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SOCIO-POLITICAL ANALYSIS OF GENDER IN BRECHT'S PLAY THE GOOD PERSON OF SZECHWAN

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ABSTRACT

Feminism is an umbrella term which comprises so many sub-terms in itself. It deals with the issue of identity, sex, gender discrimination and equal rights of the women. This study is qualitative in nature that explores switching of gender role from the perspective of Butler's performative attribution from Brecht's play The Good Person of Szechwan. In this play, Shen Teh's successful accomplishment of Shui Ta proves gender as a performative phenomenon. Different research scholars have accomplished their scholarly works on the various social, economic, psychological and political aspects of the concerned drama in the light of Marxist paradigms but a lot is still required to analyze this work from the point of different gender roles. It also aims to analyze how gender is determined upon the basis of performance and gender role regardless of the sexual identity of the characters reflected in Brecht's concerned play. The research scholars of feminism and Bertolt Brecht will get benefit from this study.

INTRODUCTION

There are a few literary figures who are recognized everywhere in the world because of their services which they have relinquished for literature and humanity. Like master pieces of literary world, their personalities are not confined to the restrictions of geographical and lingual boundaries as they are worshipped with same prestige and reverence across the world. Bertolt Brecht is one of those writers who have dedicated their lives for the propagation of some certain philosophy and doctrine in his poetic and dramatic works. Being a prolific writer he has written so many dramas among them Mother Courage and her Children, Three Penny Opera, Life of Galileo, The Caucasian Chalk Circle and The Good Person of Szechwan etc. are worth mentioning.

Brecht's plays somehow deal with a socio-political problem in one way or the other but complexity lies in the sense that these plays neither suggest any suitable solution of that problem nor they answer the question which Brecht raises in the textures of his plays and the same situation will be observed in the play under discussion *The Good Person of Szechwan*. Primarily the play revolves around a Janus-faced female character that performs two roles of Shen Teh and Shui Ta simultaneously. She has been forced to live in a dual identity out of some socio-political and cultural phenomenon. Biologically she is a female character but social and cultural circumstances lead her to the point of hiding her female gender and to perform as male one. In this study, the switching of the character from one gender to another, will be analyzed in the post-feministic phenomenon.

Different research scholars have researched a lot upon the various social, economical, psychological and political aspects of the concerned drama in the light of Marxist paradigms and according to the parameters of Epic Theatre. But no one ever tried to systematically analyze this work from the point of different gender roles performed from the perspective of a female protagonist. The following research questions guide this study:

Q. In what ways are Shen Teh and Shui Ta gendered configuration of the same individual. Is it, from Brechtian point of view, possible for an individual to switch gender role?

Q.2 If Butler critique of the relationship between gender and sex is taken as an established theory, how does switching of gender role in *The Good Person of Szechwan* reflect upon gender as a performative attribute?

Q.3 How does Butler's gender as a performative attribute paradigm reflect upon Brecht's gender role assignment and the negation of gender as a sexual attribute?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Talking about the primary text of this study *The Good Person of Szechwan*, we find both the elements, for which Brecht is famous for, i.e. the propagation of Marxist doctrine and the use of epic techniques. This particular play has been scrutinized thoroughly by the researchers across the world regarding Marxist propensity and Brecht's dramaturgical techniques. For instance, the question about the vitality of the role of three gods has frequently been raised in the texture of the play. Similarly, the poverty stricken scenario of the play, the exploitation of the poor by the rich, the dialogues of the water seller, the orthodox concept of morality and the materialistic phenomenon of the play stamp it a play with Marxist concerns behind its performance. Every researcher does mention Shen Teh's efforts for her survival as a selfless individual, entrapped in a hostile capitalistic setup, yet a few bothered to analyze that play out of Marxist dogmas. That's why one may get a comprehensive range of research articles either about the Marxist dimensions of this play, both in electronic and print forms, or about the application of epic techniques. Though Brecht has been applauded as well as studied excessively with reference to his undaunted association with the Marxist school of thought

yet this inclination towards a specific trend has also thwarted the scholars and researchers to analyze his writings other than Marxist domain. Thanks to late twentieth century feminist critics like Laureen Nussbaum, Peter Ruppert and Sara Lenox who started exploring Brecht's writings in the feministic perspective and showed the world that Brecht's work is worthy to be scrutinized in other than Marxist paradigm.

