

The Social Cults of Cinematic Gendered Violence: A Challenge and Transformation

Shareed Mohammed

The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine

Abstract

The modern female rape–revenge cinema polarizes gender relations as it endorses a misandrist logic and brutal forms of reprisal. Wilson Harris, the British/Guyanese fiction writer and theorist, argues that these hypnotic forms of female-revenge media are social cults of violence that generate a conflict of gender. Using the film, *I Spit on your Grave* and Rihanna’s music video *Man Down*, this research demonstrates that the female-revenge mediascape is prime corollary to the promotion of misandry and violent vigilante justice. The film theories of Claire Henry, Hilary Neroni, and Jean Baudrillard will undergird the arguments of this research. The research methodology for this study employs a narrative analysis intersected with the lens of Wilson Harris’s shamanistic ontology of gender. The findings of this paper reveal that a shamanic vision of gender could therapeutically convert the psychological imprisonment of cinematic rape-revenge violence.

Keywords: female-revenge cinema, social cults of violence, misandry, shamanistic ontology of gender

Introduction

Rape-revenge Mediascape: Visual Narratives of Misandry

Contemporary female-revenge cinema, where there is only a narrative trajectory of brutal rape and physical abuse accompanied by a climax of revenge and retribution, has understandably become a socially accepted form of misandry and violent vigilantism. Nathanson and Young (2012) define misandry as an intense hatred toward men which is a culturally propagated way of thinking. According to the

authors, the prevalence of misandrist logic is due to commercial opportunism in the contexts of both entertainment and advertising (Nathanson & Young, 2012). Significantly, the authors claim that misandry is much more sinister and destructive since it can generate a perverted ideology of justice which makes it synonymous with revenge (Nathanson & Young, 2012).

Studies have shown that 21st century rape-revenge media impacts societies' understanding of gendered violence and misandry (Ebert, 2010; Hess, 2017). Consequently, the media plays a crucial role in shaping public awareness and opinion on the issue as well as of female victims and male perpetrators. Looking at cinematic representations in general, we can observe that the commercial glorification of female victimhood and rape-revenge depicts rather similar visual narratives of misandry and a morally deceptive form of brutal vigilantism (Billson, 2018; Hahner & Varda, 2017). The female rape-revenge narrative constitutes a discursive practice in the media that perpetuates the rhetoric of violence overall. However, since these images of violent women are desensitized and disinhibited, they are constructed to signify masculinized female avengers and ultimately legitimize an artificial reality of shocking and gruesome restorative justice and misandrist logic (Minowa et al., 2014).

In fact, one merely has to look at the banality of the female revenge syndrome portrayed in films to think that gendered violence is equated with vigilante justice. Individuals who are immersed within the charismatic cinematic space of the avenging female are frequently engaged with violent vigilante images; which become catalysts to a heightened sense of "moral vigilantism" that apes real-life forms of restorative justice. Vigilantism and misandry in the female revenge mediascape are thus fallacies that resemble true justice. The present study discusses how the rape-revenge media promotes misandry and a morally deceptive form of brutal vigilantism through subtle patterns of violent female portrayals. Moreover, the study addresses the attempts at transforming such misandry and horrific vigilante justice through a narrative analysis method intersected with Wilson Harris's shamanistic ontology of gender.

A great deal of scholarly attention focuses on portrayals of the violent female in rape-revenge media. However, an indepth exploration of scholarly texts reveals that scant literature exists on explorations of transforming the violent female rhetoric in rape-revenge media. Arguably, there seems to be a precedence among scholars

not to discuss the value of transforming the deceptive misandrist logic and vigilante justice of the rape-revenge cinema. Few critics have approached the subject, with minimal discussion about the convertibility of such misandry and deceptive justice (Heller-Nicholas, 2011).

