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Male Dominance and the Social Hierarchy of the Patriarchal Society in Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*

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Abstract

In an article published by the Gender Team of the United Nations Development Program, which interviewed women and men in 75 countries around the world, it is claimed that 91 percent of men and 86 percent of women hold at least one bias against women and their equality with men. This article demonstrates the place of women and their condition in the second decade of the 21st century.

This study claims that Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* presents the issue of women's role in the social hierarchy of patriarchal societies. It argues that both men and women consider women as lower-level humans than men in their societies. It studies Delaney's play from the perspective of Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) in social psychology, with the engagement of feminist theory, as it discusses the issues of women in the play. The study shows that it is not only men who place women lower than themselves but also women themselves play a great role in indicating their position in the hierarchy of their societies. They also accept and endorse the doctrines and notions that are applied to them in patriarchal societies such as subordination, submissiveness, and subjugation.

Through this methodology, the study presents a new and different investigation of Delaney's play in the light of SDO and feminism. In turn, it might help one avoid the act of placing women unequal to men in the social hierarchy.

1. Introduction

This paper entitled "Male Dominance and the Social Hierarchy of the Patriarchal Society in Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*" studies Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* (1958), which is the author's debut play. It was initially written as a novel, but then the author changed it into

a play because the language of plays is more direct and candid than that of novels. The focus of the study is to analyze this play from the lens of SDO, which, in this study, focuses on the relationship between men and women and their social hierarchy in the patriarchal order of the play.

The play focuses on the lives of two main female characters in a patriarchal society; they are Helen and Jo, who are a mother and a daughter, respectively. Helen is a woman who has worked in whorehouses, but when the play starts, she moves into another apartment hoping to run away from the men of the brothel and start a new life. Despite that, she is chased by one of her clients, whose name is Peter, and later, he proposes to get married to her, and she accepts his proposal. Her daughter, Jo, is a student, but due to the hardships of their lives, she wants to quit school and start working in a bar. When her mother leaves her and gets married to Peter, Geoffrey, a male character moves into Jo's apartment and lives with her. In their lives, both Helen and Jo face different types of bias, sexism, and gender discrimination. Sometimes, it is not the men who stereotype them by their gender, but they are themselves who are the reasons for maintaining the social hierarchy of the patriarchal order.

Scholars believe that Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* is an example of Kitchen Sink Drama, which was a type of drama focusing on the domestic issues of humans in the twentieth century. Some believe that Delaney depicts her characters as not as submissive as the typical types of women during her time. However, she focuses on the issues of womanhood during her period. Women mostly depended on men to gain their living. They are depicted as marginalized individuals in the world of men (Al-Tai 25; Puddicombe 2018). Besides, Maria Elena Capitani notes that Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* presents the social and cultural history of the time it was written in. It demonstrates the difficulties of ambivalent motherhood within the working-class families of the time (215-216). Also, Adrian Page believes that Delaney's play represents an effective example

of "the new British drama in the fifties, which he described as a new sound or new wave of feeling, 'that of a general restlessness, disorganization and frustration'" (69). It focuses on the relationship of the characters to their world. Nevertheless, the play did not receive deserved and enough critical notes from critics because the author is a woman (Page 69; Capitani 219-220).

Despite the abovementioned topics studied in the play, the relationship between men and women and their social hierarchy in the patriarchal order of the play has not been approached by scholars. Therefore, this study extends the scholarly works conducted on *A Taste of Honey* and presents an analysis of the play from the perspective of SDO. It claims that the female characters of the play are placed unequally to men in the hierarchical order of society. Therefore, they face bias and sexism and are portrayed as others in their society. Further, it shows that it is not only men who consider them as lower-level humans, sometimes it is women themselves who act as though they have a lower level than men in the social hierarchy of the society. So, they perpetuate their subordination, submissiveness and subjugation, and consequently, it helps maintain the patriarchal order in their society.

This paper studies *A Taste of Honey* from the perspective of SDO, which is an approach in the realm of social psychology. As it focuses on the relationship between men and women in the patriarchal society of the play, it involves the feminist theory of the French feminists as well. In this study, the hierarchical relationship between men and women is demonstrated in the light of SDO, and it is shown how this relationship influences their behaviour and attitude. Also, it shows how and why women internalize and endorse these doctrines and

behaviours through the hierarchical order of patriarchy.

Through the abovementioned methodology, the study explores the notion of SDO in Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*. The second section explains the theory of SDO. Then, the third section demonstrates bias and sexism against women in the play. It also shows how they are portrayed as others in their society. In addition, it explains how their endorsement of the system with their placement in the hierarchy perpetuates their subordination and maintains the existing hierarchy. The fourth section explains how female characters desire male power, and how the male characters dictate and influence the decisions and behaviours of the female characters. The fifth section, which is the last one, presents the group relations of men and women, and the hierarchy-enhancing ideologies that are depicted in Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*.