Peter Ruppert (1976) explores that the play is in fact, a parable where we find Shen Teh as a paradoxical character that swings like a pendulum between her self interest and her desire to help the others but self interest and the collective interests are two completely different things and therefore, are poles apart from each other. Shen Teh's pursuance of her personal interest takes her away from the strangling hold of society and common good and gashes a hole in the sanctity of crystal social globe.

Sara Lennox (1978) a renowned feminist, wrote an article *Women in Brecht's Works* and opened a new vista for the scholars to examine Brecht's work from feminist perspective. In fact, her study is a general discussion about Brecht's treatment to women and various issues related to them therefore, she neither focuses any specific play of Brecht nor does she strictly confine the canvass of her debate within the boundary of any literary genre. That's why her discussion encompasses Brecht's poetry, short stories and plays in a systematic manner to observe Brecht's stand point about women and specially her treatment to the female characters. Lennox laments that even in sexual relations women have not been treated equally to men "Not even as sex partners are women in the early works accorded equal rights; they are regarded as sex object" (p.85). And in Simone de Beauvoir terminology they belong to the category of "the Other". And if they want to have sexual inclinations they become the centre of satire in the course of the plays. Therefore, according to Sara Lennox point of view, women in his plays are depicted as dependent and insignificant part of that socio-political regime in which they are completely helpless without the male strata.

Hence Sara Lennox, on the basis of the above-mentioned facts and findings, claims that Brecht has been badly failed to gauge the different facets of social relationships which are related to the lives and oppression of women. The rank and role of women is just presented but not problematized. Though the audience undergoes a process of learning yet the already existing human sexual arrangements are not challenged in any form. She accuses Brecht of continuing the oppression of women in the same way that the bourgeois theater preserves and prolongs the oppression of working class. Sara Lennox claims that Brecht lacked insight to see women in their full dimensions and could not understand their sexual power. He has portrayed only stereotypical images which are merely modified by his relatively wider political concerns as we observe him exploiting female characters for the propagation of Marxist doctrine without ever being able to bring forth the women's issues independently.

Unlike Sara Lennox and Laureen Nussbaum who talk about Brecht's female characters in general, Alisa Solomon (1994) specifically discusses female

protagonist of Szechwan in her article *Materialist Girl: The Good Person of Szechwan and Making Gender Strange*. Her essay can be divided into two phases. In first half she analyses the status of Brecht in the feminist circles of USA which would not be discussed here as it is not relevant to our research. In the second half of her essay she discusses *The Good Person of Szechwan* from feminist point of view in a detailed manner. Alisa Solomon does not jeopardize her analysis about Brecht's feminist strain while launching any personal campaign against Brecht like Lennox, who starts her research paper while labeling him a womanizer. Solomon, as we call in Brechtian term, dialectically analysis the feminist quibbles against Brecht without showing any personal attachment.

Dr. Meet (1996) points out the fact that Brecht with the help of Shui Ta replaces the orthodox concept of generosity like that of Shen Teh's and propagates the Marxist concept of economical assistance in shape of the opportunity of work and employment (Meet, p. 536). According to Marxist credo, Dr. Meet is sure that Shen Teh's goodness does not contribute anything positive to the society as we observe her goodness instead of breeding further goodness promotes cunningness, jealousy, coldness and evil among those who are helped by her (p.538). Therefore, Shui Ta's stance of helping the poor while providing them the opportunities of employment and using that man power in the establishment of tobacco business is much better a way to assist them economically in comparison to providing them the essentials of life, as done by Shen Teh, in which their participation is not more than that of passive recipients that resultantly develops the parasites and further creates the unnecessary economical burden in the society. Nevertheless it does not mean that Brecht considers Shui Ta as a perfect model to follow as he also exploits the people under his supervision. But to decide and think that who is right and who is wrong, in the parable of Shen Teh and Shui Ta, according to Dr. Meet is totally a wrong supposition. As Brechtian theatre was meant to raise the question in front of the audience so that they can be forced to find the satisfactory solution of the problem as Darko Suvin with reference to the play *The Good Person of Szechwan* has rightly remarked that it is an open ended play.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In fact Feminism is an umbrella term which comprises so many sub-terms in itself. It can be defined as a social, political, economic and cultural movement for the protection and establishment of equal rights of the women. That's why it deals with the issue of identity, sex, gender discrimination and equal rights of the women. It is hard to narrate exactly that when feminism was started as a movement? Therefore, about its history nothing can be said final as the profeministic glimpses can be traced down since Greek civilization. However, it was in the nineteenth century that feminism as a movement got the cross-continental attention in the world. For the comprehensive understanding about the history, scope and nature of feminism this section is to be divided into three phases.

