

PHÂN TÍCH CHUYỂN TÁC VỀ SỰ BỰC BỘI CỦA NỮ NHÂN VẬT TRONG TRUYỆN NGẮN “ẨM ỨC”

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Bài viết này sử dụng lý thuyết của Halliday và cộng sự về sự chuyển tác để tìm hiểu sự bực bội của người phụ nữ được Olga Masters phác họa như thế nào trong truyện ngắn “Ẩm ỨC”. Qua đó nghiên cứu phân tích sâu hơn liệu nhân vật nữ trong tác phẩm sẽ chấp nhận số phận và những định kiến xã hội hay không. Bài viết còn xem xét mối quan hệ xã hội nam nữ giữa nhân vật nữ và người chồng trong vòng xoáy gia trường, thể hiện nhân vật nữ đã không thể đạt được ước nguyện. Thông qua việc phân tích này, bài viết làm rõ quan điểm của Olga Masters về bất bình đẳng giới và phân biệt đối xử đối với nữ giới.

Từ khóa: Sự bực bội, Olga Masters, Halliday, quá trình chuyển tác, bất bình đẳng giới.

This paper employs Halliday and his associates' linguistic theory about Transitivity to find out how anger is depicted in Olga Masters' "A Dog That Squeaked". It then carries out a closer analysis of whether the female character would accept and adhere to social prejudice. The study also examines the social relationship between the female protagonist and her husband in the circle of patriarchy, which shows how this woman fails to achieve her desires. Through the analysis, the study clarifies Olga Masters' view on gender inequality and discrimination against women.

Key words: Anger, Olga Masters, Transitivity, Halliday, inequality, gender.

TRANSITIVITY REPRESENTATION OF FEMININE ANGER IN “A DOG THAT SQUEAKED”

1. Background

The containment of anger or rebellion plays an important part in the maintenance of the ideology of the angel-in-the-house because women's expressions of anger or rebellion, especially in relation to their domestic duties, are devalued (Hatch & Forgas, 2001). As women, they are

expected to be keen housekeepers and caring nurturers. Ann Kaplan (1992) argues that the wife/mother typically ensures that the relational and emotional needs of those within the family are met as well as doing the housework and caring for the children. She is supposed to accept her feminine roles enthusiastically without question. In the traditional view of family and femininity, a woman's role is limited to that of a family carer, fulfilling her responsibilities as a wife and a mother.

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However the image of the mother in Olga Masters' "A Dog That Squeaked" is different: she becomes angry with her daily routines and she speaks out her rejection of the assigned domestic roles. The mother's rebellion starts after she realizes the injustice that she has endured. At this point she has to demonstrate her courage as well as her determination to carry out her actions which protest against the patriarchal institution that allows unfair treatment of her.

Olga Masters is known for her writing career not simply as a female writer contributing to the canon of Australian literature but also as a public intellectual offering critiques of Australian femininity. Although she came to journalism early at the age of 15, Pambula¹-born Olga Masters turned to writing fiction only in her fifties. Olga Masters' "A Dog That Squeaked" was published in her collection of short stories *The Home Girls*. The story starts with the image of a mother who is doing the ironing for the family as usual. However, when the girl Tad gets home from school, she notices that something unusual is happening because her mother's face "was shut like a window and her mouth not a kissing one". The mother is angry because of her husband's unfair treatment of her. Her anger as a form of protest against the father and patriarchal system can be demonstrated in the fact that she "flung [the father's shirt]

back into the old basket" instead of ironing it, then she keeps saying "father made [her] to do that!". The mother decides to stand up and fight for her dignity and recognition.

To do the research on how the feminine anger of the main character in Masters' "A Dog That Squeaked" is linguistically represented in the story, a framework of textual analysis mainly based on Halliday's theory of systemic functional linguistics, particularly Transitivity is used. So far, there have appeared numerous stylistic investigations into Transitivity in literary narratives for this aim.

One of the most influential studies in stylistics using this method is Halliday's analysis of William Golding's *The Inheritors* (Halliday, 1979). In this work, Halliday shows how the patterns of Transitivity in three selected passages of the novel demonstrate the limited knowledge and vulnerability of the main characters. Similarly, in a Transitivity analysis of Sheila Watson's *The Double Hook*, Yinglin Ji and Dan Shen (2004) demonstrate that the model of Transitivity can function as a useful tool in revealing the process of a character's mental transformation, and, further, that a Transitivity analysis may shed fresh light on the interpretation of the text. In her book *Linguistics, Language, and Verbal Art*, Hasan (1985) analyzes the poem "Widower in the Country" by Les Murray, showing how the author's linguistic choices express the theme of the story and

¹ A small country town in New South Wales, Australia.

points out features of language as prominent and meaningful in the depiction of the protagonist who is depicted as still grieving for the loss of his wife.

