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Muhammad Ijaz\*  
Muhammad Amir\*\*  
Syed Ali Raza\*\*\*

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## Stigmatising Defiant Women as Mad: A Feminist Study of American Fiction

### ABSTRACT

*This research study expatiates upon investigation of social systems that coerce women towards madness and provide justifications for labeling them as mad women. It examines the patterns of normalization of madness of women strategized by phallocentric forces to formulate shierarchies of dominance and to maintain them. The study is set to explore how patriarchal mechanisms suppress all opposing voices against them and represent such deviant elements as mad. Moreover, the study evaluates feministic approaches that seek to contradict the established patriarchal normalities. Importantly, the study scrutinizes the changing feministic attitudes in the European and American landscapes during the nineteenth and twentieth century. To strengthen its findings, the study is premised on fiction produced by female writers from American literary landscape. It includes Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) and Silvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963). The study aims to carry on textual analysis of the selected texts to explore the reasons of women's madness and representation of such women in literary landscapes. As the study explores the nature of existing relationship between both genders, it applies certain conceptions of feminist criticism to scrutinize power relationship between the genders. The study finds that female tendency to challenge established patriarchal norms provides the dominant forces a justification to pronounce defiant women as mad. Women's expectation of equal social, political and economic patterns is conceived of as a threat to prevailing dominant power structures. Such dominant elements declare challenging female voices as abnormal and mad and suggest special treatment for them.*

**Keywords:** *Madness, Patriarchy, Femininity, Individuality, Supression*

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\* PhD Scholar, Department of English Language and Literature NUML, Islamabad, [ijazminhas35@gmail.com](mailto:ijazminhas35@gmail.com)

\*\* [amirasim98@yahoo.com](mailto:amirasim98@yahoo.com)

\*\*\* PhD Scholar, NUML, Islamabad, [ali.raza@uoc.edu.pk](mailto:ali.raza@uoc.edu.pk)

## **Introduction**

Women's non-compliance of social and cultural norms appears as a significant issue in literary writings produced by both the genders. Representation of the female characters by male literary icons carries their prejudices towards the women. In this regard, Gilbert & Gubar (1979) contend that portrayal of female characters in the male-authored literature is premised on prejudices towards the women and they are grouped either as "angel" or "monster" (Gilbert & Gubar). Such biases have been developed by the patriarchal elements throughout the history. Whereas, on the contrary, representation of madness of women in literature, authored by women, unpacks certain invisible reasons of defiance of women to social normalities. While living in the male-dominated society, loyalty, purity and faithfulness are expected from the women and these standards have been established by patriarchal forces for them. Bhawar (2021) explores this phenomenon and maintains that "angel" pure, dispassionate, and submissive woman, is regarded an ideal female figure in a male-dominated society" (2021, 03).

On the contrary, failure to comply such parameters results in stigmatisation of women as mad women who deserve special treatment of the society. In this connection, Bhawar (2021) notes that phallocentric structures project a "sensual, passionate, rebellious and decidedly uncontrollable" woman as a "monster" (Bhawar, 03). Historically, it has been the practice of male literary writers to delineate non-compliant women as mad characters in their literary representations. An apparent purpose of such representation seems to warn the women to go against established structures and to inculcate the ramifications of disobedience in otherwise situations. Female writers, quite contrarily, intend to challenge the essential patriarchal mechanisms that drive women towards madness. Such narratives explore dispossession of women of their rights as a driving force towards their insanity.

Moreover, literary productions by female writers find that women who claim their rights, freedom and individuality are recognized as demented characters. It provides reasons for their maltreatment because of their constructed abnormality. Owing to the growing extent of awareness about the rights of women in society, female writers seem to be successful in presenting the hidden aspects of madness of the women. So much so, such angles of madness were, consciously, hidden in male-authored literary writings. Female writers benefit from the developments in the medical and psychological studies to explore the previously neglected reality of the madness of the women.

