

THE WILD ZONE REDISCOVERED IN LISA SOLAND'S TEN-MINUTE PLAYS

Inam Hashim Hadi*

Department of English, College of Education for Human Sciences/Ibn-Rushd, University of Baghdad, Iraq

ABSTRACT

The wild zone represents the activities, experiences, and feelings of women that historians or male writers do not touch on. A gynocritic frames a cultural model of female literary identity that is inclusive of the biological, linguistic, and psychological situation of women in society. Following the perspective of Showalter's gynocriticism, the main concentrate of the present study is on the internalized consciousness or the experiences of the hidden space of Lisa Soland's heroines in her Ten-Minute plays. The main reason for choosing these short plays is first, because the writer is a woman. Second, she is persistent enough in writing about women's experiences in their socio-cultural context. The main finding of the research is that Soland, digging deep into the female wild zone, establishes a counter-culture based on self-confidence and assertiveness. She advocates an encouraging attitude to elevate female consciousness.

KEY WORDS: Wildzone, Elain Showalter, gynocriticism, women culture, Lisa Soland, Ten-Minute Plays.

INTRODUCTION

The female identity has been a controversial issue throughout a long period of time. Women, especially women writers, feel responsible to reconstruct women's status away from the archetypal image of women in the public arena.

In their attempt to find their way within the established canon of male authors, women writers try to create new consciousness. They let go of the concept of women as the "Other", as described by Simone de Beauvoir. The latter believes that: "since the female is not male ... she becomes the Other, an object whose existence is defined and interpreted by the dominant male"

(Bressler, 2007:173). Women writers start writing feminine texts given women prominence. Moreover, feminist criticism attempts to reveal facts about the patriarchal ideology that were established long ago, discriminating and marginalizing women. Nayar Pramod K. says that, "Feminist criticism seeks to uncover the ideology of patriarchal society in works of art" (2006: 83). Major modernist female writers devoted themselves to bring about a revolution in the field of women's culture. They try to revalidate undervalued female literary tradition that has

been misinterpreted by male writers long ago. These women writers are capable of creating a culture of their own that encompasses women's body, language, and psychology. This socio-cultural viewpoint is, however, very influential in constructing a female identity and in understanding the world of woman as is seen by women writers. The most famous modern female writers included Hilda Doolittle (H.D), Gertrude Stein, Katherine Mansfield, Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, Simone de Beauvoir and Elaine Showalter.

SHOWALTER AND GYNOCRITICISM

Elaine Showalter (1941), the American literary critic and feminist, is preoccupied with the cultural and social issues that are related to women. She is one of the founders of feminist literary criticism in the United States academia, developing the concept and practice of gynocritics. Showalter believes that gynocriticism must: "Look at the history, styles, themes, genres and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution of a female literary tradition" (Showalter, 1981: 184-5). Thus, Showalter seeks a shift of attention from 'andro-texts' (books by men) to 'gynotexts' (books by women) (Barry, 2002: 123).

Showalter's gynocriticism encompasses four models where women's writing is to be based on; the biological, linguistic, psychoanalytic, and cultural. Each one of these models emphasizes a new wave in women's criticism that basically aims to construct a new concept of woman. Mary Daly and Adrienne Rich advocate the biological models in their feminine criticism. They attempt a reduction of gender differences by emphasizing "femaleness". They believe that the male hatred for women is a gender-specific trait. Men's childless state and their dependency on the female for reproduction create in them the desire to control and dominate. Thus, "the only real difference, the only difference that can change a person's ontological placement on Daly's dichotomous map, is sex difference. Our essence is defined here, in our sex, from which flow all the facts about us" (Alcoff, 1988: 409). Rich's concept of woman is similar to Daly's. She argues that both female body and female consciousness are inseparable. They are the key to define female attributes. Women, Rich explains, are not only nurturers, as patriarchal society used to define them, but are more complex entities whose "wild zone" needs to be rediscovered to help them create a culture of their own. Thus she asks women to reconsider their essence since it is the bases for their identity. She states that: "The repossession by women of our bodies will bring ...essential change to human society ... in such a world women will truly create new life, bringing forth not only children ...but the visions, and the thinking, necessary to sustain, console and alter human existence" (Rich, 1977: 292).