Inherited from the previous linguistic studies, particularly based on Halliday's theory of Transitivity, the current paper will demonstrate that the mother in "A Dog That Squeaked" is linguistically represented in a way that supports an interpretation of a victim of repressed anger resulting from gender inequality and many traditional conventions placed upon her. This woman tries to escape traditional constraints and the socially expected conventions that bind her so as to achieve her goals and pursue her freedom.

2. Methods

The current paper employed the methods and the suggested set of linguistic tools adapted from Michael A. K. Halliday and his associates' theory on Transitivity to find out how feminine anger was depicted in the short story "A Dog that Squeaked" by Olga Masters.

The extracts taken from the story were broken into clauses and a detailed analysis was undertaken to identify the choices employed by Masters in depicting the main characters, their activities and circumstances. For reasons relative to the scope of this study, only clauses related to the main characters and their activities were analysed.

Theory on Transitivity

The theoretical framework of Transitivity was established and

developed by Halliday. Transitivity generally refers to how meaning is represented in clauses; Transitivity patterns can reveal the certain worldview "framed by the authorial ideology" in a literary text (Halliday, 2014, p.13). Clauses represent events and processes of various kinds, and Transitivity aims to make clear how the action is performed, by whom and on what.

In Halliday's Transitivity, different processes are distinguished according to whether they represent actions, speech, states of mind or states of being (Fowler, 1996; Halliday, 2014). Those are identified and classified as Material processes (processes of doing, usually physical and tangible actions), Relational processes (construing the relationships of being and having between two participants), and Mental processes (encoding meanings of mental reactions such as perception, thoughts and feelings). Between Material and Mental processes lie Behavioural processes that characterize the outer expression of inner working and reflect physiological and psychological behaviours such as breathing, laughing, sneezing... Between Mental and Relational processes are Verbal processes, which represent the art of saying and its synonyms. And between Relational and Material processes are Existential processes which prove states of being, existing, and happening. Here are the examples taken from the story "A Dog That Squeaked" to illustrate the theory of Transitivity.

Table 1. Examples of different process types in “A Dog That Squeaked”

Process Type	Examples (Participants; Process; Circumstances)
Material	<u>the mother</u> pushed <u>the breakfast dishes</u>
Behavioural	<u>She and the mother</u> looked at <u>the stove</u>
Mental	<u>Tad</u> saw <u>one of her play dresses</u>
Verbal	“...” <u>the mother</u> said <i>with a big tremble in her voice</i>
Relational	<u>Dolly</u> was <u>a wonderful housekeeper</u>
Existential	<u>There's</u> no tea <u>started</u>

3. Results and Discussion

The extract selected from “A Dog That Squeaked” for Transitivity analysis comprises a total of 271 clauses. This excerpt includes 79 clauses in which the mother is a grammatical participant,

which constitutes 29% of the total number of clauses in the extract. The frequency of those occurrences and the roles used to represent the mother are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Transitivity distribution of the mother in “A Dog That Squeaked” extracts

Processes Types	Roles of the mother	Frequency of distribution	Percentage distribution
Material	Actor	53	67.1%
Mental	Senser	6	7.6%
Verbal	Sayer	14	17.7%
Behavioural	Behaver	3	3.8%
Relational	Token	1	1.3%
	Carrier	2	2.5%
	Total	79	100%

As can be seen, the mother is predominantly depicted as an Actor in Material processes (53 out of the total 79 clauses), followed by a Sayer in Verbal processes, which count for 14 clauses. The mother is also realised as a Senser in six Mental processes, as a Behaver in three Behavioural clauses, and as a Token or Carrier role in three Relational processes.

The above grammatical patterns represent the mother as a devoted and active housewife who is fulfilling her family roles such as ironing the clothes, cooking the meal, and attending to the stove. Her actions are all constructed grammatically as transitive Material clauses that include Goals. Let's now

consider the relationship between the mother as an Actor and the family items as Goals in Table 3.

In these Material clauses, the Goals are all house-related or domestic items such as “*the work shirt of the father*”, “*a large piece of quivering crimson meat*”, “*a fresh*

iron”, and “*the stove*”. Hence, the mother is represented by Masters as having an effect on the ironing and food. This illustrates the domestic role of the mother in managing the household chores and nourishing the family.

