



محاكاة الذات في قصائد مختارة للشاعرة ليز لوكهيد

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جامعة واسط/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

قسم اللغة الإنكليزية وآدابها

تاريخ الاستلام : 2021-05-13

تاريخ القبول : 2021-12-21

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الكلمات المفتاحية: محاكاة الذات، النسوية، النص النرجسي، لوكهيد



Mirroring the Self in Selected Poems by Liz Lochhead

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Receipt date: 2021-05-13

Date of acceptance: 2021-12-21

Abstract

This paper presents the use of Self mirroring in selected poems. This term is closely connected with consciousness and self-consciousness. This study aims to deal with mirroring the self and how it is employed in selected poems by Liz Lochhead; “Morning After”, “Mirror’s Song”, and “Object”. The study provides a psychological, linguistic and literary analysis of these poems and points out the use of a narcissistic text to attract the attention of its readers into how it was produced and received. The study arrives at showing how the poet started to question the patriarchal traditions in her society. She reflected her own ideas and experience concerning the oppression of the patriarchal system and created ways to express herself using a new perspective that is women’s own perspective.

Keywords: Mirroring the self, feminism, narcissistic text, Liz Lochhead



Introduction

Over ages, Scottish literature was controlled and dominated by male writers. When female writers started to show up, their efforts were under an organised process of trivialisation and marginalisation. The female writers' attempts to promote their interests were confronted by rejection to access the public arena. Such behaviour must have affected women psychologically. Historically, Scottish poetry has been a male domain which misrepresented the image of women. Nevertheless, in the 1970s a new wave took place and changed the standard model of literature that is male-oriented. After years of being in shadows, female writers started to question the patriarchal traditions in their societies. They conveyed rejection to the oppression of the patriarchal system and created ways to express themselves using a new perspective that is women's own perspective. This change in the traditions of the society did not happen suddenly or was planned by a particular movement for its own purposes. It is quite the opposite; this change is the result of an ongoing process of dissociation from the patriarchal systems that continued for hundreds of years (Matt McGuire, 2000, p. 66, 67).

Mirroring the Self in Liz Lochhead's poetry

Liz Lochhead (1947-) is one of the influential characters in the Scottish literature who is remarked as the writer who introduced a gendered perspective of literature in male dominated area in the Scottish literature. It might be true that Lochhead was not the first female poet since there were many female writers before her who limited themselves to the feminine traditions that are related to domesticity and balladry. The unique statue of Liz Lochhead is associated with the critical approach she has adopted in her writings by pushing the boundaries that shape women's roles and how they should depict their experience (McGuire, 2000, p. 67).

Despite the fact that Lochhead brought change to the Scottish literature, but even in the early 2000s, she could not compete with the male writers in Scotland. Carl MacDougall describes her in *Writing Scotland* (2004) as "one of our most important writers, whose work has attracted a large and admiring public" (p. 177). Lochhead's unconventional employment of language and poetic forms made her recognised by the public and critics. Eventually, her poetry has been seen as an influential product to count for even by some institutions that have been known for their patriarchal systems over ages. She also was awarded by the City Council by the title of Poet Laureate of Glasgow in 2005, while in 2011 she became the national poet of



Scotland or Scots Makar. These awards deepened the status of Lochhead in the Scottish literature and the Scottish society. They are also evidences of Lochhead's ability to force reconsideration of women's image and role on the society (Emine Çevik, 2015, p. 3).

Lochhead's style is described as a transgressive and popular style in which she heavily employs irony. She expresses her rejection to be a part of the traditional flow in her poetry and drama by reflecting ironic feminism using a provocative tone. Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan (1997) explain that the literary work Lochhead presents is "that of one woman speaking to many, and one person speaking for many" (641), because of demotic vocabulary and the variation of the idioms she employs that vary between contemporary Scottish, English and American. Lochhead's poetry is known with its intimate address and the amount of spoken idioms and styles, like the attempts to use cliché, colloquialism and rap. Lochhead's work is intended to be a voice that represents the marginalised whether they were the Scots or women in general. She said, "My language is female-coloured as well as Scottish-coloured" (BBC, 2014). One of the themes that Lochhead addressed in her writing is the Scottish national identity and the relationship between Scotland and the United Kingdom. In her poem "Kidspoem/ Bairsang" 2003 (Liz Lochhead, 2003, p. 19), Lochhead expresses how Scots is not regarded as a formal language that has a written form. It is sidelined to be a mere spoken informal language:

Oh saying it was one thing

but when it came to writing it

in black and white

the way it had to be said

was as if you were posh, grown-up, male, English and dead. (33-37)

Moreover, a main theme in Lochhead's poetry is issues related to the society's perception of women and especially of being a woman writer. In her poem "Liz Lochhead's Lady Writer Talkin' Blues (Rap)" in 1985, she mentions this issue using satire to shed light on the conventional male thinking of what they call "women's writing". In the following lines Lochhead uses words from the colloquial spoken Scots:

He said Mah Work was a load a' drivel

I called it detail, he called it trivial



Tappin' out them poems in mah tacky room

About mah terrible cramps and mah

Moon Trawled Womb –

Women's trouble?

Self Pity. (1-7)

Lochhead's interest in expressing female identity and women's writing can be noticed in her work. She focuses on these issues using ironic and playful retelling of traditional stories and myths that include women. She believes that if perception of women can be constructed using ideological narratives, then these perceptions can be deconstructed and reconstructed by retelling the traditional narratives from a feminist perspective. (Çevik, 2015, 58). In her third collection "The Grimm Sisters" 1981, Lochhead became more immersed in feminism because of the feminist debates that took place in Britain and North America and the influence of the feminist poetry of Adrienne Rich. Lochhead worked on changing the style of myths and fairy tales and made them mainly about female characters in order to shed light on women's problems (Margery McCulloch, 2000, p. 59).

Liz Lochhead breaks from the traditional form of writing that was followed by preceding women poets. As an alternative, she employs different devices to weaken the feminine stereotypical image. A shift in the direction of the issues that can be addressed by women took place when Lochhead published her first collection "Memo for Spring" in 1972. She started writing poetry before graduating from Glasgow School of Art in 1965. During that time, she attended Stephan Mulrine's workshop for writers and then started writing poetry (Anne Varty, 2013). In this collection, it is noticed that Lochhead opened the door for women writer's in Scotland to address new perspectives in a field that had been dominated by male writers for centuries. Lochhead said once of her poetry: "My country was woman". Her ideas preceded all the feminist theorising that continued between 1970s to 1980s. McCulloch (2000) describes how Lochhead's work reflects "the strength of the speaking voice, the interaction of orality and literary device" (p. 58) that can be received and recognised by the readers. Some critics faced a



difficulty in understanding Lochhead's writings and they even attempted to label her as being an autobiographical poet.

However, she has been recognised as a professional poet, but she has described herself as the following: "I think my drive is towards storytelling, recording voices, exploring ambivalences [...] what attracts me is [...] anything which momentarily illuminates the ways of the heart, the life of the soul." (Liz Lochhead, 2000, p. 72). One of the problems women face in patriarchal societies is their lack of the ability to make their own choices.

In her poem "The Choosing" (Lochhead, 2012, p. 24), Lochhead discusses women's need to make decisions that affect their lives by themselves. She published this poem in her first collection "Memo for Spring", then republished it in her book "A Choosing" in 2012 which shows the symbolic importance of this poem. It also indicates how Lochhead kept a connection with similar poems and subjects since her earlier work. The poem is about two women who used to be friends in the past, but each one of them chose a different path in life. Within the poem, the voice of the female speaker represents one of the women. The female speaker is describing the sad life of her friend in the past and now in which she was unable to make any decision. It emphasises the destructive effect of men on women's self-discovery and development:

Mary's father, muffled, contrasting strangely

With the elegant greyhounds by his side.

