in society, to the way they interrelate, their activities and how they react to changes, interventions and policies.’ This research will be looking into concepts that contribute to the creation of certain discourses and narratives that perpetuate inequality among men and women in the American society.

The term ‘discourse’ in this research would be referring to all forms of language use, In their book, Gilbert & Mulkay define discourse analysis as ‘an attempt to identify and describe regularities in the in the methods used by participants; speakers as they construct the discourse through which they establish the character of their actions and beliefs in the course of their interaction’ (4).

In my study, conversations will be analyzed as clues to identity through discursive interactions. A further explanation of discourse is given by Sutherland and Litosseliti,

‘Relationships clearly exist between the narrowly “linguistic” understanding of discourse, i.e. *suprasententiality* + use and identity, for example, in the relationship between ethnicity and language choice...or gender and choice of language features...we are following the understanding that there can also be a more powerful relationship between identity and discourse: that ‘speakers’ identities emerge from discourse’ (.23)

Discourse analysis will help me to investigate how linguistic choices and expressions in the film’s physical settings contribute to the overall interaction carried out by the participants or speakers. Furthermore, the assumption behind these analyses is that gender identities and performance are largely created by society, context, and language use. A substantial part of the data will be analysed with the intent to look at gender in the 1970s American society through language use, verbal and non-verbal communication. Cassavetes’ works are ideal for this study because of the director’s constant attempt to achieve authenticity and high realism in his works. His actors and actresses are often encouraged to improvise, and his plots are given a documentary setting which mimics true life heavily in its portrayal of mimetic events. The dialogues in his films have a verisimilitude and inconsistent quality, Berliner terms it a rambling quality,

‘...Each sentence resonates with the ideas that precede, (words are repeated, ideas meld into one another) the lines do not add up to any coherent story. Lacking a clearly identifiable focus and progressing from association to association, the speech mimics the rambling quality of thought...’ (9)

Cassavetes’ films are also relevant to this study because of their qualification as independent movies of the 1970s. Cassavetes’ unwillingness to conform to the demands and regulations that dominated 1970s Hollywood has made his works a representation of life as it was in the 1970s. His plotlines might seem confusing and disjointed but the high level of realism in their dialogues and themes make them perfect research samples for a linguistic analysis of the popular culture of the 1970s. The research samples have been selected for two main reasons, the first being the time frame of their production and the

second motive is the roles played by men and women in domestic settings. In the films put up for analyses, we are presented with men and women who perform diverse roles in order to meet societal expectations. This makes them seem more human and relatable to us as viewers for we find ourselves doing the same in certain situations. We are presented with women who struggle to be good mothers and men who deal with mid-life crises, and these characters seem to be coping with their problems in their unhappy homes. The films selected for this research are *Faces* (1968), *Husbands* (1970), *A woman under the influence* (1974) and *Gloria* (1980).

The selection of movies span across the 1970s until his latest in the 1980, this decision was made because ideological shifts and political movements spill over from decade to decades. The films were not all produced in the 1970s, but they share intrinsic qualities other than their producer, genre and mode of production. *A Woman Under the Influence* and *Faces* have women protagonists who exist in a world of their own and collapse when they are forced to deal with the realities and pressures that lie in it. In *A Woman Under the Influence*, we are presented with Mabel a housewife and mother who seems mentally ill but at the same time shows a distinctive understanding of her inner world-her family and in her own peculiar way tries to understand the society. Mabel and Maria in *Faces* have husbands that play the role of the ideal married man, despite the difference in social statuses, both men are macho, hardworking and unwilling to submit to their emotions.

Nick ignores the signs of his wife's impending mental breakdown, Robert ignores his wife and spends dinnertime with her drinking and discussing other people's affairs. In the other two films, we have women who are portrayed in a stronger light. In *Husbands*, Harry's wife boldly asks for a divorce and tries to overcome physical violence and in *Gloria*, the protagonist is a completely independent woman who takes control of her life and that of a little boy's. The study of these films will consider the diverse portrayal of the characters, their images of self, their inner world and how they are perceived by the society. All the parts of the research are geared towards the achievement of one aim; the exploration of how much language shaped gender issues through cinema and the exploration of the extent to which word choices reflect a society's relations and preoccupations. The analysis aims at determining the extent to which language in entertainment reflects the societal

issues. Discourse analysis will be used as a tool for the exploration of history through the cinematic representations of the 1970s.

The research is divided into two parts; part involves a review of the prominent issues of the 1970s America and part two is the analyses of the research samples. In the first and second chapter, I will be addressing the presentation of gender issues in 1970s America; the representation of men and women in the media through advertisement posters. I will be looking at how men and women adapted to the changing tides of the 1970s: how women gradually began to participate boldly in feminist activism and how men began to address issues pertaining to the ideals of manhood and what the American man's masculinity should be.

The third chapter will be exploring Cassavetes' cinema, his technique and how he portrayed both genders. For this part of my paper, I have made an extensive use of Ray Carney's account of Cassavetes' interviews and his bibliography. This is because it is an undeniable fact that the works cannot be understood without a minimal knowledge of the artist. The fourth chapter will be divided into three sections; the first section will involve a review of discourse analysis as a sociolinguistic tool, there will be an explanation of the essence of discourse analysis in the research process. The second section will be a review of the methodologies used, I will be explaining how the use of discourse Historical Approach is fundamental to achieving my objectives in the research and the third will be a review of all the relevant themes addressed in the main analysis. In this section, I specifically chose to study gender issues such as gender identity, gender power, the institution of marriage and motherhood because they are relevant to the analyses of the research samples.

The themes that are reviewed are studied with attention to how discourses about them are created through word choices (Gender Identity for example is studied in relation to how word choices perform the function of labelling gender). The fifth chapter will include the analysis of the transcript of the films, with subsections where language use that highlight gender issues are studied. It is my intent to look also at the 1970s American history and gender issues from a fresh perspective through the use of methodologies which are not usually the prime choice of linguistic scholars to study films probably because a

large part of discourse analysis is involved in the study of conversation in real time. This research is carried out with the hope of gaining a better understanding of the Gender issues of the 1970s which seem to still be prevalent today but with a different intensity and political atmosphere. An analysis of Cassavetes' works will not only shed a better light on the achievements of New Hollywood cinema in the 1970s, but it will also give a better knowledge on how the films produced portrayed and addressed gender issues.

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

WOMEN IN THE 1970s

What is a woman? Is she really a different creature than man? If so why? If not, then why does the society treat her as if she were? (Freidan qtd in Marlow and Davis, 2)

‘In the quiet scene of a park or in the family laundry room, every woman at some time asks the same questions raised by Wollstonecraft and Friedan. The average woman puzzled over her own nature, for feminists affect her in one direction, fascinating women in another, her feminine core in still another and economic recession force her into the role of augmenting her husband’s income’ (Marlow and Davis 2) The female gender has been put under scrutiny for diverse purposes and constant attempts have been made to look into her world and understand the issues that lie in it. A study of the domestic sphere of the 1970 American woman would be incomplete without looking at her in the larger context, her society and how she dealt with the world from her own domain. This chapter will involve a study of the women in the midst of the prevalent issues of the 1970s America, their representations in the media, the diverse versions of feminism and its aftereffects on the 1970 American society. This will be followed by a similar investigation of the ideals masculinity and their portrayal.

1.1 WOMEN WORKERS AND BREADWINNERS

One of the major preoccupations of the 1970s America was the declining economy; inflation and unemployment rates were ever rising. Women had become an important resource in the chain of the economy; they now acted as providers of services in the corporate world, they became more than purchasers of domestic appliances. This change acted as one of the main triggers of the Second-wave feminism or woman's movement.

Hosley asserts that this pattern is similar to that of the first wave feminism; 'inclusion of women in the labour force as a result of changes that the society cannot effectively manage through the use of only males as a source of manpower' (10).

In the case of the first wave of Feminism, the change was industrialization; the development of an industrialized economy led to the need of more hands to oversee production and provision of services because the production, demand and supply of goods occurred at a faster rate. This development in turn led to an awareness and a quest for more involvement in the affairs of the state, in this case, women fought for the right to vote as free-standing citizens. Therefore, it can be said that the inclusion of women in the labor force in the 1940s sowed the seeds for the female economic revolution. This development was a counteract from the 1950s when women went to college to meet their prospective husbands and dropped their jobs after marriage to focus of wifehood and motherhood. The existence of one-income families was largely due to the growing economy. In the 1970s, there was a complete turnaround, women activists movements pushed for the employment of more women in the corporate sectors, but in spite of the increase in the employment of female workers in banks and insurance companies, there was no improvement in professional growth and promotion of career growth. England and Boyer explore the implications of women holding female clerical jobs, a white-collar job predominantly held by women in the 1970s. Clerical jobs gradually shifted from being the job for respectable

middle class women or sophisticated urban girls to the job for women with minimum educational qualifications who needed a job to help out at home economically- it became a job for married women with babies and was made adaptable to part-time and short days, but as with all developments in the struggle of feminism, the clerical job had downsides and its major downside was its reputation for being a woman's job because it was of a lower status and it seemed to require little mental effort thus being perfect for the inferior sex.

'During the 1960s and especially the 1970s, women entered the labor market in massive numbers. In 1960, 38 percent of women were in paid work, in 1970, 43 percent were fully employed in various sectors of the economy'. (England and Boyer 23) This expansion did not represent much growth because these female workers were underpaid, they were hugely substituted for their male-counterparts because they offered cheaper labour. The economical trend of the 1970s was to employ women in manual and less paying jobs- Louise Kapp Howe termed it the 'the pink-collar ghetto'. This refers to the 'crowding of women into lower-paid, lower-status service sector jobs like clerical, sales and service occupations. This injustice contributed to the force of the second wave of feminism, the struggle for the recognition of female workers as having more economic value as their male counterparts expressed in the vision of 'comparable worth'

'... Activist women inaugurated the campaign for 'comparable worth'. During the late 1970s and early 1980s, women's incomes began to lag far behind men's. The problem no longer simply required equal pay for equal work... rather, the income gap reflected persistent occupational segregation and the undervaluing of women's work...' (Schulman 167)

Other events that contributed to the rise of female workers are the increase in the numbers of single women who preferred their independence and the rise in the divorce rates thus requiring women to fend for themselves financially. -Historians like Hosley and Schulman state that American white women worked in the seventies but achieved little to no career growth. They worked jobs like childcare and clerical duties that had the reputation of being women's jobs because they required little physical and mental efforts. The majority of those who were driven to work were women who needed to augment the

household income, women who were single and had no male provider in their lives or women who had been divorced. Furthermore, the addition of the female population occurred as a result of external factors such as the economic crisis of the 1970s and absence of men due to the Vietnam war. Despite this seemingly positive development, American female workers were not only underpaid but rarely offered the opportunity to go up the corporate ladder. These injustices faced in the work sphere contributed largely to the triggers of the second wave feminism. It should be noted that black women were not included in this part of the study because they had always worked menial jobs and until the mid-70s were not present in the corporate sphere of the economy, those who did clerical jobs for example, worked majorly in African American banks or African American Insurance Agencies majority worked menial, domestic jobs or agricultural jobs.

1.2 AMERICAN WOMEN AND THE 1970S MEDIA

The media and cinema play a major role in the representation of sexes and their perceptions in the society. The western media has left out the impact made by women in the process of making history, relegated them to biological functions such as the objects of male sexual desire, subjugated to the 'male gaze' or the bearers of the future generation. Myths and legends have further portrayed women with power as evils in the society- Eve and Pandora as the harbingers of evil to mankind, Cleopatra and Medusa who used their sexuality to control and manipulate things for their selfish desires. In this aspect of the study we would be looking at how American women were portrayed in the 1970s media with a focus on the mass media and posters for advertisements. WHAT OF MEN

The 1970s media saw little or no involvement of women in political issues and they played auxiliary roles in journalism. In fact, there are little records of the participation of females in the production of communication in the mass media. This signifies that in the 1970s media, few women occupied high positions or managerial roles. Those like Gloria Steinem and Barbara Walters who were active used their opportunities to campaign for feminist objectives. In the advertising scene, there was the presence of posters that bore feminist undertones, but most posters still presented the stereotype image of women as

inferior sexes whose best position is the home. These would be seen in the figures presented below



Fig. 1.0 Advertisement for a computer.

'[https:// images.search.yahoo.com/search/images/](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images/)'

The figure above shows a pretty woman in front of a typewriter representing the white American female doing the clerical job she is stereotyped to do. The question posed makes one wonder if it is a subtle way of saying women are not up to date with technology and need to be more informed.



Fig 1.1 Advertisement of leather shoes

'[https:// images.search.yahoo.com/search/images](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images)'

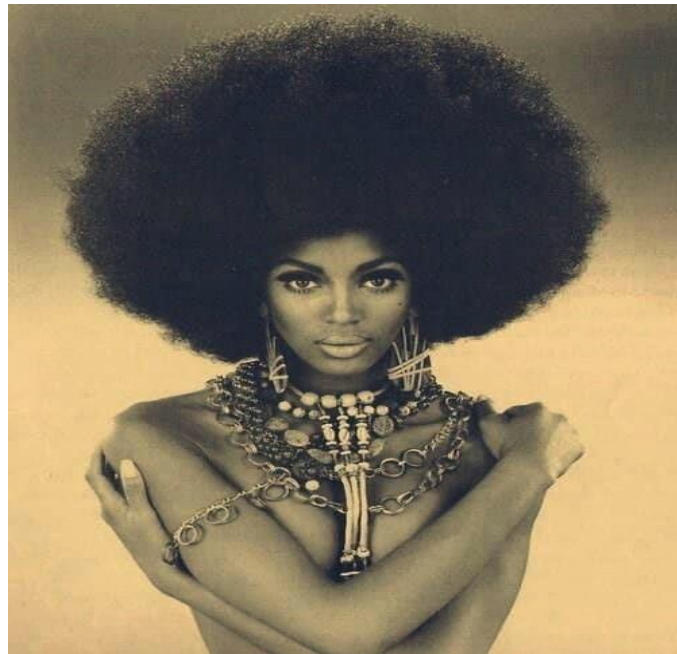


Fig 1.2 Advertisement of African American woman's natural beauty

'[https:// images.search.yahoo.com/search/images](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images)'

The posters above show both a black and white woman being showcased for purely decorative and attractive reasons. These posters are examples of several other ways by which the 1970s woman was objectified and perceived as useful for only sexual and decorative purposes. Fig 1.2 raises questions such as where does she belong? Underneath the man's shoes or polishing his shoes?

The analyses above conclude that before and still during the upsurge of second wave feminism, women were largely absent from important political affairs in the media, they were largely portrayed as objects for male sexual gratification or they were heavily domesticated the early part of the 70s women were majorly seen on advertisements looking either blatantly sexual or warmly inviting. Another addition in this time was the inclusion of the black woman but as highly sexual. A large part of the media was also dedicated to the female liberation movement, but they seemed to portray women as violent and furiously competing with men.

1.3 WOMEN LIBERATION IN THE 1970s

The feminist movement reflects the two main themes of the 1970s: counterculture and contempt for any form of patriarchal authority. It was also the expression of females who were caught up in 'The Me Decade'. They, like other parts of the population sought to explore and understand their needs, create new identities and worlds exclusively theirs. In this aspect, they share characteristics of the narcissistic America, they began to look inward, develop an attitude that was all about them and not conform to the set down roles laid for them by the society. In this study, I will be borrowing Hosley's theory that says that unmanageable situations by the society leads to changes in the overall lives of women (3). The economic crisis of the 1970s unarguably contributed to the rise in Feminist campaigns. Also, the works of Betty Friedan and the general need to question traditions sowed seeds for Feminism but the inclusion of Females in the American corporate sector where they got the opportunity to work alongside men fueled their aspirations more. Therefore, Feminism largely got ahead due to the economic implications of the Vietnam

war and the Oil Embargo of 1973 in this part of the chapter, I will be giving a study of the origin of women's movements and types of feminism in 1970s America, and its impact on the society. The various forms of feminism to be explored will be taken from Marlow and Davis' book 'The American Search for Woman' the forms are categorised based on the status levels placed in the pillar idea about the status and importance of women. Superior Feminists believe that women are higher than men in value and importance, Egalitarian Feminists believe that in some ways women are naturally superior to men while in other ways men are naturally superior to men and Environmental Feminists believe that the sexes are naturally equal but social practices and legal discriminations condition women to appear naturally inferior. The 1970s women movements were largely carried out along the principles of Superior and Environmental Feminism. They avoided the principles of innateness or hereditary traits appropriated to sexes because they believed it was limiting and was often used as a convenient excuse for the oppression of women

The revival of Feminism in the 1970s was attributed to three major social developments in the socio-cultural context. The publication of texts that promoted Gender inequality, the implementation of the Title ix Education Amendment act and the 'Battle of the sexes'. One of the main texts that awakened women's consciousness about their social state was Betty Friedan's 'Feminine Mystique'. Friedan questioned the concept of Female inferiority and the absolute rule of Patriarch authority over women and girls. This was followed by other publications like 'Ourselves Our Bodies' by the Boston Women Health Department, and the circulation of lady magazines like 'Working woman' and 'Working mother'. These publications aimed at helping women have a better sense of self awareness and breakthrough the limits placed on them by patriarchal authority, they brought ideas about how women could explore new identities, understand their sexuality. The magazines especially portrayed role models who were independent and confident outside the home and in their careers. Another event that publicized feminism was the famous 'Battle of Sexes' a tennis match between Bobby Riggs ex-Wimbledon champion and the top-ranked player Billie Jean King. King's victory implied that women were not only capable of participating in the world of men but that they could also beat men at what they claimed to do best. Shulman defines her victory as the signal of the arrival of the women's movement as a cultural force. This cultural force was further aided along by the enactment of the Title

ix of the 1972 Education acts amendment. This law prohibited sex discrimination in all federal schools especially while screening and accepting prospective students.