Table 3. Illustration of the mother as an Actor and the Goals of her actions

	Clauses	Things affected by the mother’s actions
DS3b	...and the mother was spreading an old work shirt of the father’s	the mother affects the work shirt
DS13a	^the mother picked up the father’s shirt	the mother affects the father’s shirt
DS30a	... the mother pushed the breakfast dishes	the mother affects the dishes
DS30b	and ^she threw the end of the tablecloth over them	the mother affects the tablecloth
DS31a	She placed a large piece of... meat	the mother affects a piece of meat
DS31b	^she cut it into little squares	the mother affects a piece of meat
DS31c	^she ^is piling them on an old tin plate.	the mother affects squares of meat
DS73b	and ^she began to sort the ironing.	the mother affects the ironing
DS107a	The mother took a fresh iron	the mother affects the iron
DS107b	and held it near her cheek	the mother affects the iron
DS124a	She took an armful of ironing	the mother affects the ironing

There are semantic tensions in the wordings that the author uses which build a sense of frustration and rebellion. Instead of expressing the mother’s frustration explicitly by using a verb plus an intensifying adverb such as ‘throw angrily or violently’, the author employs the implicit way by using inherently intensified lexis such as “*fling* [*flung*]”. It is similar in the case of the verb “*slapped*”.

The deployment of these Material processes reveals something wrong here: the mother does not seem happy with what she is doing. She throws her husband’s shirt suddenly and forcefully into the laundry basket instead of continuing her task by ironing it then putting it on an orderly pile. The use of the process “*flung*” indicates the mother’s annoyance at her husband’s belongings

which may be metaphorically referred to the husband himself. In a similar way, the process “*slapped*” demonstrates that the mother becomes very frustrated with the ironing in particular and housework in general, although she does not know what to do except pour all her repressed anger into what she is doing. At this point we do not know the source of her anger but through the girl Tad’s being surprised by the sight of the mother’s ironing and by the mother’s facial expression, we understand that this furious ironing is not the mother’s typical activity.

Not only being grammatically represented as an angry woman, the mother is also portrayed as no longer willing to do the housework. We will continue with the following examples:

DS16 “*I’m not ironing another thing!*” // *she said, // and seizing the poker // she slapped the irons on the stove // sending them [[skidding to the back]]*.

DS22 “*Your father made me do the ironing,*” // *she said*.

DS27 “*There’s no tea started,*” // *the mother said*.

DS81 “*There’s no beds made, no tea on -*” // *the mother wept*.

The above examples indicate that the mother is under enormous emotional stress about the things happening in the house: she seems to burst with suppressed anger at the task of ironing as reflected in

a series of material processes such as “*seizing the poker*”, “*slapped the irons*”, and “*sending [the irons] skidding to the back*”. Her rejection of the caring role of a mother can be further illustrated in the examples [DS27] and [DS81]. These two examples indicate that in her anger, the mother does not care about the tea time which the children look forward to after school. This behaviour is not welcome in a daily situation, but due to the problems she is experiencing, the environment changes her behaviour and she becomes rebellious.

In addition, the use of Verbal processes in these examples demonstrates that the mother is voicing her dissatisfaction. Not only is she rejecting the domestic task but she verbally indicates she is no longer keen on it. Her statement in the example [DS22] confirms her unwillingness, stating that her husband “*made [her] do the ironing*” though she does not want to. In this causal structure (the husband makes/causes her to do the ironing), the husband is grammatically represented as the Agent/Initiator of the action, while the mother is still in the grammatical role of Actor, in relation to the process “*do the ironing*”. In constructing this story the way she does, the author appears to be prompting the reader to question whether it is really the case that the mother is ‘forced’ to do the ironing by the father and, perhaps more generally, whether women are ‘forced’ to undertake disproportionate amounts of housework

by their husbands. By the end of the story the readers know that the mother's furious ironing is rooted in the father's complement to Dolly, a neighbouring woman, telling the mother "*All I [the husband] said was that Dolly was a wonderful housekeeper*".

Perhaps the mother is so sensitive that she takes the father's comment as implicit criticism of her. In addition, the Verbal process "*wept*" in [DS81] then shows that the mother utters her suppressed frustration through tears. Whereas in the early part of the story the mother is primarily represented as an Actor, fulfilling her domestic duties, now she turns into a Sayer complaining about her situation. Much of the remaining tension in the story arises from the fact that although she is now voicing her complaints and verbally refusing to perform duties such as organising the dinner, her behaviour does not match her words, as she does in fact undertake the ironing and goes on to start dinner before the story closes.