He didn't believe in high school education,

Especially for girls,

Or in forking out for uniforms. (27-31)

One of the instrumental symbols of self-criticism in literature is the mirror. It can be used to reflect the specific qualities of what is defined by certain traditions and cultures as ugliness or beauty. It can also reflect a twisted reality that can manipulate the mind. Also, if the mirror itself has flaws, then it reflects an unrealistic or a distorted image of the objects in front of it. Lochhead's use of mirror shows her realisation of how mirrors are associated to women in a patriarchal society. Gill (2007, p. 45) explains that "The mirror functions in Western culture both as a means of self-monitoring or self-surveillance and as a constant reminder of the feminine



ideal to which women must conform.” According to Lacan (1949, p. 76), while looking in the mirror, the individual develops a sense of maturation. So, in order to express the mirror stage, women need to go through different processes of thinking to express it using the symbolic power of language instead of keeping it in their imagination.

In her first collection “Memo for Spring”, Lochhead engages mirrors in her poems as symbols of the sexist oppression that falls on the community of women. In “Morning After” (Lochhead, 1972, p. 18), the poet presents an example of the traditional ideas about gender that were put by males. The poem’s opening shows a woman and a man holding and reading newspapers. The names of the newspapers stand for the differences between the sexes. The speaker, who is a female, in the poem highlights the classic patriarchal perspective of the roles of females and males. She employs males’ language to describe the man and herself to show the gap between females and males:

Me, the Mirror

reflecting only on your closed profile.

You, the Observer

encompassing larger, other issues. (7-10)

It can be noticed that the speaker used metaphor when she mentioned the names of two British newspapers - the “Mirror” and the “Observer”. She brings attention to the contrasting feminine and masculine traits that were socially constructed. The newspaper that is held by the female speaker is the “Mirror” which is a tabloid newspaper that focuses mainly on gossips and less serious issues and attracts readers with sensational headlines. Contrarily, the man holds the “Observer”, which is a quality newspaper that deals with complex as well as more serious issues and normally read by intellectual readers with higher education and higher status in the society. According to Colin Nicholson (2007, p. 165), this poem compares the distinctions between females and males to class differences.

The economic dependency plays a crucial role in silencing the voices of women. He sees that “the Mirror” signifies ignorance which is linked to women in a patriarchal society. It is symbol of the perception of women in patriarchal societies as intellectually inferior humans, on the one



hand. On the other hand, men are linked to knowledge and intelligence. This distinction between women and men is imposed by the society that aims to keep women controlled and under men's guardianship. Furthermore, the speaker herself seems to be a mirror by which the male himself observes her.

The ways in which Lochhead employs mirrors in her poetry is not only to criticise how mirrors are linked to women's inferiority in the society, but also to focus on their main use which is to reflect the objects. According to Lochhead, mirrors have the power to reflect the reality as it is. This truth has been blurry because of the ideological effect of the patriarchal institutions to draw a one dimensional image of women as the ideal image to look up to by the whole women community. Mirrors are often associated with narcissism and self-love. Lochhead uses mirrors in many poems and in different ways. In her collection "The Colour of Black and White" in 2003, by using mirror metaphor, she focuses on the reflective function of the mirror in exposing the standards of the patriarchal society towards femininity.

In "Lady of Shalott" poem (Lochhead, 2003, p. 119), the female speaker shows disapproval of a young female's behaviour who is obsessed of her own reflection in the mirror. She directs criticism to women's obedience to the culture built image of how women should be, look like and behave. The girl in the poem has completely adapted to the perceptions of the society of women's attributes. She obeys the system without questioning the stereotypical image of females just to please men. Here, the mirror is misted which shows how deceptive the young girl is. Lochhead sheds light on how the mirror is associated to the reality in "Lady of Shalott". Moreover, she presents a criticism to the mirror's role in empowering the influence of the society's prescribed image of women:

She paints her nails scarlet,

she moons in the mirror.

Ingenue or harlot?

The mirror is misted,

every mirror image twisted.