In the outline presented above, this investigation of Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* shows that women are placed in the social hierarchy as lower people than men. They also endorse and accept their place in the hierarchy. As a result of that, they perpetuate their subordination and accept their submissiveness to the patriarchal order in their society. Thus, this study presents a different analysis of the play in the light of SDO, and in turn, it gives awareness about placing women in the social hierarchy of societies through different attitudes and behaviours, and help avoid such behaviours and manners.

2. Social Dominance Orientation (SDO): Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) is one of the approaches in social psychology. It is related to social biases against different groups in societies and shows how biased people think and behave. This theory also

focuses on the status of one group over the other. Its attention is to "the degree to which one endorses a hierarchy in which some groups dominate other groups. ... People high on SDO support policies that maintain inequality" (Fiske 457).

Besides, it also shows how acceptance of the policies and doctrines of one group has an important influence on the degree of inequality in societies. The individual's level of SDO also influences their contribution to the social equality and inequality that exists in a society. Also, their role in receiving the ideologies affects their acceptance or rejection of the inequality that exists (Pratto et. al 741-742). Therefore, people who are biased against a group hold hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. They also long for placing one at a higher level in the social hierarchy than the other. Through their endorsement and acceptance of such doctrines and policies, they support the preservation and perpetuation of the order in their society.

The sections that follow apply this theory of SDO to Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*. They demonstrate how different individuals are high on SDO and support and preserve the policies that maintain the inequality and hierarchy that exists in their society.

3. Bias and Sexism against Women, and their Otherness in the Social Hierarchy: One of the traits of SDO in Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* is the bias of men against women. Bias could be either hostile or benevolent that women encounter in this play. Whatever the type of bias they face, it results in their discrimination and conceptualization as the other and inferior in their society. It differentiates them from men and separates them as another group of people. This othering process consequently ends up with their

inferiority and dependence on men as superiors. However, sometimes the bias women face might result from well-intended efforts of men to help them, which results in their subtle discrimination, and consequently, their inferiority and the dominance of men.

Romani et. al conceptualizes benevolent discrimination with three dimensions: "(1) a well-intended effort to address discrimination within (2) a social relationship that constructs the others as inferior and in need of help, which is granted with (3) the expectation that they will accommodate into the existing hierarchical order" (371). So, it is not always hostile bias that could lead to discrimination against women in the play. Sometimes, it is positive in nature, but negative in reality as it considers the other as inferior. Consequently, the object of this process, women, in this case, assimilate into the hierarchical structure, which means that they endorse benevolent bias and sexism. They accept the dominance of men and contribute to the embodiment of the SDO theory in favour of men and their superiority over women.

This argument demonstrates that it is not always men who prefer the maintenance of the existing social hierarchy, sometimes women are high on SDO as well. Radke et. al maintains that those group members who have benefited from the present social hierarchy or system are more liable to endorse SDO compared to those disadvantaged. Men are the main beneficiary of this process compared to women in the patriarchal system (159). Besides, some women internalize this prejudice towards their group and support the existing hierarchical system as well, because they: "...see their low-status place in it as legitimate and, through this, perceive that they are in personal need of protection from those at the top of the hierarchy (i.e., men)" (165).

So, those women who seem advantaged and protected by their superiors endorse the existing hierarchy of the patriarchal society. They see themselves as advantaged and benefited because they receive protection and care from the men in their world.

This notion can be combined with Helene Cixous's idea that the power structure asks for women's credentials and skills to speak for themselves, and it subjugates them through this mechanism. Thus, they are judged to speak by the hierarchy in the first place. This process is due to men's domination of society throughout history and their privilege, and women's subjugation in the symbolic order (Locke and Katrina 6; Chakraborty 2897). So, the structure does not see them as the right people to speak or write, because it considers them as less skilled and talented. Besides, some women think like patriarchal men about women. They believe in the superiority of men and their inferiority. In this circumstance, women see themselves as in need of men's protection and care. They do not consider themselves as credited to stand for themselves like men. Hence, they contribute to their subjugation in the patriarchal order, because they believe that they need protection and care from their superior men. So, this is a bias against women which separates them from men and results in their otherness in the patriarchal order.

In Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*, the evidence of this bias against women are very clear. However, some scholars believe that Delaney portrays women as independent individuals whose decisions are not influenced by men and their status in society (Ozturk 28-29). On the contrary, the researcher argues that, in this play, women are looked at as dependent, inferior and weaker than men. The play reflects the life of working-class people, and as

a reflection of life, it presents women as weaker people than men and places them on a lower level than men. This play shows that women are always dependent on men, and they cannot survive without men in life. This is not only revealed in the attitudes of men, but also women themselves show that they depend on men and they cannot survive the difficulties of life without them.