However, the biological model, Showalter believes, if only related to anatomy, will emphasize the theme of otherness that might endanger the search for female identity. As for the linguistic model, Helene Cixous, the French psychoanalytic feminist, believes that women's emancipation from the patriarchy dominance should be via language. The world is seen as a polar oppositewhere the male is considered as superior to the female. Cixous demands that women should resist this patriarchal assumption. She argues that woman, as an embodiment of life-energy and power, needs to be released from her captivity within this "patriarchal binary thought". Thus, she concludes that women "need a new, feminine language that undermines or eliminates the patriarchal binary thinking that oppresses and silences women" (Tyson, 2006: 100). However, the linguistic model, like the biological one, is not the only domain that a women writer should adapt to assert a female identity. Showalter believes that the appropriate task for feminist criticism is not to find a female language system away from the already male-constructed one, but to break their silence through a selection from the available lexical range. She states that "rather than wishing to limit women's linguistic range, we must fight to open and extend it ... women's literature is still haunted by the ghosts of repressed language" (Showalter, 1981: 193). Psychoanalytic model, on the other hand, is also denied by Showalter as being inadequate to define feminist criticism. It emphasizes a double sense of Lacanian lack. Jacques Lacan theorizes that the entry into the symbolic order (the acquisition of language) will create gender identity. Since the society is based on a patriarchal culture, the female will eventually experience a double sense of loss; as a human being and as a female. Lois Tyson in his book *Critical Theory Today* explains this Symbolic Order as,

[A] world of loss and lack. We've exiled the Imaginary Order, the world in which we had the illusion of fulfillment and control. We now inhabit a world in which others have needs, desires, and fears that limit the ways in which and the extent to which we can attend our own needs, desires, and fears. There is no more comforting fantasy of complete control. This new world is one in which there are rules we must obey and restrictions by which we must abide (2006: 30).

Thus, these restrictions and rules will be decisive in shaping women's struggle for creativity and self-definition. However, for Showalter psychoanalysis is interwoven with society's culture. She believes that the influence of all the aforementioned models is to be guided by the cultural situation of a woman. Women's culture redefines women's activities and goals from a women centered point of view. Till the advent of 20th century the female experiences had been excluded from history. Woman culture is muted by this history. For Showalter "class, race, nationality, and history are literary determinants as significant as gender" (Showalter, 1981: 197). Thus, the collective experience of individual women writers will be enlisted under the cultural whole and it will bind them together over time and space. Nevertheless, it is women writer's role to create a cultural history of their own based on actual women experiences or their

unconscious self that is still unseen by men. Showalter explains the relationship between that unseen part of the female and the dominant male group through Edwin Ardener's "wild zone", as he called it. It is a hidden area out of male boundaries; an invisible aspect of female life style that is intangible for men. It is that part of women's life which has not found any expression throughout history. Only women have full control over this zone (Showalter, 1981: 200-201).

Still, Showalter believes that the cultural model might help the reader to infer a "double-voiced discourse" related to both genders. She approves the fact that there are no pure feminine texts throughout history. The duty of gynocriticism is thus to detect new meanings, that were previously hidden, waiting to be exposed and labeled as women literature. Showalter's cultural model of gynocriticism is decisive in illustrating the female writers' new tendencies concerning writing about women's wild zone where the female authentic self exists. Following this model, Showalter intends a shift from an androcentric to a gynocentric feminist criticism (Chaudhary, 2013: 175). Instead of attacking the male stereotypes of the world, women writers of the 1970s try to switch their focus into presenting new records of women's experiences whether they cope with the established patriarchal code of behavior or not. Thus, these women writers intend to re-enter the literary canon that they long ago have deliberately been excluded from by the male writers.

However, Showalter concludes that the theory based on the cultural model is the most inclusive one, since it "incorporates ideas about women's body, language, and psyche but interprets them in relation to the social contexts in which they occur" (Chaudhary, 2013: 176). She asserts the importance of creating a female tradition that will endow women with the power they need to challenge the dominant male group and to regain their sense of identity.

I. LISA SOLAND'S FEMALE CULTURE

Lisa Soland is an American teacher, playwright, and artist. She graduated from Florida State University with a BFA in acting. She is the creator of the All Original Playwrights Workshop (AOPW). As a woman and as a woman writer, Soland establishes for herself a status away from the archetypal image of women of the first and second waves of feminism. She is a member of The Dramatists Guild of America, The Alliance of Los Angeles Playwrights and the International Centre for Women Playwrights. Thus, Soland's higher education and her career as a playwright feed her earnest and eager desire to establish a new women's culture and to redefine women's activities and goals from a female centered point of view. Gerda Lerner asserts, in her book *The Majority Finds Its Past*, the importance of female culture when she says:

We must, for a time, focus on a *woman-centered* inquiry, considering the possibility of the existence of a female culture *within* the general culture shared by men and women. History must include an account of the female experience

over time and should include the development of feminist consciousness as an essential aspect of women's past" (1979: 178).