Like real life – but larger. (14-19)



As Rotella, Abbott, Gold (2000, p, 64) put it, “in its capacity both to reflect and to distort, to reproduce and to fragment, the mirror profoundly changed the notions of physical space and ideas of the self”. So, the mirror has a crucial role in reaching self-knowledge for it exposes dark and hidden areas that uncover secret feelings that improve self-realisation. Lochhead displays in her collection “Dreaming Frankenstein and Collected poems 1967-1984”, her poem “Mirror’s song” dedicated to the filmmaker Sally Potter. In this poem, the mirror has a voice which gives an order to be smashed and explains that the woman trapped inside will also smash back (Lochhead, 1984, p. 74-75).

It is regarded as a dark poem in which Lochhead includes an inner dialogue with another female persona or a second-self. The poem expresses a strange force that represents anger and terror on the other side of the mirror. This force is a symbol of imprisonment by the conventional roles that are assigned to women, the liberating influence of art, and loss of women’s identity. In “Mirror’s Song”, Lochhead conveys the voice of women’s oppression and rage. The poem is overflowing with different feelings of destruction and passion to encourage women to free themselves of the restrictions of the patriarchal society (Rodrick Watson, 2010, p. 83).

Hutcheon has explained that different processes that are related to narcissism like reflecting and mirroring are essential for post-modernist writers. Textual narcissism makes the writer question many acknowledged information about language, the origins of authority, and subjectivity in women’s poetry, also how the discursive context affects the way people perceive meanings. Narcissism is not a deviation from what is described to be normal. She explains that a narcissistic text attracts the reader to how it was made since it reflects the process of its creation and makes it visible to the listener or the reader. This skeptic behaviour leads a kind of self-consciousness for the writer herself (1980, p.1).

In “Mirror’s Song” the first verse represents an invitation to literal “shattering” of the male’s perception of females which keeps women subordinate. There are two personae which are “me” of the poem, and the woman in the mirror- “she”. This poem represents an anti-hegemonic stance that attacks the ways in which male narrative internalised a prescribed image of women. As Marianna Pugliese (2013) explains that this internalisation is weakened in “Mirror’s Song” by employing liberating metaphor which refers to smashing the glass of the mirror. This metaphor is related to the metaphor of glass ceiling that can be defined as “the unseen yet unbreachable



barrier that keeps minorities and women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications or achievements.” (Federal Glass Ceiling Commission, 1995, p.4). Smashing the mirror refers to smashing that “glass ceiling”. The first line presents liberating metaphor in “Smash me” (1). In the first verse Lochhead exhibits a strong figurative language in which metaphor is employed to present the stereotypical portrayal of women. She uses mirror metaphor, “looking-glass” (1) as a part of the narcissistic text that reflects self-awareness:

Smash me looking-glass glass

coffin, the one

that keeps your best black self on ice. (1-3)

Lochhead addresses the relationship between a woman and her appearance in the mirror. According to Carol Davidson (2017, p. 314), in this poem the Nietzschean notion of “destruction leading to regeneration” is linked to feminism in a feminist shattering sense. Regeneration here means the discovery of the new self that is liberated and free by destroying the old self. Whereas, Lacan’s “Mirror Stage” indicates that the formation of self-awareness is the result of a psychic reinforcement of an Ego, the realisation of this Ego or the reflection in the mirror is regarded as the second birth of a person. Lacan (1949) explains that there are two selves, one of them before realising the image in the mirror, while the other is after the encounter of this image. So, Lochhead’s ability to reflect and to criticise the “looking-glass” (1) and “glass/coffin” (1-2) is a part of the self-reflexive act of the difficulties faced by herself or by the women community. She urges women to break from the prescribed self-restricting roles.

Here, the mirror is the speaker which has a female voice. It is a symbol for women’s imprisonment by the society’s restrictions. This entrapment is represented by death metaphor in which the poet uses “glass/ coffin” (1). The “glass/ coffin” is a reminder of women’s status in the society. They are restrained and immobile as if they are dead and always observed by the males. Then, the poet says “that keeps your best black self on ice.” (3), in which she emphasises the role of the mirror in restraining woman’s self-discovery. The mirror here is described as an obstacle



that hinders woman's development and delays her awakening since it obliges women to change themselves to have the standards of beauty that were socially and culturally constructed.