For instance, Helen, who is one of the female characters and the mother of another female character named Jo, is considered inferior and subordinate to men. She is looked at as though she needs the care and protection of a man, and without a man, she cannot survive in life. When Peter proposes to Helen to get married to him, he speaks in a way that Helen needs him and without him, she loses a chance in life: PETER: Helen, you don't seem to realize what an opportunity I'm giving you. The world is littered with women I've rejected, women still anxious to indulge my little vices and excuse my less seemly virtues. Marry me, Helen. I'm young, good-looking and well set up. I may never ask you again.

HELEN: You're drunk.

PETER: I'm as sober as a judge.

HELEN: If you ask me again I might accept. (Delaney 19)

Through this conversation, it becomes obvious that Peter looks at himself as superior to and protector of women. He says that he has rejected lots of women before, although they did not have any problems with his bad deeds. So, one can claim that he considers himself superior and of a higher level than women, which is why he speaks as though all women accept him regardless of the past wrongdoings he had. Also, Helen seems to accept this belief and idea of the superiority of men and subordination of women. That is why when Peter says that this is a good opportunity for

Helen to get married to him, as though he is on a higher level than that of Helen, she does not protest and in the end, she seems to accept his proposal. While asking for her acceptance of the marriage proposal, he addresses her and states: "You can't afford to lose a man like me" (Delaney 17). This demonstrates that Peter determines that he is of a higher social hierarchy and status, and Helen is of a low one. Thus, Helen seems to be in need of accepting his proposal, as she does later because she feels that she will be benefited and advantaged by that.

It shows that both Peter and Helen could be high on SDO, and their thoughts align with maintaining the social hierarchy of the society they live in. Besides, this thought separates women from men, as they are not as independent and resourceful as men. They are always dependent and in need of men to protect them in life. Therefore, they are always the other in their society. They do not belong to the social hierarchy of men. They are treated as though they are not equal to men, and they are below men's level. So, they need to be separated from men. This is an ambiguous social bias against women which considers them as of lower status than men. Consequently, it supports the present social hierarchy of the society they live in, in which women are considered lower, weaker, and more submissive humans than men. On the contrary, men are always independent and confident. They feel in control and authority compared to women. They seem to be stronger, more powerful, and more determined than women.

In the above example, one can say that both Helen and Peter might hold the patriarchal belief of the inferiority of women and the superiority of men. It can be said that they are high on SDO. For Peter, it is due to the

privilege and prestige that the patriarchal society gives to him. So, he feels benefited and powerful, and that is why he prefers the power structure and hierarchy that exists in society. For Helen, it is because she feels protected and taken care of by Peter that makes her feel successful and privileged as well. She seems interested in this marriage only because Peter gives her money and a house to live in. Although she runs away and tries to hide herself from him, she endorses the situation and accepts his dominance once she is found by him. Hence, it embodies Cixous's idea of women being judged by the patriarchal society as not the right people to speak or have a voice. These women think about women the way patriarchal men do. They do not believe in their talents and capability to have a say or voice in their situations, and they accept whatever their patriarchal men tell them.

In another situation, after Helen has decided to get married to Peter, Peter comes to their apartment. Jo reacts angrily and falls into a quarrel with Peter because she does not like her mother to get married and leave her alone. She states:

JO: You leave me alone. And leave my mother alone too. [HELEN enters.]

PETER: Get away! For God's sake go and . . .

HELEN: Leave him alone, Jo. He doesn't want to be bothered with you. Got a cigarette, Peter? Did you get yourself a drink?

PETER: No, I...

JO: Do I bother you, Mister Smith, or must I wait till we're alone for an answer?

PETER: Can't you keep her under control?

HELEN: I'll knock her head around if she isn't careful. Be quiet, Jo. And don't tease him.

PETER: Tonight's supposed to be a celebration.

JO: What of?

HELEN: He's found a house. Isn't he marvelous? Show her the photo of it, Peter. I shan't be a tick!

JO: You've certainly fixed everything up behind my back.

HELEN: Don't you think it's nice? One of his pals had to sell, moving into something smaller. [Goes]. (Delaney 30-31)

This dialogue demonstrates that Helen is biased towards her daughter in favour of Peter. She treats her as if she is an annoying person, and she does not have any right of talking about this situation that they are in. She defends Peter and does not want him to be bothered by her daughter. It shows that Helen is biased against her daughter because she looks at Peter as of a higher social hierarchy. So, she condemns her daughter for Peter's sake. On the contrary, she treats Peter as a person of a higher level and tries to make him as comfortable as possible by having cigarettes and drinks at their home. She also praises Peter's work of finding a house for themselves, and describes him as a marvellous person, as he has found a nice house, which, in Peter's words, it "is supposed to be a celebration" (Delaney 31) for the house.