Writing about transforming the rhetoric of rape-revenge may be a formidable task, considering the deeply enshrined feminist support for the topic (Projanski, 2001). Anne Billson's, "How the rape-revenge movie became a feminist weapon for the #MeToo generation", is essential reading on the issue as it is dedicated to providing a solution to this visual discourse of misandry and vigilante justice. Billson aims to rescue mainstream female-revenge mediascape from this status by positioning her argument as a response to the tolerant and heightened sense of deceptive moral vigilantism and misandry in the midst of the celebrated cinematic female avenger. Billson (2018) claims that a redefinition of the rape-revenge cinema can be accomplished through the replacement of the male gaze (which stimulates a palatable misandry) with the female one. She further claims that this camera shift subverts the conventional paradigm that the cinematography of rape-revenge historically exploits.

Hence considering the lack of research that investigates methods to counteract and eradicate the embattled gendered relations found in the dark psychology of the female revenge media aesthetic, it is important to explore alternative solutions to the brutal rape-revenge films for instance the shamanistic dimension of gender proposed by the British/Guyanese fiction writer and theorist, Wilson Harris. Harris's decision to turn away from simply examining the vicious and exploitative examples of rape-revenge films and provide a therapeutic solution is commendable and significant. Harris's shamanistic ontology of gender provides strong precedence for a valuable solution to the horrific instances of the rape-revenge film.

The following research question is proposed given the review of literature on the ability of the rape revenge mediascape to encourage a morally deceptive ideology of brutal vigilantism

and misandrist logic among spectators: Does a shamanistic ontology of gender actively challenge the ideologies of brutal sanctioned retribution and misandrist logic that are promoted by Hollywood rape revenge media?

Methodology

Very little discourse and research exist to illuminate a solution for the ideological conditioning of the moral vigilantism and misandrist logic conveyed in the rape-revenge films. As such, the application of narrative criticism intersected with the lens of Wilson Harris's shamanistic ontology of gender is a significant method to subvert the socialization of contemporary violent female rhetoric of the rape-revenge cinema. By employing the theoretical insights of narrative criticism, this study investigates the common themes of brutal female rape-revenge observed in the media and identifies the extent to which these forms of media create empathy for the victims of sexual violence and the morally accepted ideology of vigilante justice. Wilson Harris's shamanistic ontology of gender will also provide the framework to reveal that a convertibility of the female-revenge cinema maybe possible. In so doing, this research highlights the ways in which adopting a shamanistic approach to cinematic gendered violence reveals new areas of counteracting the conditioned spectatorial appetite of vigilantism and misandry.

In this research, narrative analysis converges with Wilson Harris's shamanistic view of gender and is applied to two types of female-revenge media: a film, and a music video. Narrative analysis and shamanistic ontology of gender excavates an understanding of the extent to which brutal rape-revenge in these media creates a deceptive form of moral vigilantism and misandrist logic with the aim of transforming such ideology. Narrative criticism is used in this research to evaluate the shrouded subtleties and mechanisms of the female-revenge cinema that promotes a complacency of forms of brutal reprisals, and a shamanistic perspective of gender provides a significant component to deconstruct the ideology of a sanctioned retribution and misandry that have been deeply embedded in media portrayals of violent female rhetoric.

Narrative Analysis

Narrative criticism involves placing emphasis on various discourses that individuals engage with in order to understand conscious experiences (Rodden, 2008). The narrative paradigm was developed by the Communication Studies scholar Walter Fisher. Fisher (1984) affirms that narrative analysis was introduced to understand how communication is constructed and how the approach of engaging with various discourses informs the nature of rhetoric. Miller (2005) argues that various genres exist for the study of narrative criticism such as media, non-fiction, fiction, prose, poetry, myth, history, legend and even ancient beliefs. Therefore, due to this inclusion of myth and ancient belief, narrative theory can address the research question proposed in this study. Through investigations of the film "I Spit on your Grave" and the music video "Man Down", the goal of using the narrative paradigm is to understand to what extent it can offer a transformative approach given its focus on identifying the rhetoric of the female rape-revenge media.