The mother's anger can also be seen in the example "*Don't rumple them up!*" // *the mother said sharply*" [DS7]. The message the mother gives her children is in the form of a prohibition, with the Circumstance of manner "*sharply*" attached to the verbal process further consolidating her resentment. Her strange behaviour is also reflected in the way she calls the children by their actual names as a form of direct address, instead of the

nicknames she usually uses, which the children find very bizarre, as in: "*Help me put the ironing away, Patrick and Freda,*" *she said*" [DS65]. This example then suggests that the matter becomes more serious and the mother not only wants to get rid of "*the ironing*" but of all the household chores.

By contrast with the angry and miserable image of the mother, Dolly (the neighbour) is linguistically sketched as a woman with more advantages. However, readers only get to know Dolly through the words of the mother and the comments of her husband. The patterns below suggest that Masters depicts Dolly as a kind of device through which the mother and her husband battle over their position. Consider the following examples:

DS35 "*Henry McViety built Dolly a shelf in the wash house and Henry showed it to your father.*" *[the mother said]*

DS37 "*Dolly came along with a tray of cake and lemonade.*" *[the mother said]*

DS94 "*Lucky Dolly McViety,*" *[the mother said]*

DS97 "*Dolly made the lemonade from their lemons,*" *the father said.*

DS111 "*Dolly would be sitting in her front room now with her sewing,*" *the mother said.*

DS112 "*She never has to go to the yard.*" *[the mother said]*

DS129 “*Dolly was a wonderful housekeeper,*” he [the father] said.

In these examples, although Dolly appears as an Actor in several Material processes, her representation is different from that of the mother. She is linguistically portrayed as being in a better position than the mother, which arouses the mother’s envy. As mentioned before, the mother is busy with her housework such as doing the ironing, preparing meals or even “*putting in a new row of beans*” and “*[nailing] two palings on the fence to stop the fowls from scratching the seeds out*”. Her jobs require certain labour and some of them may be regarded men’s jobs in the open air such as sowing seeds and mending the fence.

In contrast, the neighbour, Dolly, is not represented as acting on Goals such as the stove, irons, and meat. Instead, Dolly takes on the role of a giver who serves cakes and lemonade. Metaphorically, the author’s deployment of cakes and lemonade indicates the sweetness and considerateness of a woman, in this case, Dolly. Interestingly, the Recipient is the mother’s husband, which makes the mother concerned and depressed. In addition, being an Actor in intransitive material processes in [DS111] and [DS112], Dolly is seen to enjoy her life and follow her feminine interest of “*sewing*” rather than performing hard work: she “*[sits] in her front room now with her sewing*” and “*never has to go to the yard*” (my emphasis). Also, to stress

Dolly’s advantage over the mother, the author adds a new function to Dolly’s wash-house. Instead of being a place for Dolly to complete her domestic duties such as doing the washing, the wash-house is converted into a nice place for entertainment, something the mother also dreams of.

With Relational process in the example [DS129], Dolly is classified as “*a wonderful housekeeper*” in the eyes of the mother’s husband. Readers do not have many details about Dolly herself or her daily activities to verify his comment but the father provides us with an explanation of her domestic capability: “*Dolly made the lemonade from their lemons*” [DS97] and she knows how to treat guests. In his eyes, Dolly is more of an effortless Angel-in-the-House than his wife. Dolly’s lemonade helps to cool things down in the hot weather and to remedy tiredness whereas the mother’s anger and complaints about domestic roles bring tension and discomfort to her family, particularly her husband. Masters writes “*the father kept his eyes on Tad to avoid seeing the mother who had laid a cheek on her hand with the handkerchief prominent*” [DS47]. In fact, the mother’s domestic devotion and industriousness are not really appreciated by the husband. When the girl Tad tells him that her mother is doing the ironing – “*Nearly all the ironing*” she stresses, the father does not say anything but “*[looks] away quickly seeming to search for the dish on*

an iron frame in the corner under the tap, something he had arranged himself". The depiction of the husband's attitudes towards what the two women are doing may suggest a critique of the value of domestic servitude. The commitment to household duties may be appreciated in principle, but if too much time and energy are spent on it the wife may neglect her other feminine duties. This may result in a negative effect on the family harmony or the women themselves in terms of satisfaction or social inclusion. The mother tries her best to fulfil the expected duties of a housewife but it turns out that her efforts do not appear to make her husbands happy, and she herself does not appear to feel fulfilled, either. That she bursts into tears is an indicator of her frustration and dissatisfaction.

