

# Problematizing de Beauvoir's Myth of Woman through Gender Relation in David Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man"

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## Abstract

*Gender relation in society is complex and fluid. However, the complexity and fluidity are oversimplified by patriarchal systems in the form of binary oppositions. David Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is a poem portraying the complexity and fluidity of gender relation. Through several levels of reading the poem, gender relations between woman and man are proven to be dynamic, yet it is still dominated by patriarchal systems. This research attempts to problematize de Beauvoir's myth of woman which represents gender relation between woman and man in binary oppositions. This research applies deconstructive method. The deconstructive method includes close reading and deconstructive reading. It is applied to problematize de Beauvoir's myth of woman through Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man".*

*The first level of reading (close reading) in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" shows that the findings on the form, diction, word order, point of view, and tone versus the findings on metaphors, imagery, symbols, and allusions are contradictory. The second level of reading (explication) shows that Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" depicts some gender relation. Those are woman-man relation in speaking, never being in the same domain, performing different roles in the same domain, communicating, viewing gender relation, fighting, and considering night and sleep. The last level of reading is deconstructive reading. The first level of deconstructive reading questions the "objectivity" of portraying woman-man relation. The second level reveals the discontinuity of de Beauvoir's myth of woman to construct the gender relation in the poem in binary oppositions. The universalizing context and the absence of woman's voice in de Beauvoir's myth of woman reveal the question of the "objectivity" of the myth and how even though de Beauvoir's myth of woman stereotypes both genders unequally, woman remains the marginalized one.*

**Keywords:** *myth of woman, gender relation, deconstructive reading.*

## Introduction

West and Zimmerman define gender as something we are not born with nor have, but it is something we do (quoted in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 10). Sex, on the other hand, is a biological classification based on reproductive potential (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 10). However, the borderline between gender and sex is often overlapping. Therefore, Eckert and

McConnell-Ginet define gender as "the social elaboration of biological sex" (2003: 10).

The complexity of gender has been structured in the form of gender schema in which sex (males or females) determines gender (males as men and females as women) and gender determines gender roles (masculinity for men and femininity for women) (Devor, 1998: 27). Through the medium of language, moreover, the idea of gender identity is conceptualized as binary and permanent (Devor, 1998: 23). Therefore,

cross gender behaviors are considered as “inappropriate gender role behaviors” (Devor, 1998: 29). Nonetheless, some persons challenge the binary oppositions of gender roles by performing “gender roles” which are not “appropriate” for their genders; in other words, they blur the gender dividing line (Devor, 1989: 29). To simply determine gender representation, identity, and relation as binary, therefore, is not appropriate. Moreover, Devor suggests that masculine and feminine aspects are not the cause of status inequalities; rather it is the result (Devor, 1998: 29).

David Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is a good example of a literary work to show complexity of gender relation. It shows how through several levels of reading, the gender relation between woman and man is “dynamic”, yet in more critical readings, it is still dominated by the dominant patriarchal discourse. On the first level of reading, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” “seems” to portray gender relation between woman and man “objectively”. Moreover, the poem “seems” to take side on woman’s struggle for equality. Nevertheless, on the next (critical) level of readings, it betrays its first impression. As a result, gender relation in patriarchal society as reflected in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”, instead, tends to embrace gender patriarchal discourse in the form of de Beauvoir’s myth of woman.

Gender relation in society, in fact, is very complex and fluid, but patriarchal discourse puts gender relation merely in its simple binary oppositions. This complexity versus simplicity of gender relation is the case displayed by Lehman’s poem. Therefore, it is necessary to question the gender relation in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”. Devor suggests that it is possible to refer to “multitudinous exceptions to, and variations on” gender roles due to the neither complete nor uniform training to gender roles (1998: 32). Therefore, the major theme to discuss in this research is problematizing de Beauvoir’s myth of woman through the complexity and fluidity of gender relation revealed through different levels of reading in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”.

The main problems discussed throughout this research are: (1) what gender relation does Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” display on different levels of reading?; and, (2) how does the gender relation in Lehman’s poem contribute to the problematization of de Beauvoir’s myth of woman? This research applies feminist poststructuralism as the approach of the study. Feminist poststructuralism, not just poststructuralism, is chosen as the approach of the study because it concerns with gender issues and subjectivity (Humm, 1994: 138). The approach, therefore, agrees with Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”, the object of the study which concerns with gender issues and subjectivity.

In this research, feminist poststructuralism approach is applied to view the findings on close reading and deconstructive reading of Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” and correlate the findings to gender issues. Furthermore, the feminist poststructuralism approach is applied to extend the findings to problematize de Beauvoir’s myth of woman.

According to Kennedy and Gioia (2002: 630), close reading is the key method of formalist criticism used to unfold a poem. Close reading is conducted by analyzing a poem carefully step-by-step and exemplifying it (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 630). The purpose is to show how the combination of various elements in a literary work affects readers (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 630). As stated by Kennedy and Gioia (2002: 630), formalist criticism believes that various stylistic elements influence thematic elements, and vice versa; therefore, form and content cannot be separated because it will destroy meaning.

## **Gender Studies**

According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 10), sex is a biological classification based on reproductive potential. Meanwhile, gender is the social construction of elaborating biological sex (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 10). Gender is fluid since it is social, but since it is developed from biological sex, it often exaggerates the

biological sex difference (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 10).

Gender is divided into two domains: masculinity and femininity. Masculinity is the accepted gender identity for males, whereas femininity is the accepted one for females. The identities are often worked as “mirror images” in which masculinity is celebrated by dominance and aggression, whereas femininity is identified by passivity and submission (Devor, 1998: 28).

Society tends to demand the different gender performances from males and females which leads to reward, tolerate, or punish each individual for conforming or violating from the “accepted social norms” (Devor, 1998: 23). Those who violate the accepted gender norms are considered as “blurring the gender dividing lines” (Devor, 1998: 29). Consequently, as suggested by Devor (1998: 29), masculine and feminine aspects are the result, rather than the cause.

Gender identities and roles, therefore, are likely to refer to “multitudinous exceptions” and variations, for gender is neither complete nor uniform (Devor, 1998: 32); it is social and fluid (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet, 2003: 10).

### **Feminist Poststructuralism**

Feminist poststructuralism is a blend of two studies: feminism and poststructuralism. Poststructuralism is a form of rebellion against structuralism, for poststructuralists believe that structuralists are not consistent on viewing language on which their system is rooted (Barry, 1995: 61). Poststructuralists agree with structuralists in terms of their view about language: “that language doesn’t just reflect or record the world: rather, it shapes it, so that *how* we see is *what* we see” (Barry, 1995: 61). Although they agree on their view about language which shapes the way we see something, they come into completely different conclusion. According to Barry (1995: 61), because of this view, poststructuralists agree that we enter a world of complete uncertainty since we depend completely on linguistic processing to

perceive everything; there is no certain standard to measure.

Poststructuralism, according to Humm, focuses on “how literature and its languages work within particular cultural and educational framework” (1994: 134). As a result, we enter a “decentred universe” (Barry, 1995: 62). In a decentred universe, poststructuralism “deconstructs” structuralism’s belief in isolating systems from the authority and power structures that are responsible in controlling the systems (Humm, 1994: 134). Since this poststructuralism is combined with feminism, the study of feminist poststructuralism, therefore, focuses on issues of gender and subjectivity (Humm, 1994: 138).

Feminist poststructuralist applies the same tool as poststructuralist to debunk the “construction”. It is deconstruction. Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher acknowledged by American and French feminists for his ideas, is the one who initiated deconstruction (Humm, 1994: 146). According to Humm, deconstruction is

*the belief that universal concepts and the conventional boundaries between opposed concepts or binary opposites such as Black/white, man/woman, culture/nature must be taken apart, or deconstructed, in order for us to understand the (political) processes such terms represent (Humm, 1994: 146).*

Deconstruction deals with tearing apart production processes which make the oppositions seem natural (Humm, 1994: 146). Deconstruction is to see that the oppositions in literary products are unstable and debatable; they can go beyond their binary limits (Humm, 1994: 146-147). It is to uncover the ideological patterns that “hide” behind the aesthetic forms (Humm, 147). Since language is the media through which women are “deauthorised”, deconstruction is used as a tool to question how language produces male and female oppositions and how women are presented by the negative or supplementary term (Humm, 147-148).

## Simone de Beauvoir's Myth of Woman

According to de Beauvoir (1989: 248), woman is seen as flesh through the great collective myths. Woman is associated with nature: she is immanence; she reveals peace and harmony (de Beauvoir, 1989: 248). She often comes up as "the privileged Other" through whom man (the subject) conforms himself (de Beauvoir, 1989: 248). De Beauvoir divides the myth of woman into five categories. She takes the myth from five authors (Motherlant, Lawrence, Claudel, Breton, and Stendhal), which she considers to reflect the great collective myth of woman.

The first myth is depicted by Motherlant. As argued by de Beauvoir, in Motherlant, man is the transcendent, whereas woman is the immanent (de Beauvoir, 1989: 248-249). There is a distance to separate man from woman; he is in the sky, she is on earth (de Beauvoir, 1989: 248). Man takes woman by taking her up and throws her back, but he never lowers himself (de Beauvoir, 1989: 248-249).