The Lens of Wilson Harris's Shamanistic Ontology of Gender

The Caribbean theorist, Wilson Harris, is informed by a shamanistic ontology of gender. His shamanistic perspective of gender is a non-violent means of bringing social change to the violent female revenge genre of cinematography. His shamanic concept of gender is derived from the mythical Aztec androgynous deity Omoteotl. According to Harris (1981) in "The Making of Tradition", this god in pre-Columbian lore subsists on indeterminacy and diversity and was revered as the "formidable duality of ... male and female" (p. 95). This pre-Columbian myth is undoubtedly one of the diverse categories within narrative criticism and does indeed provide a signal for resolving the crisis in the female-revenge cinematic tradition. Harris (1999a) states that "The womb ... in shamanic lore transgresses the boundaries of individual gender" ("Apprenticeship to the Furies", p. 227). In line with a fluid notion of gender-and this is Harris's achievement-gender is not to be identified with separate male and female individuals locked into resolute

structures of masculinity and femininity but with elusive traces of all animate and inanimate parts of nature. As Harris (1999a) notes in "Apprenticeship to the Furies":

We need ... to see women-when portrayed as embodiments of the Furies-*not* as individual characters in the psychology of the novel or the cinema, but as human vessels inhabited by spectralities and concretions, by a cellular chemistry pertinent to the body of the womb in shamanic lore, the womb of nature and of civilization. Think of the human vessel in the genius of the Imagination symbolizing ingredients within itself and beyond itself which are richer and stranger than individual gender. When one looks deep into its cellular fabric-into the vessel of the womb in space and time in shamanic lore-one visualizes oceanic parables littered with stars and constellations, one visualizes the spring of rivers and veined leaves of forests that have cradled cultures since time began. (p. 227)

This cosmic sensation of gender seems remarkably difficult to grasp by our confines of a static binary gender paradigm, but it becomes genuinely meaningful when one comprehends and visualizes the interconnectedness of the human "cellular fabric". And it certainly is: "human vessels" all contain the same "cellular chemistry" or "ingredients." Such a perception creates a visual dissolution of individual male or female gender and simply reveals that the purity of gender duality is a masquerading social construct.

In short, Harris's shamanistic womb of nature informs the spiritual roots of social activism. We are dominated by this homogenous construct of gender, and therefore, we fail to see that this social imperative very often masks or shrouds from us the indeterminate and fluid roots of gender. Harris therefore unravels this gender masquerade, in some degree, by subverting its fixed frame, to lay bare an indeterminate and inconclusive cosmic unfathomable male/female — that *cannot* be polarized. This implies that dualisms between us/them, male/female or any other hierarchy that spiritually separates people is a trap.

It is significant to note that Wilson Harris formulated his shamanistic ontology of gender as a response to his profound interest in the ancient Greek mythical Furies or avenging females. The female revenge syndrome of the Furies led him to question and relate the myth's brutal polarization of gender to the equally manufactured Hollywood aesthetic of female-revenge violence. One of his prime assertions is that the "portrayal of women" in the modern female-revenge cinema is "archetypally consistent with the Furies whose vocation it was in classical myth to pursue the doers of unavenged crimes" ("Apprenticeship to the Furies", 1999a, p. 230). The "revenge-syndromes" of the mythical Furies — Tisiphone, Megaera and Alecto — according to Harris are "lifted into populist entertainment [to] create a money-making industry", but significantly "polarizes gender as it endorses the 'killing goddesses'" ("Apprenticeship to the Furies", 1999a, p. 230).

This cinematic conception of the Furies and its capacity to boost the logic of misandry and gender polarization is a problematic issue which is explicitly suggested in Harris's fictional novels, *The Carnival Trilogy*. The "hypnotic" sensation of female-revenge films, according to Harris, in *The Carnival Trilogy*, reduces individuals to pawns operating within "social cults of violence that feed on sex" (Harris, 1999b, p. 84). It is within such premises that Harris's film theory, offers much scope for authentic engagement and dialogue with the moral crisis of misandry associated with the historical problematic and the politics of the female vigilante cinema.