In this context, this research study focuses on the female characters projected as mad in literary writings from American literary landscapes at various moments of history. In these writings, female writers make an effort

to examine diversified aspects of madness of female characters from which they undergo. Additionally, it makes an effort to investigate certain opaque patriarchal mechanisms prevailing in the society to which these female characters have been exposed. By applying critical framework of feminist criticism, present research work aims to unearth the factors that drive female characters towards madness. Textual analysis of the study is premised on Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963). These texts have been selected for this study to familiarize the readership of the mechanisms of patriarchal systems of nineteenth and later of twentieth centuries respectively. Similarly, it examines the magnitude of awareness and resistance of women during the first and second waves of feminism as the texts have been set in the first and second wave historical timeline respectively. In addition, the selected texts provide a trajectory to understand critical and imaginative developments of feminism at various historical moments. Besides, they provide an insight to evaluate current narratives of patriarchy and counter-narratives of feminism as they investigate historical advancements, of patriarchy and feminism, at two distinctive periods of history.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Patriarchal cultures envisage certain modes of life that restrict the women from materializing their individuality. They establish gender roles and social norms in a way that limit the choice for the women and leave no space for them to adopt gender roles of their own choice. Such social situations drive the women to challenge social structures. Their rebellion provokes the patriarchal elements an opportunity to pronounce them as mad. Moreover, rebellious women are represented as mad women in literary writings produced by male and female writers alike. Therefore, this study investigates how non-compliant women are represented in literature and why they are delineated as mad women.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions for present study were as follows;

1. What factors are responsible for the madness of women?
2. How do the female authors represent mad women in their literary writings?
3. How do the dominant patriarchal elements restrict the women from gaining individuality?

### **Theoretical Framework**

Feminism emerged in France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a women movement for ideological liberation" (Hu 2021). Later on, it spread to other European cultures and, subsequently, to other parts of the globe. Feminist criticism, essentially, aims to dismantle the patriarchal culture of domination prevailing in the society. Selden et al (2005) contend that primary focus of feminism is "women's conscious struggle to resist patriarchy" (115). In a similar way, Hu (2021) states a significant conception of feminism which is to "overthrow the patriarchal society" (221). Moreover, it seeks to reinforce gender equality and eliminate sexist discrimination with the intention to transform social structure. Raina (2017) evaluates this goal of feminism which is to "establish political, economic, personal and social equality of sexes" (01). Likewise, feminist critical traditions appear to challenge the epistemological foundations that determine the hierarchies of domination of patriarchy over the matriarchy. Mohajan (2022) affirms the same as he explores the objectives of feminist methodology. For him, methodology of feminism scrutinizes epistemological procedures of creating knowledge that establishes superiority of one gender over the other (Mohajan 02).

A significant trait of feminism is that it analyses history with the perspectives of gender oppression. It holds that human history is characterized by women's secondary status awarded and reinforced by "masculine dominated social discourse" (Raina 2017). This phenomenon urges the women to re-visit history and re-establish it through the experiences of their distinctive identity. According to Hu (2021), feminism provided the women an insight to "re-examine themselves" being mindful of development of ideological civilization (Hu, 220). In a similar vein, Raina (2017) seems to, further, develop the same argument and suggests that the women need to "define themselves" against the ideals and stereotypes envisioned by the men at different historical moments in an order to explore their identity (3372). In addition, feminist thinkers protest against such stereotyping of the women and resist it through their philosophical and theoretical contributions. Critical frameworks, developed by the women, analyse the causes of representation of women's inferior status in the literary texts.

To add more in the scope of feminism, critical thinkers show concerns over the madness of women in general and representation of insane female characters in various genres of literature in particular. They question social rejection of mad female characters as projected by certain literary icons. They examine the situations that, ultimately, drive female characters towards insane disposition. In this regard, Clement & Cixous (1976) maintain that the women who fail to obey the patterns of life established by the men are branded as outcast and mad in the eyes of patriarchal society. Similarly, Felmen (1975) explores another reason of the phenomenon and contends that the women's failure in accomplishing their assigned gender roles leads

towards their branding as hysteric and mad (07). Qasim et al (2015) validate the argument of aforementioned critics while examining the factors involved in the madness of female characters of Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. They contend that the protagonist suffered isolation, leading towards madness, because of patriarchal oppression (Qasim et al 283).