The second myth is presented by Lawrence. Lawrence, according to de Beauvoir (1989: 249), considers the immanence presented by woman is absolutely necessary to support the life and power of phallus. Woman, therefore, is "a warm spring", the "deep richness", but woman should surrender her personal transcendence to suit herself to male (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249).

The third myth is portrayed by Claudel. Woman, for Claudel, should maintain life (passivity), but man should extend it through his activities (activity) (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). However, in Claudel, God is the only transcendence, while man and woman are equally immanence (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). It is up to each to exceed his/her earthly state; it, consequently, needs salvation (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249).

The fourth myth is represented by Breton. Breton is somehow the opposite of Motherland (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). Breton views transcendence as the trigger of "war, stupidity, bureaucracy, the negation

of anything human", whereas immanence is "pure, dark presence of the real" (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). For Breton, true transcendence is achieved by returning to immanence; therefore, woman is seen as revelation because "she tears him out of this subjectivity" (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249).

The last myth is delivered by Stendhal. For Stendhal, woman is seen the way man is seen: she is a transcendent, a free being (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). Man and woman in Stendhal, as de Beauvoir argues (1989: 249), are related to each other in "reciprocal relations". Woman is simply seen as the Other who is celebrated to give "a pungent saltiness" to it (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249).

The myth of woman in five authors summed up by de Beauvoir varies from Motherlant to Stendhal in terms of the way they see woman. However, de Beauvoir (1989: 251) claims that they are all the same in terms of seeing the ideal woman as "she who incarnates most exactly the Other capable of revealing him to himself". The myth is presented based on its benefits to man (de Beauvoir, 1989: 260). Patriarchal society uses the myth of woman as self-justification through which society implements laws and customs (de Beauvoir, 1989: 260). Motherlant looks for "animality" in woman; Lawrence asks woman to generally sum up the feminine sex; Claudel considers woman as "a soul-sister"; Breton pins hope on "the woman-child"; Stendhal wants woman to be "an equal": intelligent, cultivated, free in spirit and behavior (de Beauvoir, 1989: 251). According to de Beauvoir (1989: 251), the idea of woman, as presented in five different authors, will always lead to the same conclusions: the only possible destiny reserved for woman is always man.

## Close Reading of Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man"

Lehman's poem is entitled "When a Woman Loves a Man". "Love" is associated with romance. Therefore, Lehman's poem presents a romance between a woman and a man. Lehman's poem also employs "woman" and "man" as its diction. Consequently, it is

also associated with gender relation. Additionally, the title shows that “woman” is placed as the subject, the lover or the one who loves her beloved; therefore, the woman in Lehman’s poem is the active one. Thus, the focus in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is the woman, instead of the man.

Based on the aforementioned title analysis, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” draws its root from love poem tradition with love as its theme. However, it is also different from traditional love poems that usually depict man as the lover and woman as the beloved. Thus, Lehman’s poem exposes different gender relation between a woman and a man in expressing love from woman’s perspective.

Besides, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is a free verse or an open form poem since it is composed based on free conventional rime and meter (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 239). Kennedy and Gioia suggest that “writing in open form, a poet seeks to discover a fresh and individual arrangement for words in every poem” (2002: 238). Therefore, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” presents a fresh and free idea because the poem does not follow conventional verse rule.

Although Lehman’s poem takes a free verse form, it employs many repetitions as seen in the following lines (“When she says... / When a woman loves a man / When a man loves a woman”). As Kennedy and Gioia (2002: 241) argue that repetition creates memorable rhythms, Lehman’s poem, therefore, intends to make readers easily memorize the message(s) implied in the repetition. Moreover, in poetic aspects, repetition is not simply a repetition with its random use, but it serves as a poetic vehicle to express its aesthetic as well as ideological values. Since the repetition in Lehman’s poem always concerns about gender relation, it strengthens the voice of its gender relation, the key message that Lehman’s poem attempts to convey.

In addition to the theme and form, the diction or choice of words as concrete words in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is

significant. Concrete words point to things or particular individuals which can be perceived with senses, whereas abstract words refer to concepts or ideas (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 56). The fact that the concrete words employed in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” are used to present abstract ideas (woman-man love and relation) makes the abstract ideas presented more detailed and specific. Stanza 2 “When a man loves a woman he is in New York and she is in Virginia” (“When Woman Loves a Man” 1) is a good example to explain.

Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” borrows New York and Virginia to present gender relation. New York and Virginia are concrete words, but there is an allusion behind these two states about the history of slavery in the United States. New York, the northern state, was a state which abolished slavery (free), while Virginia, the southern state, was a state which permitted slavery (enslaved) (Cusack, 1991: 2). Therefore, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” suggests gender relation (an abstract idea) using New York and Virginia (concrete words) to present the relation in terms of the man being free and the woman being enslaved.

The abstract ideas in Lehman’s poem (love and gender relation) are presented using concrete words which makes it “keep returning to earth” and “makes us aware of things” (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 56). In other words, the use of concrete words to present abstract ideas in Lehman’s poem is to make it more detailed and “humble” (returning to earth).

Besides the diction in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”, to observe the word order employed is also essential. Kennedy and Gioia suggest that due to the rigidity of English word order, a poet tends to invert the order to resist it and attain unusual effects (2002: 70). On the contrary, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” keeps the rigidity of English word order. There is no inversion found in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”. The effect, therefore, makes Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” less complicated. Consequently, it is easier or

more “humble” to grasp. The word order and diction work together to suggest “humbleness” to Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”.

Furthermore, the tone in Lehman’s poem also highlights the “certainty” and “humbleness” in the poem. It is certain as the diction chosen is concrete words, rather than abstract words. Compared to abstract words, concrete words directly address things able to perceive with senses (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 56). Therefore, it reduces misperception since concrete words point out something “real”. It is “humble” because of the diction, light complexity, and word order that make the poem more “grounded”. Furthermore, the poem employs third person’s point of view as its speaker, which makes the poem more “objective”.

Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” also employs many metaphors to compare the woman and man’s relation in the poem. Stanza three is an example of metaphors in Lehman’s poem.

*When a man loves a woman he is in New York and she is in Virginia  
or he is in Boston, writing, and she is in New York, reading,  
or she is wearing a sweater and sunglasses in Balboa Park and he  
is raking leaves in Ithaca; (Lehman, 2005, stanza 3, lines 1-4)*

In stanza 3 lines 1-4, the way the man loves the woman in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is directly compared to various associations.

Stanza 3 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” portrays the woman and man’s relation in three metaphors. The first one is to New York (man) and Virginia (woman). The second one is to Boston-writing (man) and New York- reading (woman). The third one is wearing a sweater and sunglasses- Balboa Park (woman) and raking leaves- Ithaca (man).

Metaphor is different from simile because it has multiple associations since it does not refer to merely a characteristic

shared by two things compared (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 123). Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is dominated by the use of metaphors. Therefore, it implies that many multiple meanings underlying the poem. The metaphors employed in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” are further discussed in part B.

Besides metaphors, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” employs imagery. The imagery employed in Lehman’s poem is visual and auditory imagery. The last stanza (stanza 13) in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” presents an example of both visual and auditory imagery employed by the poem.

When a man loves a woman, he **watches** her sleep, thinking:

*as midnight to the moon is sleep to the beloved.  
A thousand fireflies wink at him.  
The frogs **sound** like the string section  
of the orchestra warming up.  
The stars dangle down like earrings the  
shape of grapes;  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 13, lines 1-6)*

Imagery is an attempt “to render the abstract in concrete terms”; it is the tool used to “see the mind of the poet more truly revealed than in whatever the poet explicitly claims to believe” (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 97). Even though this research omits to look for the “true” meaning of Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” from the author’s (Lehman’s) perspective, the analysis of imagery is helpful to further analyze the underlying meanings of Lehman’s poem rather than what it “claims to believe”. The extended analysis of the imagery employed in Lehman’s poem is discussed in part B.

Furthermore, allusion is also employed in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”. Historical and biblical allusions are the allusions employed in Lehman’s poem. The use of New York and Virginia in stanza 3 “When a man loves a woman he is in New York and she is in Virginia” (“When a Woman Loves a Man” 1) alludes the history of slavery in the United States happened in those states.

Moreover, the imagery and symbols applied in stanza 6 work together as a biblical allusion to allude the Fall.

*When a woman loves a man, they have gone  
to swim naked in the stream  
on a glorious July day  
with the sound of the waterfall like a chuckle  
of water rushing over smooth rocks,  
and there is nothing alien in the universe.;*  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 6, lines 1-6)

Allusions are applied to enrich a poem's meaning (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 62). Therefore, by applying allusions, Lehman's poem employs more multiple meanings than what it "seems" to offer.

Additionally, symbols are also employed in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". Apples in stanza 7 "ripe apples fall about them" (1), seven and nine in stanza 10 "seven times and threatened to do it another nine times." (1-2), and refrigerator in stanza 11 "and there's nothing in the refrigerator" (5) are the examples of the symbols employed by Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". Although the symbols (apples, seven, nine, refrigerator, etc.) applied can refer to many associations, the meaning of the symbols in Lehman's poem is restricted due to context, but mostly related to biblical context.