In another example, it can also be noted that Helen is high on SDO. She is biased against her daughter and imposes Peter's wishes on her daughter and herself because her daughter likes to go with them when they want to go out, but Peter does not:

PETER: I'm not having her with us.

HELEN: She can stay here then. Come on. I'm hungry.

JO: So am I.

HELEN: There's plenty of food in the kitchen.

JO: You should prepare my meals like a proper mother. (Delaney 35)

This conversation shows that Helen performs whatever Peter says, and she holds bias

towards her daughter. Helen, herself does not decide until Peter says that he does not like her to come. Then, she directly says that she stays at home, without even asking for Jo's opinion, although she previously waited for Peter's opinion for herself to decide. So, she decides based on what Peter said, not on what she thinks, or what her daughter wants or wishes. Immediately, without any interruption, she says "Come on. I'm hungry" (Delaney 35), as she wants to go out with Peter immediately. Therefore, one can claim that in this situation Helen holds a subtle bias against her daughter in favour of Peter's demands and wishes because the speed of her speech in asking to go out reveals that she does not like Jo to complain or say anything after her decision that Jo needs to stay at home. As Susan Fiske notes:

"Subtle bias often occurs in nonverbal behavior and in the speed of responses, both of which are ambiguous—hard for ordinary people to decipher. What the work on ambiguous bias pinpoints is that subtle prejudice occurs in settings where people have other excuses for their discrimination" (435). There, she stereotypes her daughter as inferior, and Peter as superior. When her daughter tries to complain about her condition as she is also hungry, Helen immediately orders her that "there is food in the kitchen" (Delaney 35). It is because of that Peter does not want Jo to come with them. Thus, she tries to fulfil Peter's demand, regardless of whatever harm she does to her daughter.

In this circumstance, one can argue that Jo is treated as the other. She is not considered as an equal person to Peter by her mother. It indicates that even her own mother, although she is a woman herself, is biased towards her own daughter and favours Peter over her. As Sari Soinen claims, Jo is considered as the

other, somebody who does not belong to a group, due to her womanhood firstly, then her being a communist (15). Niera Yuval-Davis argues that in twentieth-century England:

"... women functioned as objects rather than subjects, and were the "Other" to the male "self" when all the while it was men who defined the way in which women should represent the nation" (116-117).

As seen, women in this play, as representations of English women of the twentieth century, are portrayed as objects, and others. They are not considered as parts of the default group of society, which belongs to men. Worse than that, it is not only men who consider them as the other, sometimes it is women who look at other women as the other because they feel advantaged and privileged by the patriarchy.

Having explained the notion of bias and sexism against women and their otherness in the patriarchal society of the play, it is worth mentioning that the next section sheds light on desiring male dominance on the side of women, and dictating women's behaviours on the side of men, as attitudes of Social Dominance Orientation. It is because both cases are aligned with supporting the social hierarchy of the patriarchal society, and they maintain the existing patriarchal order.

4. Desiring Male Dominance and Dictating Women's Behavior as Attitudes of SDO:

According to Celia Brayfield, women in Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* live in a world that is completely dominated by men. Men are the ones who occupy the economic means and provide for women and children in the play, and women depend on their support. Also, those men who have a positive character and personality towards women are viewed as inferior and weak people. Rather, brutal and

more abusive men are more desirable and liked by women in the play (Brayfield 48-50). This notion provides evidence of another circumstance of SDO in Delaney's play. Women mostly desire male power and dominance over themselves. Besides, women's behaviour and attitudes are affected by men and their actions and speeches.

In the play, Jo, Helen's daughter, falls into a semi-quarrel with Geoffrey, a male character. When Jo asks him why his landlady threw him out of the flat, which he was living in before, Geoffrey says that he "was behind with the rent" (Delaney 47). She is not satisfied with that answer and determines that he needs to respond to her truthfully, as she is doubtful about his answer. When she asks her again, he does not answer her question, and she determines that she must get an answer, otherwise, she will have him dismissed from her apartment. She states: "I want to know what you do. I want to know why you do it. Tell me or get out" (Delaney 48). She tries to show that she is authoritative and powerful. She attempts to force Geoffrey to obey her and answer her question, but Geoffrey does not obey her, and he does not answer her correctly. Instead of that, he prepares to leave the apartment and goes to the door. When Jo realizes that he leaves her, she immediately states:

JO: Geof, don't go. Don't go. Geof! I'm sorry. please stay.

