Himalayan J. Soc. Sci. & Humanities ISSN: 0975-9891 https://doi.org/10.51220/hjssh.v20i1.13
Vol. 20, (2025) 103-107

Feminist Morality and Female Identity in T.S Elliot's Plays: A Thought in Contrast: Mary (The Family Reunion), Celia (The Cocktail Party) & Monika (The Elder Statesmen)

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Received: 10.10.2025; Revised: 28.12.2025; Accepted: 29.12.2025
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Abstract: The main reason behind the rise of feminism or a theme like the feminist reality is the biological difference between men and women. But more significant is to know about the gender of a person without which the identity of a male or female cannot be reckoned. The mark of identification about the general characteristic of the being is 'sex'. It, of course, is the important difference between the male and the female. As Seyla Banhabib and Drucilla write, 'the body is a material reality' and sex, which begins at the moment of birth, is biological. The body of woman is one of the essential elements in her situation in the world, but the body is not 'enough to define her as woman'. In reality, gender and sex are compulsory for identity for any person and, so, the body of woman is one of the essential realities. In other words, "the power of women leads immediately to the problem of what is meant by 'women. But the body, as a material reality, is not enough to explain her as woman. The individual self is compulsory to define her as woman. All **Mary** in **The Family Reunion**, **Celia** in **The Cocktail Party**, and **Monica** in **The Elder Statesman**, developing their female identity through their morality.

Keywords: Feminist Morality; Female Identity

Introduction

It is a truth that "one individual is just as true as another, and one woman is as much woman as any other, for it is always possible to go further" (Geneviève Fraisse and Michelle Perrot 1993). And because of this reason, the self must always be identifiable in the woman revolution. So, the psychological liberation is important for the development of a woman. Men and women have difficult conceptions of morality, each equally coherent and developed and equally valid. Linda J. Nicholson writes: "within the terms of feminist theory, it has been quite important to refer to the category of 'women' and to know what it is we mean" (Linda J Nicholson 1990). She refers not only to women as a social category but also as a "felt sense of self, a culturally conditioned or constructed subjective identity" (Linda J Nicholson 1990). So, if women are to be liberated, they must determine for themselves when to use or not to use reproduction. She has her own identity and "the sense of identity attained through these duties" (McMahon Frank B, McMahon Judith W 1986). After that, "they feel much more strongly about self-Identity, are better able to share themselves with others, and make real commitments"(Chodorow Nancy 1989).

Mary in **The Family Reunion** is a negative woman, because she is imperfect in the physical world, and is psychologically absent. According to Eliot, she is an

anti-feminist, because she is against male society because of her inner-frustration. She is individual character and represents those people who attain detachment to live real life without full enlightenment. At most, "she represents idealized feminine qualities which can be incorporated into the ideal total person who is a male" (Chodorow Nancy 1989). Woman has a conception of the self-different from that of a man. When Harry returns home, she is happy, but she is happy in light of her being physical. That's why, Agatha gives spiritual inspiration to Mary, to which Mary responds, "Waiting, Waiting, always waiting, I think this house means to keep us waiting" (Eliot T S (1969).

Agatha sympathises Mary. It must always be identifiable in the revolution not overwhelmed by it. The self must always be "perceivable in the revolutionary process, not submerged by it" (Jagger Alison M 1983). It implies that the revolution which the feminist bring about depends upon the identification of the self, because "each personality is a world in himself, a company of many. That self, that life of one's own, which is, in fact, so precious"(Chodorow Nancy 1989). It must mean that a woman who revolutionizes the cause of the feminist must see that the identity of a woman is preserved and brought up in the processes. It never does mean that woman should get herself involved in it by only inviting frustration for herself, because "the quest for identity by educated women is an immediate corollary of the modern movement of feminism which advocates woman's complete equality with man in personal, social and economic domains" (Tiwary 1 9 9 6) . However, in contemporary literature "the feminine search for identity revolves largely round claim for perfect freedom in personal matters, chiefly in relation to love and sex". In the same way, Mary is resolved in the play on a similar contention. Agatha's aversion to her in this regard is in the plea that she should go in work for the identification of herself and never get frustrated in any respect. All like a feminist, she advises Mary to identify herself but like an anti-feminist. She believes that she should not get submerged in any kind of frustration in such a regard. Agatha had advised her to accept a career, and finally, under her direction, she accepts the role that is proper to her. She does not need to prove to herself or to society that she has earned it or continues to have it. Her problem is that this identity is "clearly devalued in the society in which she lives". But Mary lacks the proper spiritual equipment, however, under the guidance of Agatha she begins to realize her importance in the society. She realizes her mistake, and decides to leave Wishwood and devote her life to academic pursuits. She would wait and watch patiently for what the future has in store for her, because the "truth is female and so are nature and life" (Harvard Belknap (1994). These different views of the self-account for at least four empathetic differences between the way in which men and women make moral decisions. First, women tend to stress the moral agents continuing relationships to others, whereas men tend to stress the agent's formal, abstract rights. Thus, the typical woman is prepared to forsake some of her rights if she can thereby cement a flattering, but extremely meaningful, human relationship. Second, when making a moral decision, women espouse a somewhat more consequentialist point of view, calculating the

effects of the moral agent's action on all who will be touched by it, whereas men espouse a somewhat more non-consequentialist point of view, according to which principles must be upheld even if some people get hurt in the process. Third, women are usually more willing to accept excuses for a moral agent's behaviour, whereas men generally label behaviour as morally inexcusable just because it is morally unjustifiable. Finally, women usually interpret a moral choice within the context of the historical circumstances that produce it, whereas men usually abstract that choice from its particularities and analyse it as if it represents some universal type of moral choice, As is in the case of **Mary** in **The Family Reunion**, **Celia** in **The Cocktail Party** and **Monica** in **The Elder Statesman**.