Based on the analysis on the intrinsic elements in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man", the poem "seems" to deal with gender relation with more concerns about woman since the title puts woman as the subject. Therefore, the title "seems" to focus on woman than man. By analyzing other devices (form, diction, word order, point of view, and tone) in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man", the "objectivity" and "humbleness" of portraying the gender relation offered in the poem is indeed highlighted. However, by observing the metaphors, imagery, symbols, and allusions in the poem, Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" attempts to relate and extend the gender relation in the poem to the gender relation outside the poem, or gender relation in general. Moreover, the metaphor, imagery, symbols, and allusions in Lehman's

"When a Woman Loves a Man" suggest that Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" employs multiple underlying meanings which are contradictory from the "objectivity" and "humbleness" presented by the other devices (form, diction, word order, point of view, and tone) observed in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man".

### **Explication of Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man"**

Following the previous finding on theme in the first part of close reading, the keywords "woman", "love", and "man" in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" are associated with romance (love) and gender relation (woman and man). Accordingly, the title "When a Woman Loves a Man" suggests woman's perspective in seeing gender relation between a woman and a man in expressing love.

Viewed from its intrinsic elements, Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is divided into thirteen stanzas in which each stanza has different length. Stanza 1 consists of 5 lines. These 5 lines employ three repetitions of saying something, but meaning another.

*When she says **Margarita** she means **Daiquiri**.  
When she says **quixotic** she means **mercurial**.  
And when she says, "**I'll never speak to you again**,"  
she means, "**Put your arms around me from behind**  
**as I stand disconsolate at the window.**";*  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 1, lines 1-5).

The first repetition is saying Margarita, instead of Daiquiri. The second one is saying quixotic, instead of mercurial. The last one is saying "I'll never speak to you again", instead of "Put your arms around me from behind as I stand disconsolate at the window". "Say" indicates that stanza 1 is related to manners of speaking. The woman, therefore, is portrayed as unable to speak directly as she mentions one thing, but actually refers to another.

The woman's manner of speaking is repeated three times. The repetitions give strong emphasis resulted in suggesting that the woman is unable to speak directly. Therefore, by repeated three times, stanza 1 gives strong emphasis on how the woman's inability to have direct speech is a part of the woman's characteristics.

Stanza 2 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" only consists of one line: "He's supposed to know that." (1). Written as one line, stanza 2 directly focuses on merely one particular issue. It, therefore, presents a strong cynical tone. Furthermore, stanza 2 switches its perspective from the woman's perspective in stanza 1 (she) into the man's perspective (he).

Apostrophe 's' in stanza 2 "He's supposed" ("When a Woman Loves a Man" 1) can stand for is, was, or has; however, following the tenses employed by Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man", which is present tense, the most essential "to be" to replace the apostrophe 's' is "is". Thus, stanza 2 "He's supposed to know that." ("When a Woman Loves a Man" 1) is best paraphrased as "He is supposed to know that."

Additionally, according to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, "is supposed to" is "used to say what was or is expected or intended to happen, especially when it did not happen" ("be supposed to do/be something"). The word "that", refers to the previous stanza (stanza 1), so "that" in stanza 2 refers to the woman's inability to speak directly. Stanza 2, therefore, suggests that the man in Lehman's poem is expected to know the woman's inability of speaking directly, but the fact is the man does not know.

The use of present tense itself is also important in terms that it is employed to state general statements of fact, timeless truths, or habitual/everyday activities (Azar, 1999: 13). Therefore, stanza 2 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" strongly states that it is a fact, truth, or habit that the man does not understand the woman. It is a general fact/truth/habit that the man does not know the woman's inability to have direct

speech even though it has become a part of the woman's characteristics.

Stanza 3 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" consists of 8 lines and it starts with "When a man loves a woman" (1). The use of "man" as the subject shows that stanza 3 employs the man's perspective. Additionally, stanza 3 employs many metaphors to compare the relation between the woman and man in Lehman's poem.

*When a man loves a woman he is in **New York** and she is in **Virginia**  
or he is in **Boston, writing**, and she is in **New York, reading**,  
or she is **wearing a sweater and sunglasses in Balboa Park** and  
he is **raking leaves in Ithaca**  
or he is **driving to East Hampton** and she is **standing disconsolate**  
**at the window overlooking the bay**  
**where a regatta of many-colored sails is going on**  
**while he is stuck in traffic on the Long Island Expressway;**  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 3, lines 1-8).*

The first metaphor to compare the woman and man in Lehman's poem is New York and Virginia. The association of New York and Virginia with man and woman recalls the memory of slavery in the United States. In the history of slavery in United States, New York belonged to northern states, the "free" states of slavery (Cusack, 1991: 2). On the other hand, Virginia, a plantation-economy-based region in the South, depended itself on slaves (Cusack, 1991: 2). Thus, the association of New York and Virginia with the man and woman's relation in Lehman's poem is that the man is presented as a free human being, whereas the woman is enslaved.

The history of slavery in the United States where northern states were considered "free" and became the "destination" for black slaves to be free (Cusack, 1991: 2) is linked to the metaphor of the woman in Virginia who needs to be "saved" and "freed" by the man who is in New York. The woman needs the man to be free and safe. As New York can be symbolized as



the shelter, refuge, and hope for black slaves in Virginia, the man is presented as having a role to be the hope, shelter, and refuge for the woman.

Moreover, New York has the Statue of Liberty. According to Sacks (1995: 457), the Statue of Liberty was the symbol of hopes and cherished aspirations which greeted immigrants once arriving in New York Harbor. Therefore, the metaphor of New York in Lehman's poem highlights the idea that the man, who is in New York, represents the symbol of freedom, hopes, and aspirations. It is a symbol of independence (man) and dependence (woman).

The second metaphor to compare man and woman in Lehman's poem stanza 3 is Boston, writing and New York, reading. Whereas the woman moves to the place where the man is used to be (New York), the man has already been in a different place (Boston). The second metaphor, therefore, highlights how the woman and man keep being in different places.

Furthermore, the activities they perform are different: writing (man) and reading (woman). Viewed from academic's perspective, writing is considered as one step higher than reading, for writing is producing, while reading is consuming. Writing is an "active" activity, whereas reading is the "passive" one. The man, therefore, is seen as the one who is active and productive, while the woman is seen as passive and consumptive.

The third metaphor is wearing a sweater and sunglasses in Balboa Park (woman) and raking leaves in Ithaca (man). The woman, pictured as wearing a sweater and sunglasses in Balboa Park, the largest urban cultural park in the United States which has 15 major museums, performing arts venues, beautiful gardens, and the San Diego Zoo in it (<http://www.balboapark.org/info>) is portrayed to connect with enjoyment. On the other hand, the man, raking leaves in Ithaca, is portrayed to work hard. Since stanza 3 employs the man's perspective, the man in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" adjusts himself in seeing the woman-man

relation in which he is the Breadwinner: man makes money, whereas woman spends it (Gerzon, 1998: 539).

The last metaphor in stanza 3 is driving to East Hampton, stuck in traffic on the Long Island Expressway (man) and standing disconsolate at the window overlooking the bay where a regatta of many-colored sails is going on (woman). The man is portrayed to mingle with mobility (driving), whereas the woman is portrayed to mingle with stillness (standing disconsolate). Moreover, regatta, according to Cambridge, is "a sports event consisting of boat races" ("regatta"). Sport is closely associated with man, a signifier of "masculinity" (Kidd, 1998: 299). Therefore, regatta represents masculinity.

Looking at masculine world, the woman stands disconsolate at the window overlooking the bay where this "masculine activity" runs. According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, disconsolate is "extremely sad and disappointed" ("disconsolate"). The woman is pictured as standing (passive), very sad and disappointed. Besides, she does not watch the regatta directly. In fact, she watches it in a distance (overlooking), she watches it through the window. Window, consequently, creates a distance/gap between woman and regatta (masculine world). The last metaphor, therefore, asserts how the man in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" believes that woman and man live in different domains in which he sees himself as connecting to the world (masculine world), while the woman disconnects from it. This disconnection, pictured by the last metaphor, makes her disconsolate, but powerless.

Stanza 4 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" consists of 5 lines. Stanza 4 has a specific setting of place: a house. Compared to the previous stanza (stanza 3) in which the woman and man in Lehman's poem are portrayed to never be in the same place, stanza 4 sets the woman and man in the same place: house. However, the woman and man, even in the same place, are portrayed to perform different activities.

Starting from the beginning of stanza 4, the woman is pictured to sleep and remain asleep. Sleeping represents passivity. The man, on the other hand, is pictured to perform an activity: watching sport.

*When a woman loves a man it is one-ten  
in the morning,  
she is **asleep** he is **watching the ball  
scores and eating pretzels  
drinking lemonade**  
and two hours later he wakes up and  
staggers into bed  
where she **remains asleep** and very  
warm;  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 4, lines 1-5)*

Additionally, the man in stanza 4 is pictured as engaging with sport as he follows the scores and enjoys the game with pretzels and lemonade. The man's "engagement" with sport is pictured significantly different with the woman's attitude toward it as shown in stanza 3, "or he is driving to East Hampton and she is standing disconsolate / at the window overlooking the bay / where a regatta of many-colored sails is going on" ("When a Woman Loves a Man" 5-7). While the woman is pictured as disconnecting from sport, the man is pictured as engaging with it even only through a television. Sport itself stands for the idea of masculinity (Kidd, 1998: 299). Therefore, the woman is pictured as disconnected from masculinity (stanza 3), whereas the man is pictured as closely connected to it. Thus, in Lehman's poem, sport is masculine; sport is the man's world.