Proto-feministic Period

Alexandra Symeonidou in her book *From Sandals to High Heels* states that Greek deities proved to be the foundation stone of feminism in terms of their

decision-making power and life of freedom. The goddess Hera was on top of them who fought against her husband Zeus for her rights and place as Zeus was not loyal to her. Our purpose to mention the episode of Hera and Zeus is not to rewrite a story or to analyze Zeus's character, as this task has been performed by a multitude of researchers centuries ago, but to make this point clear that Hera was the first lady who stood up for her rights and prerogatives. We cannot pass the sweeping statement that in Greek culture women were enjoying the sound status and repute despite the fact that some of their deities had been considered highly powerful. Quite like the rest of the civilizations, in Greek culture as well the position of women was not an ideal one. They were considered abysmally low to men in society. A female was considered no more than a metaphor of beauty like Helen, a paragon of loyalty as Penelope and the manifestation of selfless love in shape of Queen Dido (Symeonidou). It's not the case in philosophy even in the play of Sophocles Antigone serves the feminist ideals while challenging patriarchal society of her time. That's why she is regarded as the first modern heroine in the age of the classics. Hekuran Haxhija in his article explains that Antigone is startlingly different from her sister Ismene, who like a typical woman of her time, surrenders herself in front of male dominance and authority. Ismene not only tries to stop Antigone from burying her brother rather she let her remember that they are women and cannot compete the men. Antigone rejects her stereotypical behavior of taking dictation from the male authority and gives a decent burial to her brother in accordance with her free will and decision while shunning up all kind of pressure. In her first encounter with Creon have a look upon her untraditional behavior and bravery 'I have been accused of a folly by a fool' (qtd in Haxhija). It is a typical feminist quality of Antigone that she is not afraid of executing her plan and rebels against the political and patriarchal system. She remains strong and firm in front of her death and wins our sympathies of being a feminist protagonist (Haxhija, n.a) .

Feminism as a Movement

In Europe, feminism as a movement commenced with the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's book *A Vindication of the rights of Women* in 1792. The book was basically the foundation stone of feminism in which the role, nature and status of women stratum was questioned. It is also narrated that book was the ultimate cause of the first wave of feminism. The book basically deals with the subjugation of women belonging to late 18th century. It also suggests various ways to liberate the women from the conservative dogmas, associated with them since centuries, while empowering them, so that they may stand at their own in a respectable and acceptable way in the society. She considers that education of the women is the only way to empower them as they are even unable to know their basic right. Therefore, while providing them education they can be uplifted regarding their role, status and rights. However, she clearly negates that prevalent concept of education, that will brainwash them into submissive and humble beings, who are always at the back and call of their counterparts in shape of father, husband and brothers. She advocates that kind of education which will ultimately bring them from the subordinate position, up to the level equal to men. Therefore, in her book she chiefly talks about those women who have been confined themselves within the boundary

of their houses. And she suggests education as the only tool to get them aware of their rights in this regard.

After the publication and appreciation of Wollstonecraft's book, we find feminism started gaining momentum across the Europe and the issue of women's empowerment became the burning issue by the middle of the 19th century. Even the great political philosopher of Victorian England, John Stuart Mill was much impressed by the book of Wollstonecraft and took the responsibility to move forward the plea of women rights to set feminism; as a movement, on its right track. In 1869, Mill wrote his famous essay *The Subjection of Women* that is still considered as one of the preliminary sacred scripts regarding feminism. As he was the member of British parliament so in his book he not only propagates Wollstonecraft's stance of empowering the women rather he strongly advocates women right to vote. In his book, he rationally states that women are the half of human population. Therefore, the subjugation of women at any level will bring hindrance in the collective development of the humanity. He exclaims:

“The principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other— is wrong in itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle (Mill, 1970, p.2).

He further opines that women should be given equal right of representation in all the fields of life. Talking about the institution of marriage, he considers it as a part of slavery for the women as marrying a female is simply means that for the rest of her life she is going to be dependent upon her husband for the sake of food and shelter. And in return she has to look after his house like a domestic laborer. Hence he emphasizes the division of labor for both the sexes in the bond of marriage (*ibid.*).

With the passage of time the feminist movement kept on gaining intellectual and public support for the fulfillment of its initial demands such as women suffrage and the division of labor. Consequently we see the activists of these demands got succeeded in achieving the right of vote for women through “ *The Representation of People Act 1918*” in England and the same right of vote was given to the women of USA in 1919 by the nineteenth amendment in American constitution.