As appealing as the thought of the 1970s Feminism having one singular movement and goal was to feminists, it never became a reality because the cultural force was a divided one and each party held strong views. The Superior Feminists were completely matriarchal and fought against the authority of the male gender while the Environmental Feminists were in favour of the presence of the male gender but wanted equal grounds and opportunities. This difference is present in the manifestoes of both parties- an example can be seen from the objectives of organisations like WITCH (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell). The first group fought for the elimination of the patriarchal sex caste system and marriage and family as institutions recognized by the government. NOW instead agitated for the equal rights amendments, legalized abortions, government subsidized childcare and enforcement of laws against sex discrimination in employment and housing. A third version of feminism also arose in the 1970s, this group based their activities on the recognition of intrinsic feminine attributes. They celebrated womanhood and believed in the force of strong connection and interaction between women- the main slogan was female connection to their sisters and to mother earth. This connection involved women of all ethnic groups and race. The 1970s feminism had a quality different from the first wave feminism, it sought to eradicate gender limitations, it also included women of all races and origins-immigrants were also involved in the process.

This movement has a massive impact on the 1970s society and its future generation. There was a boom in the inclusion of women in the various areas of the corporate sector. According to Historian Schulman, 'Married women even mothers of small children had flooded the workplace. A new trend had developed, women not only had jobs, they pursued careers. During the 1970s, hospitals, law offices, architectural firms and faculty lounges opened to aspiring women'. p 161. The transformation did not stop there, magazines and books with largely female readers encouraged women to celebrate their sexuality and be more sexually assertive. This gave rise to the acceptance of lesbianism, divorce and single women. By 1970, there were 36million singles and 30 percent of the unmarried women chose their independence over the idea of settling down. The area of politics was not left out, in the 1970s, 20 percent of the congress members were

women, in a major party called Democratic Convention 40 percent of them were women and Shirley Chisolm became the first African American to run for presidency with a major party. The addition of women into the arena of politics led to the implementation of laws and policies that favoured the female gender. Popular ones are the Roe vs Wade on abortion that granted the woman the right to make decisions concerning her body and the abortion of a fetus, the reviewal of rape laws, punishment for offenders were more severe, women were no longer required to give proof of sexual assault and shelters were built for women who suffered from domestic violence.

These achievements were to be crowned with the achievement of the implementation of the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment). However, this was not possible due to substantial lack of votes and the activities and protests of the antifeminists. These were a group of women headed by Phyllis Schlafly who pled protests against Feminist views on the basis that the loss of benefits for a married woman will have a debilitating effect on families because they will receive no payment of alimony in the case of divorce and will not inherit their husbands' properties in the case of his demise. The ERA failed with 3 out of the 38 states required to vote for the implementation of the ERA policy. This disappointing failure proved to be at least a meeting point for all the feminists and various factions of Feminism.

The 1970s American woman was also a vital part of the 'me decade' in her own world, there was counter-culture where there was the upheaval of social norms and established modes of conduct, the roles in the family switched out of necessity and some households had the mothers performing the role of the breadwinner. There was also the display of contempt for patriarchal authority in various levels of intensity where females began to question gender roles and the authority and value of the male over them as persons. In the words of Tom Wolfe, the inventor of the term 'Me Decade', they created worlds of their own which still remains a puzzle to the outsiders till date.

CHAPTER 2

IDEALS OF MASCULINITY IN 1970s AMERICA

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“ it is important to recognize that although in general, women face greater social and economic disadvantages; men too face vulnerabilities because of gender inequality, such as experiencing stress from being regarded, and regarding themselves, as the main breadwinner...failing to get a job, failing to earn enough money or losing their job, while problematic issues in and of themselves can also lead to an erosion of their self-worth as men...” (7)

The quotation above expresses the dilemma the 1970s American man faced; he was to bear the pressure of being the provider and face the immense fear of failing in his duties. His success in life was based on how much control he had over his affairs and how much economic power he possessed. In this chapter, there will be an attempt to examine how the political and societal evolution of the 1970s influenced the ideals and representations of masculinity.

2.2 WHAT IS MASCULINITY?

Anthony Lemelle defines masculinity as ‘the socially constructed characteristics that society expects from the male sex’ meaning that the features generally considered to be masculine depend on the cultural patterns of any given society and are perpetuated through high and popular culture’. It can be said that the 1970s American man had to conform to a set of social rules that defined him as a man worthy to fit into the white male society. This is because the American man’s history was based on their ability to conquer the frontier and tame it for his own use. Therefore, the American man has to be willing to fight for his right or his territory, to prove his masculinity, the American man has to be willing to use violence.

The 1970s saw the American society begin to see white male masculinity as a problem. The classic characteristics of masculinity began to be deconstructed and many sociologists, psychologists sought to understand why the American men were supposed to be unemotional and never cry, why they were supposed to play the automatic role of the provider and protector of others and themselves. These questions were made more pertinent by the rise of the counterculture and the advent of a new discipline called “Men’s Studies”. Works published by male writers like Warren Farrell’s *The Liberated Man* (1974) and Fasteau Marc’s *The Male Machine* (1974) deconstructed the stereotypes associated with manhood and the conferences on men’s movements began to gain traction and influence the society’s opinions on what a man should be.

Americans began to question the concept of the quintessential American male who bore the traits of his ancestors that conquered the frontier and through hard work built a civilized America. Isabel Capdevila refers to the losses that came with the Vietnam war as one of the catalysts of the disregard of the concept of ideal American masculinity. The Vietnam war made the men realize that the America was not meant to conquer the whole world and they were not invincible

“Thus, the American frontier was constructed as a masculine arena where men could pursue their exploits unencumbered by domestic codes of conducts or feminine interference and the true American became the man in the wilderness far from the sinister corruption of the civilized world and rising to extraordinariness setting his jaws and walking into danger...the frontier ethos and its ideological foundations were brought to critical scrutiny after the Vietnam war...the Vietnam war was the destruction not of America but of the myth which gave it life and in which Americans once believed...’(18)

The counterculture of the 1970s also influenced the changing tides, men began to question the concept of all-American man. They were discontent with the pressures that came with being a breadwinner and a fearless man who bore all the pressures relentlessly. The acceptance of homosexuality became an uprising trend and men began to question the

concept of the dominant white heterosexual male. Other things that influenced the changing tides of masculinity were the Vietnam war and the rise of unemployment. In her paper on manhood and employment, Victoria Ludas states that the fall in the level of employment acted as one of the main drives for the transformation of masculinity.

‘sociologists studied “masculinity as it applied to groups like juvenile delinquents especially focusing on the effects on a man growing up without a father but discussion in the 1970s was important because it came at a time when these socially imposed standards of masculinity were again been threatened, especially in the workforce for the first time since WWII...the country changed in several ways that affected how white men saw themselves, and it was not be accident that the movement that led to men’s studies began in the 1970s’

The feminist activism of the 1970s made massive waves but not all men were converted to its cause. In spite of the activism, many men still saw women as the weaker sex and as unequal to them. An as a result of this men still blatantly expressed sexist views and the use of sexist terms were still seen as a symbol of masculinity. There was the masculinity that involved the acceptance of feminism and getting in touch with the man’s feminine side. Feminism played a role in setting the man free. The man did not have to deal with the pressures that came with being a sole breadwinner or a macho man who always had everything under control. In the 1970s, many men began to opt for lifelong bachelorhood. Schulman states that men began to see Feminism as a benefit, “other liberated men recognized that many feminist achievements-like liberalized divorce laws and weakening taboos against sexual expression outside marriage-benefited men. In the 1970s, men initiated most divorces under the no-fault laws and more American men chose to live as bachelors. The number of men living by themselves doubled over the decade”

The erosion and evolution of social values gave birth to a new 1970s man who had accepted that he was a liberated man who did not have to meet the grueling demands of classic American masculinity. The changing tides of culture and tradition meant that he could express himself freely and give into his emotions without guilt.

2.3 MEN IN THE 1970S MEDIA

The 1970s media portrayed the fluidity of American masculinity; the first strain of masculinity involved men who were painted as traditional males who were in charge of their world. These men were breadwinners with wives whom they needed to subdue or women who existed for their pleasure and entertainment. The second strain of masculinity involved men who were metrosexual and who had begun to realize that women were also playing a major role in daily affairs therefore, their opinions mattered also. These men played up their masculine traits not only because they could but with the aim of gaining female attention. In this period, the public was presented with men who had features women were known to be attracted to.

In spite of these changing tides among genders, men were still largely the most represented in professional careers, they still ruled the workforce in spite of the trend which brought more women into the workforce. However, these men began to understand the importance of performing their masculinity. The posters below will shed more light on how the media precisely advertisement posters portrayed different versions of men in order to attract their target customers.



Fig.1.3 Advertisement of an 'irresistible' jacket

'[https:// images.search.yahoo.com/search/images/](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images/)

This poster presents men as attractive to the opposite sex because of their clothes. The jacket been advertised is shown to be able to give the male wearer some sexual power-putting men and women at an equal level



Fig 1.4 Advertisement of men care products

'[https:// images.search.yahoo.com/search/images/](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images/)

The man depicted in the picture above is not supposed to need anyone, he is unashamedly masculine, he is raw and in sync with his innate qualities that define his manhood. He is an animal like the lion, wild and primitive and just like the lion, he is king in his jungle



Fig 1.4 advertisement of a Detergent showing the man as the breadwinner

'[https:// images.search.yahoo.com/search/images](https://images.search.yahoo.com/search/images)'

The advertisement poster shows a man automatically playing the role of the provider who pays the bills (utility bill) and his wife is being expected to take care of the laundry. The couple are portrayed as happy or comfortable with the roles they both play.

The posters above have been used to study the portrayal of men in the 1970s American society because advertisements are more than a marketing tool, they are often used to create awareness by using pictures and languages that their target customers understand or by creating situations that the members of the society can relate to. They have shown the diverse versions of the American man that were socially acceptable. The

first poster showed that there was the man who understood that he had to be attractive to women and in order to do so, he needed to put on the right clothing while the second and third poster showed men that were expected to be in control of the situations surrounding their lives. All these show that while the counterculture of the 1970s had a sweeping effect on men and the concept of masculinity, there were still those who chose to hold on to their traditional ideals of manhood and there were the others who chose to find a meeting point of both ideals and create their version of masculinity.

CHAPTER THREE

MEN AND WOMEN IN CASSAVETES

‘May you dare to follow in
Cassavetes challenging exciting
footsteps. Down the road not taken,
away from the pack, along the path
of the artist’

Ray Carney *Cassavetes on
Cassavetes* (xv)

3.1 THE CINEMA OF JOHN CASSAVETES

Cassavetes is known for his daring works as an independent director, genius scriptwriter and actor. However, there is a lot of sacrifice and uncertainty behind his adventurous persona and passionate artist façade, the public is largely unaware of the main reasons behind his creations, his venture into the world of independent directing and *cinema verité*. This chapter seeks to explore Cassavetes’ works as an independent director with a focus on his distinctive ways of representing women

John Nicholas Cassavetes was born into a family of Greek immigrants, his parents migrated to America when they were teenagers. They never came into wealth and their finances peaked only when his mother owned a boutique and his father a travel agency in the 1950s. Cassavetes got his love of arts from being exposed to Greek literature at an early age; his father read him Sophocles and Plato when he was a little boy. This exposure to classic literature would later shape Cassavetes into the kind of director he would become; idealistic and believing he could change the society’s way of thinking.

Cassavetes’ venture into the world of cinema did not begin when he finished the school of arts but rather when he was a young child, acting and telling stories to his

family and friends. He talks about his childhood in Ray Carney's *Cassavetes on Cassavetes*, 'When we had money, we went to the movies. When we didn't, we sat around the table and told stories...' (626). He spent a lot of his childhood performing poetry and acts for his mother's friends, his love for making films grew from his early dalliances with a video camera,

'When I was a kid, eight or nine, my four best friends and I would take a Bolex camera and make our own movies. I would be on the beach, in a bathing suit, shooting 8mm. And playing "The Killer"! Nothing much has changed really. I'm still making them with my friends! We'd pretend to be disc jockeys. Fantasizing is instinctive. It makes things better than in real life. I grew up on films and books. But even when I was growing up, books were going out, films were coming in....' (627)

While growing up, Cassavetes earned the reputation of being the quick-witted daredevil. He later enrolled at the American Academy of Dramatic Arts (AADA) at the age of nineteen. His enrolment was not entirely an academic pursuit but based on his friends' and their youthful exuberance. While in school, he had no interest in learning acting techniques, but he proved to be a diligent performer and was noticed by his instructors when he was on stage. In 1950, he finished his course and began to search desperately for a job. His search for an acting job went on for five years, within that time, he worked as an apprentice in various stage companies and took some jobs as an extra in television productions; In 1953, he got his first major job as an assistant stage manager in theatre productions. Cassavetes' story took a turn for the better when he met Sam Shaw who was a professional photographer and movie producer. Shaw took Cassavetes under his wing: He taught him how to navigate the social circles of Hollywood and later introduced him to his first agent, Robert Lang.

Cassavetes' acting career took off in 1954 when he met William McCaffrey who casted him as a bullfighter in one of the episodes of *Omnibus* (Cassavetes was casted because of his olive-skinned complexion and his slender stature). His performance opened doors for him in the film industry and helped him gain a bit of financial stability. 'He would act in more than twenty-six television productions in 1954, twenty-three in 1955 and twelve in 1956' (36). As Cassavetes' acting career grew in film and television, his fears

of becoming a shadow of himself and an actor who could only dance to Hollywood's tune of monetizing entertainment led him to open his own Drama workshop, which in turn led to the production of his first independent movie titled *Shadows* (1958) which received critical acclaims and earned him recognition as a filmmaker

Cassavetes' films stood out from the contemporary blockbusters because of his keenness on portraying social issues on a ground level, his themes were often based on family and marital problems or relationship issues between a man and woman or parents and children. He developed his own unorthodox techniques based on three principles: Firstly, art must be a complete mimesis of reality. The Longhetti family in *A Woman Under the Influence* was according to him, the 'realist' family he had ever seen because the issues that were addressed in it were current in 1970s society and there were no magical ways of making them go away. Families had problems that remained with them for life and real life does not always have a happy ending.

Secondly, the character that is been portrayed is more important than the actor; Cassavetes aimed at giving an authentic portrayal of his characters and because of this, he worked around the state of mind of his actors. He was also famous for making them angry and channeling their anger for the portrayal of an angry character or fueling their nervousness to get a nervous character; He was completely against the smooth lines and perfect acts of Hollywood films, so actors were recorded even when they did things that were not in the script, he aimed at getting characters that were rough around the edges and relatable. Thirdly, the audience must be left to interpret the messages in their own way, for Cassavetes, individualism was an essential theme in all his productions, the issues addressed were real, but they were often personal, the characters battled with their own internal demons just as everyone does. Minnie Moore in *Minnie and Moskowitz* battles with depression and loneliness in spite of her attractiveness, Nick in *A Woman Under the Influence* is anxious because he loves his wife but has to commit her to a mental health care facility and the three friends in *Husbands* battle with mid-life crisis after the death of a friend. All these are issues on an intimate level and Cassavetes makes his viewers confront them by presenting characters that are often relatable, he does not create a sensational escape, he creates an avenue for deep thoughts and self-questioning.

Another distinctive quality of Cassavetes works is his use of ‘improvisation’. He created his own version of improvisation; This means that the recordings of scenes were not stopped if the actors made mistakes, most of the time mistakes were recorded along with the acting itself so the actors often could not tell when acting merged with real life

slips. This fluidity was also seen in his refusal to stick to fixed schedules. He did not mind taking a week to film only one or two scenes. This version of improvisation also meant that he had a different style of working with his actors on set. He worked around the actors with a handheld camera and sometimes mimicked their movements, this was aimed at making them feel like they were being guided along their own interpretation of the characters they were portraying. Also, in order to achieve his highly realist style, he often used close ups of his actors faces and the props in the scene and the sound effects were sometimes recorded sounds and noises.

An important feature Cassavetes’ improvisation technique was his method of choosing his actors. He created characters based on the personalities of the actors he had in mind for his films. An instance of this was seen when he was preparing the cast for *A Woman Under the Influence*, he had to revise the scripts because Peter Falk was made the lead actor much after the script had been prepared. These unconventional methods ensured that Cassavetes would always work with an unprofessional crew, his cast members were often friends and family that understood his quirks and did not mind the way he directed them during production. As a part of one of the rules on set, Actors were not allowed to talk about their characters with each other, there was no group discussion of characters offset.

Cassavetes would often give the actors the basic details of the characters he needed his actors to portray but he never gave them extensive instructions on how to portray them, due to this, he was quite difficult to please, scenes were repeated over and over again, tensions at times could be high during the production of a scene. These methods in combination with lack of funds would have discouraged any high-ranking professional actor because they would clash heads with Cassavetes who was willful and particular about the way he wanted his films to be produced.