GEOF: Don't touch me.

JO: I didn't mean to hurt your feelings.

GEOF: I can't stand women at times. Let go of me.

JO: Come on, Geof. I don't care what you do.

GEOF: Thank you. May I go now, please?

JO: Please stay here Geof. I'll get those sheets and blankets.

GEOF: I can't stand people who laugh at other people. They'd get a bigger laugh if they laughed at themselves.

JO: Please stay, Geof. [She goes off for the sheets and blankets...] (Delaney 48)

This conversation reveals that Jo becomes disappointed in making Geoffrey her obedient man. However, she does not determine in making him her obedient man, otherwise she would not have changed her mind. On the contrary, she becomes the obedient person under the control of Geoffrey in this circumstance. It is she that prefers Geoffrey's authority and control, rather than being left behind. She accepts Geoffrey's dominance and authority, which is why she accepts his choice of not answering her question, although she was determined to get an answer previously. It proves that Jo accepts Geoffrey's dominance and authority. As Jane Lewis maintains, in twentieth-century England, working-class women accepted men's dominance and resented their authority and power over themselves (Lewis, *Women and Society* 2).

Apart from that, in the above example, Geoffrey also behaves in a way that he wants to be the dominant person in this situation. He does not provide any excuses for his attitude of not answering the question. One can argue that this behavior also shows that Geoffrey acts in a way as if he is superior. Consequently, this attitude dictates Jo's behavior in this circumstance. She neglects her question and its answer only for the sake of Geoffrey. Thus, one might conclude that Geoffrey's authority and dominance dictate Jo's behavior and attitude because she determines to get an answer, but he refuses to answer. As a result of that, Jo changes her mind due to Geoffrey's attitude and behavior. So, it changed her decision and behavior. Therefore, it is what

one can regard as an act of SDO which works parallel to the social hierarchy of the patriarchal society of the play, which is aligned with Ligneul and Dreher's statement: "Social dominance refers to situations in which an individual or a group controls or dictates others' behavior, primarily in competitive situations" (212).

After becoming dominated when Geoffrey moves into Jo's house and they live together, Jo feels better and happier, because she is taken care of emotionally as well. When Geoffrey stays at her side, she feels confident and independent from her mother because she feels supported and backed by Geoffrey (Al-Tal 29). So, Jo cannot stand loneliness and isolation from everybody, especially when her mother leaves her. Therefore, she needs somebody to take care of her and support her so that she could survive in this life. That is why, she needs to beg Peter to stay with her so that she could be comforted and feel taken care of and supported. Consequently, this process leads to the acceptance of men's domination and control over women, and thus, through the lens of SDO, it supports the existing hierarchical order of society.

Furthermore, Helen also behaves in a way that one can claim that she desires male dominance and authority. Although she runs away from Peter, when Peter appears, she accepts his marriage proposal joyfully and leaves her daughter without hesitation. She indeed marries him for the sake of his money, but she accepts his dominance and authority as well. She even prefers Peter over her daughter. One can argue that their economic condition makes them behave like that. Helen wants to become the wife of a rich husband so that she could have a share of his fortune. When Jo asks why she marries this man, she responds by saying that: "He's got a wallet full of reasons"

(Delaney 34). So, Peter's money makes her ignore and leave everything behind, even her daughter, just for the sake of wealth. However, it is undeniable that Helen accepts and desires Peter's control and authority over herself, even if it is due to his wealth and fortune. Consequently, she becomes an obedient person under the control of Peter, and whatever he says, she performs immediately.

When Peter and Helen plan to go out of the apartment, Peter says that Jo will be all right if they leave her at the apartment. He wants to imply that he does not like her to come with them. Helen responds that if they go on their honeymoon, they cannot take her with them unless they change their minds. Peter replies: PETER: I'm not having her with us.

HELEN: She can stay here then. Come on. I'm hungry.

JO: So am I.

HELEN: There's plenty of food in the kitchen.

JO: You should prepare my meals like a proper mother.

HELEN: Have I ever laid claim to being a proper mother? If you're too idle to cook your own meals you'll just have to cut food out of your diet altogether. That should help you lose a bit of weight, if nothing else.

PETER: She already looks like a bad case of malnutrition.

JO: Have you got your key, Helen? I might not be here when you decide to come back. I'm starting work on Saturday.

HELEN: Oh yes, she's been called to the bar.

PETER: What sort of a bar?

JO: The sort you're always propping up. I'm carrying on the family traditions. Will you give me some money for a new dress, Helen?