As a result, these standards draw women away from the developing and discovering themselves instead of being objectified by the society. Women in patriarchal societies are frozen unchanging images that can be described as one-dimensional images which Lochhead encourages the reader to change. One of the major themes that Lochhead dealt with since her beginning is females' issues and the social roles assigned to women (BBC, 2014).

Lochhead writes "Smash me, she will smash back" (4) to refer to how the reflection in the mirror will mimic the actions of the poem's narrator which can be linked to Lacan's "Mirror Stage" in which the human children start imitating their actions to acquire self-recognition. The poet is metaphorically displaying the role of the reflection in the mirror in bringing revenge to the poet who is imprisoned in this patriarchal society. The reflection in the mirror represents the new self which according to Lochhead "can't lift a finger" without "you" (4)- the narrator. It denotes the connection between the narrator and the mirror and how the mirror is unable to take her own actions. This use of language adds to the imagery of the reflection in the mirror as an unstoppable character of vengeance which can be a threat to the system, because it represents a step in the direction of acquiring self-recognition or self-awareness Smash me, she'll smash back-/ without you she can't lift a finger (4-5).

In the "Mirror's Song" poem, Liz Lochhead depicts how she turns the socially constructed self to small pieces by smashing the reflection in the mirror. The poem can be seen as both a threat to people who subject women to misogyny and a battle cry for all the women who are suffering in their societies. In this verse there is an allusion of the Indian goddess Kali, goddess of destruction and creation. Kali is a symbol of feminine empowerment (Wendy Doniger, 2019). So, it is like a promise that the new self – "she"- can and will rise from the destruction after smashing the looking glass- i.e., the traditions of the patriarchal society that limit and restrain women "Smash me, she'll whirl out like Kali" (6).

Lochhead uses a clear language to direct her criticism to this culture that sexualises women. She overtly condemns items that are used to make women under control. She calls Kleenex as "tissues of lies". She creates a connection between the cosmetic industry and women's self-deception that accompanies their mirror reflection. She also illustrates the difficulties women



face in relation to fashion garments such as whalebone, lycra, and under wires as symbols of the physical challenges that women go through.

In the line “the chaffing iron that kept them maiden,” (21), directly criticises these things as instances of the socially imposed torture that women had to deal with for centuries. This suffering is a mere attempt to meet the expectations of the ideals of beauty imposed by society. The speaker in the poem mentions a list of items which strengthened the idea of glass ceiling for ages during the poet’s time and in the past, including items like whalebones corsets of an era in the past, moving to the lycra in 1980s. The poet focuses on the use of dramatic imagery of the items women use in order to be accepted in the patriarchal system like lipstick, hairbrushes, hatpins.

The new self – the “other” in the mirror”- is undervaluing the old self to a list of items that belong to her “alligator mantrap handbag” (7). In the final stanza, after fragmenting her image or her identity by smashing the mirror and indicating and uncovering the contents that the constructed this identity, again she appears in her new identity. Her old “feminine” self was constructed by “the/tracts and the adverts, shred/ all the wedding dresses, snap/ all the spike heeled icicles” (35-38). Her new persona shows interest in political issues like wars and Greenham Summons. By this, she discovers a more effective feminine self that is developed and has a role in the public space.

Smash me for your daughters and dead

mothers, for the widowed

spinsters of the first every war (27-29)

...

She’ll crumple all the

tracts and the adverts, shred

all the wedding dresses,

in the cave she will claw out of-

a woman giving birth to herself. (35-40)



Lochhead is urging women to destroy these items that symbolise their oppression. The speaker in the poem- the mirror- demonstrate women's inherited affliction from generation to the next generation. For ages, women have been in an ongoing struggle for their rights and liberation. In the first three lines above, there is a direct reference to women's oppression in different times- past, present, and future. It is a scream and a request for unity and solidarity amongst women. The speaker attempts to awaken women to take vengeance for years of subjugation and oppression and to remember their sisters that suffered in the past and to make an inspiration for future generations of women.