Cassavetes was able to achieve high realism majorly by his dialogues, he constructed his dialogues based on his recordings of conversations between family and friends. This gave his dialogues their lifelike quality. Cassavetes' success as a filmmaker comes from his ability to express himself in his art without limits and finesse

3.2 WOMEN IN CASSAVETES

The 1970s came with films that addressed feminist issues, popular examples are Martin Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974) and Barbara Loden's *Wanda* (1970). These films featured women that were able to break away from the trappings of the society in one way or the other. Alice gains freedom and independence at some point in the plot, Wanda refuses to be a married woman and a mother trapped by the unwelcome duties that come with managing a family. In contrast, Cassavetes' films continually feature women who are trapped in the demands of the society. These women are often presented as unhappy or searching desperately for something and we the viewers are afraid of the possibility of his representations being the reality. A major part of his work as a film producer has women acting lead roles (most of these roles were played by his wife Gena Rowlands). Cassavetes was not interested in portraying a sexualized 1970s female character, he instead sought to use his films to portray women the way he saw them: As different and misunderstood, he says in *Cassavetes on Cassavetes*, an account by Ray Carney,

'I try to deal with women differently from the way I would deal with men, so that I won't be presenting some opinionated view of a man viewing a woman, I don't really know anything about women. So, I deal with it on a line of activity of what they do and when their character was out in their activity' (367)

This statement returns in the characterization of his female protagonists, in *Minnie and Moskowitz*, Minnie gives an honest opinion about what it means to be a single and lonely middle-aged woman and she blames films for giving young girls unrealistic expectations. In *A Woman Under the Influence*, we have a woman who is scarily

fascinating because of the way she slowly and unconsciously pulls the viewers into her private world, we cannot judge her for being who she is: A woman who constantly tries to please her husband and connect with others unabashedly. *Faces* also gives us a representation of two different women on opposite ends of the moral spectrum, the prostitute and the rich middle-class housewife, both are frustrated but for different reasons. The wife (Maria) is unable to connect with her husband who slowly slips away, and the prostitute (Jeannie) is frustrated with not being recognized as an individual with valid opinions

Cassavetes gives various representations of diverse women to reinforce his cinema verité style, he seems to want to say that women are very different individuals in real life, in spite of their beauty, they are not sexual objects. They are individuals with diverse dreams and aspirations. He also portrayed women with strong character, Minnie is a woman who takes control of her life, in the scene of domestic violence, she hits right back, Gloria fights a mob and subsequently becomes a mother despite her seeming lack of maternal instinct. These women show varying levels of dynamicity and the dynamicity in itself is power.

He presents the feminine quality of being unpredictable and unstable as an appealing quality, Gloria might seem like only the girlfriend of a mafia king, but she has learnt survival tricks meaning she is not just a bimbo, she might deliver her threats in a shaky voice, but she means it when she says she is going to shoot. A closer look at his works shows that Cassavetes might have unknowingly voiced some feminist concerns, in *Cassavetes on Cassavetes*, an account by Ray Carney, he says

‘Gloria celebrates the coming together of a woman who neither likes nor understands children...there’s a lot of pain connected raising children in today’s world, it is considered a big holdback for women, so a lot of women have developed a distrust of children, I wanted to tell them that they don’t have to like children-but there is still something deep in them that relates to children. (448)

This view of female independence is also reflected in the relationship Cassavetes had with his wife. Cassavetes saw her as an artist and believed strongly in her capacity to effectively act out the roles he gave to her. In reality, one of the major reasons for Gena

Rowlands constant appearance in his movies was not only the communal atmosphere that existed in the film production but Cassavetes' method which made him a difficult producer to work with, the only lead female star who could work with him was his wife.

'Cassavetes' treatment of Rowlands and Falk is a textbook example of the use of psychology to massage souls and spirits. His relationship with Rowlands was extremely rocky at times (to the extent that at one point, he told her he would never work with her again). Rowlands on her part felt that lost at moments and desperately in need of help which Cassavetes treatment of Rowlands could be called heartless and brutal... What is more interesting is that when the cameras rolled, Rowlands gave Cassavetes something he never experienced'(333)

This emphasizes the fact that while Cassavetes saw women as different, he still treated them as individuals with minds of their own. His professional relationship with his wife showed that he treated her just like other male actors-he expected the best and nothing less.

3.3 MEN IN CASSAVETES

‘Listen I am a man, I stood up for it. I can be fired, I can win or lose but at least I said what I had to say at the right time’

Cassavetes John,
Cassavetes on Cassavetes

The popular films in the 1970s that had male protagonists showed men who were in full control of the events of their lives, made big decisions and those who conquered through violence or used their power for good or evil. In *Taxi Driver* (1976) by Martin Scorsese, Travis Bickle a veteran of the Vietnam war takes up the responsibility of saving a teenage prostitute and is proclaimed as the hero of his community in the final scenes of the film, in *All the President's Men* (1974) by Walter Coblenz, Woodward and Bernstein act as two brave reporters who expose the Watergate scandal, these men are brave enough to expose the secrets of the presidency to the public. Their actions are not only heroic but presented as socially relevant. The male protagonists in the preceding films were men who were the saviors, they were courageous, and all won at the end in Cassavetes aimed at portraying men in a different light,

Cassavetes sought to present men that did not always have everything under their command. His aim for a highly realistic film will not have allowed him to portray men who bore the ideal traits. The men he portrayed were masculine in appearance, most of them were the breadwinners and often used coarse language as men but these men were not in control of the situations in their lives, they were seen to break down when things got unbearable or chaotic like. In the *Woman under the Influence* for instance, Nick who is hysterical throughout the film might have been the breadwinner, but he could not be seen as unemotional or stoically in command.

Cassavetes men were also products of the influence of the society, he didn't portray them as instinctively masculine. They were only performing roles the society expects them to perform. Richard performs in the scene where he engages in a brawl with the businessman in the earlier scenes of the film to prove his manliness. The men were presented with their own set of struggles, there were men afraid of failure, there were those who had insecurities like... and there were those who were breaking under the pressures that came with manhood and at times took the unmanly route to solve them like the characters in *Husbands* who struggled with mid-life crises and grief and dealt with it by running away from their responsibilities or attempting to put their lives on hold. He also presented the men in their domestic setting to show us a version of men experiencing more relatable struggles that came with daily life. His opinion on men showed how he thought men should be presented in order to achieve high verisimilitude. in Ray Carney's account *Cassavetes on Cassavetes*, Cassavetes talks about his knowledge of men,

'...I know men very well...the complexities of men are like the complexities of a woman, but they are definitely not the same ...men seem to be the real victims, confusion keeps them going. Dashing around, the business lunch, a little hanky-panky with a prostitute, getting drunk with some buddies-adventurous, daring eh? Empty meaningless little actions that fill up a day. Their brutish existence holds no dreams and for a man who goes out into it every day, there is no signal of reassurance. And so, our characters are forced into playing power games, using what they know-business techniques to verify their social acceptability...' (367)

Taking a look at his works, it could be said that Cassavetes' portrayal of his characters was realistic because he often drew inspirations from the people he came into contact with on a daily basis and on his personal knowledge of men, being a man himself. He believed that he was in the best position to present them to the public with a high level of honesty. This attitude produced veracious depictions of the life of the regular American man who was in fact, not faring much better than the women psychologically and emotionally. It could be said that their struggles might have been much difficult because they were expected to be the salvation of the society. As we will see in the chapters that follow, the male characters will experience breakdowns and openly talk about their insecurities and fears.

PART TWO
CHAPTER FOUR
DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

4.1 AN OVERVIEW OF DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The study of how language interacts with context to establish meanings has been a major preoccupation of linguists, they are all concerned with recurring modes of language use and how they serve as building blocks for the construction of narratives and meaning. The aim is to determine how the words we use affect our understanding of the occurrences and concepts in day to day life, and this preoccupation is one of the main interests of discourse analysts. Hugh Trappes-Lomax Identifies the main thing Discourse analysts are interested in as the scientific study of the patterns in connected speech and how they define context, he states

‘Discourse analysts do what people in their everyday experience of language do instinctively and largely unconsciously: notice patterning of language in use and the circumstances (participants, situations, purposes outcomes) with which these are typically associated. The discourse analyst’s particular contribution to this otherwise mundane activity is to do the noticing consciously, deliberately, systematically, and as far as possible, objectively, and to produce accounts (descriptions, interpretations, explanations) of what their investigations have revealed’ (2)

Therefore, the pertinent questions to be answered here are what is Discourse analysis in itself and what is its relevance in this research? Discourse analysis is the study of language in use, it is a close study of word choices and their creation and identification of meaning. Simply put, it is the study of language use, contexts and meaning.

Paltridge Brian defines Discourse analysis as ‘an examination of the patterns of language across texts and the consideration of the relationship between language and the social and cultural contexts in which it is used. Discourse analysis also considers the ways that the use of language presents the views of the world and different understandings. It examines how the use of language is influenced by relationships between participants as well as effects the use of language has upon social identities and relations. It considers how views of the world and identities are constructed through discourse’

From the definitions above, ‘Discourse’ is the key word. Paul gee identifies two meanings of ‘discourse’, he defines ‘(d) discourse and (D) Discourse’ discourse refers to language in use (this refers to connected speech, words and syntax) the second Discourse refers to patterns of language in use, connected speech and a combination of other resources of communication (semiotic signs, shared contexts and references) Discourse analysis is often focused on the second type of Discourse and how it serves as a framework of relations in a community. The Discourse analysis in this research will be serving the main function of objectively observing language patterns and the communication the issues in gender relations. It will also be used critically study the concepts that are accepted as the norms of the 1970s American society. Discourse analysis will be playing the main function of deconstructing pertinent themes in the study of gender issues (sexism, sexual objectification, motherhood and gender power in the institution of marriage) in the sections that follow, I will be addressing the relationship between language use (Discourse) and themes in gender study. I will be studying how discourse shapes realities in concepts like gender roles and identity, objectification of sexes and the institution of marriage and motherhood.

The methodology and fundamental theories used in the analyses will be discussed later in this chapter with the intention of setting the stage for the proceeding chapter. In each section, there will be an analysis of how linguistic expressions of participants in social settings reveal their position or attitude towards gender issues. There will be an observation of how word choices reflect an individual’s identity: this would involve an investigation on how much of an impact, the language use and expressions of self-identification have in the creation of an individual’s identity that could be different from that which the members of a social circle create for him or her. I will also be looking into how language in itself is

a performance of gender or social roles: This discussion will be a closer look at how sexism as a gender issue could serve as an access ticket in various Communities of Practice (CoFp). There will be an analysis of the types of sexist terms used and how they function in CoFp. The main focus of these analyses will be the ways by which female objectification can be seen in language use and how the participants deal with it. The subsequent analyses that follow would include an investigation of power play in the ideals of marriage in 1970s America and the diverse versions of motherhood in 1980s America. The theories are tackled in the order of the analyses which will be carried out in the next chapter. Therefore, the first theory addressed in the third section of this chapter foreshadows the analyses of the first film in the next chapter.

4.1.1 THE METHODOLOGY OF THE ANALYSES

The analyses will be carried out using the DHA (Discourse Historical Approach). Speed Ewen (2009) defines this approach as ‘the study of discourse as context-dependent linguistic practices that are located within the fields of action. This approach identifies discourse as structured forms of knowledge and the memory of social practices; the historical context requires the analyst to address the influence of different historical contexts in the subjective understanding of social inequalities.’ This approach will be effective in the study of the historical and sociological contexts of the discourses looked into. It will enable me to take a closer look at the discourses from diverse angles. discourse historical approach is a blend of principles that are social constructivist. This section of the chapter will involve a brief review of the two approaches that have influenced the scope of DHA. Jorgensen and Phillips identify the three main approaches under Discourse analysis that are social constructivist. They are Discourse Theory, Discursive psychology (DP), and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and for the purpose of this research, I would be looking at the Discourse Theory and Discursive psychology.

Discourse theory by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe is based on the poststructuralist idea that discourses are the building blocks of meaning in the world and that owing to the dynamic nature of language, meaning can never be stable. No discourse is a closed entity, it is rather being constantly transformed through contact with other

discourses. They further state that there are dominating discourses which often appear to be taken as truth ‘ Discourses are structured totalities which regulate linguistic elements such as words and utterances to objects and practices in a contingent manner...hegemonic discourses serve to generate the clarity and security of what we take for granted hegemonic meaning is normal meaning, any alternative meaning in the society is marginalized’ (12) This theory functions as one of the main tenets of every Linguistic analysis which is often based on the need to understand how meaning is a fluid entity in relation to social context and why certain discourses acquire the hegemonic status. With discourse analysis there is the need to deconstruct what is generally taken to be common sense or acceptable truths.

Discursive psychology was coined from Potter and Wetherell’s book “Discourse and Social Psychology” (1987). It focused on the study of the interrelation of the mind and versions of reality. The mind in this context refers to attitudes, feelings and expectations, while realities refer to events, history and existing objects. DP is concerned with observing how all these are reflected in the actions of individuals. Hepburn & Wiggins state that ‘Discursive Psychology is a broad title for a range of research done in different disciplinary contexts which include language, communication, psychology and sociology.’ The title however does not indicate that it is mainly concerned with traditional psychology. They differ in their areas of preoccupation. Potter (1995) differentiates traditional Psychology from Discursive Psychology on the account of how each discipline focuses on explaining the actions of individuals; Traditional Psychology focuses on the processes and entities that underpin action while Discursive psychology focuses on the participant’s practical, situational construction and displays. In contrast to traditional Psychology, DP is concerned with how our versions of diverse realities are demonstrated in our speech, unlike traditional Psychology, it is not concerned with how our thought processes lead to our actions.

Discursive psychology is based on the principle that an individual’s inner world is visible in his communication. Therefore, it seeks to understand how people construct identities and worldviews in conversations and to analyze the social effects of existing discourses It focuses on how people’s selves, opinions and emotions are processed and influenced by social relationships, and how they influence social and cultural status quo. Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) is a blend of all these domains because it studies

language as context dependent in diverse social spheres, it studies the dominance of existing discourses and seeks to understand how their history affects the present. DHA focuses on the identification of patterns and commonalities of knowledge and structures. Speed Ewen states that,

‘DHA details a need to draw from a social psychology informed reading of the subject in order to shed light between the relationship of text and context....the key DHA argument is that a focus on objective variables such as gender, class or ethnicity cannot sufficiently demonstrate the influence of social context on language variation and discourse.. within DHA, history and by implication, memory is understood as a relevant context that needs to be taken into account’ (17)

The use of DHA as a methodology will be suitable for the analyses in the following chapter because of the combination of different themes and subject matter in the text samples. The flexibility of these methodologies makes them even more pertinent to this research because of the multimodal nature of Discourse analysis as a discipline. The subsections that follow will be brief reviews of the themes that are relevant in gender studies and how they could be studied using the general principles of Discourse Analysis. In particular, I will be studying the concepts of identity, power and performance in relation to discourse. I will also be paying attention to sexism, objectification and motherhood.

In the analyses seen in the following chapter, I will not be focusing only on language use, rather it will be a blend of the study of American history, gender and their representations in social contexts. The textual analyses in the following chapter will involve a close look at the discursive elements in relation to the context; the contexts in this section are transcripts of the scenes in the films. These analyses are aimed at dissecting the word choices and how they reflect not only the intentions of the speakers but also the socio-political issues that existed within the time frame of the film production and Cassavetes’ perspective of them.

4.2 THEMES AND THEORIES IN THE ANALYSES

4.2.1 LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND PERFORMANCE

4.2.2 INTRODUCTION

Phillips (2002) defines 'language as a 'machine' that generates and, as a result, it constitutes the social world. This also extends to the constitution of social identities and social relations. It means that changes in in discourse are a means by which the social world is changed'. This statement highlights the function of language as more than a tool for communication; language here is defined as the vehicle of the social world. This section of the chapter will be focused on how language use reflects gender, and the performance of gender roles and identity.

4.2.3 GENDER IDENTITY AND DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Discourse analysis studies 'language in use' in relation to the context of verbal or non-verbal interactions that take place. Mills (5) asserts that 'Discourse may refer to the spoken word only or all utterances written or verbal. It is a particular way of talking delineating a specific domain with its own particular vocabularies and sets of meanings'. This reinforces the concept that words have the power to not only define social settings but also identities. In the 1960s, scholars developed a new approach of language analysis called Gender discourse analysis. This became one of the ways by which scholars began to study how gender is defined by the society; Linguists sought to understand better the extents to which gender is constructed by social interactions and how they go on to define the way rules are laid down for the males and females in every spectrum of the society. This new school of thought gave birth to various opinions on how the parameters of gender were set in the society; A group of researchers believed that social rules and interactions defined masculinity and feminineness, another group believed that the definitions of gender was

fluid and ever dynamic. This concept was founded by the Discursive Psychologists, Xue Chen gives a definition of Discursive Psychologists in his paper,

Discursive psychologists state that gender is neither something into which we are born nor something we eventually become. In terms of the same metaphor, we would argue that the jelly never sets... we claim that people's gender identities remain relatively fluid, capable of adapting to the particular social settings or contexts in which people find themselves. (3)

The opinions stated above define gender as nothing stable but rather defined by social settings, which could also be historical occurrences. However, a better definition of how much of an impact language use has on the establishment of gender identity which can also be stereotype roles is defined by West Candace,

'Studies of discourse and construction of gender have taught us much about the systematic ways this pattern is generated. From those who focus on the social and economic contexts of texts and talk, we have learned of the construction of women as consumers and men as producers in the capitalist western societies, we have seen how women come to be defined in relation to their marital and familial roles and how men come to be defined in relation to their occupational roles... we have developed a deep appreciation for the power of specific practices that allow us to 'see' the world as a Gendered place....' (6)

The excerpt above shows that the Discourse analysis of communication plays an essential role in understanding the power play between other members of society and women. The analyses which will be carried out will borrow heavily from the concepts of identity construction based on language use in socio-historic contexts. This research will involve a study of the expressions used to define the men and women in the selected transcripts. The participants are analysed in domestic settings; they are seen performing the roles of parents or spouses. My intent is to analyze how men and women are subjected to the performance of various roles in domestic settings; at home with family and close friends. Furthermore, the discourse analysis will seek to examine how language use acts as a 'Gender Identity Marker'; this refers to expressions and linguistic devices that establish an individual's sex based on its history, meaning and social connotations. In North

American societies, for instance, the term 'A beauty' refers to a woman who is physically attractive and 'A Hunk' a man who is physically and sexually attractive. In the analyses seen in the subsequent chapter, the identity markers were created by the other participants in the discourse and it is vital to this research to understand the contexts of their use because it shows the level of powerlessness the 1970s American woman faced even in her own 'innate' domain, women were unable to create identities for themselves and Cassavetes shows us how much impact the words used to define a woman has on the way she is perceived by others.