Moreover, by placing woman and man in the same place (house), stanza 4, therefore, emphasizes how woman and man keeps performing different activities or roles within the same domain. Stanza 4 employs the woman's perspective in Lehman's poem, whereas stanza 3 employs the man's perspective. Consequently, through stanza 4, woman and man are pictured to have the same perspective over gender roles: that woman and man perform different roles.

Stanza 5 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" consists of 4 lines. Stanza 5 employs the woman's point of view. The words "says" and "talking" in stanza 5 are the

keywords about the theme of gender relation employed by this stanza: verbal act (communication).

*When she **says** tomorrow she means in  
three or four weeks.  
When she **says**, "We're **talking** about me  
now,"  
he stops **talking**. Her best friend comes  
over and says,  
"Did somebody die?";  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 5, lines 1-4)*

In lines 2-3, stanza 5 portrays that woman and man starts to talk. Then, it discontinues. Instead, stanza 5 depicts that the woman's best friend comes over. The presence of the woman's best friend and her presupposition that somebody died, which is in fact not, suggests that the communication between the woman and man portrayed previously fails. The woman's best friend presupposition that somebody died presumably is caused by the woman's hard crying. Therefore, the focus of stanza 5 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is the failure in communication between the woman and man.

Tannen mentions the communication of woman and man as cross-cultural communication (1998: 114). It means that woman and man communicate differently. The man's silence as mentioned in stanza 5 line 3: "he stops talking" is presumably misinterpreted by the woman as Tannen suggests that woman perceives "silent attention as no attention at all" (1998: 116).

Additionally, woman also uses talking as a means to have intimacy in relationships (between girls); therefore, she hopes that her husband can be her best friend by talking to each other as a way to have closeness due to the life shared (Tannen, 1998: 114). Man, on the other hand, acquires bonds (between boys) by doing things together (Tannen, 1998: 114). Therefore, the presence of the woman's best friend highlights the fact that the communication between the woman and man fails that the woman needs the presence of her best friend (who understands her), instead of the man.

Stanza 6 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" consists of 6 lines. It employs the woman's perspective, but the pronoun employed in the stanza is neither she nor he. Instead, it employs "they" as the pronoun used. The significance of "they" is that the woman and man are considered as one union as mentioned in "When a woman loves a man, they have gone / to swim naked in the stream" ("When a Woman Loves a Man" 1-2).

In stanza 6, woman and man (they) are pictured to swim naked in the stream. Nakedness refers to a biblical allusion: the Fall. According to Christian tradition in Dictionary of Symbols, nakedness represents "the consequence of Original Sin and of the Fall of Adam and Eve" ("nakedness"). Therefore, the woman's perspective employed in this stanza is also significant since Eve (woman) is the tempter to Adam (man). However, although the perspective borrowed is the woman, the next pronoun employed is they. The pronoun, consequently, is crucial to allude the Fall since Eve is the tempter, but Adam also eats the forbidden fruit. They both fall. In addition, by referring to the Fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, nakedness also represents purity and innocence as the state of Adam and Eve before the Fall.

Stanza 6 line 3 contributes to give the setting of time to this stanza: "on a glorious July day" ("When a Woman Loves a Man" 3). Glorious July day alludes the independence day of the United States: 4 July. Independence represents freedom. Therefore, although the nakedness represents the Fall, the failure of keeping the "purity" and "innocence", it also represents freedom. Failing but achieving freedom.

The next metaphor in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" stanza 6 moves into the description of the sound of waterfall which resembles a chuckle of water rushing over smooth rocks: "with the sound of the waterfall like a chuckle / of water rushing over smooth rocks" (4-5). Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English denotes chuckle as to laugh quietly ("chuckle"). Since it is a laugh, it signifies happiness. However, the sound of chuckling which is in a higher

pitch than a laugh sounds more like temptation. It presents the idea of the temptation initiated by snake to Eve which results in the Fall. Snake is the tempter to Eve (woman) as Eve is the tempter to Adam (man).

Additionally, nothing alien mentioned in the last line contributes to allude to the condition of Adam and Eve after the Fall: "and there is nothing alien in the universe" ("When a Woman Loves a Man" 6). The Fall "opens" their eyes and they know the good and evil (King James Version, Gen. 3. 5).

The relation of the woman and man in Lehman's poem, therefore, is depicted as the relation of Adam and Eve in the Fall. The woman and man are pictured as pure and innocent beings who fall for being tempted. As Eve is portrayed as the tempter to Adam, Lehman's poem also follows the Fall by employing the woman's perspective to affirm it. However, the falling results in achieving freedom to know good and evil.

Stanza 7 consists of 2 lines. Stanza 7 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" also discusses the Fall: "ripe apples fall about them. / What else can they do but eat?" (1-2). Therefore, stanza 7 continues the Biblical flow of stanza 6. According to Dictionary of Symbols, apples, as mentioned in line 1, signify the forbidden fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil which initiates the Fall ("apple"). Apples, therefore, is the temptation. Referring to A Dictionary of Literary Symbols, in Hebrew and classical tradition, apples also symbolizes "sexual love, which Adam and Eve discover, in some interpretations, after eating it" ("apple"). The temptation, therefore, is more specified as the temptation of sexual love. The diction of ripe also plays a significant role. Ripe apples in stanza 7 contribute to give an idea that the apples are ready to eat: "Ripe apples fall about them / What else can they do but eat?" (1-2).

The next line highlights the idea of how powerless woman and man against the temptation. The extended imagery in stanza 7 is that the ripe apples fall about woman and man. Consequently, it is hardly possible to

resist the temptation as the ones who fall right in the eyes are the ripe ones, ready to eat.

Stanzas 6 and 7 depict the relation of the woman and man in Lehman's poem by following the biblical narrative of the Fall. The woman and man in Lehman's poem are pictured as pure and innocent beings who fall into temptation of sexual love which free them. The temptation is difficult to resist as ripe apples which fall about them. As the Fall is considered as a great ancient narrative, the relation of sexual love between the woman and man in Lehman's poem is as ancient as biblical narrative the Fall.

Stanza 8 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" consists of three lines. It employs the man's perspective. It starts with the man saying "Ours is a transitional era." Presumably, it continues the flow of the previous stanzas (stanza 6 and 7) about gender relation from biblical perspective. However, the man in stanza 8 is portrayed to have a different view on gender relation.

Stanza 6 and 7 portrays gender relation as ancient and great as Eve and Adam in the Fall. Woman is seen as a tempter as Eve is the tempter. Woman and man are pictured as innocent beings falling into the temptation of sexual love which actually frees them. Moreover, the main point highlighted in stanza 7 is that woman and man are powerless as ripe apples which fall about them. These are the woman's perspectives over gender relation. However, the man's perspective differs from the woman's.

The man in stanza 8 points out that "Ours (the woman and man) is a transitional era." ("When a Woman Loves a Man" 1). Transition means a process of change. Presumably, the man offers a different view over gender relation from the woman's as mentioned in stanzas 6 and 7. Whereas stanzas 6 and 7 assert the powerlessness of woman and man to resist the sexual love temptation (from the woman's perspective), stanza 8 (from the man's perspective) opposing the woman's perspective implies that they (the woman and man) have power to change the gender relation. Power

itself is closely related to masculine power. Therefore, this view is delivered by the man's perspective. The man presumably does not want to be viewed as powerless because the woman's perspective in stanzas 6 and 7 assert that as biblical narrative the Fall, they also are powerless against temptation.

Stanza 8 line 2 mentions the woman's reply to the man's perspective about gender relation. The woman in stanza 8 replies the man by saying cynically (dry as Martini) that "That's very original of you." ("When a Woman Loves a Man" 2). It asserts that the woman does not believe in him. Her diction "original" is also significant. Original refers to genuineness. Apparently, the woman's reply is based on her experience(s) with the man that he does not keep his words.

Stanza 9 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" consists of ten lines. Viewed by its poetic form, stanza 9 is the longest stanza in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". Stanza 9 also employs different perspective compared to the other stanzas. It does not employ either woman or man's perspective. Instead, it employs "they" started from the beginning of the poem.

The word "fight" in stanza 9 suggests the underlying theme in this stanza: the fight between the woman and man.

*They fight all the time  
It's fun  
What do I owe you?  
Let's start with an apology  
Ok, I'm sorry, you dickhead.  
A sign is held up saying "Laughter."  
It's a silent picture.  
"I've been fucked without a kiss," she says,  
"and you can quote me on that,"  
which sounds great in an English accent;  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 9, lines 1-10)*

Referring back to the previous stanzas (stanzas 1-8) which picture woman and man as two beings who have different manners of speaking (stanzas 1-2), always be in the different places (stanza 3), perform different roles even if in the same domain (stanza 4), undergo miscommunication (stanza 5), and have different opinions about gender relation

(stanzas 6-8), stanza 9 is considered as the “climax” or “crash” between the woman and man. The fight between woman and man depicted in stanza 9 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” also involves rude words like “dickhead” (5) and “fucked without a kiss” (8), which are said by the woman.