Meanwhile, Europe suffered devastation on the larger scale because of the atrocities of the First World War. The thread of society was badly shaken and severe demographic changes were observed in the post war scenario. The rapid growth of industrialization demanded full participation of women in all the fields of life. Therefore, the concept of empowering the women underwent a radical change and it no more remained confined to the education and political spheres only. Like Mill, Olive Schreiner also talks about the concept of women labor in her book *Woman and Labour*, published in 1911. She states that man and woman adopt each other's companionship through the bond of marriage. But afterwards it has been observed that women are not treated equal to men in terms of their status and rank in household issues. Therefore,

they have not been paid for the labor which they rendered at domestic level. Furthermore, she stresses upon the fact that women empowerment cannot be realized until they are offered the equal opportunities of employment in the social institutions dominated by males. She firmly states that the dream of women empowerment is only possible when the male and female shall eat from the tree of knowledge equally sitting side by side with each other and when they both will create Eden together (Schreiner, 1978, p.72).

Judith Butler's Theory of Gender Performativity

However, this specific research will be accomplished under the theory of "Gender Performativity" propounded by Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble*. As we have discussed Simone de Beauvoir's stance in her book *The Second Sex*, in which she states "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 1953, p.10) opened new vistas for the feminists to move forward in their cause about the rights of women and consequently Judith Butler while explaining the concept of "Becoming of Woman" presents her famous theory of gender performativity. Before discussing her theory in detailed, one thing should be clear in our minds that when Butler was asked a question in an interview about the difference between gender is performed and gender is performative she said: It's one thing to say that gender is performed and that is a little different from saying gender is performative. When we say gender is performed we usually mean that we've taken on a role or we're acting in some way and that our acting or our role playing is crucial to the gender that we are and the gender that we present to the world. To say that gender is performative is a little different because for something to be performative means that it produces a series of effects. We act and walk and speak and talk in ways that consolidate an impression of being a man or being a woman.

Beauvoir claims that no human being is naturally born as woman (or even man) simply means that one is not born along with gender rather one selects it (or one has been forcefully assigned a gender) after ones birth. In simple words it can be said that gender is not something god made or inborn quality rather it is a culture made product, acquired by choice and situation and exhibited through psychological' physical and lingual acts. Hence, it is acquired by a sex/body that's why it is changeable accordingly. Discussing Beauvoir's views in this regard Butler (2007) comments:

"Beauvoir was willing to affirm that one is born with a sex, as a sex, sexed, and that being sexed and being human are coextensive and simultaneous; sex is an analytic attribute of the human; there is no human who is not sexed; sex qualifies the human as a necessary attribute. But sex does not cause gender, and gender cannot be understood to reflect or express sex; indeed for Beauvoir, sex is immutably factic, but gender acquired, and whereas sex cannot be changed-or as she thought- gender is the variable cultural construction of sex, the myriad and open possibilities of cultural meaning occasioned by a sexed body" (pp.151-152).

About the discrimination of sex and gender, Butler concludes her theory when she affirms that sex is something which posed to be factic and real; a concrete and physical base on which gender acts as a cultural inscription (p.199).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative in nature, that's why, it undertakes the task of critical and textual reading of the prescribed play. Therefore, the evidences provided to support the thesis is mainly textual. The research was completed in the light of various books, articles and material present on the writer and deductive reasoning was employed to derive the certain conclusion. Hence descriptive research methodology was used to analyze the effects of gender performance in Brecht's *The Good Person of Szechwan*.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

To start with the question whether or not, it is possible from Brechtian point of view to switch gender role is a debate that requires deep textual analysis and critical faculty to derive the certain conclusion. The play *The Good Person of Szechwan* has been written long before the theory of gender performativity. Therefore to assert that the issues related to gender were unknown to the realm of literature, before the inception of Butler's theory of gender performativity, would not be a solid stance to argue with. However, it is also a fact that in Brecht's time gender had not been discussed as comprehensively, within the domain of any specific discipline, as it is being discussed in the modern context.

In Brecht's play *The Good Person of Szechwan* the protagonist Shen Teh keeps on switching from one gender role to another easily. Shen Teh's switching from one gender role to another also forces us to think the cause out of which she was forced to perform that activity. In the background of this switching from female to male gender, poverty was not the only cause but socio-political scenario and Shen Teh's endeavors to maintain her personal business also play a significant role in this connection. In the course of the play we come to realize she switches from one gender to another just for the survival of her respectable business and way of living in the capitalistic set up. We cannot assert that she does this for the sake of money as we are well aware of the fact that earlier she was selling her body to meet the necessities of life. Likewise, we cannot pass the statement that she changes her gender because women were not allowed to set up their business as we find before Shen Teh; Mrs. Shin was the owner of that store.