4.2.4 LANGUAGE AS IDENTITY MARKER

The use of words as identity markers and containers is a concept gotten from the research carried out in the Gender discourse analyses of the 1970s that arose in the 1970s where scholars sought to understand better how words that refer to men and women have evolved over the decades. In her book, West expatiates on this concept by explaining the evolution of terms that are used to refer to women in western societies

' Research on gender and language structure has demonstrated numerous ways that women are ignored, trivialized and deprecated by the words used to describe them...women are denied an autonomous existence through titles that distinguish them on the basis of their marital status ('Mrs.' vs 'Miss', 'Senora vs Seniorita', 'Madame vs Mademoiselle')... and words associated with women tend to pejorate over time; *Woman* came to mean mistress or paramour in the nineteenth century leading to the necessity for *lady* after that...' (9)

Feminists have gone on to assert that English language does not include the female gender enough. Certain terms and expressions often give people the impression that the person being referred to is a male. Examples are 'doctor' 'professor' 'Engineer' as all these professional titles do not seem to have a version for women. English as a language has primarily created identities for men and women based on the way the dominance certain masculine terms have being given. Lakoff (1973) has identified the use of registers by males and females. The use of female registers by a man and male registers by a woman

could present the speaker in a negative light. This is because female registers are seen as signifiers of weakness and male registers are seen as aggressive and powerful

Cassavetes in his films used dialogue to show the viewers how the subconscious use of words and expressions defined women negatively and created unfavorable stereotypes, in one of his films *Minnie and Moskowitz*, a dialogue between two characters on a romantic dinner reveals a negative stereotype based on the colour of a woman's hair, Zelmo says to Minnie at a point in the dinner, 'You blondes, you are all alike' this was a response to Minnie's opinion of Zelmo not being an understanding person. That is, a person she does not hold in high esteem. The keyword in this dialogue is the use of *Blond* as a derogatory term based on the stereotype of blond women being unintelligent and unpleasant, and it should be noted that this generalization is often used only when referring to women, blond women are airheaded, blond men receive no negative judgements based on their hair color.

4.2.5 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND GENDER ROLES

Speech is often a performance of diverse roles in relation to context; People perform diverse roles in the society and their speech is often a means to identify the roles they play in a conversation. For instance, A man who uses technical medical terms during a seminar will be identified as a medical expert because his speech has shown that he has substantial knowledge in the medical field. At home, his speech will reflect his position as either a father, husband or son because he will perform roles during interactions. Our daily linguistic repertoire are linked to the roles we play in different social spheres we inhabit. Kipers in his research sought to understand better the stereotype attached to gendered speech,

' from the records of naturally occurring conversations in a public-school faculty lounge of all-male, all-female and mixed gender groups of teachers it was seen that, home and family, personal and family finances and such social issues as child abuse and women rights were the most common topics in all female

conversation, while recreation and work-related matters predominated in the all-male conversations'.(10)

A close look at the topics discussed predominantly by both genders may serve as pointers to their roles in the society. The women for example demonstrate their roles as home keepers and mothers through their interest in 'home and family' as frequent topics of discussion. The men on the other hand may subconsciously be performing their roles as the providers or main breadwinners who are always focused on work hence their interests in 'work and recreation'.

Discourse Analysis in gender roles is focused on the way certain expressions and word choices show the participants performing their required gender roles. This part of the analysis is based on the sociolinguistic theory that gender roles are largely determined by language use. As asserted in her book on Gender identity and discourse, Sunderland states,

'gender roles are constructed in talk rather than associated with biological sex, this means that the talk of ideas related to the behavior of males and females make them different rather than the behavior itself-society creates gender roles and identity through discourse....' (29)

This assertion is based on the notion that gender roles are reflected through discourse. Men and women reflect their gender through the way they speak, what they speak about and how they are addressed. Kristoff Schon (2005) gives a further example of the performance of identity through speech could be seen in the 'Japanese tradition where women are expected to use a high-pitched voice when speaking to appear daintier, and men are supposed to lower their voice pitch to show masculinity and appear more commanding'. Through these differences in their vocal pitch, they identify as a part of a social group and in turn reflect the roles they play in diverse social contexts.

In the analysis presented in the following chapter, there would be a focus on how certain expressions reflect gender roles as performance and how societal expectations and realities are constructed through discourse. A study of this discourse and the construction of social reality especially in family life would serve as an aid for the examination of the 1970s society.

4.2.6 DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AND GENDER POWER

Power refers to the ability to control events, people and actions. It is one of the most studied social phenomena because scholars have discovered that at the foundation and center of every kind of society (human and animal), there is the use of power and the capacity to wield it as a weapon. Ragins and Sundstroms in their book define power as a property of the individual, of the interpersonal relationship, or of the structure of an organization.

Power as a property of an individual means that power is a personality trait and can influence others, power in interpersonal relationships means power can be seen in the way people relate to each other and power in the structure of an organization refers to the establishment of authority over people, information and resources. Power is an influence by one person over others, stemming from a position in an organization, from an interpersonal relationship, or from an individual characteristic (4)

Discourse can be analysed in relation to power from two different perspectives, Discourse can be seen as possessing the power to carry out certain actions. That is, the use of certain words will lead to certain courses of actions. Instances like this refer to proclamations in courtrooms or certain statements made by those with political authority. Discourse could also reflect a possession of power over persons, organisations or entities. It could show the power to change and control person, entities or organizations. The words used by those in control over organisations or small groups of people often reflect their power

Gender power refers to the ideals set in the society that limit an individual on the basis of his or her biological attributes. These limits are often discourses based on gender stereotypes and these stereotypes lead to the creation of pre-established prejudices that act as gatekeeping or barrier setting mechanisms towards sexes. It should be noted that gender power works both ways and could be exerted by both parties. Instances of this are seen in the man's economic power or assumed authority as the leader of the home, and the

woman's power over the rest of the family especially the children and the benefits she obtains in the event of a divorce. Other general examples of Gender Power are seen in the automatic assertion of authority and control by men and the high level of acceptance this brings them in the society. This is a contrast to how authoritative women are viewed; in general situations, women who are more assertive are either labeled as insecure or bitter man-haters.

The analysis of *Husbands* would be aimed at studying the roles of power in marital relations and how much of an impact external influence has on the way wives are viewed by their husbands.

4.2.7 MARRIAGE vs GENDER POWER

The institution of marriage is one of the main perspectives from which gender issues are studied and evaluated. This is not only because it largely involves the joining of a male and female gender but also because the concept of marriage has been believed to involve power play. The man wields absolute authority over the home and the woman wields authority over mundane house affairs. The 1970s came with a diverse concept of marriage, it became one of the many institutions that were deemed to be a waste of resources, and a symbol of unwanted and enforced religion. To put it shortly, the American young generation lost hope in the marriage institution. In the few marriages that still existed, men still played traditional roles, and still felt the pressure of being the breadwinner, coming home to an unhappy marriage and the threat of divorce. While the women still felt the burdens that came with constantly keeping up with appearances, managing the demands of housekeeping and family, living with the sense of idleness, aimlessness and discontent. The concept of marriage and gender power refers to how gender stereotypes limit both parties in a marriage and how these limitations are reflected in language use. In this film, Harry is unable to connect to his wife because he does not see her as a good enough companion, he prefers the company of his friends. This is probably based on the gender stereotype that women are of lower intellect and they are not good enough conversational partners. At some point in the film, Archie says he knows he is

always right and does not allow any objections to his opinions. These attitudes occur due to the stereotypes of the inferiority of women as partners and companions for men.

The 1970s saw a lot of advancement in the movement of Feminism and the analysis of Gender issues. As a result, men still held a lot of economic power and wielded authority but they themselves began to look for ways out of the pressures that came with such responsibilities. They began to question why they should work long hours and get less time for relaxation or personal interests; They also began to question why their wives got a large settlement and child custody. The 1970s came with men questioning traditional values and hating them, the end result of this was a large feeling of misogyny and celebration of male brotherhood. Schulman identifies the masculinity of the 70s as suffering

‘Masculinity, all the 1970s explorations of the man problem agreed, caused endless suffering. And seventies men paid heed, at decade’s end, an *Esquire* magazine survey of ‘today’s young men’ discovered widespread uncertainty over gender roles. Young men valued success and professional achievement every bit as much as their stuffy elders; they also wanted families, but those twenty-something males insisted on freedom and independence. They feared responsibility and worried about stress. They did not want the heart attacks, the ulcers, the nervous breakdowns of their own Organization Man fathers’

As we would see in the following chapter, some key statements made by the characters hint at the men’s fear of living a struggled life. Therefore, they exercise their authority as a means of escape. For example, Archie says he would not take a shower for his wife and he would not clean himself for anyone’s approval. He fights for the freedom to be himself, but he does this under the pretext of exercising his masculine authority as the head of his home.

Gender power in marriage reflected the competition between both genders. Men exerted their power not because they possessed the qualities of a leader but because the society and male brotherhood requested that they do so. Also, women did the same by ensuring that they hold all the cards in the event of a separation or divorce, men were rarely given custody rights because there was the general belief that they could not care for children. It could be said that both parties wielded some sort of power over the other and

this was expressed through the nuances in communication. Men were forceful with their speech; they also controlled the economy of the family and women were more in control of the children and how they perceived their fathers. They majorly had soft power, they could be involved and detached, at the same time appear cold and untouchable.

4.3 SEXISM AND FEMALE OBJECTIFICATION

Studies on language, gender issues and human resource management have been carried out to measure the extent to which language use encourages social issues such as misogyny and sexism, further linguistic analyses have also shown that most issues that deal with the representation and gender perception stem from constant word choices that establish the issues as a norm in the society. The language that is used to define and address a certain group determines the way issues related to that group will be perceived. Gruseg in his paper on parental attitude and child development asserts that issues related to children are treated with delicateness and are believed to require a lot of specialization and tenderness, certain issues that are related to the female gender could be viewed as trivial. This could mean that sexism as a social issue is discursive in nature and it begins from the use of certain expressions that emphasize the inferiority of women by the way they are addressed or spoken about. In her book on gender and identity, Weatherall states that,

“Early feminists strongly endorsed the idea that language reflected women’s secondary status in the society. According to this mirror mode, the few words that refer to strong sexually active, intelligent, independent women and the plethora of negative and sexual terms just reflected the negative attitudes towards women in the society... constant comments about how women look and what men do are a form of power because they set up the desired attributes expected of each gender.”(36)

The assertion above helps us to understand how language plays a defining role in the construction of women's social reality, the negative attitudes towards strong and bold women already set a tone for how young girls view themselves in relation to others. Sociolinguists have constantly sought to understand how language perpetuates sexism and how to use language as an antidote to the oppression of the women and the female gender. This section would involve a brief study of sociolinguistic research on sexism and how it is revealed in diverse forms of discourse.

Sexism refers to the discriminations and expectations imposed on both genders due to societal ideals and beliefs. This is seen in instances whereby women are judged more harshly for their looks and men being evaluated based on what they do and how much money they make. The phenomenon of sexism also reflects itself in language use, scholars have identified the main types of sexism and how they are seen in language use; The main types identified are overt and covert sexism: As the names imply, they are direct and indirect forms of using sexist languages.

Mills (23) identifies overt sexism in the use of generic pronouns such as 'he', 'mankind', the use of linguistic terms like these is direct, it implies that the female gender is not being taken into consideration and likely is not an option when referring to people in general. Overt sexism has been encouraged in language use as a result of male and female presentation in religious literature and the assertion of female weaknesses due to biological build. On the other hand, covert sexism refers to the use of sexist language in an ironical manner. Sexist term and expressions are used in a humorous and condescending manner, and at first instance, often seem harmless to the listener. Examples can be seen in the use of expressions like 'ladies first' and 'she is the wife'. Crawford (60) gives a clearer example of covert sexism, she asserts that irony is a common strategy for humorous remarks about women, for example, on radio 1, DJ Chris Moyles often uses covertly sexist terms such as 'tart, cow, dippy' to his female colleagues, mocking and belittling them if he interprets them as having stereotypically female concerns but he does so by framing these remarks within an ironic playful mode.

Another form of covert sexism is seen in presuppositions in expression that express bias and imply that women are inferior to men. An example is the phrase 'have you women

finished gossiping?’ this implies that only women are known to gossip and talk about trivial things. These forms of sexism are reflected in all forms of discourse and are especially noticed in the dialogues between men, an informal term for this is ‘Men’s locker room talk’. These observations have become a source of concern for sociolinguists because it has been noted that words like ‘pretty little woman’ are not just forms of endearment, but they are subtle ways of putting women in a box, a continuous way of female gender oppression.

In the further analysis of *Faces* seen in the next chapter, I will be investigating how the words used reflected the sexist ideals of 1960s America. The analysis will be concentrated on word choices, context and how they portrayed the realities of the 1960s suburban American marriages.

4.3.1 SEXISM IN COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Sexist attitudes and beliefs could often serve as a rite of passage in certain communities of practice (CoPs). This linguistic term was first coined by Wenger Etienne (21) who defined it as ‘groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis’. Hildreth and Kimble (3) also define CoPs as a ‘group of professionals informally bound to one another through exposure to a common class of problems, common pursuit of solutions and thereby themselves embodying a store of knowledge’, by extension, these definitions could also be applied to groups that are established as a result of shared gender or biological characteristics and experiences. A common example is seen in parent association groups which are created based on shared opinions and communication of information on common interests. This concept of social behaviorism was borrowed from the theory of human behaviours being built on the modeling of the actions of other members in the society, according to Hildred and Kimble’s’ theory, the human society is a conglomerate of actions modelled and passed down within generations

It should also be noted that the concept of sexism does not only apply to the female gender but also to their male counterparts. That is, women are not the only ones who suffer

from the negative effects of sexism, but men also suffer from different forms of oppression, and their quality of life could be affected by the stereotypes that arise from sexist discourses. Some common sexist discourses that affect men are; 'men are dogs'; Therefore, they lack all forms of sexual discipline as a result of this, men are often not trusted with children that are not theirs. Also, they are often viewed as predators with brutish tendencies. Another example is the sexist belief that men are naturally unemotional and lack the ability to be good caregivers. As a result of this, men are less likely to be given the opportunities to work as nurses, childcare assistants, hospitality givers. A more negative implication of this stereotype is that men are rarely given custody of their children in the case of divorce or separation.

My main assertion is that individuals often imbibe sexist attitudes and make sexist statements because they believe that it is expected of them, so sexism could be a way of reinforcing the barriers and defining the concepts of self and other among both sexes. Men could often repeat sexist remarks as recycled thoughts, or as access tickets to their communities of practice. That is the probable reason why a larger percentage of discussions among male groups are interested in presenting women in a negative light; women are defined as not only inferior but the major problems they have, the women they are committed to are referred to as problems that they have to deal with when they get home.

4.4 DISCOURSES OF MOTHERHOOD

Across a variety of cultures (western and non-western), mothers are revered as the fountain of unconditional love, tender and round-the-clock care. In America for example, the concept and perception of motherhood has evolved gradually over diverse periods. Katherine Mayer (2009) asserts that 'the advent of industrialization and the establishment of men as the main providers and women as the homemakers in American homes has led to the development of an ideal version of maternal care called 'Intensive mothering'. She defines this version as 'child-centered, emotionally absorbing and labor intensive. In this mother-child relationship, the child's needs always take precedence'. This social construct of the ideal sacrificing mother is further propagated through their responsibility for the prime duty of reproduction. Teresa de Lauretis (1984) uses semiotics to deconstruct the

main functions of women in the society to that of reproduction of human species and the overseeing of the family unit;

‘Woman, he would say is a human being, like man... but her main function is reproduction: the reproduction of biological species and the maintenance of social cohesion.... In sum: women are objects whose value is founded in nature (‘valuables par excellence’ as bearers of children, food gatherers, etc.); at the same time, they are signs in social communication established and guaranteed by kinship systems’ (18)

The construction of the ideologies and ideals of mother-child relationship led to the development of theories like ‘The Good mother’ which has its origins from the Japanese term ‘Good wife Wise mother’ (*Ryosai Kenbo*). According to Kumiko Fujimura-Fanselow’s (1991) studies in its history, This term *Ryosai Kenbo* was created in the late 19th century to advance conservative state and religious policies that stated that women were to be perfect mothers and wives: A perfect mother was to always sacrifice her needs and put her children first, she was to see to her children’s physical and moral needs, and her primary job was to make them successful individuals who could be useful to the community. The 19th century Japanese woman was to make these goals her only priority in life; she had to happily sacrifice her dreams and look after her family. A woman became a bad mother when she did not do all these things perfectly and happily.

A new school of thought arose in America through the production of books like *The Second Sex* by Simone De Beauvoir, *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* by Adrienne Rich and the popularity of 1970s women movement further led to the establishment of ideologies that redefined the concept of motherhood. They established that women are mothers if they want to be and not necessarily as a result of biological instincts. Their main point was that all women are not mothers, all mothers are not good mothers and women do not have to lose their sense of self to the duties and sacrifices that come with motherhood. Lastly, mothers should be encouraged to pursue their personal goals and dreams because that would contribute to their overall happiness and psychological health.