A fight is usually dominated by anger, but stanza 9 portrays the fight between woman and man differently. The words “fun” (2) and “laughter” (6) in stanza 9 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” asserts that even a fight occurring between the woman and man (because of their differences) is viewed as an enjoyment in the relation. It is not seen as a big deal.

Stanza 9 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” does not really mention the cause of the fight. Presumably, as mentioned in two previous paragraphs, it is because the differences between the woman and man, which have been explicated previously. However, even there is no evidence to find out the “cause” of the fight, the woman in stanza 9 is the first one who apologizes. The woman in fight as portrayed in stanza 9 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is presented as understanding; she is less offensive, ready to apologize and negotiate.

Besides portrayed as being understanding, less offensive, ready to apologize and negotiate, the woman in stanza 9 is presented as refusing to be silent despite the fight: “‘I’ve been fucked without a kiss,’ she says, / ‘and you can quote me on that,’ / which sounds great in an English accent.” (“When a Woman Loves a Man” 8-10). She is the one who apologizes to the man in the fight. However, she dares to speak up her mind. It is spoken with a vulnerable tone as stanza 9 shows that she is “fucked without a kiss” (“When a Woman Loves a Man” 8); she is the one who is harmed. Yet, she challenges the man, and presumably the world that the man (and the world) can have her words that she is the “victim”.

Stanza 10 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” consists of two lines in one sentence: “One year they broke up seven

times and threatened to do it/ another nine times.” (1-2). It is the continuation of stanza 9: the woman and man’s relation in terms of dealing with the fight. Stanza 10 stands for one sentence in two lines which is in fact is still the continuation of stanza 10. Therefore, viewed from its poetic form, stanza 10 must have stood for a significant idea.

Breaking up is the main theme discussed in stanza 10. The fight as the climax in dealing with difference between the woman and man in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” results in breaking up. However, the breaking up is surely not a break-up since stanza 10 asserts that it continues into seven, then into nine, and apparently will continue.

In addition, seven and nine are significant symbols. Following the biblical flow in previous stanzas (stanzas 6-7), the significance of number seven and nine in this research is also associated with biblical symbols. Seven is a significant symbol in the Bible presenting forgiveness as Jesus commands to forgive our brothers (and sisters) seventy times seven (Mat. 18.22). Moreover, nine presents divine completeness as Christ died at 3 p.m., the 9th hour of the day, to open the way to salvation ([www.biblestudy.org](http://www.biblestudy.org)). These numbers, therefore, represent the interdependence between the woman and man in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” which means that although in the “journey” of their relation they break up, but they will not really break up as they need each other to be complete (full, whole).

Stanza 11 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” consists of 5 lines. Stanza 11 employs a different “form” compared to other stanzas. Stanza 11 employs two perspectives, woman (line 1) and man (line 3) within one stanza.

*When a woman loves a man, she wants  
him to meet her at the  
airport in a foreign country with a jeep.  
When a man loves a woman he's there.  
He doesn't complain that  
she's two hours late  
and there's nothing in the refrigerator;  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 11, line 1-5)*

The word “there” in line 3 also suggests a reference to the previous place mentioned by the previous line (at the airport in a foreign country). By placing the woman and man’s perspectives within one stanza, Lehman’s poem, therefore, puts both woman and man’s perspectives on a particular issue.

Stanza 11 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” starts with the woman’s perspective, and it continues into line 2 as one sentence employing herperspective: “When a woman loves a man, she wants him to meet her at the / airport in a foreign country with a jeep.” (1-2). Based on Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the verb “want” is used to say that you need something or ask someone firmly to do something for you (“want”). Thus, stanza 11 line 1 asserts that the woman needs man, for she demands his presence. Moreover, stanza 11 lines 1-2 do not stop only in portraying that the woman needs the man. By including some details like “at the airport”, “in a foreign country”, and “with a jeep”, the woman in stanza 11 is portrayed as not only asking for man’s presence to be with her, but also saying it in demanding tone.

Stanza 11 lines 3-5 portray the man’s perspectives. The word “there” in line 3 links these lines into the previous lines. Thus, lines 3-5 discuss the same issue as the previous one, with the same setting of place as its reference: at the airport in a foreign country.

Stanza 11 line 3 starts with a response given to the woman’s “demand” in the previous lines from the man’s perspective: the man is there. Compared with the word “want” attributed to the woman in stanza 11 line 1, the man is attributed with the use of present tense. According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, the word “want” can also denote desire (“want”). Desire is a wish, which means that it may not happen. Nevertheless, present tense offers an idea that something is a fact or habit (Azar, 1999: 13). Therefore, the woman and man in Lehman’s poem are “attributed” differently. The woman with her desire is pictured as demanding and unrealistic. On the other hand, man, attributed with the use of present

tense, is pictured as more grounded and realistic.

Stanza 11 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” also pictures that the man does not complain about the fact that the woman is late for two hours: “When a man loves a woman he’s there. He doesn’t complain that / she’s two hours late” (3-4). The fact that man does not complain about the woman’s unrealistic demand and the fact that he has to wait because the woman is late shows that the man is dependable.

Moreover, stanza 11 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” strongly suggests how dependable a man is: “and there’s nothing in the refrigerator.” (5). Refrigerator is a thing used to keep food. “Nothing in the refrigerator” suggests a fact that one is lack of food. Food itself is a basic need for a human being. Refrigerator, a place for keeping food, is closely related to woman’s domestic role: nurturance. Portraying “nothing in the refrigerator” implicitly shows that the woman neglects her domestic role to nurture.

The woman in stanza 11 is portrayed as having unrealistic demand as airport, foreign country, and jeep represent secondary needs. Refrigerator, a place for keeping food, represents primary needs. The woman, having unrealistic demand while neglecting basic needs, and the man, not minding to have his basic needs neglected, represent how dependable and understanding man is. The woman, nonetheless, is portrayed as demanding, dependent, and less realistic.

Stanza 12 consists of 3 lines. It employs the woman’s perspective. The keywords “stay awake”, “nightfall”, and “the day to end” assert that stanza 12 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” employs night as its specific setting of time: “When a woman loves a man, she wants to **stay awake**. She’s like a child crying / at **nightfall** because she didn’t want **the day to end**.” (1-3).

According to Dictionary of Symbols, night can be used to represent sleep, nightmares, monsters, and black thoughts (“night”). The representation of night in Dictionary of Symbols is justified in Lehman’s

poem by the woman's attitude: "wants to stay awake", "like a child crying", and "didn't want the day to end". Therefore, stanza 12, which employs the woman's perspective, represents a negative view of night. It is to say that the woman in stanza 12 dislikes night.

The specific setting of time: night in Lehman's poem stanza 12 is also closely related to sleep. It is because night is the time in which most people take a rest after working at day. De Beauvoir argues that "she (woman) hates his sleep (man)" (1989: 657). The reason is that sleeping, which mostly takes time at night, isolates or creates a distance from her lover (de Beauvoir, 1989: 657). Woman views that "the absence of her lover is always torture" (de Beauvoir, 1989: 657). The attitude of the woman in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" stanza 12 justifies de Beauvoir's argument. Therefore, it is reasonable that the woman is pictured as having a negative view about night since night means "parting" with her lover. She is abandoned.

The last stanza in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is stanza 13. Stanza 13 consists of 6 lines. Stanza 13 employs the same setting of time as the previous stanza. It is seen from the use of the words "night" (stanza 12) and "midnight" (stanza 13) in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man": "When a man loves a woman, he watches her **sleep**, thinking: / as **midnight** to the moon is sleep to the beloved." (1-2). Stanza 13 sets the man's perspective about night and sleep. Stanza 13, consequently, compares woman and man's perspective about the same issues: night and sleep.

Stanza 13 line 1 portrays the man's perspective about the woman's sleep. The man's perspective about woman's sleep is presented as a metaphor to compare woman's sleep with midnight and moon. Midnight is compared with sleep, whereas moon is compared to beloved.

According to Dictionary of Symbols, moon does not have its own light; and it only reflects the light of the Sun ("moon"). Only if night comes does the moon shine. Lehman's poem pictures moon as the symbol of the

beloved. Dictionary of Symbols also regards moon as having closely links with female deity in myth, legend, folklore, folktale, and poetry ("moon"). It, consequently, highlights how the diction of "moon" relates closely to represent the woman in Lehman's poem.

Lehman's poem stanza 13 makes analogy between midnight-sleep and moon-beloved. The meaning of sleep to woman, thus, is portrayed to have the same meaning as midnight to the moon. The woman and man are portrayed to have different views on sleep in Lehman's poem (compared to stanza 12). De Beauvoir suggests that "the loved woman, when sleep restores the disarmed of childhood, belongs to no one: that certitude is enough" (1989: 657). Whereas the woman feels abandoned when her lover sleeps, the man feels secured, for it is enough for him to be assured that she is his. The man sees his beloved's sleep as a means to reveal her childhood side: "belongs to no one" (de Beauvoir, 1989: 657).

Therefore, as moon "shines" in night, the man views that the woman "shines" in passivity of sleeping as his reflection and extension.

The rest and extended lines (lines 3-6) of stanza 13 portray the contribution of the nature (fireflies, frogs sound, and stars) to the man who is watching his beloved sleeping at night. Lines 3-6 show how the man gives meaning to night and his sleeping beloved.