In a similar vein, scholarship of feminist criticism recognises patriarchal institutions as significant factors in driving the women towards madness and representing them as mad women. Such elements have been engaged in establishing social institutions with the intention to maneuver the dominance of one gender over the other. Another purpose of such elements has been to obtain the desired outcome of a situation by controlling the functions of social institutions. In this regard, Chesler (1972) investigates the discriminatory functioning of social institutions in revitalizing superiority of one gender over the other. She considers the ethic of mental health as masculine in the prevailing culture (1972, 68). Her significant question is who possesses the authority to declare a woman as mad. Ulukoy and Bayraktaroglu (2014) explore the impacts of gender discrimination, reinforced by certain institutions, on multiple aspects of women's life which include their ways of wearing clothes, manners of speaking and living life in accordance with the social norms (359). In addition, Chesler seems to question the soundness of criteria which determine madness of a woman (1972). Bhawar (2021) seems to authenticate Chesler's argument while investigating Bertha Mason's madness. She maintains that madness is conveniently inflicted upon those women who refuse to adhere to the Victorian [Patriarchal] code of conduct (2021, 02).

Likewise, feminist theory critiques the rubric and protocols of literary writings that are adopted by the female literary figures. It explores that female writers, consciously or unconsciously, imitate the ways of writings established by the male writers. In this connection, Gubar & Gilbert (1979) reveal their concern over the delineation of female characters on the patterns established by male literary authorities during the nineteenth century. Such literary writings of the period are characterized by representing female characters either as docile and domesticated or as rebellious and disobedient to the male authority. Gubar & Gilbert, further, contend that noncompliant woman is projected as "monster" in the nineteenth century literature (1979). Bhawar (2021) encapsulates rebellious attitude of the women as a quality that "caused a great deal of anxiety among men during the Victorian period" (2021, 03). Occasionally, a female writer might express her own frustration against patriarchal restrictions by representing a "monster" female character. To achieve this end, the writer is supposed to assimilate deeper structure of the text with surface structure while observing the conventional patterns of writing. Woolf (1931) considers this narrative technique plausible for female

writers and puts it as, "Killing the Angel in the house was part of the occupation of a woman writer (1931,4).

In an effort to enumerate the reasons of hysteric attitude in women, feminist thinkers regard motherhood a phenomenon that generates changes in attitude of a woman. This shift of attitude is conceived of as insanity by the phallogocentric elements. It is a sort of experience that demarcates between the psychological conditions of an unmarried woman and a mother as the status of motherhood brings a new identity to her. McMahon (1995) examines this transformation in attitude while interviewing a mother. The lady unfolds her experience as, "I think [without a child] I would have viewed myself as an administrator/teacher instead of, now, I view myself as a human (147). Experience of motherhood generates diversified transformations in every woman that seem to be connected with her class, ethnicity, religion and cultural qualification. Arendell (2000) puts this situation as, "Mother is neither a unitary experience for individual women, nor experienced similarly by all women" (1196).

Similarly, feminist critics examine postpartum period of the women as it brings about such psychological transitions that drive the women towards their stereotyping as mad ones. They contend that the loss of previous identity and recognition of the new one is intolerable for women. A woman finds it hard to forsake the feelings, emotions and thoughts of a woman thoroughly and replace them with the affectation of a mother (Felmen, 1975). Moreover, in the process of child rearing, the women find their own individuality diminished that leads them towards regret of being mother. In this regard, Felmen (1975) states that a woman's rejection of her stereotypical role provides the patriarchal system an opportunity to label her as mad woman. Gross (1998) puts the phenomenon as, "For other women, getting caught up in what has been called "Superwoman-Supermom" syndrome also means experiencing defeat and disappointment with respect to their dreams for themselves" (270-271). Likewise, Rich (1979) manifests the same in a slightly distinctive manner. She acknowledges the motherhood as one of the dimensions of a woman's being. This intolerability towards motherhood and conformity to the womanhood provokes disillusionment and nonchalance regarding child care. This phenomenon of indifference is perceived as abnormality and madness in the cultural and historical pretext.

## **Literature Review**

The issue of madness of women has been of paramount significance and intriguing for the academicians and for literary figures alike. Many research studies have been conducted that investigate the issue of madness of female characters the way it has been represented in the literary landscapes. Some of these emphasise and explore the reasons caused by racial, ethnic and class

discrimination. Whereas, there is a plethora of studies that examine the gender-discrimination and othering of women as the key factors of madness of women. One of such studies is *Bertha Mason's The Mad Woman in the Attic: A Subaltern Voice* (2021) conducted by Pradnya Bhawar. The study, essentially, is premised on the feminist critique of *Jane Eyre* (1847), a representation of Victorian era produced by Charlotte Bronte. On one side, the study presents an analysis of the characters of Bertha Mason and Jane and discriminatory attitude of Rochester towards Bertha on the other hand. The study is significant as it explores, comprehensively, the reasons of 'so called' madness of Bertha Mason. According to Bhawar, a significant reason of Bertha's madness is that she hails from a creole descendance while Rochester considers her as an 'Other' as he is from white race. Similarly, another reason is that Bertha no more qualifies the standards of "angel in the house" as she demands social and economic equality with her husband. In addition, the study traces family background of Bertha in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) that serves as a re-writing of *Jane Eyre*. Additionally, Bhawar presents a panoramic view of the patriarchal images of the women developed during the Victorian epoch. She explores the characteristics of 'angel' and 'monster' women, two categories of the Victorian period.