The feminists majorly sought to deconstruct the false ideals of contented motherhood as a picture-perfect reality of the average American woman. Woodward Kathryn (1994) identifies this perception of motherhood dysfunction in functionalism

‘Motherhood was merged with women’s affective role within the family and not singled out for critical analysis. This illustrated the silence around motherhood and women’s experience. Motherhood was seen as a biological activity and only noteworthy if women failed in their duties, within functionalism, this was seen as dysfunction but otherwise motherhood was not questioned, it was assumed to be the most desired role within the family’ (13).

These analyses to be carried out would involve the study of the discourses of motherhood in *Gloria* (1980). The transcripts would be analysed in the following chapter with a focus on the preeminent discourses of motherhood present in them. There will be a focus on how the protagonist was able to break away from this mold of picture-perfect motherhood and attain the standard of functional motherhood.

CHAPTER FIVE

ANALYSES OF THE FILMS

5.1 ANALYSIS OF 'A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE' (1974)

The film is about an American housewife (Mabel Longhetti) who collapses under the overbearing attentions of her husband (Nick Longhetti) and the task of performing as a wife and mother. At some point in the movie, she is committed into the mental institution and her husband's treatment of her return leads to another collapse. The film is one of Cassavetes's most popular works and still remains relevant today because it addresses social issues that plague the working class, suburban families of 1970 America. The analysis is divided into the textual analyses and the general discussions; The textual analysis will involve a study of how the word choices used by Mabel and those in her social circle affect her sense of identity and those of others and the general discussions are aimed at providing a deeper analysis of the dialogues and their context.

5.1.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSES OF TRANSCRIPTS 1-5

TRANSCRIPT 1- screen time 3.08-4.56

CONTEXT

In this scene, Mabel is seen speaking with her mother who is taking Mabel's children along with her, she is giving last minutes instructions and is hurriedly making sure no important items are forgotten.

Mother - oh Tony, don't yell at the kids.

I don't want anything to go wrong.

(Mabel's mother seems like she is nervous too)

Your mother is terribly nervous.

Mabel- Mom listen, if anything happens//

Anything, I mean, if they are impossible,

I want you to call me

I don't care if it is day or night//

Do you understand?

Mother- Yes. All right//

Mabel- You hear what I am saying ma?

Mother- yes

Mabel- Because I don't want any slipups on this

I don't want you getting chickenshit and not calling me

I don't want you saying...

"Mabel's having a wonderful time, I don't want to disturb her//

While one of my kids is lying there bleeding//

All right, okay?

Mother- All right

PARTICIPANTS; Mabel Longhetti, her mother, Martha Mortensen

NUMBER OF TURNS; Mother (4), Mabel (5)

MOOD; Tense



Fig 1.3. Mabel, Nervous or Assertive?

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 1

The conversation shows that Mabel is assumed to be volatile or unable to control her emotions. It also shows that she is hesitant to hand over her kids to her mother. She uses the imperative warning tone ‘I don’t want any slipups on this...I don’t want you getting chickenshit and not calling me...’ Her constant repetition of orders depicts her as not only an overprotective mother but a very loving one who is willing to sacrifice her ‘luxurious’ free time in case her children need her. Further, into the scene, we also question if Mabel is just overreacting or perhaps there has been an incident of her mother being careless with the children and naturally, she is hesitant to hand them over because she does not want a repeat

Mabel’s sentences are longer and contain more function words, her mother’s responses show that she agrees to Mabel’s demands out of the fear of a potential breakdown that Mabel could have if not treated like glass. Mabel meanwhile repeats the same warning in three different modes

‘I want you to call me if anything happens, I don’t care if it is day or night’

‘I don’t want you getting chicken shit and not calling me’

‘I don’t want you saying, I don’t want to disturb her while one of my kids is lying there bleeding.

The warnings are more imperative as the conversation proceeds and the last one has the most potent effect because she paints an alarming picture that makes the viewer think that her fear just might be justified.

TRANSCRIPT 2 Screen time- 8.16-8.46

CONTEXT

Nick is having a conversation with his colleague about his wife and the cancelled date they had which occurred because there was a work emergency

Nick- I can’t call her,

How am I gonna call her?

She already sent the kids to her mother’s

She ‘ll climb the walls, break dishes, scream

Co-worker- Mabel is a delicate sensitive woman

Nick- Mabel’s not crazy,

She’s unusual. She’s not crazy so don’t say she’s crazy

This woman cooks, sews, makes the bed, washes the bathroom

What the hell is crazy about that?

PARTICIPANTS- Nick Longhetti, A fellow colleague

TURN-TAKING- Nick (2), Co-Worker (1)

MOOD- informal, relaxed, conversational

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 2

Nick is seen having a private conversation with his colleague; he refuses to call his wife out of fear or guilt or both. Nick's words are also contradictory. He describes his wife as someone who will climb walls, break dishes and scream because of a canceled date due to work emergency at the same time he reiterates that she is not crazy but rather 'unusual'. The viewer wonders if Nick is in denial? is he comfortable with a woman who is volatile with emotions that are out of control or he really does not understand his wife?. His colleague's description of Mabel as a 'delicate sensitive' woman was a subtle way of saying that he thinks she has some mental problems, Nick's vehement defence in combination with his description of her expected reaction to the cancelled date-night makes the viewer question who just might be right, the colleague who sees things better because he is the third party or Nick who knows his wife better because of their intimacy.

There is also a list of adjectives that make Mabel not a crazy woman 'she cooks, sews, makes the bed and washes the bathroom'. Therefore, she is not crazy.

Furthermore, she is defined through the execution of her roles as a doting mother: she is nervous because she has to leave her children with her mother. She is also defined as the perfect housewife despite the possible mental issues she might have. The expressions used to define Mabel bear undeniable characteristics of the 1950s sexist stereotype, Mabel is delicate, this means she is weak and incapable of weathering tough times, she is sensitive therefore she does not have a tough skin and thus must be handled with utmost care. She is nervous, so, she is the typical neurotic female loses control over the slightest things.

TRANSCRIPT 3-Screen time 57.08 – 58.44

CONTEXT

In this scene, Mabel has decided to host a party for her children and their neighbour's. Here, she is seen attempting to effectively play the part of the perfect hostess.

Mabel-Don't just stand there on the outside //

This is a house where people come in. hello, hello

Harold Jensen-My wife couldn't make it

Harold Jensen -I just thought I would drop the kids off //

I have to pick something at the stationers-Ah//

Mabel- You're uncomfortable, aren't you?

Harold Jensen-Well// no.

Mabel -Yeah, you are. Just a little bit uncomfortable.

Mabel -Come on. Come on. A little smile.

Come on. Come on. Let's have some fun

Mabel -Hey kids, it's time to dance

You see that? Once they get together,

they're not interested in anything

That's what you have to break, you have to break through

that and make 'em interested in things

In uh, languages,

In singings, dancing

Jokes even fun, everything.

URNS Mabel-5, Harold Jensen-3

PARTICIPANTS- Mabel Longhetti, Harold Jensen

MOOD- Conversational



Fig. 1.4 Mabel, Unadulterated adult.

TRANSCRIPT 4- Screen time 58.53 - 1.00.13

CONTEXT

In this scene, Mabel is still having a conversation with Mr. Jensen and in the middle of it, she and the children put up a performance of the swan lake which happened to be playing on the radio for Mr. Jensen, immediately after the performance, she receives a phone call from her husband Nick Longhetti

Mabel- Hey, you hear that?

Mabel-you don't believe in miracles?

That's Swan Lake//

That's perfect.

That's perfect!

Hey kids// Kids. Girls!

This is Swan lake//You remember the dying swan?

Come on. that's //come and die for Mr. Jensen

Mabel- Bravo! Come on, an applause, they just died for you.

(Mabel leaves at the end of the performance to receive a phone call from her husband)

Mabel-Hello nick, it's working //I am a great mother

I not only// I not only love our kids, I love the Jensen kids//I love Mr. Jensen

PARTICIPANTS- Mabel

MOOD- Cheerful

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 3 AND 4

In this scene, Mabel is seen playing the roles of the perfect suburban housewife and perfect mother because she is able to connect with her children by communicating on their level. She uses the same tones and mannerisms a kindergarten teacher would use while talking to her pupils, and these make her seem warm and nurturing. On the other hand, she is also seen playing the role of the perfect American housewife who is a hostess (she repeats hello 3 times with a cheerful tone and insists that he must not feel uncomfortable) that seeks to make every visitor feel welcome and attended to. Mabel is portrayed here as sensitive-she senses that Mr. Jensen is uncomfortable from his body language, his unwillingness to stop for a quick drink and his use of fillers such as ‘uh and well’ that show hesitancy. As viewers, we are left to wonder why he is so hesitant; is he hesitant because he knows that Mabel’s husband isn’t home? or because he has heard about her identity as a nervous and an unusual woman?

Mabel’s speech in this scene unwittingly sets the tone for the upcoming scenes, just like a keen teacher or a watchful mother, she explains more about the world of children, ‘in order to make children do the things the society sees them do, you have to infiltrate their world and make them involved in things adults expect them to do’. The second scene seems connected to the former that involved exposure to the world of the children. Once again, Mabel plays the role of the teacher that encourages her pupils to put up an act for the viewers. At the beginning of the transcript, she exclaims with childlike wonder at the song on the radio and later, she invites the children to put up a display. She later receives a phone call from her husband, and she gives him an account of what has happened at home. In this instance, we see her switching roles and becoming a child herself, she tells her husband about how well she is performing her duties as a wife and as perfect mother she loves all the kids and Mr. Jensen. These declarations of love make the viewer contemplate the level of her naiveté; she states with enthusiasm that she loves another man and the tones and context makes us aware that the love is completely unsexual and platonic.

TRANSCRIPT 5. Screen time 2.10.07- 2.10.48

CONTEXT-

In this scene, the entire family is seen having a welcome dinner for Mabel who has just arrived from the hospital, Mabel decides to have a conversation with her father.

Mabel- Dad will you stand up for me //

(Her dad stands up from the chair)

no, I don't mean that, sit down dad.

Will you please stand up for me?

Mabel's Father- Mabel, I don't uh //

know what you want me to do//

Honey, I don't understand this game //

Mabel-Will you just stand up for me?

Mabel's Mother- Don't you hear what she's saying? //

Don't you understand what she is trying to tell us?

Make them go away, please make them go away

PARTICIPANTS Mabel Longhetti, her mother, her father

TURNTAKING Mabel 2, Martha 1, dad

MOOD- Somber, awkward



Fig 1.5 Don't you understand what she is saying?

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 5

In this scene, Cassavetes gives us an idea of Mabel's background and relationship with her parents. Mabel's conversation with her father mirrors one of the major claims of Gender discourse analysis, which is that men and women have different worldviews, and these differences often arise as a result of one's upbringing. A common example is the use of the colour blue for toys and clothes for boys and pink for girls. Mabel's alienation from her father shows that there is a possibility that gender differences in modes of communication begin from a very young age, and these differences could be seen for example in the ways we communicate with our parents. Typically, children are expected to have a closer tie with their mother's because she is the constant caregiver. As seen in the scene above, Mabel is able to effectively communicate with her mother but the

only time we see her communicating with her father, there is a disconnection and misinterpretation of meanings, her father takes her words literally, but her mother understands the undertones and hidden meanings of the statement she has made. In the scene, her father looks genuinely perplexed because he is missing the point of the discussion and Mabel's mother is impatient with her husband's inability to understand their daughter.

This scene delivers a message to the viewers, Mabel a representative of the 1970s American woman is alone, she has no one to defend her from the external influences of the society, the harsh truth is that her father cannot even defend her because he doesn't know or understand what she is fighting against. This unbridgeable gap between male authority and women is also seen in Barbara Loden's *Wanda* Wanda Goronski, the titular protagonist is unable to obtain help and understanding from the outside world, and most especially from her lover Norman Dennis who ends up dead after his attempt to rob a bank. Cassavetes believed the 1970s American woman was a lonely and misunderstood individual; They were not only alienated because of the patriarchal system that failed to protect them, they were also alienated because of the inability of others to understand their inner struggles and they themselves could not express them explicitly because they did not know how to. They were just like Mabel, with private problems that neither they nor others could understand well.

GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

5.1.2 MABEL 'NERVOUS OR UNUSUAL'

A close look at the language use in the transcripts 1 and 2 above presents the viewer with two main concepts, we are presented with the socio-cultural context of women and the linguistic codes that existed in the 1970s, this analysis will focus on how identities are created majorly through the word choice of others about an individual.

In both scenes, Nick, his colleague and his mother all use potent expressions that give the viewer an impression of Mabel in intensifying degrees. Mabel's mother says she is 'nervous' which is singularly a harmless term, everyone gets nervous under certain conditions, but the second term we encounter through Nick's colleague make us more aware that something might be wrong, Nick's colleague says she is 'delicate and sensitive' and Nick himself says she will climb walls, break dishes and scream but she is not crazy, only 'unusual'. These expressions make the viewer question the actions of the seemingly overprotective mother that was presented in the first scene, the one who wanted to ensure the safety of her children. Also, we are presented with the stereotype of, the weak, breakable woman. We see the familiar image of a screaming woman: when a woman is crazy, she breaks dishes and screams. When she is on the verge of mental collapse, 'she is delicate and sensitive', these words that imply that she is weak and needs to be treated like glass, and when she has a lot of activities to handle, she is nervous and cannot stand the noise.

The transcript presents us with the socio-cultural context of the 1970s American suburban housewife. According to Nick, his wife is perfect because she cooks, cleans and sews, that is all he defines her with, he denies the probable issues or difficulties she might have while she wallows in her own personal turmoil. Betty Friedan defines the concept of the perfect housewife in suburban America, she says they have a problem that has no name
(20)

‘It is easy to see the concrete details that trap the suburban housewife, the continual demands on her time. But the chains that bind her in her trap are chains in her own mind and spirit. They are chains made up of misinterpreted facts, incomplete truths and unreal choices. They are not easily seen and not easily shaken off’ (20)

This nameless problem might be the perfect diagnosis for Mabel’s volatile nature and the inability of her husband to be aware of what goes on in her own little world. We hear from three characters who know Mabel that she is crazy and displays odd behavior, Mabel herself says nothing that implies that she has a mental condition, she does not say she is nervous or losing her mind. This goes on to show power in identity building, Mabel is powerless and has been given no choice in choosing how she wants to be seen, despite her word choices which might make her seem to be in control of her household, she does not define herself rather, others define her and set the parameters for her identification. She is delicate, sensitive and nervous- words that indicate the stereotype ‘weak woman’ or she is unusual- the woman who can never be understood by her husband.

5.1.3 LANGUAGE IN THE PERFORMANCE OF DIVERSE SOCIAL ROLES

A close study of the transcripts show how language is the ultimate tool in the demonstration of gender roles- an example of this is seen in how our linguistic repertoire reflects the group we belong to. A female is typically expected to use words such as make-up, absorbents and tampons, a male instead might use words like beard shaving, testosterone and videogames. In the film scenes above, Mabel effectively portrays the warm hostess by repeating certain words for emphasis, she says ‘hello’ 2 times with a high-pitched tone, she says ‘come on’ 4 times in an attempt to make Mr. Jensen loosen up and take part in the fanfare. Johnson in his study identifies this behavioral pattern as gender practices,

‘Johnson characterizes masculinity and femininity as ongoing social processes dependent upon systematic restatement, noting that this also means doing identity work, it can also be seen as one’s sense of oneself/selves as man or woman...however, these roles

are never complete, gender identity can be seen as multiple and fluid, the emergence and re-emergence of self' (22)

This explains that the roles we perform determine our identity as individuals who are part of a social or cultural group. Mabel is not only an American female, but she is also a typical American hostess, she exhibits the qualities Americans are known for: being warm, welcoming and friendly. She lets, Mr. Jensen, in without no fear that he could be capable of perpetrating any evil. However, she doesn't just stop at being welcoming, she is also the stereotype female chatterbox, she easily starts a conversation despite Mr. Jensen's obvious unwillingness. Davies and Harre identify this way of identification through language use as 'positioning'. 'The idea of positioning captures the more dynamic and multiple locations that any one individual may inhabit during their lifetime.' Positioning is the idea that

'An individual emerges through the processes of social interaction, not as a relatively fixed end product but as one who is constituted and reconstituted through the various discursive practices in which they participate. Accordingly, who one is, is always an open question with a shifting answer depending on the positions made available within one's own and other's discursive practices and within those practices, the stories through which we make sense of our own and other's lives' (46)

At a second glance, we see Mabel in another light, she is too innocent and unabashed to be an adult, she behaves like a child in a woman's body. She jumps and actively becomes a part of the children's playgroup, later in a phone conversation with her husband, she gives him an account of what she has done and how well she did it just like a child would do to his or her parents when they come back home. In the scenes above, Mabel becomes a child instinctively seeking for approval and Mr. Jensen and her husband (Nick Longhetti) become the adults.

The portrayal of women performing diverse identities is not exclusive to Cassavetes' works, this representation can also be seen in other 1970s women films. An example is Martin Scorsese's *'Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* Alice is seen letting loose and becoming a child herself in order to connect to her son Tommy. She also switches roles

with her son when she is uncertain, for instance, she asked him what he would do after his father's death. Alice does not automatically play the role of a perfect mother who is in control. She is a mother, but she is also vulnerable, and her inner child still comes out to play.