*A thousand **fireflies** wink at him.  
The **frogs sound** like the string section  
of the orchestra warming up.  
The **stars** dangle down like earrings the  
shape of grapes;  
(Lehman, 2005, stanza 13, lines 3-6)*

The setting in stanza 13 is clear: night. Whereas the woman in stanza 12 focuses herself in seeing night as darkness and nightmares, the man views the beauty of night. Fireflies are animals which shine in the dark. "A thousand fireflies wink" (1) in stanza 13 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" means that it is not only light that they give, but it is sparkling light since they wink. While the woman merely views night as

darkness, the man is able to find light, enjoyment in the darkness.

Besides, the man also finds the beauty of night from the frogs sound. Frogs sound are usually heard on rainy days at night. Stanza 13 lines 4-5 suggest how the man is able to give meaning to the natural frogs sound as musical instruments: string, a harmonious sound of culture.

In addition to fireflies and frogs sound, the man also sees the beauty of night through the stars. Night is the time at which people are able to see countless stars shine. Stanza 13 line 6 shows how the man sees the stars not merely as stars, but for him, they resemble earrings whose shape is like grapes.

Compared to stanza 12 in which the woman views night cynically, the man seems to view it in a completely different way. Whereas the woman regards night as the parting time with her beloved and abandonment, the man regards it as the time to see his sleeping beloved in her beautiful passivity like the moon which shines in midnight. Moreover, whereas the woman in stanza 12 focuses only in seeing night as darkness and nightmares, the man is able to find his enlightenment at night. His ability to find nature as enlightenment is something that the woman fails to notice.

Summarizing the explication of Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man", the next discussion attempts to review the findings of the gender relation in more compact means. The explication of Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" shows that gender relation portrayed in the poem strongly speaks about differences in woman and man that contribute to their relation. The differences are about woman and man seeing particular issues and their differences in perceiving how woman-man relation should be.

The perspective employed by the poem is a third person. Additionally, the poem does not mention a specific name for the "characters" in the poem, rather generalizes them as a woman and a man. Therefore, although the above explication of Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" employs

definite article "the" to refer to the characters inside the poem, the poem, since it leaves the characters nameless, refers to portray woman and man in general.

The next discussion is the summary of the differences between woman and man found in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" and their contribution to gender relation. The first gender relation between woman and man found in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is about manners of speaking. Stanza 1 portrays how woman is unable to have direct speech. In addition, stanza 2 shows how man does not understand this disability. Stanzas 1 and 2, therefore, show how man fails to notice woman's manners of speaking which often results in misunderstanding.

The second gender relation in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is about never being in the same place. Whereas the previous relation about manners of speaking is taken from woman's side, the second gender relation is taken from man's side. Stanza 3 suggests how man considers that woman and man should not be in the same place (domain).

Furthermore, it also includes the different way man seeing himself to woman. Stanza 3 suggests how man sees himself as the independent, active, and productive being as the breadwinner who connects to patriarchal world (Gerzon, 1998: 539). Woman, on the other hand, is seen as the dependent, passive, and consumptive being who stands still and disconnects from patriarchal world.

The third gender relation in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is about being in the same place, but performing different roles. It is seen through stanza 4. The third gender relation is almost the same as the previous one, but it employs a different perspective: woman's perspective. Whereas man views woman and man to be in different places, woman views woman and man to be in the same place, but perform different roles.

The fourth gender relation between woman and man found in Lehman's "When a



“When a Woman Loves a Man” repeats the first one: misunderstanding in communication. Stanza 5 shows that the communication between man and woman results in failure. The presence of woman’s best friend shows how woman’s expectation to communicate with man does not work. It is because the communication between woman and man are cross-cultural communication (Tannen, 1998: 114). It means that they communicate differently and the difference results in involving woman and man in miscommunication and misunderstanding.

The fifth gender relation between woman and man found in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is about the way woman and man seeing their relation. Stanzas 6 and 7 employ woman’s perspective in seeing gender relation. Woman considers gender relation as the continuation of Eve and Adam in the Fall in which they are portrayed as powerless beings to temptation. On the other hand, man, as seen through stanza 8, disagrees with woman in terms that they have power to not refer to Eve and Adam in seeing gender relation.

The differences between woman and man, as portrayed in stanzas 1-8, result in woman-man fight, which is shown through stanza 9. The fight includes inappropriate words; ironically, woman and man view it not as a big deal since they consider it as fun.

Stanza 10 extends the enjoyment found in woman-man’s fight by showing that the fight results in breaking up, but woman and man make their relation altogether again. Furthermore, by employing numbers seven and nine, stanza 10 asserts the interdependence between woman and man. However, when involving in a fight, woman, as shown in stanza 9, is the one who apologizes first. Woman is pictured as understanding, for she is less defensive, ready to apologize and negotiate. Yet, she refuses to be silent. She speaks up her mind.

After the differences portrayed by stanzas 1-8 which result in a fight portrayed by stanzas 9-10, the gender relation between woman and man in Lehman’s “When a Woman Love a Man” still continues. Whereas

stanza 9 portrays woman as understanding when involving in a fight with her beloved, stanza 11 portrays the opposite. Stanza 11 portrays man as the one who is understanding and dependable to cope with woman’s unrealistic demand.

The last gender relation between woman and man in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is portrayed in stanzas 12 and 13. The difference is about woman and man’s view on night and sleep. Woman, as mentioned in stanza 12, views night as darkness and nightmares. Night is seen as abandonment, parting from her beloved. Nonetheless, man, as mentioned in stanza 13, views night and sleep differently. Man views his sleeping beloved as innocent; she shines in the passivity of sleeping at night. Moreover, man acquires enlightenment through night at which he is able to give meaning to nature. Since stanza 13 employs man’s perspective, his achievement in giving new meaning to night is considered as something which woman fails to notice.

### **Deconstructive Reading of Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” and Its Contribution to Question de Beauvoir’s Myth of Woman**

As mentioned in the title, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” sets a ground on exposing woman’s perspective in viewing gender relation in expressing love. The form is free verse, indicating that the poem attempts to “discover a fresh and individual arrangement for words in every poem” (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 238). Lehman’s poem does not follow conventional verse rule; instead, it presents a fresh and free idea about a woman loving a man, a rare idea of viewing gender relation in expressing love from woman’s perspective. The repetitions employed throughout the poem also emphasize the focus on gender relation in expressing love as seen in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”.

In addition to the theme and focus in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”, analyzing the intrinsic elements in the poem in form of the diction, word order (complexity), point of view, and tone

construct the idea of how the poem present the gender relation. The diction is concrete words, meaning that the poem minds the details. Even though the concrete words employed refer to abstract ideas, but they results in more detailed and "grounded". Additionally, the word order (complexity) is also more understandable and "humble" since the poem omits the tendency to invert the word order and make it more complex in order to accomplish remarkable effects (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 70). Moreover, the point of view employed is a third person's perspective which marks that the poem attempts to be "objective" in presenting gender relation in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". Thus, the diction, word order, point of view in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" suggests "objective" and "humble" tones in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man".

By stopping the discussion in this point, Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" presents a first impression attempting to present gender relation in the poem with "objectivity" and "humbleness". However, by continuing the discussion on the other intrinsic elements employed by the poem, the discussion results in finding a niche which proves that instead of cohering the poem into a single stable meaning, the elements in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" refuse to do that, and instead, break the single stable meaning into multiple meanings. Therefore, the next discussion attempts to find the discontinuities in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" which betrays its first impression.

Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" puts the discussion of gender relation in its metaphors, imagery, allusions, and symbols. In discussing gender relation, Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" compares woman and man in form of metaphors, imagery, allusions, and symbols. Since metaphors (compared to simile) refer to multiple associations (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 123), the use of metaphors indicates that the gender relation discussed in the poem also refers to multiple meanings. Moreover, the use of imagery to present gender relation in the poem suggests that the

poem seeks to look what is often overlooked (Kennedy and Gioia, 2002: 97). Therefore, it indicates that what the poem offers in its first impression is capable of being broken. Additionally, the use of allusions and symbols suggest that the words employed in the poem goes beyond what they state. Thus, the first impression of Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" to portray that the gender relation in the poem is "objective" and "humble" is broken down by its other elements (metaphors, imagery, allusions, and symbols) which indicates that the poem refers to multiple meanings; it does not merely refer to a single stable meaning.

Additionally, metaphors, imagery, allusions, and symbols depend on context to make meanings. Therefore, Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" also depends on context to make meanings. Since context depends on each reader's background, it is impossible to achieve a single stable meaning.

The form, diction, word order, point of view, and tone in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" suggest that the poem attempts to present gender relation in the poem "objectively". However, the metaphors, imagery, allusions, and symbols employed in the poem suggest that gender relation presented in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is contextual: it depends on context since the association between the metaphors, imagery, allusions, and symbols employed in the poem and their significance relies on the way the reader gives them meaning. Therefore, the attempt to present the gender relation in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" through the form, diction, word order, point of view, and tone in the poem are discontinued by the metaphors, imagery, allusions, and symbols governing the poem. The paradox within the intrinsic elements employed by Lehman's poem shows the poem's inconsistency of presenting the gender relation "objectively". Furthermore, the paradox emerges in the same level of reading. It is self-contradictory. Thus, it highlights the disunity of Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man".