Similarly, another study of the kind is conducted by Yalcin et al (2018) under the title *Madness as a Protest*. It is based on comparative analysis of Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and Toni Morrison's *Sula* (1988). The study focuses on certain ideologies of patriarchy crafted at different historical moments and their role in maintaining the male-dominance in the society. As well, the study takes into account attitudes of the women for which they are labeled as mad and hysteric. The study finds that women's non-compliance of patriarchal patterns leads them towards being bracketed as mad, outcast and hysteric. Moreover, the study applies the feminist critical conceptions of bell hooks, Catherine Clement, Helen Cixous and Shoshana Felman to investigate the rebellious attitude and protest of the women. These critics entrench that if a woman breaks the stereotypes of patriarchal forces, she is branded as outcast, rebellion, mad and hysteric. The study seems to conclude that mad or hysteric women are unconsciously rebelling against their lack of freedom and patriarchal suppression.

In addition, another study conducted by Hedda Torntorp (2018) under the title *Mad or Misunderstood?* primarily a research project submitted in Lund University explores the reasons of branding women as mad during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The study applies the frameworks of Biographical criticism and New Historicism on *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) to investigate the factors operating behind the tendency of labeling women as mad and hysteric. The study uses the perspective of Showalter to diagnose the reasons of declaring women as mad. Showalter contends that 19<sup>th</sup> century patriarchal elements construct the relationship

between women and madness in two different ways. In the first place, madness of the women was considered one of the wrongs of women themselves. Secondly, madness is the phenomenon of feminine nature itself. Moreover, madness is a female malady since more women experience it than men do. The study finds that after the first psychiatric revolution at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century, women came to be stereotyped as mad instead of men. Prior to this revolution, lunatics were accounted as animals and monsters and were locked up. However afterwards, mad women came to be treated as sick human beings. The study, further, establishes that, during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women were stigmatized as hysteric and man because of their reproductive systems, childbirth, menopause and menstruation. Patriarchal elements of the period were of the opinion that such feminine issues cause disorder in their mental health.

In a similar manner, there is one more study by Nimrod Numan (2023) under the title of *Disrupting Dominant Discourses: Hybridity in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre Jordon Peele's Get Out*. This study is premised on a comparison between Victorian classic *Jane Eyre* (1847) and a contemporary horror film *Get Out* (2023) directed by Jordon Peele. Both the texts are different in setting and style but, both, utilize gothic literary tropes to project experiences of their protagonists. The study applies the framework of postcolonialism and Afro-American and the concept of hybridity to explore how hybridity is used as a tool for exposing and challenging power structures. The study reveals, through comparison, that both Bertha and Chris are people of colour, marginalized and suppressed as they have hybrid identities. Both are condemned in white setting as they belong to either black or colour ancestry. Their physical characteristics are discussed by the white people around them. On the other hand, people around them fear because of their potential of resistance and rebellion. Another similarity between both protagonists is that Bertha is locked up in an attic that is dark and isolated whereas Chris is hypnotized in the Sunken Place. This place is delineated as dark, suffocating and lonely where Chris cannot move and speak his consciousness exactly like Bertha. Therefore, keeping in view these studies conducted on madness of women, the aim of this study is to bring to the limelight such elements that enforce insanity, madness and hysteria on Edna and Esther Greenwood. Madness and depression of the protagonists of Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899) and Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963) seem to be uninvestigated. This study intends to explore the layers of male oppression, factors of women's madness and their challenge to the prevailing patriarchal structures with reference to Edna and Esther Greenwood.