For the first and the last time in his career, Eliot created a woman who acts in her own right, not as foil or prop to a man's self-realization as artist, convert, or sinner. The development of "psychic structure begins with the basic self-feeling and self-structure". With brave distinctness, she states her surprise at the defection of her lover, Edward, and is the focus for sympathy in the play. Never before had Eliot conceived so lovable a woman, at once assured and vulnerable. But "women's wildness expresses their resistance to male domination" (Jagger 1983). Two men have loved her: the middle-aged husband, with whom she has had a long affair, and the young film director, the artist, who has loved her platonically. Of the two, it is the artist, Peter who has the clearer view of her distinction. She arouses not the usual desire for possession, but a strange feeling at once more intense and more tranquil. Here Eliot explores the rarefied moment that he owes to 'Emily Hale'. Peter declares it to be his only experience of what he, like Eliot, calls 'reality'. So, Eliot ties with Emily Hale and defies definition. She was a watcher of his destiny. Such a course of existence requires a climax. **'Emily Hale'** was the source of rejected woman for Eliot. She presents **Celia** as a rejected woman in **The Cocktail Party**. She is a young lady, and Edward's lover, and in him she has been trying to find the divine. Her love has been selfless, born out of her deep-rooted need for loving. She tries to persuade Edward to marry her. But the shock which she receives when Edward decided to abandon her in favour of his wife, shatters her illusions about herself and her way of life. She is shocked to realize that she was living in a world of unreality, and now her dream is over. This is the main reason that she is a rejected woman by Edward. Celia combines a craving for ideal love. She has never even been aware of Peter's attachment till it is pointed out to her by Edward. She replies that now she understands him better than she ever did before.

Monica, in **The Elder Statesman**, is living with her father. This is a main reason that she is worried about her father's health. On the other side, she loves Charles very much. The importance of separation and autonomy in men's lives often leads them to focus the discussion of morality around issues of justice, fairness, rules and rights, whereas the importance of family and friends in women's lives leads them to emphasize people's wants, needs, interests, and aspirations. Sometimes women play there roles

not so much because they want to, as because they have to in order to survive economically and/or psychologically. Although all women engage in feminine role-playing, three kinds of women play the role of 'woman'. They are, said Simone De Beauvoir, the prostitute, the narcissist, and the mystic.

Gender identity is important for woman's self today. Infact, there are such types of sexual differences. It starts with the sexual relation, coupletion and reproduction. A woman is situated between man and child. But the human being is nothing without the body, and the body is nothing without flesh and blood, and these are nothing without the oxygen of sexual differences. Actually, feminists have always been suspicious to talk about biology. Of course, men as well as women have bodies. But many of the areas and processes of the female body serve no apparent function. For the health of the individual women's bodies are thought to commit them to the biological reproduction of the species, and they are seen as closer to 'nature'. Men on the other hand, are thought to express their creativity through the creation of 'culture'. Woman is defined, in opposition to man, "as weak, night, passive, emotional, intuitive, mysterious, unresponsible, quarrelsome, childish, dependent, evil, submissive etc" (Jagger Alison M 1983). On the other side, man is seen as 'day, positive, forceful, aggressive, dominant, objective, strong, intellective etc'. Woman is depended on man, but she argues that she can be liberated only by conquering human biology because her body is a solution. But everyone is created woman and man, socially recognized genders, and the fact is that woman is different from man as plants are different from animals. According to Simone De Beauvoir that woman is frustrated as a subject because she is not allowed to engage in self-defining activity and because her feminine activities are not- fulfilling. In reality, "the modern quest for feminine identity rebels against the very basic of ancient culture, against all established order" (Tiwary 1996). She gives herself supreme importance because no object of importance is accessible to her. Woman then becomes her own object, because she is "a free, self- actualized being" (Deo and Dangwal 1996). Believing herself to be an object – a belief confirmed by most everyone around her, she is fascinated by, and perhaps even fixed on, her own image, face, body, clothes. Probably the most problematic feminine role is that of the mystic who seeks to be the supreme object of a supreme subject.

Conclusion:

In case of feminist morality and female identity, women's moral development is necessary. At level one, the developed level of moral sensibility, a woman's care is directed completely inward. Actually woman feels scared and vulnerable, in need of affection and approval. At level two of moral development of woman, she shifts from self-centeredness to other directedness. She becomes the stereotypical nutrient woman, who subjugates her wants and needs to those of other people's and who claims that all she wants to do is what the other person wants. This is the kind of women such as **Celia** and **Lavinia**, who would have her lover, husband, parents tell her whether to get her interest or not. It depends on man's power. A woman can suppress her wants and needs in the interest of sustaining a

relationship only so long before she starts feeling resentful. Thus, to develop as a moral person, a woman must take steps to avoid this destructive boiling point. At level three of moral development, woman will learn how to care for herself as well as others, and then the decision becomes a complex choice. The woman must get her liberation and moral development. Thus a woman attains full moral stature when she stops vacillating between egoism and altruism, recognizing instead the falseness of this polarity and the depth of her connection to others and of their connection to her.

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