5.1.4 SOCIAL CONTEXT- SYMBOL OF THE DYING SWAN AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS

The performance of *Swan Lake* in the film could be interpreted as a bridge or a pivotal turn in the film. *Swan lake* (1875-76) is a ballet piece by Tchaikovsky, it was composed based on the Russian folk story of a prince named Siegfried who falls in love with an enchanted princess (Odette) who turns into a swan at midnight. The two lovers eventually drown in the lake after their failed attempt to get married. *Swan Lake* bears certain implications on the message the director was aiming to pass across, the story could be an extended metaphor for Mabel's life; filled with uncertainties and living under the compulsion to play diverse roles. The swan is a bird gliding on the lake during the day and a beautiful princess during the night. The princess is cursed to play the unflattering role of the swan during the day when she is unavoidably in public view. Mabel is also forced to play certain roles in the presence of the society, she has to act like a welcoming hostess who chatters to make her guests feel welcome even if she would rather behave like her children and say what she thinks and run around freely. This provides an insight into the life of the 1970s Suburban housewife who was locked in the cycle of constantly keeping up appearances and struggling to find and create her own identity or sense of self.

Mabel tells the girls to die for Mr. Jensen as a performance. The significance of the scene could be interpreted as Mabel's way of saying that the children have to also learn to conceal their true selves to fit in with the society and live up to societal expectations or she could also be trying to say that all efforts to obtain the society's approval is often wasted

efforts because at the end of the children's performance. The girls in this case, are future women who have to 'die' by coming out of their world and performing to earn societal approval. Despite this, Mr. Jensen the spectator is visibly unimpressed and can barely give an applause. At the end of the performance, Mabel urges Mr. Jensen to applaud the children's efforts because they came out of their world to perform for his pleasure. The tragic ending of the ballet musical piece used could be seen as an extended symbol for the dissatisfaction in the lives of the 1970s American woman in her relationship with the society.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF FACES (1968)

Faces is one of Cassavetes' first film productions, it is about an older married man who wants to divorce his wife while having an affair with a prostitute. The film centers on suburban marriages of the late 1960s America, the unpleasantness of the relations between couples and how they deal with the demands of marriage. In this film, Cassavetes gives the viewers an insight into the emptiness of marriage when there is a lack of connection between husband and wife. The main characters are a middle-aged man who is estranged from his wife who might seem flighty but feels things deeply, a cunning prostitute and her friends. These characters might seem a bit stereotypical but Cassavetes presents us with an inner dimension that was not commonly seen in the films of the late 1960s. The textual analyses of the transcripts will be carried out to investigate how much of an impact language use has on encouraging sexism among the participants. In the later part of the section, we will see a review of the connection between sexism and female objectification.

5.2.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSES: TRANSCRIPT 1-5

TRANSCRIPT 1 - screen time, 00.36.15-00.36.58

CONTEXT

In this part of the film, Richard Forst and his friend Freddie are spending the evening relaxing and drinking with a prostitute Jeannie. Jeannie excuses herself to change her clothes into something more comfortable and Mr. Forst has a conversation with his friend while they wait.

Freddie- Oh, dickie remember when we didn't have to worry about our wives and kids?

Richard- Oh God, Yeah, Phew//

Freddie- Remember when we had our own apartment and the girls would come up and see us and cook us anything we wanted and give us their money// and go to bed with us....

How many times does Maria ask you for some money... money Charlie is a necessity//, and don't you think

that you don't work for it and pay for it?

PARTICIPANTS- Richard Forst and Freddie Draper

MOOD- cheerful, jolly.

TURNTAKING Freddie 2, Richard 1

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 1

The conversation between the two men provides a background for the discourses in the scenes that follow, we are presented with the power of money in the context of marriage: Freddie implies that they use money as a value of exchange for sexual intimacy and this makes the viewers wonder why they have to pay their wives for something that should come instinctively. The conversation shows a nostalgia for the times when they were single and free with no wives and children to bother them, this gives us the idea that the men see their families as burden or cages from which they could break free. This nostalgia and search for escape gives us a hint that they just might be going through midlife crisis, middle aged men who are bored with their lives and are therefore searching for a source of excitement and escape

In the last statement made by Fredrick, we are not sure what 'it' is. Could he be referring to the privileges of having a woman cook for them and keep them company? Or the pleasure of letting a woman take up their financial responsibilities and have sex with them? However, we see the beginnings or hints of midlife crises, middle-aged men who are unsatisfied with their lives and the responsibilities that come with being a husband and a father. Unhappy men who are desperately searching for an escape, so they turn to heavy drinking and the company of prostitutes.



FIG. 1.6 Verbal sparring.

TRANSCRIPT 2- screen time-00.53.45

CONTEXT

Richard is having a conversation with his wife Maria at the dining table, someway along the conversation, they begin to discuss his friend Freddie.

Richard- I'm the pompous puke of all times,

Maria- Yeah and you smell like a brewery too

And you will take me to a movie show?

Richard- I'll...take you any place that your little heart desires
if you'll just keep that lovely mouth of yours shut

for a couple of seconds

Maria- Were you with Fred tonight?

Richard- Yeah

Maria-I think he is a terrible father

He never talks with his kids or plays with them

Richard- The kids are grown up

Maria-Nineteen isn't grown//

I don't like Fred anymore

Richard-Why don't you like Fred anymore?

Maria- Because// he cheats on his wife

Richard-Now who told you that?

Maria-Louise

Richard-Oh Louise

Maria-Fred talks in his sleep

He comes home at night and he just stares at her, doesn't say a word...

PARTICIPANTS- Richard Forst, Maria Forst

MOOD- relaxed, conversational

TURNTAKING- Richard 7, Maria 7

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 2

The transcript above is between the main characters in the film; Richard and Maria Forst. The conversation seems like the typical one a couple would have; They bicker about household affairs, Richard complains about not having his dinner on time, Maria complains about him always wanting sex and then they play catch up. The conversation leads to Maria telling him about the latest development in his friend's marriage. All these paints the picture of the average dinnertime discussion between a middle- class couple. The wife, Maria is portrayed as a subject to her husband. Her husband is the rich businessman that goes out to command the world and come back home to his wife who is a housewife with a lot of idle time on her hands. He makes a lot of demeaning remarks such as 'little heart and lovely mouth'. These are patronizing expressions that could be viewed as condescending. The idea of her having a little heart and a lovely mouth gives the listener the picture of an inferior woman; her heart, a fundamental organ in her body is little and her mouth is 'lovely', lovely here is an empty adjective that could be used as an absentminded response. Also, the inappropriateness of this response to his wife's request shows his disinterest in the conversation they are having. At the latter part of the discourse, we see her behaving like the typical idle housewife who is bored and with nothing constructive to do with her spare time; she fills her husband on the latest gossip, she tells him about his friend's failing marriage and his inefficiency as a father and, her source of information is her friend, a housewife like her.

Her husband shows little to no interest and is only concerned about getting sex and dinner. This brings to light another representation of women, they are only capable of providing meaningless and empty chatter, carrying out household duties and providing sex, so, they are seen as objects available only for their husband's use.

TRANSCRIPT 3- Screen time 00.47.34

CONTEXT

In this part of the scene, Richard Forst is moved by the preceding argument he has had with his wife and then he proceeds to talk expansively about his duties as a husband and the frustrations that come with it.

Richard-Boy, you know,

One of these days...

You girls are gonna go, charge!

And you know something funny?

We'll all surrender, and you can have everything

You can have the house and the cars and the office...

And the bills

And the headaches//

And we'll sit home and laugh!

That's what we're gonna do//

All we ask for is peace to take our daily beating and three-square meals a day

And we will just sit staring at the sun

Going blind okay?

Maria-Oh, I'm so sorry//

Do we emasculate you?

PARTICIPANTS- Richard and Maria Forst

MOOD- Tense

TURNTAKING- Richard 1, Maria 1

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 3

In this part of the scene, Richard launches into a monologue that shows the power play between husband and wife. In the tirade that showed the plight of the 1960s man, he complains about how much stress and pressure he is under and his wife's responsive use of sarcasm is a contrast to the preceding scenes where we see a woman who might be docile and even childlike in her speech. This scene gives us a better understanding of Freddie's wish for freedom in the first dialogue. Therefore, we are able to note that the husbands suffer from societal pressures that could be strenuous, and we the viewers wonder if that is why they turn to extramarital affairs with prostitutes who seem fun and relaxing in contrast to their wives with whom they cannot have a smooth and mutually satisfying conversation. We see that the extramarital affairs might just be a source of escape for the man under the pressures of jobs and families that they are disconnected from, and the women might just be escaping the bondages that come with being a suburban housewife that is often ignored and misunderstood.

Another thing we notice is the subtle hints at Richard feeling threatened, he says 'one of these days, you girls are gonna go charge!' this statement bears similarities with some versions of the 1970s feminist slogans 'girl power', 'women do it better' and we wonder if it is not his ironical version of mocking feminism, he says the slogan, and then lists his responsibilities and how much pressure he is under. This may be his own way of telling his feminist wife that she is not capable of withstanding the pressures of being a man. His wife's reply is also reminiscent of feminist slogans, her retort about emasculation makes us think that their relationship is and has been a constant battle of wills. In this scene, Cassavetes' presents an extended metaphor for the turbulent interrelations between men and women in 1970s America.

TRANSCRIPT 4- Screen time- 01.12.03-01.25.45

CONTEXT

This is a scene where Maria Forst is having an evening out with her friends and in the process had picked up a young man from the bar. In the middle of a conversation amongst friends, Florence gives a monologue about what she feels about her life

Florence - I love Malcolm. Yes, I love my husband how about that?

I think he is nice. Don't you? You know my Louie so short...

You know those dances, these wild crazy dances,

I think they have succeeded where science failed. 'cause you know//

I can go to a beauty parlor and sit there for hours

Having my hair done and my nails polished but, I don't feel any younger.

I might look it but these dances, these wild crazy dances//

They do something to the inside.

Well to hell with Louie

Because do you know one of these days, I am going to croak?

And I'm gonna flop down on the ground

And some preacher's gonna preach some goddamn preacher's sermon

Over my goddamn body!

PARTICIPANTS- Florence

MOOD- solemn

TURNTAKING- Florence-1

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 4

This scene reveals the fears and motivations for the actions of the women portrayed in the film, the fear of dying a lonely death after living a life that is void of fulfillment. Florence (Maria's Friend) at first exudes childish exuberance, she dances and sings, she encourages her friends to get caught in the moment but somewhere along the line, we see a different Florence. We see a woman who is desperately looking for an escape from the duties that come with being a wife and mother. She is not just unappreciated, she is bound within the chains of propriety, she cannot be herself under normal circumstances so when she gets the chance, she lets loose, and her real self comes out. She is able to express herself freely because she is under the influence of alcohol

The scene also reveals the futility of the life of a 1960s American woman: in this instance, Florence goes for all the beauty treatments that a middle-class woman can afford but she is still dissatisfied with the outcome, it does not erase the bleak realities she is faced with. She still has a husband that is probably absent and noncommunicative, she still has the task of being a mother with the never-ending duties, she is still locked in the box of the society that stops her from being her true self. Therefore, she uses alcohol as an escape channel, and she seems to be successful for only one night.



FIG 1.7 An independent woman

TRANSCRIPT 5- Screen time-01.55.23-01.57.09

CONTEXT

Richard Forst has just come home to discover from the evidence in the house that his wife had brought home a lover the night before. He threatens her with violence and hints at some of the issues they faced in their marriage.

Richard- A novel adulteress, I think you ought to be rewarded

Maria- Dickie I don't care

Richard- Rejected for the thousandth time in fourteen years//

She doesn't care

You don't need me, you don't need any man

You want me to be violent, you want me//

To slap you across the face every time you open your mouth

Maria- I just don't love you

Throw me a cigarette, please

Those pills they tie up your lungs.

PARTICIPANTS- Richard Forst, Maria Forst

MOOD- Angry, tense

TURNTAKING- Richard 2, Maria- 2

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 5

This is the scene where Richard Forst discovers that his wife has committed adultery. If we take a close look at the conversation, there is obviously no love between the couple, there are no feelings of betrayal and no one seems hurt. At best, we only see a show of anger and, an admission to the use of hard drugs and cigarettes. Richard does not realize the possible reasons for his wife's extramarital affairs, and he does not admit to his own extramarital affairs. However, he seems to suffer from just his wounded male ego and the accumulative effects of being rejected. His display of anger shows one of the main causes of his frustrations: His wife has rejected him countless times in 14 years of marriage, and she has shown that she does not care for him or need him. The statement 'you don't need me, you don't need any man' gives us a hint to what one of the marital problems might be; one of the partners does not feel needed; in this case, Maria is too guarded to bond deeply with her husband.

Another issue this scene addresses is the probable sexual tension between the couple, we only hear that Maria rejects her husband, but she rejects what? His sexual advances, his attentions, his attempts to communicate?. We can never really tell because the couple does not air out their differences and, they do not really say anything serious. Instead, they beat around the bush, hint at possible issues and when all seems to be falling apart, they resort to a divorce.

We see another aspect of overt sexism in the 1960s when women were seen as inferior and they needed to be managed with the use of physical abuse. In this dialogue, Forst does not hide his sentiments, his wife is a woman who behaves like she needs no man, and she refuses him. Therefore, she needs a bit of spanking to call her to order.

TRANSCRIPT 5

CONTEXT

This will be a comparison between the scenes where the married couple have a conversation and when Richard Forst has a conversation with his lover, both conversations are held during dinnertime after Forst arrives from work

SCENE 2.5-A- Screen time 01.38.00-01.42.03

Jeannie- I listened to your demented dialogue too didn't I?

Richard- Yes, you did //

Jeannie- And I thought you were crazy, didn't I?

But I made love to you and I held you in my arms all night //

And if you'd been out in the streets last night,

they'd have had you committed. Wouldn't they? Right?

How come you hate me now?

Richard- Jeannie, do me a favor? Don't be silly anymore //

Just be yourself

Jeannie- But I am myself, who else would I be?

I am serious

TRANSCRIPT 5B- Screen time 00.46.18-00.48.13

Richard- Listen Maria, get me a cigarette will you?

Maria- Ooh we are out. I'm sorry //

I smoked myself silly today

Richard-You're such a conformist//

Maria- Like hell I am //

Dickie, why don't you take me to a movie, okay?

Richard-Why doesn't somebody fill those stupid boxes?

Maria- You smoke too much.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 5A AND 5B

A look at the dialogues above shows the contrast between the relationship between the participants. Forst shows a negative and unwelcoming attitude to both the women he speaks to. He speaks to his wife as he would to an errand girl, and he speaks to his lover with a grudging acceptance of her help in making him feel better, he goes further to tell her to stop being silly and be her real self: could this imply that her assertiveness is a pretense or that he is used to women who do not stand up for their beliefs?

A close analysis of the dialogues reveals a paradox: the profound dialogue is between a man and his lover while the more banal one is between him and his wife; with her, he spends time arguing about cigarettes and movies and with his lover, he discusses his sense of identity. We are left to wonder why he escapes to his lover for a more serious conversation and why he cannot do the same with his wife? At the same time, we wonder why his wife is not assertive enough, why she takes his disparaging comments with a nonchalant attitude: Is she tired of caring or does she not even care at all?

There is some covert and overt sexism in both of the dialogues, Richard Forst acts as an unapologetically sexist man. He is overtly sexist to his wife: He rudely requests that

she gets him a cigarette, and asks her to fill some stupid boxes, he is covertly sexist to his lover, he tells her to be herself after she reminds him of how much help she has been to him. The question we would ask is if he would say the same if a man reminded him of how much help he has given in the past: would he tell the man to be himself and stop being silly?

The question this analysis asks is, does Jeannie not have the right to some appreciation or gratitude? Is she expected to take him in, make him feel better and be hated in return? These two dialogues prove that none of the women in Richard Forst's life is getting a better treatment, the both of them have to suffer the effects of having a sexist partner.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

5.2.2 WOMEN; CHATTEL FOR THE MALE GAZE

Human societies have constructed genders in such a way that the female gender has been and has remained a source of sexual entertainment. In her article, Benwell identifies the diverse ways women are objectified in male magazines for sexual pleasure,

'A defensive hegemonic masculinity can strengthen its own identity by exaggerating a polar female identity-one we have come to associate with patriarchy. Men's magazines seem to focus on women in one of the two ways, the first way is as an idealized object-usually a celebrity-and this is very much as a fantasy, unattainable icon. The second way of focusing on women is as real women -wives, girlfriends, lovers- and these depictions are almost invariably negative; real women are difficult, different, impossible to understand and sometimes threatening and to be avoided' (155)

The issues addressed in the statement above are seen in the dialogues analysed in this chapter. The women addressed and referred to in the dialogues analysed have been portrayed as flighty, burdensome and filled with idle chatter. This stereotype has also become a recurring motif in Hollywood cinema and various forms of western entertainment.

De Lauretis defines this representation as women being presented as spectacles for the male gaze, 'In cinema, the stakes for women are especially high, the representation of women as spectacle, body to be looked at, place of sexuality and object of desire so pervasive in our culture finds in narrative cinema its most complex expression and wide circulation narrative cinema'. (4)

Women like Maria who discusses only her friend's marital problems are seen to be burdens their husbands are saddled with. This sentiment is seen in the film when Freddie wishes he could be free again from his wife who he pays to get some sexual attention. The men talk about their wives with a misogynistic tone, and as responsibilities they are forced to bear. They are also objects only meant for amusement; In one of the scenes, Richard scoffs dismissively at his wife's analysis of her friend's predicament and she rightfully talks about his friend's failing as a father, he shrugs off her concerns and responds in a patronizing manner.