## Research Methodology

The present qualitative study uses content analysis as its research design by utilising close reading, as a technique, to examine the theme of madness in the selected texts. It uses thematic analysis as a method to explore the themes of madness and oppressive strategies of patriarchal mechanisms. For this purpose, the analysis of recurring themes and sub-themes related to madness of female characters and role of male dominance is conducted. So, the method employed for this research is analytical and descriptive. As the study is premised on the relationship between both the genders, theoretical framework of feminist criticism seems plausible for this study.

## Analysis of the Texts

Edna Pontellier, the protagonist of Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), carries identicalness with Jane Eyre's Bertha Mason. Edna finds herself unable to perform the role of mother the way it is expected from her by certain oppressive forces. Her husband, Leonce Pontellier, always supposes her to enact like the traditional mother and behave like "angel in the house". Nevertheless, she still cherishes the feelings and passions of a free human being. The narrator puts Edna's feelings as, "Mrs. Pontellier was beginning to realize her position in the universe as a human being, and to recognize her relations as an individual to the world within and about her (Chopin, 17). Being a mother, Edna considers her freedom and individuality are suppressed by her position as a mother. This realization of the freedom encourages her to develop a love relationship with Robert Lebrun whereas she becomes nonchalant to the limitations of a mother while living in a male-dominated society. Bhawar recognizes this situation as "marital frustration", a phenomenon associated with the women which results from "toxic masculinity" (Bhawar, 2021). Likewise, Felmen (1975) states that non-fulfilment of the expectations of a mother creates the feelings of regret of losing the position of womanhood.

Moreover, Edna is seen fluctuating between her individuality and the motherhood expected from her. The transformation in Edna's demeanor is so threatening to phallocentric forces around her that Madame Lebrun manifests it as "Sometimes I am tempted to think that Mrs Pontellier is capricious" (33). After Robert's departure, she cannot restrict herself from indulging in another love relationship to gratify her individuality. She is continuously being drawn between the love for her children and the fulfillment of her own personality. However, she looks determined to sacrifice her motherhood for her own womanhood and the appeasement of her own feelings as a woman. Her eternal womanhood gains victory over the vision of motherhood formulated by subjugating forces of "toxic masculinity". Chopin narrates the

phenomenon as, "I would give up the unessential; I would give my money, I would give my life for my children; but I wouldn't give myself" (52). Edna's nonchalance, towards her role as a mother, provides the oppressive elements to project her as a mad woman. In this respect, Rich (1979) contends that indifference of a woman towards motherhood is perceived as abnormality and madness in the cultural context.

This change in Edna's attitude is interpreted in diversified manners as non-compliance to the social norms is perceived as a challenge to the conventions established by the cultural and historical elements. Robert leaves to Vera Cruz without a prior notice to Edna as he realizes this proximity as contradictory to the established norms of the institutions of marriage and motherhood. Robert's sudden disappearance from Edna's life is suggestive of condemnation to her efforts of regaining woman-ness. Similarly, it might be translated as a way to push her towards culturally-accepted role of motherhood. Similarly, her husband seems more concerned about her fluctuating demeanor as he never foresees such transformation in Edna's attitude. The narrator puts his anger and bewilderment as, "Her new and unexpected line of conduct completely bewildered him. It shocked him. Then her absolute disregard for her duties as a wife angered him" (Chopin, 62). He seems to exaggerate the non-compliant attitude of his wife as madness as he reveals the fact to his friend, Dr Mendeler. He projects Edna as a mad woman and seeks treatment for Edna.

Leonce's labeling his wife as mad woman reveals the inclination of the period to declare the non-compliant, rebellious attitude of the women as madness. Moreover, it carries analogies with Rochester's treating Bertha as a mad woman. Both, Bertha and Edna, are projected as mad by their husbands as they fail to comply the traditions of society set by "toxic masculinity". Bertha is branded mad when she demands social and economic equality from her spouse as narrated in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1963) by Jean Rhys. Whereas, Edna is pronounced mad by her male-partner when she intends to materialize her freedom and individuality. Yalcin et al (2018) contextualize the madness of women at various stages of history and build the relationship between madness of women and their rebellious attitude. They contend that, at various historical moments, certain women have been projected as witch, hysteric, mad and an outcast if they are not "angel in the house" (Yalcin, 01). In a similar way, Clement & Cixous (1976) come up with identical argument and state that women who are not angel in the houses are branded as sorceress, outcast, abnormal and mad in the eyes of patriarchal society" (1976). Edna's prioritizing womanhood over motherhood carries connections with Rich (1979)'s understanding of madness. In the light of Rich's conception, Edna individuality and womanhood are seen as disobedience and betrayal to the institution of motherhood and recognized as madness by the patriarchal architecture.