Additionally, the use of the third person point of view in Lehman's "When a Woman

Loves a Man” suggests that the poem employs an “omniscient” persona. However, this “omniscient” persona in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is called into question because in the poem, the “omniscient” persona shifts from one perspective (taking side on woman) to the other perspective (taking side on man). The shifting proves that the “omniscient” persona fails to present the gender relation in the poem merely in one stable perspective. Therefore, the “objectivity” in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” is also called into question. The paradox shows the poem’s inconsistency to present the gender relation “objectively”.

Besides, de Beauvoir categorizes the relation between woman and man in the form of the myth of woman. De Beauvoir’s myth of woman is categorized into five myths based on five authors (Motherlant, Lawrence, Claudel, Breton, and Stendhal). De Beauvoir’s myth of woman presents gender relation between woman and man in binary oppositions. Hence, the multiple references presented through the metaphors, imagery, allusions, and symbols in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” problematize de Beauvoir’s myth of woman in which the five authors construct the gender relation in binary oppositions. The multiple references in gender relation as seen in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” prove that it is not sufficient to divide gender relation merely into two clusters.

After applying deconstructive reading on the first level of reading of Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”, this research continues the deconstructive reading on the second level of reading of the poem. The next discussion attempts to seek the relation between the gender relation in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” and the gender relation portrayed through de Beauvoir’s myth of woman. The deconstructive reading starts by portraying the gender relation in de Beauvoir’s myth of woman and seeking the contribution of the poem in justifying the myth.

The first myth of woman categorized by de Beauvoir comes from Motherlant.

Motherlant puts woman in different places in which man is the transcendent, while woman is the immanent (de Beauvoir, 1989: 248-249). Stanza 3 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” employing man’s perspective also puts woman and man in different places. Stanza 3 line 1 first portrays that man is in New York and woman in Virginia. Then, Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” continues putting woman and man in different place: man in Boston, Ithaca, East Hampton, and Long Island Expressway; meanwhile, woman is put in New York, Balbo Park, and even portrayed to stand disconsolate.

Additionally, stanza 3 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” portrays that woman already achieves man’s place (New York); however, man has moved to another place (Boston): “When a man loves a woman he is in New York and she is in Virginia / or he is in Boston, writing, and she is in New York, reading,” (1-2). As a result, stanza 3 portrays how woman is always left behind man. Woman moves forward to man’s stage (New York), while man keeps on moving to the next stage (Boston). He never goes backward. Moreover, woman and man are portrayed to not only be in different places, but also perform different activities.

Stanza 3 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man”, therefore, justifies de Beauvoir’s myth of woman from Motherlant. Stanza 3 justifies the myth of woman in keeping woman and man in different places. Furthermore, stanza 3 justifies the myth by presenting how man never lowers himself (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249).

The second myth of woman categorized by de Beauvoir comes from Lawrence. Lawrence considers woman’s immanence is necessary to support patriarchal systems and he expects woman to give up her transcendence to suit herself to male (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). Stanza 4 in Lehman’s “When a Woman Loves a Man” employing woman’s perspective justifies de Beauvoir’s myth of woman from Lawrence. Woman in stanza 4 puts woman and man in the same domain, but remains performing different roles. Stanza 4 employing woman’s

perspective and stanza 3 employing man's perspective convey related idea. By agreeing that woman and man perform different roles although they are in the same domain, woman willingly accepts her gender role, the submissive one. Therefore, her acceptance of gender role supports patriarchal systems which put woman and man in the same domain (patriarchy) with different roles.

Additionally, stanza 9 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" shows that woman and man are involved in a fight. Even though the stanza does not provide the reason and the party to blame in the fight, woman is obliged to apologize first. It shows how woman is expected to maintain man's pride. Hence, stanza 9 shows how woman surrenders her power and willingly accepts her submissive role which results in supporting patriarchal systems.

The third myth of woman categorized by de Beauvoir comes from Claudel. Claudel is tenderer in defining gender relation compared to Motherlant and Lawrence. Claudel puts God as the only transcendence, while woman and man are immanence (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). However, Claudel puts different roles on woman and man. Man extends life (leads), while woman maintains it (nurtures) (de Beauvoir, 1989: 1989: 249). Stanza 3 portrays man as independent, active, and productive. Those characteristics reflected through man are closely related to the characteristics needed to lead and extend life. On the other hand, stanza 3 portrays woman as dependent, passive, and consumptive. Although those characteristics are not strongly necessary to consider as the characteristics to maintain life (nurture), they obviously do not belong to characteristics needed to extend life (lead). Additionally, the portrayal of man as a leader is also reflected through the same stanza in which man is portrayed to be one step higher than woman.

Additionally, stanzas 6-8 portraying woman and man's view on gender relation justify the myth from Claudel. In seeing gender relation, woman believes that gender relation refers to Eve-Adam relation with the great ancient biblical narrative: the Fall. Referring to the narrative, woman considers

woman and man powerless to change the gender relation shaped since the Fall. Man, on the other hand, considers man and woman have power to change the gender relation. Stanzas 6-8 show how woman remains keeping the belief inherited since the great ancient biblical narrative the Fall and man extends the belief by arguing that they live in a transitional era which means that they do not need to follow the belief. Woman "nurtures" the ancient belief of gender relation, while man challenges and extends the ancient belief.

In addition to stanzas 6-8, stanzas 12-13 also justify the myth of woman from Claudel. Whereas stanzas 6-8 portray the justification of the myth from woman and man's view on gender relation, stanzas 12-13 portray the justification of the myth from woman and man's view on night and sleep. Woman maintains the view of night and sleep merely as nightmares and abandonment. On the other hand, man extends the view of night into enlightenment from nature.

The fact that woman's role as maintaining life (nurturing) and man's role as extending life (leading) as portrayed in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" stanzas 6-8 and 12-13 support the myth of woman from Lawrence. Woman's role as maintaining life (nurturing) like what Claudel pictures is essentially similar to giving woman's power of extending life to man. In fact, by accepting the role to merely maintain life (nurture), woman also supports patriarchal systems. Consequently, although Claudel seems to portray gender relation in tenderer way, he also justifies the myth of woman from Lawrence.

The fourth myth of woman categorized by de Beauvoir comes from Breton. Breton believes that true transcendence is returning to immanence because transcendence is the trigger of non-humanity (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). Stanza 11 portraying man as understanding and dependable to deal with woman's unrealistic demand shows his respect toward woman. It asserts his belief in achieving transcendence by returning to immanence since he respects woman (the

immanent), the one who is in charge of his achieving transcendence.

Furthermore, stanza 13 also portrays how man considers woman's sleep as the revelation to childhood. Childhood is related to not only belong to no one, but also be innocent. Stanza 13 shows how man considers woman with her passivity is stunning as midnight to the moon. He shows his reflection in woman's passivity.

The fifth myth of woman categorized by de Beauvoir comes from Stendhal. Stendhal considers that woman is also a transcendent; woman and man are in "reciprocal relations" (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). Stanzas 9-10 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" show that although woman and man fight and even break up to seven to nine times, they remain together. Despite differences, woman and man are interdependent.

The five myths of woman categorized by de Beauvoir from the five authors (Motherlant, Lawrence, Claudel, Breton, and Stendhal) are indeed justified by Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". However, stanzas 1-2, stanza 5, and woman's refusal to be silent in stanza 9 suit none of the myths. Stanzas 1-2 and 5 are about the differences in the ways woman and man speak and communicate which result in miscommunication and misunderstanding. Stanza 9 is about woman's refusal to be silent when she is harmed. The absence of portraying the misunderstanding in speaking and communicating, and woman's refusal to be silent in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" proves that de Beauvoir's myth of woman fails to accommodate all gender relation portrayed in the poem.

Furthermore, although the gender relation from the five authors in form of de Beauvoir's myth of woman is justified in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man", each myth is incapable of portraying all gender relation depicted in the poem. Motherlant's perspective on gender relation that man is transcendent, whereas woman is immanent (de Beauvoir, 1989: 248-249) merely covers stanza 3 which employs man's perspective. Therefore, as stanza 3 in

Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" employs man's perspective, Motherlant's view on gender relation is only justified from man's side, not both sides (man and woman). Woman's perspective is absent from Motherlant's myth of woman presented in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man".

In addition to Motherlant, Lawrence's view on portraying gender relation that woman (the immanent) should surrender her personal transcendence to support patriarchal systems (man, the transcendent) (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249) fails to reflect all gender relation found in the poem. Lawrence's perspective on gender relation merely covers stanzas 4 and 9. Stanza 4 employs woman's perspective, whereas stanza 9 employs more neutral perspective as it does not mention the party it represents. Lawrence's view on gender relation in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" omits man's perspective and it fails to cover all gender relation in the poem.

Similar to Motherlant and Lawrence, Claudel's perspective also fails to include all gender relation found in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". Claudel's perspective on categorizing man's role as extending life (leading) and woman as maintaining it (nurturing) (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249) merely covers stanzas 3, 6-8, and 12-13. Differing from the previous myths, Claudel's perspective in seeing gender relation in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" includes both woman and man's perspectives. However, it still fails to cover all. Furthermore, the division on woman and man's characteristics and their contribution to extend (lead) or maintain life (nurture) in stanza 3 discontinues being constructed as binary.