The women in the film are also presented as idle objects who have a lot of time on their hands with nothing to do other than wait for their husbands to take them shopping or to the movies. This is a representation of the sociocultural ideologies that were prevalent in the late 1960s representation of American women. These portrayals often did not do much to reassert women's claims that they were not just objects for the male gaze or chattels for the decoration of a man's arms but rather they had the capacity to think rationally and even more they could see things more clearly than men do. Taking a look at the transcripts above, Maria's friend Louise is uncannily right, she might not be always aware of her husband Freddie's whereabouts, but she knows of his infidelities and his psychological absence at home which makes him a 'bad' and inattentive father.

Cassavetes' presentation of a double side of these women who supposedly spend time doing nothing humanizes them, he makes the viewers see that they are perceptive, and they see important things that men do not notice. Therefore, they are more than beautiful objects, they are women who might seem flighty but are cunning and cannot be fooled.

5.3 ANALYSIS OF 'HUSBANDS' (1970)

This film was subtitled 'A Comedy about Life, Death and Freedom' by Cassavetes. In his film, he presented a picture of American masculinity and its bleak realities. The film is about three young American middle-class men (Harry, Archie and Gus) who attempt to re-explore life and go on an adventure after the death of their close friend. It addresses the popular issue of mid-life crises, misogyny and American narcissism. The film centers on husbands, the ideals of brotherhood and the American man's endless search for satisfaction in life. The analyses in this subsection will be aimed at studying how the dialogues between the participants mirror their tussle for power. The general discussion will look into the diverse ways by which the participants of the dialogues demonstrate control in their domestic affairs

5.3.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSES: TRANSCRIPT 1-5

TRANSCRIPT 1. Screen time 00.35. 45

CONTEXT

The three friends have decided to explore the city a bit after their friend's funeral and they stop at a bar for drinks. The conversation involves Harry and his management of his wife

Harry: Why don't you spell it out?

Archie: I could never talk to you

You're insensitive//

Harry, you get to work on time

You fawn over your wife//

You are absorbed by yourself and you have no sense of humor.

Harry: I will call my wife and tell her about my friends,

What did you do darling? Went to a funeral.

How was it? Marvelous!

How is that for a two-day venture?

PARTICIPANTS Archie Black, Harry

MOOD- tense, accusatory

TURN TAKING Archie Black 1, Harry 1

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 1

The dialogue above is a conversation between two of the three friends, an observation of the main statements gives an insight into the way the men in the film view their wives. Archie accuses Harry of being insensitive because he fawns over his wife. To the readers this statement might seem paradoxical; a man who fawns over his wife is never assumed to be insensitive rather he is either seen as a wimp or as an inferior male. This statement gives us an idea that the word 'insensitive' possesses another meaning in this context, this could mean that Harry is not insensitive in general but maybe out of touch with his friends. He fawns over his wife; therefore, he is not masculine enough, he gets to work on time, he has become too law-abiding, and while he may have a sense of humor, they do not like or understand his sense of humor. These three statements also represent behavioral codes in a CoFp (Community of Practice), they may be certain modes by which

men demonstrate their superiority across all levels of socialization. At work, they are not punctual, they arrive late and it is acceptable, they pay little attention to their wives and may even be brutish with them and with their friends; an exhibition of a similar sense of humor does not only enhance a sense of belonging but is also a sign of social charisma.

Furthermore, we see his mock conversation between Harry and his wife as a reflection of the kind of marriage and spouse he has. His wife does not know his friends, she is not aware of her husband's emotional state. The conversation between them shows that the attitude she has towards her husband's loss of a close friend is indifferent and unfeeling. The mock conversation shows that out of the three men, Harry who fawns over his wife has a typical unhappy or unstable marriage in which the partners are detached and unaware of what is happening in their lives.

TRANSCRIPT 2 Screen time 00.41.15

CONTEXT OF TRANSCRIPT 2 AND 3

The three friends are still together and after spending the night at the bar have decided to go home to prepare for work. At this point in the film, the men have left the bar because they all had to resume their jobs later that morning. Harry has decided to go home and prepare for work

Harry: Look what I did to the phone booth //

I kicked the hell out of it

Gus: Yeah

Harry: Like I have been telling my wife for years//

Aside from sex, and she is very good at it

God damn it, I like you guys better//

I really do. Now, who the hell else could put up with me, huh?

I am a jerk and I know it.

PARTICIPANTS: Gus Dimitri, Harry

MOOD: conversational

TURN TAKING: Gus 1, Harry 1



FIG 1.8 Harry 'fawns' over his wife

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 2

The dialogue gives us some hints about Harry the first being that he has anger problems or unresolved emotional issues. Secondly, he believes his wife is only good for sex, but he does not see her as a companion, and he believes his friends are more of his companion than his wife. His wife takes second place when it comes to a comparison with his friends. The second part of the dialogue shows his asking, who else could put up with him other than his friends, does that mean his wife cannot put up with him or she is constantly having to try hard at putting up with him: this could point out to the fact that these men who are husbands spend little time with their wives and spend more time with their friends.

An analysis of certain statements in the context of the dialogue makes us realize that the reference to his wife's sexual expertise could be a way of displaying masculinity, he kicks the hell out of a phone booth, to show physical power and he talks about his wife who he has been telling for years that she is only needed for sexual relations because he prefers the company of his friends. This hints that his marriage might only be a source of sexual relief to him and if he had his way, he probably might not have married his wife. This also reflects his attitude towards marriage as a ticket for sex, there is absolutely not an expectation of intimacy and companionship.

TRANSCRIPT 3. Screen time 00.42.30

Harry: We will never make the 8.02.

We're late. We got 10 minutes

Let the cab go! We'll take my car.

Gus: That's the difference between him and us.

Archie: If my wife opens her mouth to me about anything//,

I finish that fast, I'm not going to shower for her,

if I want to stink, I'll stink. That's my privilege

Gus: You're right

Archie: I walk right in there... I know I'm right, and I spell

It out.

And that's what you have to do//

Gus: Right that's what you have to do.

PARTICIPANTS Harry, Archie and Gus Dimitri

MOOD: Rushed, conversational

TURNTAKING Harry 1, Gus 3 and Archi 1.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 3

The conversation shows us the kind of attitude the men have towards their wives, Archie comes across as belligerent and defensive. He is the typical male chauvinist; he is aggressive about his wife saying anything contrary to his opinions or expressing any disagreement. He says that he finishes any contradicting opinion fast. This statement could be a pointer to a form of verbal and physical abuse. The statement about him showering for her could also mean that his wife has constantly nagged him not just about his personal hygiene but also about other issues that they face. Another look at the conversation makes us realize that Archie's aggressive behavior has earned him support from his friend Gus, this signifies that aggression towards women is a shared practice since all three friends are married men.

However, certain statements made by Archie could also mean that he is tired of having to change himself to suit his wife, at some point in the conversation, he says that if he wants to stink, he has a privilege to stink, privilege in this context could mean God-given right, that means he believes his personal hygiene is a symbol of his identity as a man who is free

to do whatever he wants to do with his body and he doesn't have to change- this could be a pointer to selfishness or narcissism

TRANSCRIPT 4 Screen time 00.38.54

CONTEXT

In this part of the film, Harry, his wife and his mother-in-law are having an altercation. At this point, Harry is holding his wife in a tight grip and he is yelling at her.

Harry-You love me?

Say you love me. Say you love //.

Just say you love good old Harry

You love Harry, don't you?

Poor working stiff //

You love me. Say you love me

Say you love me! Say it!

Wife-I love you

Harry- Again.

Wife-I love you.

Harry-That's better//, that's not hard, is it?

I love you too.

Wife- I'm gonna call the police on him

I'm gonna kill him

PARTICIPANTS, Harry, wife and mother-in-law

MOOD- violent, tense

TURNTAKING-Harry 3, Wife 3

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 4

The transcript shows an altercation between Harry and his wife. He is seen enforcing his will on her by coercing her to declare her love for him. On closer analysis, we see that his demand for love is not as a result of pain or heartbreak, rather it is as a result of him feeling cheated. He calls himself a 'poor working stiff', 'good old Harry' these expressions have three connotations. The first implies that Harry sees himself as a poor man, a man that is to be pitied because of his state or situation. Secondly, he sees himself as a working stiff; an interpretation of this expression would be a man who is always working and has no time for anything else. It could also mean a man who works so much that he has become consumed by it, stiffened by the demands of work that he cannot do anything else and his work is all he knows. The word 'stiff' could contextually mean 'stoic' or rigid. This could be a subconscious reference to Archie's statement that Harry is not fun, has no sense of humor and he takes things too seriously. The expressions give an image of Harry as a man who is rigid, a workaholic and an unhappy man,

The dialogue shows that he believes he should be compensated for all his work with his wife's love and that is why he demands it even when he knows that the love he gets from her is not genuine. He coerces her to say she loves him because he sees her as a subordinate whose love he can demand just like respect.

TRANSCRIPT 5A

CONTEXT 5-6 Screen time- 1.30.43

The three men are at a bar in London where they have decided to spend the night and explore

Harry- I must be going nuts

I hate that house

I only lived there because of a woman

You know, the legs, the breasts, the mouth

Well, not anymore. No sir.

Gus, Archie

I'm confused, I will tell you

Because I know I'm going to go in that house

And I know I'm not going in that house,

Because if I go in that house, I'll say I'm sorry

TRANSCRIPT 5B

Archie-Harry, my wife is not so good in bed

Maybe that's the answer,

I mean, I don't enjoy it that much.

I am very slow

Right now, Harry,

We've got two lovely wives, you know

The only problem is to go home and make love to them

PARTICIPANTS- Harry and Archie

MOOD- conversational

TURNTAKING- Harry-1, Archie-1

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 5

These two monologues share a common theme, they address the sexual appeal and skills of their wives. Harry says he will go home to apologize to his wife on a closer look, we see that this apology is not because he feels sad and contrite. He will apologize only because of his wife's body. He stayed in his house only because of his wife's body and sexual skills, and if he goes back, he will be forced to apologize because he is enslaved by her body and her sexual skills.

Archie, on the other hand, laments that his wife is not good at sex and because of that he does not enjoy having sex with her. He believes that that answers a question and we the viewers are not really sure what that question is. Could it be why Archie does not want to go home? (he says it is a problem to go home and make love to their lovely wives) or could it be the reason for his absenteeism or lack of functionality as a husband?. Both men see their homes as unpleasant places to be and they put the blames on their wives and their sexuality or lack of sexuality. They are reluctant to go home because they get only sex at home and the have decided to avoid it for the quality of the sex they would have. Harry refuses because for him, sex with his wife is like slavery and, Archie refuses because the sex is an unpleasant one.

TRANSCRIPT 6

You had a lot of hair then Harry

Harry-I got older she gets younger.

They all get younger, you get older //

Well that is it //

Gus-You're not the first guy to ever punch his wife out

Listen, you worry about your family //

We worry about our family

PARTICIPANTS Harry, Gus

MOOD- conversational

TURNTAKING- Harry 1, Gus 1

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF TRANSCRIPT 6

The conversation among the three friends shows the prevalent thoughts American young men had in the 70s. They saw women as a major cause of stress; women were draining bloodsuckers and they made your hair fall out, they also grew younger because they had such a simple life after all they did not have to work and pay the bills, they only had to sit and look pretty. This could be a representation of the way most men viewed all women in 1970s America; they believed they should be 'punched out' because they are inferior and have no authority, the husbands have the right to physically abuse them when they do not want to submit to their authority. There is a general consensus among the men (Harry, Archie and Gus) they are all husbands who believe in physical coercion and they have all abused their wives at some point (this is in reference to Harry's actions in transcript 5)

At the second part of the dialogue, the men also agree that they all have to worry about their families. They do not specifically say how but from the context, it can be seen that it is a duty they have in common. In their own different ways, they worry about their families and they believe in managing it with patriarchal authority.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

5.3.2 WIVES IN THE FACE OF MACHISMO AND MISOGYNY

‘The stereotype of machismo emphasizes the idea of hyper-masculinity in men. The word macho means male animal in Spanish; in fact, machismo emphasizes the idea of an almost animal masculinity. That is, the main characteristics of machismo are aggressiveness and hyper-sexuality. Aggressiveness is demonstrated through authoritarianism, aggression and dominance towards men and women. Hypersexuality refers to the continuous conquest of women and pursuit of several sexual partners’

Misogyny, on the other hand, refers to the outright hatred of women and constant debasement of women or the female gender. These two phenomena were the main problems the feminists of the 1970s faced and sought to address through movements and the use of various media like written articles and books, mass media productions. They aimed at explaining how American machismo affected the relations between men and women and in turn, affected the society. One major publication that addressed machismo was the Boston women’s Health department book titled *‘Our Bodies, Ourselves: A Book by and for Women.’* The book focused mainly on the male chauvinism of doctors and the effects on women and society. Kaufman identifies it as one of the fruits of the second-wave feminism that ‘sought to demystify social-relationships that may have for decades appeared ‘the norm’ but which are in fact staunchly defended patriarchal positions’. He shed more light on the aims of the writers of the Boston Women’s Health Book,

‘They all wanted to do something about those doctors who were condescending, paternalistic, judgmental and non-informative.... chapters on abortion, rape, birth control, venereal disease, self-defense and lesbianism challenged any assumption that women should remain passive at the mercy of microbes or men.’ (19)

‘Husbands’ gives the viewers a clear picture of the privileges enjoyed by men in the 1970s American society; they could get up and leave their homes and waltz around doing anything they liked, they could return home anytime they wanted to and that is if they wanted to and their wives were obliged to accept them whenever they finally came

home. All three protagonists were husbands and fathers. In the movie we see them neglecting their roles without any consideration for the consequences.

Throughout the movie, Cassavetes presents us with women who are either silent or violent. This gives us two extremes of female behavior, the silent or silenced woman or the vocal and violent woman. Both types of women have reacted in the ways they could in the face of coercive male authority. For example, Archie's wife is silenced by both Cassavetes and Archie himself; Archie silences his wife with his machismo; his totalitarian claims to always being in the right: 'he stops all form of objections from her fast and tells her he is right'. Cassavetes silences her by not giving her a voice at all, we get all we know about her from Archie and we never hear her own opinions about her husband or her marriage. This presentation of extreme and hysterical women in the face of machismo gives us a view of how women cope by living in an autopilot mode without never really questioning the occurrence of certain things in their lives like why they are being treated the way they are or why they are refused privileges like leaving their responsibilities as wives and mothers to go find themselves. Cassavetes presents women as beaten down in the face of hyper-masculinity, they do not get to defend themselves because there is no opportunity given to them; he withholds the voices of Archie and Gus's wives.

The only woman (Harry's wife Annie) who tries to put up a defence is assaulted and objectified as a sexual object. This could mean that Cassavetes perceived women as defeated in the face of machismo and hypermasculinity. They were silenced due to the machismo of men like Archie and they became hysterical as a response to violent husbands like Harry.

5.4 ANALYSIS OF 'GLORIA' (1980)

The film is about a tough mob woman who saves her neighbour's son from being killed by a mobster who had already killed his family because his father had given out confidential information. The film focuses on how they gradually grow to accept each other as mother and child, and successfully escape the mob and build a new life together. Cassavetes uses the film to project his belief that all women have it in them to be mothers if they are not afraid of the societal expectations that come with motherhood. The analyses in this section will involve a study of the words that reflect the ideals of motherhood in the 1970s American society. The general discussions will involve a comparison between Gloria and Jeri; the two versions of motherhood portrayed in the film.

5.4.1 TEXTUAL ANALYSES OF 'TRANSCRIPT 1-6'

TRANSCRIPT 1- screen time 10:30-29:45

CONTEXT

In this part of the movie, Jeri has just found out that assassins were coming for her family in the next few minutes, while in a fierce argument with her husband, Gloria stops by to ask for coffee and Jeri begs her to escape with her son to save him.

Jeri: You gotta take the kids Gloria

Gloria: Jeri, you know I'd do anything for you

But I don't like kids//

I hate kids especially yours

(on the corridor talking to Phil)

How old are you? Six?

I don't know what to do with you kid

My poor cat//

What do I do with you?

You're not my family or anything

You're just a neighbour's kid right?

Run, go on run, run on home, go on

PARTICIPANTS-Jeri, Gloria

TURN TAKING- Jeri 1, Gloria 2

MOOD- tense; worry and confusion

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 1

The transcript is a dialogue between Gloria and Jeri (Phil's mother) and later between her and Phil. At the beginning of the dialogue, Gloria expressly states that she does not like children so she cannot help her friend to babysit her child. She declares that she would rather do anything else than help her with her child, implying that babysitting is something she would rather not do except under dire circumstances like this one. Also, another information makes it worse, Phil is not a child that could possibly fend for himself or be independent enough to take care of himself. He is a six-year-old boy that would require a lot of attention and he would be largely dependent on Gloria for his needs.

At some point in her dialogue she states expressly that she does not know what to do with the child. This could imply that Gloria has obviously lacked maternal care, has never taken care and responsibility for anyone most especially a child who is largely dependent on others.

There is also a subtle juxtaposition of a cat and a child; Cats are stereotypically known as independent domestic animals. She shows sympathy for her 'poor' cat and

complete bewilderment for a child that she is supposed to naturally know how to care for. She does not only show her reluctance to take him as her responsibility because she does not have the skills but also she does not feel any connection to him after all, he is just a neighbor's child not her blood relative. She does not feel any connection to him, so she can turn her back on him whenever she wants to.



Fig 1.9. Unwanted Union

TRANSCRIPT 2 screen time 45:24-47:12

CONTEXT

Gloria has been able to find a safe place for Phil and this shows one of their conversations when he is getting dressed.