Significant literature has emerged discussing spirituality in the context of restorative justice. Several scholars define indigenous spiritual practice as credible solutions to crises within communities. These scholars also connect their definitions of spirituality and create them within the framework of equity, social justice and anti-oppression. Wane and Waterfall (2005) argue that "Spirituality is often culturally specific, meaning that its principles and practices were developed in response to the needs of a certain people in a specific environment (p.51). Similarly, Tisdell (1999) claims that, "for many, spirituality

is a grounding place for working for justice in the world" (p. 92). Stanczak and Miller (2002) also noted that engaged spirituality focuses on the therapeutic dimension. A framework that is in rapport with Harris's shamanic womb of nature. Stanczak and Miller (2002) claim that the therapeutic dimension of engaged spirituality is calming and provides a relief from a chaotic world or sense of peace in times of crisis. These perspectives of spirituality that are community-oriented and social-justice driven, therefore, substantiate the shamanistic praxis of Harris's womb of nature. But while there is a body of literature connecting spirituality and social change, there is a scarcity of research studies that focuses on the use of spiritual or shamanistic practices to convert the misandry and deceptive moral vigilantism of the rape-revenge mediascape. Therefore, this research addresses this gap.

Deceptive Rhetoric of Rape-revenge Violence

It is essential to gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which empathy is constructed for female victims and avengers of sexual abuse in media as well as the implications for cultivating messages of misandry and violent vigilantism. The female revenge films particularly with its often-explicit visual depictions of rape and violence may subconsciously, if not consciously, place spectators within a psychical prison of gendered violence. It becomes sealed stereotypes of female victimhood that inform an appetite for brutal forms of reprisals among unsuspecting consumers. In *Visual Representations of Violent Women*, the film critics, Minowa et al. (2014) contend that although the woman avenger kills the predatory male character, they are in fact both engulfed in voluntary crime. The woman avenger's violent reprisal, according to Minowa et al. (2014), is also a glaring form of "aestheticized" vigilantism that becomes a deceptive reality of free agency and feminist liberation.

The commanding yet subtle cinematic mechanisms of the female revenge media are capable of lodging a vigilante fixation into the minds of spectators. The galvanic momentum of brutal and "justified" revenge that tends to

seize the spectator, is established by camera mechanics. The film theorist Claire Henry (2014) states that the gripping realistic portraiture of revenge, explicitly revealed in some films reflects a different framing and function of the violence. According to Henry (2014), the camera work, for instance, in rape-revenge scenes repels the male gaze by placing the viewer in a fixed gravity of desexualization. This clever instrumentality, therefore, amplifies only the violent (instead of the sexual nature of sexual violence). There is a consequence to this, an unveiling of distorted reality in a warning Jean Baudrillard, the postmodern theorist, advances in his assessments of simulated images. In "Violence of the Virtual and Integral Reality" Baudrillard (2002) notes that:

The image is not related to the truth. It is related to appearances. Hence its magical affiliation with the illusion of the world-as-is – an affiliation which reminds us that, whatever its content, the real (like the worst) is never a certainty and that, perhaps the world may do without the real and the principle of reality. I believe that images affect us immediately.... So you can see there is a blur in the real. Reality is not focused. (p. 11)

By subtle degrees, unsuspecting viewers perceive that such rape-revenge narratives are justified dramatizations of sexual humiliations endured. The rape-revenge film becomes a commodification of the avenging female's suffering and survival as it positions the viewer to empathize with the victim and support her actions. Once the viewer, "trusts" the morality of this brutal reprisal, he or she may succumb to an inner powerlessness and disposition to discard the deceptive cinematic illusion of gendered violence. Rape-revenge films can therefore, in line with the argument of Minowa et al. (2014), endorse violent rape as both morally repugnant and a form of sanctioned retribution.

Avengers of Sexual Abuse: Messengers of Misandry

The Hollywood film *I Spit on Your Grave* (Monroe, 2010), contributes to the social understanding of the female revenge syndrome. The commercialized brutal forms of reprisals in

this film seem designed to fetishize the avenging female as an embodiment of the ideal female vigilante; an ideology of vigilantism that seeks to both resist and dismantle patriarchal oppression.