Lochhead makes predictions about the future of the appearance of a new woman. This woman will reach a level of self-awareness and development that will help her consciously reject the imposed cultural perceptions about women, which can be noticed in "tracts and the adverts," (36). Moreover, she will "shred" (36) all wedding dresses and work on weakening the patriarchal industry which includes fashion items that deform her body. All these steps lead to liberation that will enable woman to discover herself. The arrival of this woman represents the end of a painful journey of self-discovery and self-development.

Lochhead's poem "Mirror's Song" presents a different type of mirror and symbols in comparison to Sylvia Plath's (1981) use of mirror as a symbol of females' suffering. Plath considers "mirrors ... are terrible rooms/ In which a torture goes on one can only watch". Also, in her poem "Mirror", she shifts her attention from the Mirror's persistence on the "truthful" image it reflects, to the panic of the female viewer who discovers that "In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman/ Rises toward her day after day, like a terrible fish" (17-18). Other poets reversed the roles of the object and the reflection, as in Zoë Skoulding's poem "At the Dressing Table" (2004, p. 46), in this poem the human is being addressed by the mirror. In this manner, the poet indirectly breaks the conventions related to authority, subjectivity, and identity. Also, the poem depends highly on the reader's ability to construct or discover the implied meanings.

From another angle , Lochhead's mirror is iconoclastic which has a tendency to destroy symbols of feminine beauty. It is provoking the woman viewer in an aggressive language and by using forceful rhymes to "Smash me". The aim of this is to open the doors for "best black self [to] whirl out like Kali" (3-6). The message here, if a woman wants to give birth to a new better and truer self, she must have the ability to break with her past. She must be able to destruct



everything she acquired from the patriarchal system to think about as womanly or feminine (McCulloch, 2001, p. 59). Liz Lochhead's "Mirror's Song", is regarded as a sign of the generational shift that happened between 1970s and 1980s. The poem opens with a command to the poet's persona, the reader, "Smash me looking-glass, glass ..." (1) Whereas, it ends with "a woman giving birth to herself", as if there is an act of regeneration or self-generation of women which might refer to their self-discovery (Alan Riach, 2016, p. 159).

Lochhead's concern with feminist issues can be noticed clearly in her poems. She had a period of art training and worked in Glasgow and Bristol as an art teacher during which she used to question and criticise the tradition of the Western society. This personal experience became a major theme in Lochhead's poetry. In her poem "Object" (1972, p. 190), Lochhead expresses her rejection of the tradition of posing for a photographer by describing "the process of female portrait-making" as "continually refracted" (May, p. 45). In her collection "Dreaming Frankenstein & Collected Poems 1967-1984", Lochhead presents a poem titled "Object" to criticise how the female body is objectified by patriarchy.

Over centuries, the female body has represented the center of male's sexual desires. Because of this, females' aesthetic assumptions were influenced by males' interests. These interests have become a part of the patriarchal ideology that resulted in the objectification of women's bodies to satisfy males desires. Lochhead presents her poem "Object" which signifies her rejection to the objectification of the female body. In this poem, the speaker is a woman in her partner's studio and she is talking with him. The tone of the poem is playful but serious at the same time to reflect the rigidity of the atmosphere between the speaker and the photographer.

The title of the poem itself can be understood as a verb and as a noun at the same time. In the first line, she uses the first person pronoun "I" to refer to the speaker. The poem is told from a subjective point of view of a first person speaker. This statement sheds light on the difference between her self-awareness and the male's narrow-minded stand point. In the third line, she explains the numerous ways in which people view the appearance of her body. She uses the word "angles" to refer to the various ways that man need to understand her personality. Lochhead is known for her use of direct language in her poems to reflect her struggle with this culture that sexualizes women and objectifies them:

I, love,



am capable of being looked at
from many different angles. This
is your problem. (1-4)

