

Hetero-patriarchy as an impulse of tragedy in Can Themba's *The Suit*

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Abstract

Can Themba's *The Suit* is an enthralling narration that centres on Matilda's retribution for her extra-marital affair. Philemon, Matilda's husband, unearths his wife's secret of infidelity through his old friend, Mr Maphikela and decides to take an act of diabolical revenge against her. He metes out an agonising punishment upon her, which disregards a divorce but ironically inflicts more pain to him as the punisher than it does to Matilda as the victim. This paper sets out to examine Philemon's appalling revenge against Matilda and argues that the requisite is informed by hetero-patriarchal attitudes. The hetero-patriarchal ideas, which often underpin sexist undertones are sought to be explored as catalysts of tragedy in Themba's *The Suit*. Furthermore, the paper is qualitative in nature and collects data from Themba's aforementioned narration, which the study relies on as a primary lens to unmask hetero-patriarchal notions as canons that often contribute to matrimonial complications. Moreover, textual analysis is utilised as a mechanism to comprehend, scrutinise and analyse the data acquired from the purposively selected literary text for this study, which is Themba's *The Suit*. The findings from the paper include the detection that hetero-patriarchy has moulded masculine and feminine societal perceptions and roles where masculinity is exalted at the expense of femininity.

Keywords: Cultural underpinnings, Feminism, Hetero-patriarchy, Masculinity, Tragedy.

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