In an addition to other factors, pressure to meet the responsibilities and gender roles established by dominant cultural forces results in depression of the women. This pressure is directly generated as an outcome of the construction of gender roles by governing forces of society. Edna feels this pressure of fulfilling the requirements of a mother, however, she fails to comply with such standards. On Edna's situation, Yalcin et al (2018) establish an argument while discussing Felmen's study (1975) in which she critiques Sophocles's saying "Silence gives proper grace to women". They seem to expand Felmen's synopsis and maintain that a woman is perceived as mad if she rejects her gender role stereotype manufactured by dominant element (Yalein, 03). Felman's thesis seems more pertinent to this debate and carries significance as she investigates the nature of gender roles and their relationship with the patriarchal mechanisms (Felmen). She puts the phenomenon as, "From her initial family upbringing throughout her subsequent development, the social role assigned to the woman is that of serving an image, authoritative and central, of a man" (1975).

In the imaginary landscapes, Sylvia Plath explores the complexity of gender roles and their connections with hysteria. Like Chopin, Plath's imaginative works have been set to diagnose construction of gender roles and expectations of one gender from the other one to comply with the given roles. Plath's *The Bell Jar* (1963) is an autobiographical novel which delieates nature of gender roles and oppression of women during the second half of twentieth century American society. Likewise, it embodies failure of Esther Greenwood, the protagonist, to accomplish the requirements of her role constructed for her by the social forces. Esther wants to become a poet in future, however, she is surprised to find out that she is expected to choose a career for herself from gender role established by male-dominating society. Her failure to materilise her own individuality in the presence of established gender roles causes great depression and mental illness. Kirkus and Her (2022) explore the same reason of Esther's madness and contend that social restrictions prevailing in the 1950s cause her "great mental decline" (2022, 18). In addition, they consider "social oppression and expectations" as the factors involved in Esther's worsening mental illness.

With regard to sexuality, Esther remains confused to understand the construction of sexual norms by the social forces. Because of the complex nature of sexual behavior of the times, Esther is unable to establish successful sexual relationship with Buddy. Esther's mother puts a check on her and advises her not to have physical relationship with any man. She forbids Esther from reading magazines that could arouse sexual feelings in her, Instead, she gives a pamphlet with an intention to mould her sexuality accordingly. Plath puts it as, "It was said in an article my mother cut out of *Reader's Digest* and mailed to me at college" (Plath, 66). This situation generates depressive attitude in Esther. Furthermore, the stereotypes attached with female

sexuality carry significance as they demonstrate mental tendencies of the patriarchal mechanisms prevailing during 1950s. The narrator puts it as, "I saw the world divided into people who had slept with somebody and people who hadn't" (Plath, 67). The protagonist's protection of virginity provokes her to despise the ladies who lose their virginity as it is considered a token of purity. Chandran (2016) explores the inner conflict of Esther that remains unperceivable to the end of the novel. He maintains that Esther is unable to fathom the connections between idea of morality and "her natural drives" (Chandran, 412). This perpetual state of confusion leads Esther towards mental illness and depression.

In a similar way, presence of the bell jar symbolizes prevailing and reinforcement of the "toxic masculinity" over female of the society. It creates a constant state of fear for women of the period. This state of fear seems to be in line with the notion of madness established by Chesler (1972). For Chesler, discriminatory division of gender roles in the society and the expectations associated with them leads the women towards madness (1972). *The Bell Jar* (1963) delineates same division of gender roles that becomes driving force for Esther's madness.

## **Conclusion**

Critical analysis of the selected texts from multiple perspectives unpacks that patriarchal mechanisms play a significant role in driving women toward madness. Similarly, contribution of male dominance in getting the women labeled as mad persons is significant as well. This situation arises when male dominance is threatened by women's demand of individuality. Likewise, women's desire for equal social, political and economic conditions shake patriarchal structures. Situation of both the protagonists suggests that "toxic masculinity" envisages certain mechanisms to reinforce its moral, social and economic dominance over its opponents. Moreover, it establishes such ideologies and tropes in the society that become "naturalized" for the women and that prove to be instrumental in the achievement of its targets. If, at any moment, Patriarchy feels threatened, it tries to sabotage its opposition by projecting it as rebellion, madness and insanity.

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