Soland belongs to the third wave feminism, the female phase. It is an era of women's liberation where the female identity has almost freed itself from the patriarchal oppression. Soland is known for having a unique voice for telling the truth. She seeks the truth in whatever story she explores. She condemns women's holding of their real needs and desires. Her talent to speak the truth is transformed to her character's creation. In a letter of recommendation, Chip Chalmers; director and filmmaker, recommends Soland stating that she has a unique voice for telling the truth. Like her, "each character, a good, bad, or indifferent person ... has a definite and individual voice" (qtd. in Arnould, 3). She encourages her students to write their stories and be creative like herself. In her ten-minute plays, Soland releases all the feminine voices in her head. In each play, she presents a new concept of women; a new experience. As a female writer, Soland maintains a philosophy based on the concept of perfectibility. She believes that women should work hard to perfect their deficiencies. She says:

God actually equips us with everything we need to get out of our baskets and do what it is that we're here to do. But it's in our limited thinking that we look in the mirror and see with our human eyes, 'I'm not done, I'm not finished. There's something not perfect about me so I'm not going to get on with the work that I'm given to do. I'm going to sit and wait.' And I think that's something that unrightly inhibits us (qtd. in Albert, 2014: 5).

However, Soland believes that human beings, especially women, do not have to be negative and wait for miracles to happen to endow them their own identity or happiness. Instead, all they have to do is to believe that they are already endowed with everything they need to make the required change. Her philosophy is "to add light to this increasingly challenging world rather than negativity" (qtd. in Albert, 2014: 5). Soland bases her ten-minute plays on this philosophy, establishing, thus, a new ideology for women writers to follow; getting out of the box. She rediscovers the wild zone of each one of her female character to help them find their identity. Thus, she attempts to mute the negative voices that long ago have been established in the patriarchal society.

II. THE WILD ZONE OF SOLAND'S FEMALE CHARACTERS

The modern business woman introduced by Soland, in her play *The Man in the Gray Suit* (2008), personifies Soland's philosophy concerning women's search for happiness. The play is based on an interior monologue of a modern business woman as her description indicates, "business suit, overcoat, briefcase-type purse, cell phone, energy bar and wrist watch" (Soland,

2009: 11). Gloria, or as Soland named her, Woman, seems to suffer from a lack of communication and friendship. She says to Man “Women are different in that way. We need communication” (Soland, 2009: 15). Thus, she breaks her inner silence and starts a conversation with a statue of a man wearing gray suit. The philosophical bent of the play asserts the idea that our perception of life changes throughout time, due to the different experiences that one might encounter. After her encounter with the statue of the man, the Woman realizes that there are missing things in her life and that if she perceives them, she will be happy and have a sense of existence. Art is talking, a fact that she does not usually conceive, till she stops for a while to consider her needs. Women need to stop thinking for a while and just enjoy the moment that might provide them with a new positive perspective to life.

Man. Don’t think so much.

Woman. Now you’re trying to get me to not think.

Man. That would be nice, wouldn’t it?

Woman. Not to think? I thought it was the other way around.

Man. For some, yes. But not me. Not now. I mean, really. What would you rather do, Gloria? Rest by thinking or rest by *not* thinking?

Woman. To be perfectly honest, I’d like to *not* think (Soland, 2009:20).

Soland believes that beautiful things in our life, symbolizes by Art in this play, sometimes have a healing effect. She seems to be influenced by the playwright Mary Chase who writes *Harvey* (1944). Chase believes that “Healing laughter is in order... The world has need of it” (qtd. in Martinson, 2017: 1). Soland refers to Chase’s play *Harvey* when Gloria, lost in thought, compares Man to the invisible rabbit, Harvey, and herself to Jimmy Stewart. She says: “This is like that rabbit thing, right? You’re like that rabbit and I’m Jimmy Stewart” (Soland, 2009: 19). Stewart is the actor who plays the role of Elwood, the eccentric and different, who starts a friendship with a rabbit. Like Elwood, Gloria finds happiness in her new friendship with Art, even though it exists only in her imagination. She finds in him a healing sense of happiness.