As discussed above, the portrayal of the mother in "The Dog That Squeaked" is of a momentarily rebellious female character who refuses her domestic roles and who does not comply with the expected rules of her culture. In this instance, housework is used negatively to display gender stereotypical oppression which evokes an unpleasant response from the mother. The following examples may illustrate the point.

DS92 *"I have to clean up the wash house," she said.*

DS92 *"I have to make it so neat [[you could do the washing in the middle of the night without a light]]. // Or*

serve cake and lemonade there // like Dolly McViety does."

DS102 *"I'm supposed to make the lemon tree grow // I suppose, on top of everything [[I have to do]]."*

According to Thomson and Martinet (1986, p.125), the structure "have to" expresses an external obligation, i.e. one imposed by external authority or circumstances. In this case, the use of "have to" indicates that the mother is under the pressure of social obligation to act as a good family woman. In other words, the mother is given the responsibility indirectly from the society and the patriarchal system *"to clean up the wash house"* or to make the house *"neat"*. The example [DS102] further confirms the social and familial expectations prescribed for her. Thomson and Martinet say that "to be supposed to" can mean to be expected or required, not only by duty, but also by law, morality, custom etc. (to do something). Thus, using the sarcastic expression of obligation in the mother's saying *"I am supposed to make the lemon tree grow"*, the author is stressing the fact that the mother's family, particularly her husband, is taking it for granted that it is her duty to make the lemon tree grow. By using the grammar of obligation in the structures "have to" and "supposed to do", the author implies social and familial pressures upon the mother.

Not only does the mother feel that she is being under-valued by her husband, she

also feels self-pity, as seen in the following instances.

DS72 *"But of course we haven't got a lovely tidy linen press like Dolly McViety."* [the mother **said**]

DS94 *"Lucky Dolly McViety," // the mother **said**, // "how long since we've had money [[to spare for a bottle of lemonade?]]"*

DS111 *"Dolly would be sitting in her front room now with her sewing," // the mother **said**.*

DS112 *"She [Dolly] never has to go to the yard."* [the mother **said**]

As a Sayer in these Verbal processes, the mother seems to speak to herself while she is doing the ironing. She envies Dolly because her husband thinks Dolly is a good housekeeper and he takes a drink of lemonade from her. The mother thinks this is a reflection on her: she might be financially and legally dependent on him but maybe he values Dolly more than her. Hearing the husband commenting on Dolly: *"Dolly made the lemonade from their lemons"* [DS97] and *"Dolly was a wonderful housekeeper"* [DS129], the mother thinks he is really criticizing her. As a rebellious reaction, she refuses to iron any of his clothes, throwing them back angrily into the basket.

The mother is also depicted as becoming terrified by the idea that her husband prefers the other woman though I do not think the story suggests that he is

unfaithful. In the story, the husband is portrayed as a family man who likes playing "cowtime" with his children and tries to humour his wife's irritability to prevent trouble. He finds himself at loggerheads with his rebellious wife because she wants to criticise him. He is also aware that his wife is emotionally vulnerable because she becomes upset when he goes to Dolly's house. She experiences strong emotions that lead to her impulses, as the following examples reveal:

DS24a *"He rode over to McViety's this morning // and he had lemonade in their wash house!"* [the mother **said**]

DS37 *"Dolly came along with a tray of cake and lemonade"* [the mother **said**]

DS39 *"I was here putting in a new row of beans, // the mother said with a big tremble in her voice."*

The employment of the Circumstance of manner *"with a big tremble in her voice"* indicates that the mother is repressing anger and anxiety. The pressure has built up in the mother's mind for quite a long time and comes out in the form of a complaint as in [DS39] above or of a sulk as in [DS103] *"Why didn't you marry Dolly McViety?"*. Through these examples, the mother is represented as rebelling both in actions and words. She expresses her disappointment as a way of protesting against what she sees as her unfair

treatment. Trying to fulfil the tasks of an Angel-in-the-House, the mother is caught in several negative circles. In accepting her domestic role, she has learned to repress her temper but this repression indicates that she is living an unfulfilling life of self-sacrifice and self-denial. She does not have time for herself because she is very busy ironing, planting seeds, and fixing fences. She feels she is not as lucky as Dolly whom she describes as “*sitting in her front room now with her sewing*”. To some extent, the difference in the characterization of the mother and Dolly may indicate the difference in economic status between these two women: the mother wants to do the same as Dolly, and indeed her husband puts pressure on her to be like Dolly, but her financial situation does not allow her to do so: as she asks herself “*How long since we’ve had money to spare for a bottle of lemonade?*”.