HELEN: If you really want to make a good investment, you'll buy a needle and some cotton. Every article of clothing on her back is

held together by a safety pin or a knot. If she had an accident in the street I'd be ashamed to claim her.

PETER: Are we going?

JO: Can't I come with you?

HELEN: Shut up! You're going to have him upset. You jealous little cat! Come on, Peter.

PETER: All right, all right, don't pull. Don't get excited. And don't get impatient. Those bloody little street kids have probably pulled the car to pieces by now but we needn't worry about that, need we ...

HELEN: I told you you'd upset him. (Delaney 35)

This argument demonstrates that Helen tries her best to make Peter comfortable and unannoyed at their apartment while he is there. She also does whatever He says with eagerness and joy. For example, when Peter says that he does not want Jo to come with them, she immediately agrees without any hesitation. She does not even try to change Peter's mind or challenge his wishes. Therefore, one can claim that she might enjoy doing whatever he says as she does not hesitate. So, it can be argued that Helen desires the power and authority of Peter. Whatever she does is for the sake of Peter's dominance not to be shaken in this place. She does not even allow her daughter to bother Peter with her complaints and whines. She is completely at his disposal and performs whatever Peter tells her.

Through the above example, it can be noted that Helen is also high on SDO. She desires the authority of men and their dominance over women, as she imposes Peter's demands on her daughter and herself, because her daughter likes to go with them, but Peter does not like that. Helen does not decide until Peter says that he does not like her to come. Then, she states that she stays at home, without

even asking for Jo's opinion, although she previously waited for Peter's opinion for herself to decide because she desire to fulfil the authority and demands of Peter. So, she decides based on what Peter says, not on what she thinks, or what her daughter wants or wishes. This is what one might call a desire for male dominance and authority. Hence, it can be looked at through the lens of SDO, as it supports and maintains the social hierarchy of the patriarchal society in the play. Women perpetuate their own subjugation and subordination by following the decisions of men, and desiring their authority and dominance, either for the sake of financial benefits or whatever reasons they have for that.

Besides, Peter's decision also dictates Helen's behaviour and attitude towards her daughter. Helen says that her daughter stays at home. Her response is due to due to Peter's decision. So, it is Peter that dictates and influences Helen's decision on her daughter. Therefore, it can also be looked at through the SDO point of view, because Helen's state of being influenced by Peter's speech maintains and preserves the social hierarchy of the patriarchal system. Men stay above, and women below on every occasion of life. Men become the ones who decide, and women will follow whatever their men say about them and their matters.

Helene Cixous criticizes those women who aspire to gain respect and place themselves within the patriarchal system. She accuses them of perpetuating the order of patriarchy when they participate in the system (Cavallaro 17). Likewise, as explained by Cavallaro, other feminist scholars also:

"...as already suggested, condemn the ideal of equality as women's ultimate aim by stressing that when women seek to be equal to men,

they merely perpetuate patriarchal structures by begging admission to them, and that access to a male-dominated world will only, in any case, benefit a limited number of female subjects" (Cavallaro 18).

Therefore, as demonstrated before, Helen tries to integrate into the patriarchal system of her society by performing the demands of patriarchy. By doing that, she acknowledges the system and integrates into it. She tries to show that she has the same opinions as Peter by not rejecting or challenging his decisions, and by assuming that they are equal. Accordingly, she perpetuates the existing patriarchal structure and the social hierarchy of society. As a result of that, she becomes the object of criticism of both Cixous's and some feminist scholars' theories about women's participation in their subjugation and subordination. She is one of the limited numbers of women who benefit from patriarchy, but her decision and behaviours take part in prolonging the patriarchal system the majority of women suffer from. She desires male dominance and is influenced by the attitudes of men because she begs admission into the system so that she could gain some benefit from the patriarchal system.

After explaining women's desire for the dominance of men, and men's dictation of and influence on women's behaviours and attitudes, it is time to discuss the hierarchy-enhancing ideologies that both men and women hold that work in the direction of perpetuating and prolonging the social hierarchy of the patriarchal system. The next section will explain this notion and its representation and evidence in Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*.

5. Group Relations and Hierarchy-Enhancing Ideologies: The relation of social

groups relies on the attitudes and behaviours of the members of the groups towards each other. For example, those who are high on SDO will behave accordingly with the social hierarchy of the society and believe in the order or system of the hierarchy that exists in a particular society. They maintain the social hierarchy and support the existing order. Consequently, they respect and accept the ideology and regulation that the social structure provides. As Pratto et. al state:

"The theory [of SDO] postulates that people who are more social-dominance oriented will tend to favor hierarchy-enhancing ideologies and policies, whereas those lower on SDO will tend to favor hierarchy-attenuating ideologies and policies. SDO is thus the central individual - difference variable that predicts a person's acceptance or rejection of numerous ideologies and policies relevant to group relations" (742).

In Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*, people who are high on SDO favour hierarchy-enhancing ideologies. It becomes the basis of the group relations of the patriarchal society of the play. For instance, when Peter proposes for Helen to marry him, Helen says that she is older than Peter, but Peter responds that he like the difference between their ages. Their conversation continues as follows:

HELEN: Well, you certainly liberate something in me. And I don't think it's maternal instincts either.

PETER [sings]: "Walter, Walter, lead me to the altar!"

HELEN: Some hopes. (Delaney 18)

As it is obvious in their conversation, Helen says that Peter liberates or releases something inside her. So, the thing which Helen mentions has been inside her already, but now it is going to be released or freed. One can argue that it is the release of hopes and optimism for her

future, as she says later in the above dialogue. This kind of hope that she has for her future, and now it is going to be liberated, is based on Peter's marriage proposal. Therefore, Peter's proposal gives Helen hope and opportunity for her future, and she is optimistic about that.

In the play, when Peter finds Helen, it becomes obvious that Helen runs away from the men of the whorehouses, as she was a whore before. One can claim that when Peter proposes for her to get married to him, she becomes optimistic that she will have a husband in the future to protect her from the abuse of other men. Also, she can depend on her husband economically and she might not need to work again in the future. These ideas give Helen hope, confidence and optimism for her future life. Marry Harrington claims that before women got economic independence from men, they got married to get protection against the abusive acts of other men. They also got married so that they could gain a source of finance, as they were dependent on men economically (Harrington 2023). Therefore, it can be argued that Helen's condition is the same as that Harrington explains. She has hope that she will get married and get rid of being abused and financial ineptitude. Here, hope is a metaphor that Delaney uses to signify the protection and care received by men in patriarchal societies. So, Helen is about to gain this prosperity, and that is why she feels glorified and valued by that.

Accordingly, this notion of being protected and cared about by men gives men a higher level in the social hierarchy, and women a lower one. Men become the protectors, and women are protected. Thus, men take the role of the subjects, while women occupy the role of the objects. This ideology founds the relationship between men and women in the play. Helen

becomes the object of protection by men, and men are the subjects of this process. Therefore, this notion can be considered as a hierarchy-enhancing ideology that both men and women hold in Delaney's play.

Jane Lewis argues that in twentieth-century Britain, women were doing the house works and men were working outside their homes generally. Some were happy with their roles as housewives, and they preferred to do the domestic work of the family. They wanted their men to continue their role and job as breadwinners of the family. They worked so that they would reduce the risks of divorce and separation from their husbands because they were protected and taken care of by them. Other women also continued their roles as housewives, although they were not happy with that. Nevertheless, they continued due to their life necessities and children. Some of them even hated their husbands, but they carried on their domestic duties due to their lack of a better alternative in their lives (Women in England 12, 103).

Elizabeth Jackson explains further this notion of continuing the domestic duties by women and believes that women resisted the ideas of transition and change in the traditions of their lives, as she states:

"So, whether particular patriarchal bargains involve, for instance, protection in exchange for varying degrees of seclusion, social status in exchange for submissiveness and propriety, or financial maintenance in exchange for domestic service, 'women often resist the process of transition because they see the old normative order slipping away from them without any empowering alternatives'" (112).

It can be argued that Helen in the play prefers the patriarchal order to continue as it is. It is due to her lack of a better alternative that she holds this hierarchy-enhancing ideology. As a

result, she accepts her submissiveness and subordination to men, and then, she participates in maintaining the present social hierarchy of patriarchy in her society, as criticized by Helen Cixous and some feminist theorists, as mentioned in the previous section. Helen participates in their subjugation and subordination in this context as well. She endorses this kind of life and participates in the patriarchal order so that she could get some privilege and benefit from Peter. Therefore, she becomes part of the patriarchal system and takes a part in their submissiveness and subordination in the social hierarchy of patriarchy.

In another circumstance, after getting married to Peter for several months, Helen comes back to their previous apartment, in which Jo lives with Geoffrey. Throughout their conversation, it becomes clear that Geoffrey has gone to inform Helen about her daughter's pregnancy because he had thought that Helen might be of some use to her. When Helen comes back, it is noted that Peter stays outside the apartment, because he does not want to come inside and see Jo. After she is in the apartment for a while with her daughter and Geoffrey chatting about their situation and the life Jo lives, Peter comes inside the apartment:

[PETER appears.]

PETER: What the hell's going on? Do you expect me to wait in the filthy street all night?