In this rape-revenge film, the avenging female becomes more of a vigilante fetish and less of a rape-survivor. There is no deviation from the deliberately ideological theme of the film's story—misandry and systematic violence against men. The protagonist's desexualized aesthetic deliberately counters toxic masculinity and is meant to repel the male gaze and male desire. The repulsive male gaze-oriented appeal favours the protagonist's masculine expressions of violence. Through this, the film promotes the vigilante ideology; an ideology that is meant to serve the shackled consumer appetite of brutal retributive justice. By shifting its focus to the avenging female's violence rather than the affection of the male gaze, the film objectifies, fetishizes, and desexualizes the violent female. As such, the film's commercial desexualization consequently triggers a misandrist logic rather than a feminist critique.

This capacity for dramatic visualization of brutal reprisal solidifies the iron-clad female-revenge syndrome, a complacent and egocentric code of vigilante justice. According to the Hollywood critic Roger Ebert (2010), the film, *I Spit on Your Grave*, endorsed an unwanted vigilante sensibility of "moral equivalency [or] getting even.... If I rape you, I have committed a crime. If you kill me, you have committed another one." Ebert's answer suggests that rape-revenge films may leave the audience angry, sad or nauseous, but nevertheless delivers satisfying retribution to all viewers. In other words, unsuspecting viewers, both male and female, may subconsciously support the same kinds of violence. This depiction of horrific reprisal killings exercised in the name of moral retribution is nevertheless, a moral deception. The woman avenger is a cinematic tool governed by absolute ruling images of retribution that serves to sustain a meaning of glorified and applauded violence. Such cinematic construction may apparently simplify, in the words of Roger Ebert,

a structure of "moral equivalency" (2010). It therefore voids all other restorative perspectives but its clarity of retribution and misandry at the same time ironically becomes an illusory form of lawful justice.

This illusion of moral equivalency pervades Rihanna's music video "Man Down" (Rihanna, 2011). In this Caribbean rape-revenge scenario, the aesthetic of female victimhood and rape survival is only simulated to enhance the psychology of brutal vigilantism that is extolled in the confession "Mama I just shot a man down" (Rihanna, 2011). Such language may only serve to destabilize the notion of the woman avenger as a feminist symbol. The fundamental ideology of the avenging woman therefore continues to be problematic within the context of feminist resistance. Instead of confronting patriarchal values, revenge consolidates them. Rather than exemplifying feminist challenge to male violence, the female becomes a symmetrical reflection of masculine aggression.

The mass media and its obsession with the female-revenge syndrome has assisted in terms of its breach in traditional ideals of femininity and deepened our inquiry into the ideological model of female vigilante violence. Such continuous and institutionalized frame not only seeks to cement together the intricacies of masculinity and femininity into a coherent singular social reality but also subverts dialogue that could signal an alternative to the complacent acceptance of the avenging female's sense of violent retribution. The danger here has been explicitly depicted by media theorist, Hilary Neroni in *The Violent Woman: Femininity, Narrative and Violence in Contemporary American Cinema*. Neroni (2005) argues that the femme fatale character on screen fissures the hubristic and uniform function of a predictable complementarity of the sexes:

Violence functions primarily within ideas of complementarity insofar as men are violent and women are spectators and guarantors of violence. When women react with violence ... they do not regain their femininity, but instead position themselves even further from that complementary relationship with masculinity.... Fictional violent women in film similarly disrupt a sense of complementarity and unsettle not

only the narrative (in its trajectory towards a romantic union) but also all the cultural nuances and gender definitions that film normally relies on. Violent women create a moment in which the trauma of sexual antagonism is revealed, and provoke a rash of "meaning making" that is trying to redefine gender (pp. 929–3).