The idea of the invisible rabbit has its roots in Irish folklore. It symbolizes a pooka, a creature that assumes different forms and may bring good or bad fortune. In her article entitled “*The Pooka (Pooka) in Irish Folklore*”, Serena Ó Longáin demonstrates that the Pooka loves “to chat and will happily stop and ‘shoot the breeze’ with you, sometimes giving great advice and making exceptional prophecies” (2016:3). The statue of Man is just like this pooka. It loves to chat and is sometimes giving great advice to Gloria who finally seems to regain a sense of existence that brings happiness back to her.

Soland’s imagination sets its new journey into the ‘wild zone’ to objectify another female experience as part of the new culture that she aspires to spread. Soland’s play, *Different* (2005), presents two young women in a gym. They start a conversation to disclose the reason why one of

them dislikes the other. Much like *The Man in the Gray Suit*, Soland's *Differentis* based on discussion that reveals Soland's philosophy concerning women's search for identity and perfection. The philosophical argument of the two characters is centered on the term, narcissism. Susan asks for Chris's help to make her grow and be strong, she says: "How is someone like me ever going to grow, if someone like you doesn't help?" (Soland, 2009: 31). Chris recommends narcissism. "The word narcissist comes from Narcissus who was this Greek kid who basically falls in love with his reflection in a pool" (Soland, 2009: 32). Women, Soland believes, should reconcile with their own reflection. Susan's difference from Chris is related to her low sense of self-esteem and she is unable to cope with anxiety. Chris says: "the women I like have restraint" (Soland, 2009: 30). Thus, a moderate amount of the right kind of narcissism is recommended to help Susan recapture her self-esteem and control over her desires and needs. Rev Sheri Heller in his article "*The Gift of Healthy Narcissism*" approves the words of Heinz Kohut (1913-1981), the Austrian-American psychoanalyst, who was best known for his development of self psychology. The latter affirms that if "narcissistic needs were adequately fulfilled, the developmental childhood stages of autonomy, initiative, competence, identity and intimacy would be satisfied and healthy self-esteem would result" (Heller, 2015: 1). Consequently, the narcissistic experience is highly recommended to the self-formation process. Woman's love for herself is one of the cornerstones that she can start her race from to pursue an aim in life. Thus, though the reader might interpret the story as related to a love triangle, Soland aims to give it a deeper philosophical bent; a feminine quest. The difference between Chris and Susan is the word *restraint*. Lack of self-control is disastrous and disadvantageous. Thus, Soland invites women to have a cohesive and solid sense of self to discard patriarchal dominance.

Soland's narcissistic experience is re-emphasized once more in her play *Red Roses* (2005). However, meanwhile it is a destructive one. It is related to infidelity. Soland, in this play, creates a double-voiced discourse where the dominant and muted story is told together. Her heroine, Julie, displays a good deal of modern independence. Yet, she exceeds her limits and violates patriarchal sexual taboos; she engages in extramarital affair. Although Soland's *Red Roses* expresses dissolution from the patriarchal gender role, yet the playwright delves deeper than that. She tries an insightful examination on the nature of love and communication that might help women sustain a balanced and satisfying existence and identity. *Red Roses* considers woman's status in modern life, that no more embodies Beauvoir's contingent being. The play discusses the married life of Julie, a forty year-old smart and successful writer and her husband Robert, who is described as "a work-at-home father" (Soland, 2009: 37), by necessity. The wife receives red roses as a gift from her lover, yet they are mistakenly delivered to the husband at home. The title words, Red Roses, are interpreted as "the ultimate in completing the tender passion. Usually sent following a night of untamed lovemaking" (Soland, 2009: 40).

The Writer's attitude is, however, ambiguous since there is an unexpected twist at the end of the play. Infidelity is treated differently by Soland than the expected norm. The husband forgives

his wife at the end of the play. He tries to resume his married life when “together they twist and pull at them [jeans], trying to rid them of their pressed seams” (Soland, 2009: 48). Traditionally, it was the woman who used to be marginalized and treated with infidelity by man. She has to forgive all the time because man’s infidelity is not a taboo the way woman’s is. Soland uses the jeans as a metaphor for Robert’s lost sense of patriarchy. He revolutionized his wife’s attempts to reverse his patriarchal ideology by marginalizing him. He says “DON’T PRESS MY JEANS” (Soland, 2009: 44).