HELEN: I told you to stay outside.

PETER: Don't point your bloody finger at me.

HELEN: I said I'd only be a few minutes and I've only been a few minutes. Now come on, outside! (Delaney 64)

This dialogue demonstrates that Helen has stayed for a short time inside the apartment with her daughter. Then, Peter comes inside and talks to Helen masterfully. He speaks as though he has been deceived into waiting

outside by Helen. He continues speaking to Helen in an abusive and rude way, although Helen does not respond negatively. Immediately, after Peter's appearance and unmannered way of talking, Helen wants to leave her daughter due to her husband. This is because of the authority of the husband over the wife. This kind of relationship between the two spouses makes one the subject and the other the object. In this case, Peter is the subject of power and authority, and Helen is the object of discrimination and exploitation. Despite that, Helen's reaction is not to challenge or reject this ideology and notion, but it is her acceptance of the dominance and authority of her husband, and her subordination and submissiveness to being an object under his control. This is what one might call a hierarchy-enhancing ideology endorsed by women. This also supports maintaining the hierarchy of the patriarchal society of the play.

After getting advantaged and benefiting from the social hierarchy, women try to preserve their privilege and advantage. They attempt to avoid taking risks of losing them, which is why they continue supporting the hierarchy of their society. For example, after getting married to Peter, Helen becomes advantaged and gets privileged from that. Henceforth, she attempts not to lose what she has achieved in this patriarchal order. In the play, the evidence of women's attempts to keep their success in the patriarchal society is demonstrated obviously. For example, when Helen visits her daughter, she offers to go and stay with her at Peter's house, but Jo rejects this idea. Despite Jo's rejection, Helen tries to convince her to live with her. Later, when Peter comes inside the house, again, she offers her daughter to go and live with her, but Peter responds by saying: "Ah! Shut up!" (Delaney 67), because he does

not like the idea. However, Helen wants to keep giving Jo the offer to live with her. Then Peter responds:

PETER: I'm not having that bloody slut at our place. I'll tell you that for nothing.

HELEN: Take no notice. The house is half mine.

PETER: Like hell it is. I could throw you out tomorrow.

...

PETER: ... I don't like the smell of unwashed bodies, woman. I dragged you out of the gutter once. If you want to go back there it's all the same to me. I'm not having this shower at any price. I'm telling you for the last time because I'm getting out of it. Stay if you want, it's all the same to me; it's your own bloody level. Well, are you coming or not?

HELEN: I'm not.

PETER: I said are you coming?

HELEN: And I said I'm not.

PETER: Well, you can just go and take a flying flip out of the window. [He goes.]

HELEN: I'll... I'll... (Delaney 68-69)

As it is shown above, when Helen wants to take her daughter to live with her, Peter rejects this idea completely. Then, Helen says that the house is half hers, but Peter refutes her and threatens to throw her out of his house. He states that he has taken her out of this rotten neighbourhood, and if she wants to go back there, it is all right to him, and he does not care. He says that this rotten neighbourhood is of Helen's level, and she can choose to stay there if she wants. Then, he asks Helen whether she goes and leave the place with him or not. At first, Helen refuses to go, but then when he goes out, she hurriedly says that she will leave with him.

One can claim that this way of talking to somebody shows that the speaker speaks boastfully and authoritatively. On the contrary, it also demonstrates that Helen does not have

any authority, and if she says something that is not approved by her husband, her secure life with him becomes threatened and shaken. Therefore, she needs to preserve what she has achieved out of the order. She follows Peter out of the house due to her acceptance of the hierarchy-enhancing ideology that makes her in need of a husband to get rid of the abuse of other people and the financial plight she was suffering from previously. So, one can argue that, due to her fear of losing her achievements, she accepts her submissiveness and subordination to her husband, because she feels needed to be protected and taken care of both physically and financially. Accordingly, it supports the policies and notions that preserve and keep maintain the social hierarchy of the existing patriarchal order that they live in.

Conclusion:

The present paper concludes that Delaney's *A Taste of Honey* presents women as unequal to men. It shows that men occupy a higher level than women in the social hierarchy of the patriarchal society of the play. Therefore, women face bias and sexism due to their sex in the society of the play. They are also depicted as the other, who are different from the default group of the society. Thus, they suffer from their subjugation and subordination in the patriarchal society they live in. Sometimes, it is not only men who cause their placement in the hierarchical order of society, but also women themselves cause their subjugation and subordination, as they desire male power for the sake of being privileged and benefited by the patriarchal system. In addition, women also enhance the ideologies and notions that preserve their subjugation, submissiveness, and subordination in the patriarchal order. They accept these doctrines and behave in accordance with the ideologies of patriarchy.

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