The above analysis of linguistic representation of the mother indicates that she is in a real dilemma trying to cope with the world of patriarchal attitudes. On the one hand, she has to deal with traditional duties that control her behaviour. On the other hand, she wants to follow her wish to do what she wants and enjoy life. This dilemma makes her feel trapped. The usage of the Circumstance of manner “*deeply*” in “*She sniffed deeply and began to sort the ironing*” [DS73] indicates not only the mother’s suffering but also her inability to effectively step out of the traditionally

expected roles. After her outburst, the mother controls her frustration and continues with her expected duties: she “*[begins] to sort the ironing*”. She feels the obligation to fulfil her feminine duties and to maintain her position as a domestic woman. The analysis also demonstrates that the mother’s rebellion is temporary and contained, not a considered decision to abandon conformity.

The mother’s concern about her role can be seen in the following Mental clause in which she plays the role of a Senser.

DS28 “*I can’t even **think** [[what we’ll have!]]*”(for the evening meal)

The example shows that the anger and concern about her feminine role seems to block the mother’s mind: she does not know what to prepare for the evening meal. The frustration associated with the repetition of her daily routines and being under-valued by her husband prevents her from fulfilling the duties of a nurturer. Or, maybe she does not even want to “*think*” about it. This is another indicator of her rebellious attitude to the domestic roles that she is expected to fulfil.

In short, the Transitivity analysis of Olga Masters’ “A Dog That Squeaked” portrays the mother as a hard-working but ‘angry’ housewife who just for a while wants to escape from the domestic obligations assigned to her. She frequently plays the role of an Actor in the many Material processes that describe her house-keeping activities such as “*do the*

ironing”, “*cut [the meat]*”, and “*took an armful of ironing*”. However, a close study of the Material clauses in which the mother participates articulates a different image of the mother: she is represented as an angry and rebellious housewife. This point can be illustrated in the portrayal of the mother who “*flung the father’s shirt*”, “*seiz[ed] the poker*”, and “*slapped the irons*”. Her protests against household chores can be seen through the use of Material processes that denote the tension embodied in these activities. She also verbally rejects her domestic roles by saying that she is not ironing the father’s clothes and not serving afternoon tea.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to linguistically analyse the representation of feminine anger in “A Dog That Squeaked” by Olga Masters, then to see if the female character (the mother) either submits to the patriarchal system, accepting her fate to be ‘in the kitchen’ without argument, or if she subverts male domination, following her own convictions and trying to gain control over her own lives. The question of whether she escapes in the negative circles of patriarchy and hierarchy is a big concern.

The analysis of the language used in the story demonstrates that the mother is rebellious but then still accepting. Since women are expected to stay in their home spheres, appointed to them by social evolution, and not to transgress into any

masculine territory, the mother has much hope of getting away from the pressure of these female roles. It would appear that she has no choice except to be tied to traditional feminine and domestic duties but the effect of this story may suggest or even insist that things need to change.

For different reasons and at a certain time, the mother in the story shows her dissatisfaction with life. The mother demonstrates her anger to her husband as a kind of protest which is metaphorically compared to the hesitant squeaks of a dog. The rebellion of this female protagonist is a linguistic manifestation of the author’s disagreement and distaste for social values and expectations maintained either by the community itself or their families that do not correspond with the character’s wishes. I also claim that in her actions she crosses the line and tries to build her own identity even though her actions are unwelcome and discouraged.

In conclusion, this Transitivity analysis of “A Dog That Squeaked” has illustrated how the embodiment of anger and rebellion chiefly juxtaposes contemporary and de-traditionalized femininity with normative and traditional conceptions of female identity. The study of Transitivity patterns contributes to the text’s re-positioning of the mother in relation to traditional ‘feminine’ and maternal roles. She is portrayed as an enthusiastic housewife but then she rebels to regain her identity and respect. The question of

whether she achieves her aim is still unresolved. The mother's rebellion is understandable in the sense that it is a way for her to protect her love and to have her voice heard: she wants to prove that she is a good housekeeper - an Angel-in-the-House, especially in a comparison with Dolly – the neighbour.

Abbreviation

DS "A Dog That Squeaked." *The Home Girls*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982. 76-83.

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