Still, Julie ascribes her infidelity to a lack of communication, not to a lack of love as the husband concludes when he says: “I always thought that if I opened myself up... If I was more sensitive, more understanding... But it isn’t enough. Love isn’t enough” (Soland, 2009: 45). Indeed, Soland pinpoints a deeper and more genuine reason behind Julie’s infidelity; it is woman’s lost sense of self-importance. Despite her success as a writer, Julie could not fully capture her weight in society. When Robert asks her to be decisive with her publishers, she says: “I don’t know if I have that kind of weight yet” (Soland, 2009: 46). Once more, she affirms her sense of inferiority when she waives decision-making for her husband. She says: “I’ll do whatever you tell me” (Soland, 2009: 46).

Julie’s wild zone is deliberately been conquered by Soland who tries to develop a feminist consciousness; to define and order the principles that a woman should believe in, to create a female culture within the general culture shared by men and women. She tries, to use Elaine Showalter’s words, to “bring into being the symbolic weight of female consciousness, to make the invisible visible, to make the silent speak (1981: 201). Women, Soland believes, should bridge this gender gap to produce a more genuine feminine culture.

Soland draws a new countenance of a female image in her play *The Same Thing* (2005). The play is about a woman, Jean, and a man, Gene; who are just too alike, as the title suggests. Like Gloria in Soland’s *The Man in the Gray Suit*, Jean needs to break her inner silence and unleash her imagination to retrieve her female identity and be happy. Jean is reluctant to re-enter the feminine world. She enclosed herself within the circle of marginalization and self-denial in the masculine society and is afraid of any change. She says: “new things are very hard for me” (Soland, 2009: 60). Soland places Jean in a critical situation to force her make a choice in life. Jean has to learn how to receive and be happy not only to sacrifice all the time, as the man suggests: “since we are by nature, givers, we would have to then learn to receive” (Soland, 2009: 59). Gene is an embodiment of the patriarchal principles that inspires Jean to follow his footsteps to create her private feminine principles as well. Like him, she decides never to walk away from her dreams. He tells her: “I would never walk away from anything that had a pinch of a promise that by moving forward, I would be more happy” (Soland, 2009: 60).

However, Soland’s keyword in this play is tango. It is the new experience that Jean intends to experiment to sweep her back into the world of childhood. At the end of the play the woman resolves to dance tango with the man. “I don’t mind the same thing ... Care for a tango?”

(Soland, 2009: 61). Tango is a popular dance well known and basically originated in Buenos Aires. Nevertheless, though tangos are highly opposed by feminists, as it is the performance par excellence of gender inequality, Soland employs it audaciously. She seems to contradict her feminist principles. However, Soland's ambiguous attitude is clearly explained by Kathy Davis; a critical feminist scholar. Davis' article "*Should a feminist dance tango?*" discusses the importance of passion, any passion – including feminine passionate love for dancing tango. She discusses various feminist critical opinions where some approve and others disapprove tango. She mentions that both Paula Villa and Marta Savigliano left little doubt about the answer to her question whether a feminist should dance tango? Villa and Savigliano state that: "a feminist has no business dancing tango unless she is prepared to de-gender and de-colonize it, and preferably both" (qtd. in Davis, 2015:8) This is exactly what Jean has been doing. She chooses to dance following her own rules, as explained by the stage direction "*she leads and the two dance stage right and then he leads and the two dance stage left*" (Soland, 2009: 61). She condones the problematic aspects of the traditional gender role in dancing Tango when she takes the leading role, instead of her male partner.

Moreover, it is the moment of isolation that tango provides for Jean, who needs it urgently to abandon the routine in her life and to regain her sense of self. Davis asserts the importance of such passion for tango when she mentions that "such passions provoke a person to abandon the routines of ordinary life, give up the familiar in order to do something that is experienced as 'what s/he was always meant to do' (but had not yet dared)" (2015: 15). Soland believes that Jean, like all the women around the world, needs to reconsider her choices in life; to bring a particular kind of engagement with the world around her. She has to learn to be committed not only to others, but to her individual freedom and happiness as well.