In this regards firstly, we shall observe the behavior of Mrs. Shin who, being a pauper, takes full advantage of Shen Teh's female gender and not only laughs at the Unemployed Man, who begs a free cigarette from Shen Teh, but also emotionally black mails her to gain the personal benefits in shape of rice while exploiting her gender as she complains "You have taken everything I've got. Now you're cutting my throat. I'll leave my children on your door step, you blood sucker!" (Brecht, 1943/1994, p.13). So we find Shen Teh's inability to maintain the hold over them simply because of her female gender. Similarly, when the Nephew, Brother and Male were fighting over wine, look at appealing behavior of Shen Teh "O look out for the shop, don't smash

everything! It's a gift of the gods. Take whatever's there if you want, but don't smash it!" (p.20).

Nevertheless, Scene II starts with the application of what Judith Butler says in her theory that gender is all about performance and has nothing to do with sex. The situation becomes quite different when the female protagonist Shen Teh appears in the guise of her stereotypical male counterpart such as Shui Ta, knocking at the door of tobacco store along with Carpenter when they were sleeping. The Nephew breaks this news of Shui Ta's arrival to the Woman and her behavior is worthy to be studied minutely:

THE YOUNG GENTLEMAN: I am her cousin.

THE WOMAN: (Falling from the clouds) What did you say you were?

THE YOUNG GENTLEMAN: My name is Shui Ta. (p.22)

The surprise of the woman is highly meaningful. She has been shocked less because of Shui Ta and more because of his male gender. So her surprise, later on, proves quite right when the Nephew demands for break-fast as they used to demand it from Shen Teh, Shui Ta in response, switches off the lamp and in an assertive manner declares once for all to clear the place so that he may open up the store.

On the contrary look at the behavior of Shen Teh towards the same people while performing the role of male gender:

SHUI TA: Yes (seriously) Leave here at once.

THE MAN: What, us?

SHUI TA: Yes, you. You are thieves and parasites. Leave at once, waste no time in arguing, and you can still save you skins. (p.25)

When The Man tries to pacify him saying that they are waiting for the boy to come, unlike Shen Teh, Shui Ta firmly states "Yes, where is he? I told you I will not have him here with stolen cakes. (Suddenly Shouting) For second time. Get out! (p.25).

We also observe minutely the behavior of the Carpenter towards female gender when he steps into the tobacco shop and demands to be paid for the shelves which he had installed under the supervision of the old proprietress. In response to Shen Teh's request for delaying the payment, notice his statement "Crooks. A pack of crooks. You and this Mrs. Shin are thick as thieves. I want my 100 silver dollars, or my name's not Lin To" (p.15). Consequently, he starts creating mess in the shop and shouts in warning cum threatening way "Then I'll have you sold up! On the spot. Pay on the spot or you'll be sold up" (p.15). We see him getting on her nerves simply because of her female gender. However, the issue remains pending to be solved until the arrival of her supposed male cousin who is initially introduced as "sharp as knife". And as soon as the Carpenter puts his claim of 100 silver dollars in front of Shui Ta, he simply rejects the bill, regardless the fact that it was dully signed by Shen Teh, and starts bargaining with him.

SHUI TA: Then my offer is 20 silver dollars.

THE CARPENTER: (laughs) Are you crazy? These shelves are walnut.

SHUI TA: Then take them away.

THE CARPENTER: What do you mean?

SHUI TA: I can't afford it. I suggest you take your walnut shelves away.
(p.24)

So the man, who was creating mess in the store, was threatening to Shen Teh and was not ready to accept less than 100 silver dollars, surrenders in front of the same individual who was performing the role of male gender in the guise of Shui Ta.

Therefore, as an independent female gender, we find Shen Teh stands nowhere in the society. So for the sake of her economic survival in that social milieu she has to shun the female gender and transforms her into male one by telling a lie that she has had a cousin just to meet the challenges of the life. The note worthy point is, before Mrs. Mi Tzu, her supposed cousin is introduced as 'skinny and tall' where as to the carpenter he has been presented "as sharp as knife". In both cases we can observe that he has been introduced in terms of those characteristics which are associated with his gender. The answer of the questions that why she cannot do an agreement and why she cannot handle the Carpenter alone is the fact that being a female gender she has been bullied by male and female genders alike. Therefore, the cause of her sufferings is gender discrimination. This was the same cause on the basis of which The Sister-in-law predicts to the Nephew "This set-up won't last long." (p.18) simply because that set up was being run by a female gender and in a patriarchal system, it is doomed to failure.