The discontinuity of the stable binary between masculine violence/feminized victimhood of which Neroni speaks in tandem with her negation of enshrined institutional bias of male dominance is, however, ambiguous. The twenty-first century cinematic construction of violence, in some degree, galvanizes the crisis of gender polarization. Yet, there is also a crisis of responding to the transfigurative capacity of gendered violence that lie buried within the biased conditions of a patriarchal ideology. And it is such ideology, that may ultimately flatten the prospect of a challenge and transformation of the psychical imprisonment of gender violence. The ideological collision between a subversion of patriarchal logic and a violent heroine who refuses to abide by the stable binary of masculine violence/feminized victimhood is further articulated by Neroni (2005):

The femme fatale is an ambiguous character who varies dramatically from film to film.... She seems to be society's fantasy screen and, on the other hand, she seems to be hard rock of the real that threatens the stability of patriarchy. She is both a manifestation of society's fantasy of the underside of femininity (and thus in the service of ideology) and also something more elusive (and thus undeniably threatening to society) (p. 22).

Is it possible to convert such endemic deprivation through and beyond protest films of gendered violence into communities of hope and into abrupt alteration of enshrined sensibilities of vigilante behaviour? Such a question raises implications that are both realistic and troubling. The cinematic tool of a commanding female-revenge aesthetic may be difficult to challenge. It exercises itself as the ideally natural violent retribution. One that is also configured within the heteronormative confines of a capitalist cultural imperative. This entrenched value within complying societies consequently builds itself

into an equation of massive ideological strength. Such territorial power-structure was manifest in the largely ignored call for Rihanna's music video "Man Down" not to be aired on the BET television network (RAPUP, 2011).

This is the frontier of a Western capitalist agenda and stultified narrative tool that societies may never cross. The despair of gendered violence in the female revenge films may definitely become more and more marked in this millennium and the inner psychological conditioning of the vengeful vigilante will persist in a world that remains consistently a pawn to ideologies of division. Indeed, this seductive female-revenge narrative tool and medium of mind control, continues to arouse gender prejudices and misgivings. One is reminded of Rihanna's (2011) rape-victim "Man Down" video. The rape victim's portrayal resembles a realistic situation of victimization and rape survival, but it significantly engages with equally violent retribution in the senses Ebert (2010) implies in his review of *I Spit on Your Grave*.

A Shamanistic Ontology of Gender: Transformative Potential

In the context of Harris's mythical Furies, the female victim/vigilante 'dies' and yet she 'lives' in these films. She is half-alive, half-dead in the psyche of the spectator. This, however, is a false reality of rape-revenge that is shrouded by the female avenger's costume of immortality. It is a masquerade of revenge that reminds the viewer of the real-life atrocities committed against women solely by men. The costume of female vigilantism therefore excavates a collective memory of female victimhood and patriarchal oppression. The female avenger would seem to be the sine qua non of misandry and psychological persuasion of sanctioned retribution. This hypnotic costume gives her a central place in the blind consumption of female revenge. It is a centrality that is cemented and which deceptively supports a complete psychic institutionalization of vigilante killings.

Such reinforcement of the vengeful fury also casts a structured misconception of justice in the minds of women. Real women may choose to masquerade as agents of the 'Furies' for instance

a victim of domestic violence, another a rape-victim, another a victim of gender discrimination. Such 'hypnotized' women may assume they are above the law and they are the embodiments of the Furies who trade in 'moral equivalency.' Every vengeful act that counters toxic masculinity, in the female revenge film, is a debt repaid for past humiliations and deprivations.

Harris's film perspective is an imaginative yet critical approach that shares a correspondence, in some degree, with Neroni's theoretical constructs of the female-revenge cinema. Harris, and Neroni, different as they are from one another, magnify an awareness, in their association, to the threat that female-revenge cinema poses to vulnerable men and women. Yet there is a significant difference between Harris and Neroni. The female-revenge cinematic plot in Harris's theory and fiction is less submerged by the pathology of sanctioned gendered violence and more by regenerative desire profoundly rooted in a shamanistic therapeutic dimension. In Harris's shamanistic view of gender, the conversion of morally diseased cinematic gendered violence into restorative equilibrium of genders is implicit, in some degree. This is pertinent to the therapeutic shape that lies in Harris's theory, and it is what separates him from Neroni's pessimistic outlook towards a psychic imprisonment by the social cults of gendered violence.