Soland's philosophy in *The Same Thing*, concerning women's needs to reconsider or even direct their choices in life to approach happiness, is re-enforced in her play *Knots* (2006). However, Soland employs flashback, a wonderful narrative device, to help the audience visualize the emotional knots that Karen suffers from. These knots deprive Karen a happy progressive future. Still, the philosophical argument of the play moves farther than the failed romance of a female college student. The inner journeying beyond time allows us a view into a past event that seems to be locked. When young, Karen perceives life in a different way than in old age. Her lies concerning her love to Doug have been transformed into knots that leave her psychologically bound forever, unless she chooses to dismantle these knots. However, despite the fact that the play revolves around love, yet it is not the mutual love, but self-love. Karen tries to untangle the threads of her yarn by navigating into the world of memories. She addresses the young Karen, through the flashback technique, and advises her to reconsider her commitments that should be directed towards herself not towards Doug. She says: "Remember what that feels like to be honest and free and not have to lie? Not have to change yourself to make something work?"

Not have totie yourself up into knots ... be clear. Atleast in your own head, please be clear about what it is you love” (Soland, 2009: 71).

Thus, the older woman adds an insight into young Karen’s mindset. It is Soland’s attempt to emphasize young Karen’s and every woman’s sense of self, since it is their gate to free themselves from the vertex of patriarchal society. Negative complexes, like the knots that young Karen attempts to evolve unconsciously, plague the older woman’s life. After all, the older woman’s attempts to erase the lies of the past have failed. She has to live with these knots forever. Young Karen insists on deceiving Doug by telling him that she loves him: “Doug I love you ... just because I can’t say it the same way you can ... [it] doesn’t mean that my words mean any less. Love is love” (Soland, 2009: 71). Soland has committed herself to demonstrate and explain the psychological knots and their repercussions. She concludes that reconciliation with oneself is the key to woman’s freedom and happiness in a patriarchal society. The young Karen, Like Jean in *The Same Thing*, needs to exceed the fears where she imprisoned herself within. Yet, while Jean expresses a willingness to change and to be free, Karen does not. Karen’s lies on Doug constitute an unprocessed life experience to the older woman. The latter tries to reconcile her past, to untangle the yarn to bring back her self-regulation, but in vain.

Soland’s final play in this collection is *Come to the Garden* (2006). It is an inspirational story about being hopeful. The play simulates the writer’s philosophy concerning hope. She says: “we get discouraged. There are negative voices around us telling us it’s a hopeless pursuit. But the truth is, it’s not hopeless to pursue a life of service. ... you can either ignore the voice or pursue what’s right in your life in spite of the voices” (qtd. in Albert, 2013:6). The question is, what is the connection between the wife and the garden? Gardens, explains Sheila TCavangh; professor of English at Emory University, “feature prominently in literature because they offer an abundant metaphoric range of images that help propel fictive, poetic and dramatic narratives” (qtd. in Thorpe, 2016: 1). Thus, the garden is used metaphorically by Soland to help her delve deeply into the psyche of the wife. The latter has recently been experienced three successive miscarriages that left her completely broken. She is so desperate and needs her husband’s support to bring her back to life. The husband’s key answer to his wife’s emotional destruction is nature represented by the garden. Soland’s spontaneous and tightly woven dialogue enables the reader to examine the parallels between the wife and the garden. The latter says:

Garden never produces anything. Nothing at all. I work, I slave. And the corn gets knee high by the fourth of July and then it dies ... and the tomatoes. So large. So pregnant with promise and then, just before we’re to pick them, ... some deviant, evil thing starts tearing away at it ... All that promise just flushed down the toilet ... before we even have time to name it, it’s gone (Soland, 2009: 80).

Obviously, the wife does not specifically utter what happened to her, instead several images are borrowed cleverly from the garden to explain the situation and to demonstrate the ultimate aim of the whole story; the rebirth of HOPE. Though *Life*, represented by the garden in this play, is full of ups and downs, yet Soland still cops with her philosophy of hope. She intends to add light to the world, not negativity. She uplifts her heroine's spirit by admitting her again to the world of the garden. The husband leads his wife and tells her that "the turnips are ready to be pulled, there's zucchini, too much zucchini, actually. You haven't been picking it ... and there're a ton of tomatoes (Soland, 2009:82). The garden is full of delightful images of rebirth; it is the image of the fertile world, not the barn one that the wife and all the women should keep on watching to be hopeful.