Besides Motherlant, Lawrence, and Claudel, Breton's view on gender relation is not able to cover all gender relation found in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". Breton views true transcendence as returning to immanence (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). Breton's perspective on gender relation is justified only by stanza 11 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". It includes

both woman and man's perspective, but still fails to cover all.

The last myth of woman by Stendhal portrays that woman and man are in "reciprocal relations" (de Beauvoir, 1989: 249). Stendhal's view on gender relation merely covers stanzas 9 and 10. Similar to the four authors, Stendhal's perspective on gender relation fails to embrace all gender relation reflected in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" although it includes both woman and man's perspectives.

The gap found in de Beauvoir's myth of woman proves that to construct gender relation in binary oppositions is unattainable. Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" shows that gender relation is complex and fluid that to construct it in binary oppositions is oversimplified. None of the myths is able to continually reflect the gender reflection from the first to the last stanza in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". Therefore, the attempt to suggest universal values on gender relation in de Beauvoir's myth of woman is debunked by Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". Hence, the discontinuity of de Beauvoir's myth of woman to portray gender relation between woman and man problematizes the "validity" of the myth to "objectively" depict gender relation.

The myths are indeed justified by Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man", but it shifts from one to another. It indicates how context is vital. The gender relation in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" does justify the myths. However, the myth justified relies on the context. On the other hand, De Beauvoir's myth of woman universalizes context. Therefore, to construct and stereotype gender relation in binary oppositions by universalizing context is indeed oversimplified. It does not mean that the myth is incapable to portray gender relation. However, by universalizing context, the myth results in generalizing and stereotyping woman and man.

Besides the justification of de Beauvoir's myth of woman and its gaps in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man", the poem

challenges de Beauvoir's myth of woman. As aforementioned discussion suggests, de Beauvoir's myth of woman fails to accommodate all gender relation presented in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". The ways woman and man speak and communicate and woman's refusal to be silent are absent from de Beauvoir's myth of woman. This omission is crucial to challenge the myth of woman because stanzas 1-2, 5, and 9 present how woman does not merely accept her gender role. Instead, she speaks her voice.

Stanzas 1-2 and 5 portray the ways woman and man speak and communicate which result in misunderstanding and miscommunication. Stanza 1 portrays woman's incapability in speaking directly. She shifts from one to another. Stanza 2, on the other hand, implies that man has different manners of speaking, for he is accused as not understanding woman's manners of speaking. Hence, stanza 2 challenges de Beauvoir's myth of woman. Stanza 2 breaks the disunity of the myth of woman which portrays that man is transcendent. In fact, he lacks of knowing and understanding woman's manners of speaking.

Additionally, stanza 5 portrays the misunderstanding and miscommunication between woman and man differently. Stanza 5 portrays woman's incapability to interpret man's silence. For woman, silence means no attention; however, it is a fact that in silence, man actually listens (Tannen, 1998: 116). Nevertheless, man fails to understand that intimacy in relationships through sharing is important for woman; therefore, she wants them as best friends (Tannen 1998: 114). The different manners of communicating result in misunderstanding and miscommunication. Since it is misunderstanding and miscommunication, it is crucial to note that no one to blame because they are just different.

Stanzas 1-2 and 5 prove that woman and man employ different manners of speaking and communicating. Since they are different, it exaggerates to say that one (man) is superior to the other (woman). Therefore, it is unnecessary to compare woman and man

because they are just different. It means that nothing is shared in common, so it exaggerates to compare and find who is superior to the other. By then, stanzas 1-2 and 5 in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" discontinue the construction of de Beauvoir's myth of woman which portrays that man is the transcendent, the superior (Motherlant, Lawrence, Claudel).

In addition to stanzas 1-2 and 5, stanza 9 depicts woman's refusal to be silent. Stanza 9 pictures a fight between woman and man. Stanza 9 shows how woman is obliged to apologize firstly though the trigger of the fight or who in charge of fighting are not clear. Woman "seems" to accept her role to be understanding, less offensive, and ready to apologize and negotiate. She keeps man's pride to never lower himself; hence, by accepting her role, she supports patriarchal systems. By this point, woman justifies de Beauvoir's myth of woman from Motherlant and Lawrence. However, stanza 9 is ended by woman's refusal to be silent even though she accepts her role. She speaks up her voice. She asserts in a vulnerable tone how she is victimized. Woman's refusal to be silent breaks the discontinuity of de Beauvoir's myth of woman which constructs woman as immanent and willingly accepting her role (Motherlant, Lawrence). Woman indeed is incapable of refusing and changing her role, but she speaks her voice and shows how she is treated unfairly.

Besides the justification and challenges of de Beauvoir's myth of woman in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" along with the gaps found, the nameless characters (a man and a woman) in Lehman's poem is crucial to problematize de Beauvoir's myth of woman. The nameless and generalized characters indicate that Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" represents woman and man in general. Therefore, the contribution of the poem in problematizing de Beauvoir's myth of woman also applies to woman and man in general. The paradoxes found in the attempt to construct gender relation "objectively" in binary oppositions as Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" presents are called into question.

Moreover, Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" consisting of 13 stanzas is only able to reflect some context in gender relation. In fact, none of them succeeds to portray the gender relation in speaking and communicating and woman's refusal to silently accept her role. Since the gender relation context in real life is more fluid and complicated, the myth of woman by the five authors as categorized by de Beauvoir is surely not applicable to portray gender relation in real life. The construction of gender relation in binary oppositions by the five authors is called into question.

Additionally, the myth of woman is initiated by five authors who are men. Hence, it is necessary to question the "objectivity" of the myth since it omits the other gender's perspective: woman. Woman's voice is absent from the myth of woman. The myth attempts to depict woman, but it is derived from man's perspective. Therefore, although Claudel, Breton, and Stendhal portray the gender relation tenderly than Motherlant and Lawrence, they remain presenting gender relation in form of the myth of woman in how woman suits man (de Beauvoir, 1989: 251).

Finally, although the myth of woman stereotypes both genders unequally, woman still becomes the marginalized party. It is because the myth of woman is initiated by men. Woman's voice is absent and the myth of woman always depicts how man is superior to woman that the myth keeps portraying gender relation by presenting how woman supports patriarchal systems.

Additionally, Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" loses its voice in taking side on woman. The theme asserts that Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Woman" attempts to show woman's perspective in expressing love between woman and man. However, the need of employing man's perspective proves how unattainable it is to portray woman's perspective without seeking the relation between both genders. Woman and man are proven to be interdependent. Their relation is like "mirror images"; one sees her/his reflection in the other (Devor, 1998: 28). Since they are interdependent, it is obviously

exaggerating to claim that one is superior than the other.

Besides showing the interdependency between woman and man, the need of employing man's perspective shows how woman still lives under patriarchy's reflection. Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man", therefore, not only problematizes de Beauvoir's myth of woman, but also reflects how in attempting to pursue gender equality, woman remains the marginalized one.

### Concluding Remarks

The first level of reading conducted in this research is close reading commenting on the intrinsic elements of Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man". The findings on the form, diction, word order (complexity), point of view, and tone in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" suggest that the poem attempts to portray gender relation "objectively". However, the findings on the metaphors, imagery, symbols, and allusions in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" contradict the findings on the aforementioned intrinsic elements, for the findings suggest that the poem employs multiple underlying meanings.

The second level of reading conducted in this research is close reading focusing on explicating Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Woman". The findings on the second level of reading in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" show that Lehman's poem depicts some gender relation underlying the poem. The gender relation represented in the poem is woman-man relation in speaking, never being in the same place (domain), performing different roles in the same place (domain), communicating, viewing gender relation, fighting, and considering night and sleep. Woman and man are proved to have different views on the relation portrayed by Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man".

The aforementioned findings are the answers to the first problem formulation about how Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" depicts gender relation on different levels of reading. In addition to the aforementioned findings, the next findings

are the deconstructive reading findings on Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" and the gaps found in the poem along with how the gaps problematize de Beauvoir's myth of woman. The findings on the deconstructive reading are the answer to the second problem formulation conducted in this research.

The deconstructive reading on the first level of reading conducted in Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" reveals that the intrinsic elements in the poem are fluid and paradoxical. Therefore, the fluid and paradoxical intrinsic elements problematize the "objectivity" of portraying gender relation that Lehman's poem attempts to show. Additionally, the deconstructive reading on the second level of reading reveals the discontinuity of de Beauvoir's myth of woman to construct the gender relation in the poem in binary oppositions. Besides, the universalizing context and the absence of woman's voice in de Beauvoir's myth of woman reveal the question of the "objectivity" of the myth and how even though de Beauvoir's myth of woman stereotypes both gender unequally, woman remains the marginalized one.

A literary work is a reflection of what happens in society. Therefore, the complexity and fluidity of gender relation as exposed by Lehman's "When a Woman Loves a Man" is also the reflection of today's society. Yet, as de Beauvoir's myth of woman constructs gender relation in binary oppositions, society oversimplifies the fluid gender relation into binary oppositions: woman and man along with each different role. The unequal binary oppositions result in stereotyping and generalizing woman-man relation along with gender roles. This results in punishing, and in the worst case alienating whoever deviates the roles. However, woman keeps being marginalized because she lives in patriarchal society in which man has the power and authority.



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