The 'womb of nature' that 'transgresses the boundaries of individual gender', as Harris implies, may provide a subtle fissure within the gender polarization which comes to reside within the dark clutches of the female-revenge cinema. An alteration of gender perception comes into that fissure and as a consequence, generates a challenge within a deceptive pop culture of female vigilantism. Significantly, his 'womb of nature that transgresses individual gender' suspends such violence and offers a response to the fallacy of cinematic female vigilante justice that only resembles real and lawful justice. Therefore, Harris is committed to combining social justice with a shamanic perspective.

The strength and value of Harris's shamanic view of gender may be marginalized by our addiction to a complacent scientific logic of gender

binaries. In spite of the fact that the 'womb of nature' resides within a context of primitive cosmic belief and symbol, it nevertheless offers a vision of positive gender relations. It is a far-reaching perspective but inscribes a degree of resistance to the hypnotic apparatus of female-revenge films.

Remarkably, it is this resistance towards the female victim nemesis that can imbue the individual with the militancy of a self-critical and self-confessional sensation. By engaging with such self-critical reflections, individuals can begin to logically judge for themselves the moral deception associated with female revenge films. The arousal of such self-confession and self-judgement is the beginning of a conversion of simulated reality into the real world. It is a movement of vigilantism into restorative justice. One that challenges the spectres of the 'Furies' who reside at the heart of a commanding cinematic force. This is the frontier that must be crossed for every individual who seeks to break with a psyche of social cults of violence. And it is this heightened awareness of such deceptive film mechanisms that can also increase one's capacity to embrace Harris's shamanic approach to gender relations in the modern world. Such acceptance constitutes the first illumination of a conversion of simulated misandrist logic into the cosmic and therapeutic dimension of male and female gender. This transformative nature of Harris's womb of nature offers much scope for future investigations in the correlation between spirituality and social transformation. Therefore, in Harris's terms, the female revenge cinema with its immortalized 'Furies', even if in its potency for terror, paradoxically entertains the possible regeneration of cosmic love ("Apprenticeship to the Furies", 1999a, p. 227).

Final Insights

Historically, women have experienced male violence in every culture around the globe. These real-life narratives of brutal exploitation are mirrored in the female-revenge cinema that dominated the 21st century. That domination continues to evolve into further explicit

forms of female vigilante films. In order to preserve the stability of moral equivalency, the female-revenge cinema of the 21st century skillfully promotes that violence inflicted on women can only be vanquished by a higher authority of violence.

The deceptive cinematic strategies breed a sensibility of gendered violence and consequently places vulnerable males and females in the clutches of an absolute form of vigilantism. This is a type of simulated reality that ultimately apes therapeutic insight into the apparently real-life crisis of polarized gender relations. The images of sanctioned retribution summons a viewer's active participation and may encourage a pursuit of such behavior in real-life situations. This could also be mentally damaging for societies plagued by gendered violence. In the militarized cinematic world of divisive gender relations, the vengeful "furies" are hallowed. However, their deception of terror can be fissured until self-critical men and women visualize a cosmic sensation of gender. A visualization that releases the transformative capacity of shamanic wisdom to liberate themselves from the hypnotic snare of the female revenge film and its psyche of social cults of violence.

Shareed Mohammed (BA, MA, DipEd) is currently a PhD candidate in the Literatures in English programme at The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine Campus. Presently, he is conducting research for the Curator of the National Museum and Art Gallery of Trinidad and Tobago. He is currently researching the theory and practice of new museology and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. His most recent conference paper entitled "The Magical Logic of Voodoo Aesthetics" was presented at the British Art Network's Curating Magic Seminar in October 2022.

Email: smshareed3@gmail.com

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