Gloria: Did you hear me?

Okay, here are your socks, put them on//

Phil: No

Gloria: I feel like your mother,

Phil: You aren't my mother//

Gloria: What did you say?

Phil: You aren't my mother

My mother is beautiful

PARTICIPANTS Phil, Gloria

TURN-TAKING Gloria 3 Phil 3

MOOD-conversational

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 2

As the film progresses, we see an argument occur between Phil and Gloria: Phil gives the viewers an idea of some of the criteria of a mother's beauty; feminineness and tenderness. Gloria begins to assume the responsibility of a mother: she scolds Phil for not putting on his socks and she instructs him and in childish rebellion, he refuses and states that she is not his mother. A typical mutinous response of a child that has been forced into unwanted situations. He says no, he is not putting on the socks, she is not his mother because his mother is beautiful. His refusal to do something mundane is a representation of a refusal of a larger possibility- the possibility of having a new mother that does not fit into his perception of what a mother should be or look like.

While we know that children have different perceptions of beauty Feeney and Moravcik (1987) assert that children beneath the age of 6 judge beautiful things on the basis of attractive colors and familiarity. There is also the general belief that children will see their mothers as beautiful because of their familiarity and tenderness. Therefore, we question if the beauty is a physical one because of Jeri's feminineness and physical features or the beauty is an internal one because Jeri is tender, warm and loving. All these things that Gloria is not.

Ironically, the first part of the dialogue presents a domestic scene between a mother and child; the mother scolds the child and tells him to do something for his own safety or comfort and the child decides to be capricious and refuses out of spite. It is ironic because the two participants are caught in a mutually unpleasant situation and they find themselves subconsciously playing roles that they would not play willingly.

TRANSCRIPT 3 Screen time 1:03: 21- 1: 04:51

CONTEXT

Gloria and Phil have just escaped the mobsters and Gloria stops on the street to question her decision to take Phil as her child.

Gloria: I just realized I'm doing the wrong thing//

I should be sending you to boarding school

Phil: Okay, anyway you are not Spanish like me//

You're not my father, you're not my mother

You're not anyone to me

You're not enough for me

Okay, Gloria

So, I'm gonna find a family

Some new friends and a girlfriend too

Okay//

You're a nice girl but you're not for me

Gloria: Fine,

See that bar across the street?

I'm going to be in there having a drink

If you want to run away//

That's your problem

Phil: Bye Chiquita, bye little sucker

Bye little insect, Bye little fly

PARTICIPANTS- Gloria, Phil

TURN TAKING- Gloria 2 Phil 2

MOOD- Angry, Tense

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 3

This dialogue shows the viewers one of the turning points in the makeshift relationship between Gloria and Phil. At this point, both parties believe that they cannot have a healthy relationship. So, Gloria contemplates the idea of sending Phil away to boarding school because she probably is insecure of her capacity to take care of him until he can be independent. Phil reacts in an adult like manner by rationalizing the possible reasons for her decisions. He rationalizes her abandonment as a result of a different ethnicity. She is not Spanish, she is not his father or mother, she is not family thus she is not enough, so she is not important. This could also make viewers wonder how a six-year-old boy could have a sense of ethnical differences and use it as a basis for creating relationships. This also makes the viewers wonder why he would say Gloria is not enough for him, what makes her lacking; her skills as a mother or her ethnicity?

The second part shows Gloria giving Phil choices and Phil responding in an adult-like manner. Gloria sets the tone of the dialogue, she gives Phil his choices in a clear-cut manner and lets him make his decisions like an adult and lets him deal with the consequences, she tells him she is at the bar, so he has two choices, he comes to get her at the bar then they continue to live together and she performs her duties as a mother or he runs away and he is left to fend for himself. Phil is seen responding in a childlike manner; showing his Spanish heritage by calling her names like bye Chiquita, bye little sucker, bye little insect, bye little fly. All these insults are not only childish in nature, but they have something in common; Phil's repetition of 'little' could be an extension of his statement that she is not enough for him. She is not important, and she is too little for him: her lack of tenderness and her non-Spanish ethnicity makes her unsuitable for him



Fig. 2.0 On the run

TRANSCRIPT 4 1:23: 26- 1: 27:34

Context

At this point in the film, Gloria has decided to go and have a discussion with the mob boss and ask him for Phil's life in exchange of the book. They have this conversation in the middle of drafting the plan for Phil's trip to Pittsburgh

Gloria: I asked you once if I could be your mother,

You didn't want that

Phil: You want to be my mother?

You could be my mother,

I don't have any mother, no more mother

So, you could be my mother

Why would you want to be my mother?

Gloria: I don't know

Just want to clear things up//

Phil: You're my mother, you're my father//

You're my mother, you're my whole family

You're even my friend, Gloria

PARTICIPANTS Phil, Gloria

TURNTAKING Phil 2, Gloria 1

MOOD-Conversational, emotional

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 4

At this point in the evolution of the relationship between Gloria and Phil, there is the possibility of acceptance. Phil considers the thought of having Gloria as a mother, he goes on further to say why he has decided to agree finally: he explains himself like someone who has weighed his options- he does not have a mother anymore, he has lost the hope of her coming back so he would not mind her becoming his mother. The conversation is an attempt to define the progression of their relationship. It is interestingly similar to the stereotype conversation between two lovers who want to take the relationship more seriously. They define the relationship; it has become more than a forced cohabitation where a woman has to take charge of her neighbour's child, and a little boy has to live with a new mother in order to save his life. Phil has begun the process of accepting the fact that his family is gone forever.

Here again we see Gloria treating Phil like an adult with an ability to make clear and rational decisions; she seems to have it at the back of her mind that Phil might not want to be her son, so she does not want to take the possibility for granted. She is also aware of the possibility of him refusing her request, so she asks him again in order to be sure of his acceptance Phil assures her of complete acceptance as his mother; she has become his whole family, friend and even girlfriend., she has become his everything. She is no more too little or not enough, she has become more than sufficient.

TRANSCRIPT 5 screen time 1:48:35-1 50:25

CONTEXT TRANSCRIPT 5 AND 6

Gloria is having a conversation with the mob boss Tony, she addresses the men in the room in an attempt to come across as unthreatening and fearless at the same time

Gloria: I know you all approve of mothers

I know you all had mothers//

Me, I am not a mother

I'm one of those sensations

I was always a broad

Can't stand the sight of milk

Okay, I know you guys are going to have your day //

But maybe I could have a drink?

Do you think I could have a drink?

Tony: Nice girl /Tell me about the boy

Gloria: Kill me.

PARTICIPANTS- Gloria, Tony

TURNTAKING- Gloria 2, Tony 1

MOOD- conversational, tense

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 5

This conversation shows Gloria stating her stand on protecting Phil but before she gives the mob boss her decision on releasing Phil to them, she gives them her opinion on what motherhood is for her. She identifies the idealistic views people have about motherhood: all the men who are mobs and likely involved in illegal activities approve of mothers- see motherhood as something positive. She disassociates with the saintliness or goodness that comes with the position of motherhood, she instead identifies as a 'sensation' and a 'broad'. Two terms that focus on women's sexual qualities; broad could be an offensive slang that defines a woman, sensation on the other hand could refer to a person that could arouse sexual excitement. She defines herself with words that are not in any way connected to motherliness. She goes further to say that she cannot stand the sight of milk, which could be an allusion to the maternal responsibility of weaning a child.

Gloria builds her tough anti-maternal persona by asking for a drink in a very relaxed tone, she might have asked for a drink in order to seem unthreatening to the mobsters or to seem unthreatened by the presence of the mobsters. As a complete show of bravado, she tells Tony to kill her when he asks for the whereabouts of Phil; she showed her absolute willingness to die saving his life. Her statement might have been a bluff because she knew who she was talking to so she might have known that he would not kill her or harm her in any way, but she took a risk that could have led to the loss of her life.

TRANSCRIPT 6.

Gloria: The boy didn't see the murder,

He was with me

Tony: I don't like this kid

You can't go around shooting our people

Every time we try to talk to you//

You pull a gun.

You killed people // People get angry

I understand. You are a woman

He is a little boy// you fall in love.

Every woman is a mother, you love him

Gloria: I love Phil?

PARTICIPANTS- Gloria, Tony

TURNTAKING- Gloria 2, Tony 1

MOOD- conversational, persuasive

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS: TRANSCRIPT 6

In this part of the dialogue between Gloria and Tony, we see both parties negotiating the terms for the other's refusal or agreement. Gloria uses Phil's absence during the murder of his family to justify why he should be let go; he knew nothing about the reason for the killing and he was not present, so he saw no faces. So, he should be left alone because of his complete innocence. The mob boss states that he does not like the child because Gloria kills mobsters to protect him, this could also be because the child has created a rift between Gloria and the mob boss and also because Gloria's shooting have caused problems between him and other business partners who are aware that the boy is alive and a likely threat to them

He attempts to persuade Gloria by making her feel like he understands why she is so protective of the child. He explains her sudden protectiveness and saintliness as born out of the love a mother has for a child. He does not consider the possible reasons like Gloria's sense of justice because an innocent child could be killed and for his father's mistakes or actions, or her sense of humanity because a child is a human being with life. He focuses on the strongest possible reason which is her love as a mother; that fierce protectiveness that comes with the position of motherhood. He goes on to describe the process of Gloria's evolution: she sees a little boy and just like every woman with a natural born instinct she falls in love and seeks to mother him. Just like every woman, she is inclined to nurture him, in spite of all her toughness and her bravado. Later on, we see Gloria been bewildered and surprised at the thought of loving a child or being able to love at all.

GENERAL DISCUSSIONS

5.4.2 COMPARISON BETWEEN JERI AS A MOTHER AND GLORIA

The main female characters in *Gloria* might have carried out diverse roles but the both of them have convergences and divergences, these comparisons are seen in the parts they play in Phil's circumstances. Primarily, we note that Jeri is his biological mother who gives him up to save his life and Gloria basically adopts him to achieve a similar purpose. This aspect of the analysis would involve a comparison between both women in order to understand the significance of the juxtaposition of two different characters.

Jeri and Gloria both seek to provide a safe place for their child. Jeri hands over her child to Gloria because she believes that she can provide him a place safe from the mobs she was not willing to let her son out of her sight, but she let him go because she had to do the best for his life. Gloria does the same, she plans for them to escape to Pittsburgh and she gives him money in case of emergencies. They both carry out drastic measures to save Phil's life. Jeri is an example of a stereotype 'good mother' who is self-sacrificing, and Gloria is an individualistic mother or both; just like Cassavetes' version of every woman she has natural maternal instincts, but she does not forego her dreams. While she is not morally perfect because she uses bad language in front of Phil and a gun in his presence. she is not the typical mother, but she has the most fundamental aspects of having a maternal feeling for a child. She loves him enough to uproot her comfortable life, cut off pre-existing relationships and kill people to protect his life

She may be unconventional, but she will protect his life at all costs. She is unfailingly loyal and protective. Jeri is portrayed as the conventional good mother and Gloria the 'bad mother'. She could bear the traits of the 'bad mother' because she treats Phil like the adult and does not cocoon him the way a typical mother would. Interestingly, their relationship is almost like a romantic one; in one of the film scenes, Phil is seen reinforcing the fact that he is 'the man', at some point he asks her if he can touch her hair and she tells him not to try it because she outweighs him by 60 pounds. This is an odd

reaction to the request of a young child asking you for permission to touch your hair. At the end we see both women as a reflection of Cassavetes' opinion on mothers; every woman is a mother, but each might have a unique way of being a mother.

5.4.3 DISCOURSES OF MOTHERHOOD IN GLORIA

The film employs certain discourses of motherhood to pass its messages across to the viewers. The main message is the ability of all women to act as mothers even if they do not have the natural inclination to show tenderness. Other discourses seen in the film are the beauty and feminineness of motherhood, and the love that comes with child rearing; taking care of a child makes you fall in love. Gloria's transformation into motherhood supports the theory that women might not be natural mothers, but maternal instincts could be acquired, they could be developed, learnt or acquired via relationships just like love relationship that does not occur at first sight but through time and continuous proximity. This evolution is seen in the way Gloria evolves from a woman that does not like children to one who risks her life and all she has for a child. Her evolution might have been made to project a view that women can be mothers in spite of their backgrounds; Gloria might not be from a stable white background, she might not have had a stable family and she might have carried out some illegal activities but she has the heart of a mother and her roots does not stop her.

Gloria seems to demonstrate the possession of some of the traits of the Good mother and the 1970s mother. She is willing to sacrifice for her child- she leaves the comfort of her home, burns bridges with her friends and fellow mobsters and she does it happily without a second thought. She also shows her love for her child through her sacrifice and complete protectiveness. Gloria is a 1970s version of a balanced mother, she shows tough love and she protects her child by confronting men with her gun, she goes on to assure him by making a plan together: she gives him some money, and instructs him to take a train to Pittsburgh if she does not come back in time she is realistically aware that she might not return from the negotiation she will have with the mobsters.

Both mothers are beautiful and attractive women, Cassavetes does not portray Gloria as an unattractive woman in spite of her tough persona and the way she responds to physical aggression. Gloria is feminine, she dresses like a lady and uses beauty products just like Jeri Phil's mother. However, she does not give tender kisses and speak Spanish like Jeri, she is hard: she forces Phil to make choices like an adult and she is white, she speaks only English. However, the differences between the beauty of both women is seen in their sacrifices and willingness to prioritize a child's safety. All these discourse point to a singular theme, the dynamicity of carrying out the duties of motherhood and becoming one. Goodwin and Huppertz (2003) state that good motherhood is a fluid state;

'The good mother appears in different settings, she is a nuanced and multiple form...the de-naturalization of motherhood and the opening up of categories woman/mother has been established in a number of ways...not all women give birth, not all women who give birth rear children, not all women who rear children give birth to them' (5) This statement lays emphasis on the perspective that Gloria might not have been a traditional mother with her biological child, but she has fluidly been able to perform the duties of a mother and thus, is qualified as one.

CONCLUSIONS

This research has analysed the effects of language use especially word choices on the creation and perception of the discourses in the gender issues of the 1970s America. The results have shown that word choice in media is not only of importance in media outlets such as broadcast news, political speeches and advertisements but also in the diverse forms of entertainment such as films. The results have investigated how the characters representing the American society, handled affairs that were deemed domestic. This research has been able to highlight the importance of studying the society on a domestic level. This point is important to note because majority of the discourse analyses being carried out seeks to understand the society from a political standpoint of power and this leads to analysts overlooking the fact that politics in itself starts from the family as a grassroot group of a nation. Therefore, the study of domestic affairs such as marital relations and parent-child relations would prove to be a vital clue in the social experiment of understanding the complexities of human relations. Bernardes Jon in his argument for family ideology asserts that studying family affairs and ideology is essential to understanding the human society. He states,

‘Family life is key to understanding the human society, more than this, understanding family life is the key to improving society...our first and most important experiences occur within and are largely determined by family life. Subsequent major life experiences-dating, marriage, parenthood-are also largely determined by family ideology’ (34)

The films of Cassavetes chosen for this study have been able to successfully provide realistic speech, which is a vital material in any Discourse analysis. We have studied how Cassavetes’ documentary films bring to light the common discourses that were present in the time of the productions of his films. *A Woman Under the Influence* showed us how the use of identity markers like the ‘Crazy Woman’ only helped to make Mabel seem more out of reach and burdensome, while her husband Nick who was also at times a ‘Crazy man’, rational and easily understood. *Faces and Husbands* showed us how conversations in male

communities of practice (CoFp) enhanced female objectification. In these films, we see the presentation of sex as a commodity and men acting as consumers because they have purchasing power. Richard seeks the attentions of Jenny, a prostitute to escape his failing marriage and Harry along with his friends travel to London for a night of bars and women in order to avoid their families and drown out the pain of losing their friend.

The analysis of *Gloria* showed that the discourses of motherhood used in the film shaped the perception of Gloria's evolution into motherhood. The major discourse that played the role of setting the path for Gloria was the concept that all women are mothers meaning that Gloria becomes a mother because of the inherent maternal instincts she possesses. She might be all hard edges and street smart, but she has a tender spot on the inside that makes her a mother by extension, Gloria stood for the 1970's American woman who was defined as a mother based on her gender but still doubted her capacity, or didn't want to be a mother just because she is a woman

RESULTS OF THE DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

The analysis has been able to prove how effective a multidimensional examination of language in high and popular culture, with the use of Discourse analysis, could help understand better the inner workings of the society. It has also gone on to further show that gender is inseparable from performance in the society especially through language use. The findings from the research are stated as follows:

- The research has validated my assertion that the discourse analysis of popular culture is equally as relevant as the other political or recorded interviews. A discourse analysis helps in achieving scientific results that are factual and based on the parts of the research sample used for the analysis
- These analyses have also validated the possibility of there being a sociolinguistic analysis of pieces of high and popular culture. Thus, it proposes ideas and opens a world of possibilities for further and more technical research

- The results have gone further to show that history can be primarily examined through language use, precisely through dialogues. The expressions used in the films that were analysed portrayed the social preoccupations of the 1970s either by default or design. This proves the fact that societal issues cannot be obliterated as long as there are dialogues and documented conversations. In spite of their production dates which date as far back as 50 years ago, these films address subject matters that are relevant in this time and the results of the analyses affirm that word choices create discourses that affect the world view of a society. These analyses also prove that the study of language use in contemporary popular culture would help in understanding how the language use affects the perception of the society; proving a salient point that even something as mundane as entertainment and cinema can have a long lasting effect on the ways in which a social group relates to the world and vice versa.

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