Mrs. Mi Tzu's behavior towards Shen Teh is also noticeable when she enters Shen Teh's newly opened tobacco store along with the papers of lease agreement and bluntly asserts "I suppose you can provide me with one or two references?" (p.17) Despite the offer of the Man, the landlady is not willing to accept his reference because of the patrilineal and patrilocal system prevailing in that society:

MRS.MI TZU: "But you must have someone who can tell me what kind of tenant I'm getting in my house. This is a respectable house, my dear. I can't sign any agreement with you otherwise". (p.17)

We also notice gender as a performative attribute when we compare and contrast the behavior of Shen Teh and Shui Ta towards the pilot Sun. When Sun, in Scene five demands money from Shen Teh, she instantly gets ready to hand over him the 200 silver dollars of the old couple which she receives as a loan. However, this was not the case when he demands further 500 silver dollars to Shui Ta; he abruptly asks "may I ask how the 500 dollars will be used" (p.50). Unlike Shen Teh, who does not even bother to think about the use of money, Shui Ta, performing the role male gender, asks him endless question without any kind gesture before entertaining his demand. Therefore, their discussion come to an end as Sun remains unable to satisfy Shui Ta's reservations.

It's the typical performance of male gender where the feelings, emotions and sympathies of Shen Teh are not allowed to enter. The dealing and decisiveness of Shui Ta are quite in line with male gender. Likewise, gender is reflected as a performative attribute in the "Song of the Defenselessness of Good and The God's" firstly as we see Shen Teh putting on Shui Ta's costume and walking in his style and secondly, when she sings in the voice of Shui Ta, performing the role of male gender. In the episode of Wang's fight with Mr. Shu Fu we find the same individual performing the opposite gender role in a consummate manner. Being Shen Teh, she encourages Wang to register a complaint against Mr.-Shu Fu. But at the time of testifying Wang's complaint, being Shui Ta, we find the perfect rendition of male gender when he asserts, "Mr. Wang, one of my principles is never to interfere in a dispute between my friends" (p.56).

In the final Scene of courtroom, the Policeman's evidence and comparison between the characters of Shen Teh and Shui Ta such as "Miss-Shen Teh was a girl who made herself pleasant to everyone-live and let live, as they say. Mr.-Shui Ta, on the other hand, is a man of principle. The young lady's warm-hearted nature sometimes drove him to strict measures" (p.100), the grudge of the Sister-in-law "Shen Teh put us up, and he (Shui Ta) had us arrested" (p.102), Sun's testament of hearing Shen Teh's crying from the room where Shui Ta has imprisoned her and finally the testimony of Wang in these words "What have you done with the good Shen Teh, you evil man? How many good people are there left, Illustrious Ones? She was certainly good!" (p.104), are a kind of appreciatory notes to Shen Teh about the perfect performance of male gender. Therefore, all the above-mentioned textual references, statements of various characters regarding Shui Ta, in which they are abusing, cursing or even appreciating him, confirm Butler's stance that gender is a performative attribute as they all remain unable to recognize the fact that Shen Teh and Shui Ta are the various configuration of the same individual until she herself discloses "Yes, it is me. Shui Ta and Shen Teh, I am both of them." (p.105) and proves the statement of Butler when she says:

"When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice, with the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine a male body as easily as female one" (Butler, 2007, p. 9).

CONCLUSION

Shen Teh's successful accomplishment of Shui Ta proves gender as a performative phenomenon. In the form of Shen Teh we recognize her performing the characteristics of female that society has associated with her gender such as a naïve lady; requesting, apologizing and compromising with every one, showing sympathetic emotions to the paupers and consequently bearing the unearned sufferings without any complaint. But when she transforms herself into male gender of Shui Ta, we perceive her an assertive being that, unlike Shen Teh, passes the directions to the rest of the characters with the sense of authority, rationality and firm belief. In the light of the earlier analysis it can be asserted that Shen Teh/Shui Ta dichotomy proves

gender has nothing to do with sex and it is entirely the performance of a man or of a woman that determines his or her gender. In terms of his behavior, dealing, approach, management, expression of emotion, way of thinking, in short, from every aspect Shui Ta proves Butler's theory that gender, in reality, is a socially constructed set of behaviors that is not as rigid and fix as sex is.

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