CONCLUSION

In a nutshell, Lisa Soland proves herself as one of the successful woman writers who have created for themselves a place within the established canon of male authors. She is conscious of her role in writing a literature that resists the dominance of a patriarchal society and the predominant concept of woman as (Other). Yet, unlike women writers of the first and the second waves of feminist criticism, she tries to create a new female culture based on true to life women experiences, whether they cope with the established patriarchal code of behavior or not. According to Soland, women have to be seen through female, not the male, lenses. Her ten-minute plays display what has been lost in women's life in modern age. Thus, she goes back to the wild zone of female experience to break women's silence and make the invisible visible.

Soland's viewpoint differs from that of the male writers. For her, gender has been culturally, not biologically produced, and eventually it is liable to change. She condemns women's passive reaction to life and asserts the need to destroy older tradition when women were totally confined themselves to the domestic household. Her heroines are independent; they do not need the prince charming, like Cinderella, to live happily ever after. Instead, they follow their innate instinct to make the required change in their life. Soland's ten-minute plays establish a counter-culture based on self-confidence and assertiveness. In context, she no longer advocates the traditional concept of good or bad woman or the projections of patriarchal male desire. In text, her plays are beautifully written. They are based on discussions that hold within their folds the writer's philosophy and culture that distinguish her among the feminine writers of her age. Her heroines are true to life characters who reflect Soland's unique voice for telling the truth. The female images presented in her ten-minute plays are varied, yet they are united by a new culture; a feminine one. Nevertheless, though Soland tries to feminize her society's culture in her plays, yet, she intends no enmity to the masculine world. She does not criticize men in her plays, but she, sometimes, employs them to make perfect the image of her heroines. After all, Soland's main

concern, as a female writer, is to create a wild zone of female experiences that reflect a uniquely female culture.

REFERENCES

Albert, L. B. (2013). Lessons from an Angel: Soland to present program on new book Tuesday. *Climbing Angel Publishing*. 1-11. Retrieved 9 February, 2018 from <http://lissoland.com/climbing-angel-publishing>

Albert, L. B. (2014). Perfect as you are: 'Unmade Moose' Finds Purpose in New Children's Book. *Climbing Angel Publishing*. 1-11. Retrieved 9 February, 2018 from <http://lissoland.com/climbing-angel-publishing>.

Alcoff, L. (1988). Cultural feminism versus post-structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory. *The University of Chicago Press Journal*. Volume 13. No. 3, 405-436. Retrieved 5 June, 2018 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174166?>

Arnault, D. Teaching: Letters of Recommendation and Testimonies. *Climbing Angel Publishing*. 1-7. Retrieved 9 February, 2018 from <http://lissoland.com/teaching---workshops>.

Barry, P. (2002). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 2nd Edition. USA: Manchester University Press.

Bressler, C. E. (2007). *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. (4th ed.). New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Chaudhary, K. (2013). Elaine Showalter's Critical Examination of the Essay – Feminist Criticism in Wilderness. *Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL)*, 4, 174-177.

Davis, K. (2015). Should a Feminist Dance Tango? Some Reflections on the Experience and Politics of Passion. *Feminist Theory*. Volume 16.1, 3-21.

Gerda L. (1979). *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

Heller, R. S. (2015). The Gift of Healthy Narcissism. *Psych Central*. 1-3. Retrieved 22 June, 2018 from <https://pro.psychcentral.com/the-gift-of-healthy-narcissism>.

Martinson, K. J. (2017). The Improbable Life of Mary Chase. *Court Theatre*. 1-4. Retrieved 28 June, 2018 from <https://www.courttheatre.org/about/blog/improbable-life-mary-chase/>

Ó Longáin, S. (2016). The Púca (Pooka) In Irish Folklore. *Your Irish Culture*. 1-11. Retrieved 20 July, 2018 from https://www.yourirish.com/folklore/irish-pookas_.

Pramod K., N. (2006). *Literary Theory Today*. New Delhi: Prestige.

Rich, A. (1977). *Of Woman Born*. New York: Bantam.

Showalter, E. (1981). Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness. *Critical Inquiry*. Volume.8.2, 179-205. Retrieved 5 February, 2018 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343159> .

Soland, L. (2009). *The Man in the Gray Suit and Other Short Plays*. USA: Samuel French.

Thorpe, C. (2016). Great Literary Gardens: from ‘Hamlet’ to ‘Lady Chatterley’s Lover’. *Financial Times*. 1-9. Retrieved 18 July, 2018 from https://www.ft.com/content/2c2d36ce-0e06-11e6-b41f-0beb7e589515_

Tyson, L. (2006). *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide*. (2nded.). USA: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.