Also, she knows that this man is affected by the norms of the patriarchal society in his views about women. He is limited and chooses to belittle her instead of looking for ways to understand her diversity. While she is posing for the man in his studio, she is aware of the man's attempts to reconfigure her appearance according to his own desires. His fixed gaze on her body makes her feel intimidated and offended. This feeling can be described as a universal feeling shared by women who experienced to be a subject to men's desires. She uses simile in "as a formal object" (11) to reflect how dehumanized she feels. The speaker is aware of her true self and she rejects to be reduced by anyone:

You pick your point of view
and stick to it, not veering much –
this
being the only way to make any sense of me
as a formal object. Still
I do not relish it, being
stated so – my edges defined
elsewhere than I'd imagined them (7-14)

As McCulloch (2000, p. 59) puts it, Lochhead has the ability to create characters that have voices and build a dramatic scene in the poem even if the poem is not narrative in the conventional sense. In her early poetry, Lochhead reflects energy within the language and the rhymes she employs. She also shows transformation in the characters of her poems using irony and humour, in addition to self-mirroring which is related to the female speakers. She attracts the listeners or



the readers to her work as if they are participants. Lochhead's main themes are related to women and love, and later she showed interest in issues about her country.

In this poem, the patriarchal society is represented by the photographer that objectifies women and refuses to consider their complexity. The woman notices that the man is redefining her based on his limited thinking. The photographer is an example of the contrast between males and females. The visual contact between the speaker and the photographer is how he recognises her, and at the same time this male gaze is a step that certainly later will be a part of her dehumanization:

I am limited. In whose likeness

do you reassemble me?

It's a fixed attitude you

force me into. (18-21)

...

But you, love,

set me down in black and white exactly.

I am at once

reduced and made more of. (62-64)

When the speaker is objectified, she turns to a passive victim of the photographer who is still in control of everything. So, he "forces" the speaker into passivity. The act of reducing women to objects represents a kind of oppression on them since her individuality is denied by the photographer or by the whole patriarchal society. She is entrapped in a repetitive life of doing uncreative duties like posing for the photographer and being offended by his gaze, on the one hand. On the other hand, the man represents creativity and liberty. In the last three lines, the poet shows how the photographer depersonalized the speaker. He wanted to make her suits his limited thinking, so he deformed her and hence, she lost herself because her body had been objectified by



the patriarchy as if the photographer's gaze represents the mirror or a reflective surface that impose the society's norms on the female speaker.

Conclusion

In this study, Liz Lochhead presents a gendered point of view in the Scottish literature. Since her early poetry, she used it as a means to force a reconsideration of women's image in the Scottish society. Lochhead used a clear direct language in her poems to criticise how the patriarchy marginalises and sexualises women including her. She fought for her status as a female poet in the Scottish literature, in a domain that is dominated by males. In her poem "Morning After", she uses the mirror metaphor to refer to how women are associated with ignorance whereas men are associated with intelligence:

Me, the Mirror

reflecting only on your closed profile.

You, the Observer

encompassing larger, other issues. (7-10)

In "Mirror's Song", Lochhead presents a conversation with another female persona or with the mirror. She creates a distinction between herself and the mirror. The poet refers to herself by using the pronoun "me", while refers to the mirror as "she". She uses mirror metaphor "Smash me looking glass" (1) after realising the limitations that the mirror imposing on her as a woman. By looking in the mirror, she sees her image reflected in the mirror and imprisoned within it. As a result, she decides to smash this mirror which is a symbol for the patriarchy's authority on her as a woman and as a poet.

Lacan sees that the realisation of the reflected image in the mirror can be considered as the second birth of the person reaching the Mirror Stage, since the reflection represents the person's Ego. In addition to this, Lochhead uses allusion in "Smash me, she'll whirl out like Kali," (6) referring to the Indian goddess Kali, who is a symbol of feminine empowerment. It is like a promise that women will rise from this destruction and take revenge. Lochhead's mirror is iconoclastic that destroys the symbols of feminine beauty and invites the future generations of women to free themselves from the patriarchy. Lochhead also writes "Smash me, she will smash



back” (4) in order to show how the reflection in the mirror mimics the narrator’s action just like Lacan’s “Mirror stage”.

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