

Norma, as a Mirror of Female Identity: Feminist Perspectives on Power and Sacrifice

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Abstract

Literarily and artistically, Norma's image is a romanticized idealization of the culture of the past by European artists in the 19th century. This research examines feminist theories of power and sacrifice in Bellini's opera Norma, with reference to the character of Norma, a Druid priestess grappling with questions of authority, duty, love, and sacrifice. Feminist theory, narrative analysis, historical analysis, and feminist criticism are used by the study to analyze the opera, analyzing the character roles in a patriarchal society and mechanisms of gender oppression. The essay provides vital insights for actors studying the drama, enabling actors to grasp the psychological transformations of the character Norma. Ultimately, Norma's persona highlights the challenges women face in aligning themselves with societal expectations, motivating women today to continue striving for true equality and self-emancipation.

1. Introduction

Through the ages, literature, opera, and theater have presented powerful media for exploring feminism and the complexities of women's lives. From foundational plays in the late 19th century and early 20th century to modern works, several authors have used such forms to critique patriarchal societies and give voice to women. In opera, the struggle with identity in *Aida* (Verdi, 1871) sheds light on love and duty themes at the crossroads of personal desire and societal. Afterwards, the intricate female heroine of *Tosca* (Puccini, 1900) faces love, power, and sacrifice in a world dominated by males, finally deciding to make a tragic choice for freedom.

Although opera often puts female singers at the center of the stage, the larger history of music has often left women out as composers, creators, and decision-makers. Scholars like Marcia Citron (2000) and Susan McClary (1991) have shown that women have been mostly excluded from the musical tradition—both in writing music and in having the power to explain or perform it. This long-standing imbalance helps us understand why, even when female characters are central in opera, their stories are often limited or controlled by others.

In the study *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*, it was pointed out that there were few feminist criticisms in the field of opera (Clément, 1988). So she studied the opera libretti and found that the female characters were either tamed or died in the opera, and their destruction invisibly consolidated the patriarchy. The traditional idea was that music served the plot and atmosphere, but just as Abbate (1991) believed, music enriched the characters through multi-angle interpretation. As a narrator, the music could even transcend the script. For female characters, music could be more than life and death. Even though these women characters die in the narrative, they leave behind powerful artistic legacies. From a musical perspective, they are not entirely marginalized. This study builds on such perspectives, but shifts the focus more directly to the opera's libretto and narrative structure.

This research focuses on *Norma* (Bellini, 1831), which is a quintessential Bel Canto opera that tells the tragic story of a Druid priestess navigating themes of authority, duty, love, and sacrifice, famously highlighted by the aria "*Casta Diva*". The article addresses the role of women in 19th-century power dynamics through *Norma* as a representation of the conflict between women's emancipation and social rights. The central research question of this paper is: How does *Norma* construct and reflect female identity and resistance under patriarchal power through its libretto and narrative?

It emphasizes the importance of understanding the cultural and historical background of the opera for performers, providing insight into the cultural contexts of their characters. By adopting a sociological focus, the research advances the understanding of the interior lives of the characters and brings fresh insights for feminist drama studies and literary research.

This study informs their performance of *Norma*'s inner struggle for performers. It allows them to navigate her emotional transitions—from priestly devotion to romantic despair and ultimate self-sacrifice—with more authority. Furthermore, the singer's knowledge of the cultural and historical setting provides richness to his or her artistic expression, dramatic interpretation, and character formation, all relevant to what defines a professional opera singer. In the integration of this information in their vocal and theatrical presentation, singers are able to enhance their performance, with *Norma* a richer and richer character.

2. Literature Review

The study of the Druids is largely based on ancient texts, archaeology, and literature. Druids were multifaceted figures in ancient societies, serving as religious leaders, poets, scholars, and strategists, symbolizing wisdom and truth. While *Norma* is a fictional character, the Druids in reality did exist as religious leaders among the Celts, especially within the prominent ranks of ancient Gaul and Britain. The references of Druids are limited, mostly derived from ancient Roman writers such as Caesar (2004) and Pliny (2007). As indicated by Hopman (n.d.), most of the records about Celtic society were done by male Christian monks who mostly overlooked or devalued the position of Celtic women. However, archaeological discoveries show that there are female Druids. For instance, an inscription in Metz, France, has recorded a female priestess who offered sacrifices to forest gods and local fairies. Klimczak (2015) argued that within medieval Irish mythology, female druids were known as *Banduri* or *Bandorai* and possessed an important position in the class of druids. These historical records not only provide a cultural reference for *Norma*'s image as a female religious leader, but also reveal the long-standing absence of female Druids in historical and literary narratives. This absence shows that gender power structures are not naturally formed, but are shaped and reinforced by human choices—through the repeated transmission of culture, history, and art.

From a literary and artistic perspective, the image of Norma as a Druid priestess represented a romanticized idealization of ancient culture by 19th-century European artists. These artists had a keen interest in mysterious and exotic themes and often used such characters to express emotional tension and moral conflict. Due to this historical absence, the identity of female Druids became more easily reinterpreted and reshaped in later cultural works. .

Anczyk (2015) addresses gender issues in Druid society in *Druids and Druidesses: Gender Matters in Druidry*, analyzing the evolution of the role of female Druids (Druidesses) through history, literature, art, and modern neo-paganism. The article points out that although female Druids were mentioned in ancient Roman literature, the image of Druids today is dominated by male sages, and the image of women was less appreciated before the 19th century. As literature, movies, games, and the neo-pagan scene evolved, female Druids have been redefined more and more and have become a stronger figure in modern Druidic movements. The author argues that the history of female Druids is not merely a matter of historical fact, but also a deeper issue concerning cultural discourse and gender equality. The writer asserts that the history of female Druids is not merely an issue of historical fact but also involves considerations of cultural reproduction and gender equality in the present day.

According to Matthews (1986), feminism is a political stance that calls women out of gender oppression. The absence of women in cultural narratives in fact reflects their continued marginalization in the realms of politics, religion, and family. Traditional history measures women in comparison to men; their independent role is overlooked. Traister (2023) claimed that women historically don't have strong power in the political centers; for instance, women only occupied a small number of seats in the U.S. Congress, and there was still no female president. In situations involving claims for rights, demands by women are often expressed in more mitigated ways, but they still fail to take over religious space. According to Woodhead (2012), women always remained focused on family dilemmas even while participating in religious activities; it hints at the lower status of their place in a family and society.

From a literary and artistic perspective, the image of Norma as a Druid priestess represents a romanticized idealization of ancient culture by 19th-century European artists who were captivated by mysterious and exotic themes. These artists often used such characters to explore emotional tension and moral conflict. Although there is some literature such as Anczyk (2015)'s *Druids and Druidesses: Gender Matters in Druidry*, providing sufficient information on the previous scarcity of female Druids and proposing the evolution of the image of women Druids in modern culture. However, in-depth research elaborating on the immediate impact of 19th-century artwork on modern perceptions of female Druid characters is sorely deficient. Additionally, little attention has been given to the impacts of such representations on neo-pagan movement debates over gender dynamics and power. Thus, the research is needed to explore how idealized presentations of women like Norma not only reflect but also shape contemporary understandings of gender, power, and cultural identity in Druidry and related practice. This study could examine the intersection of literature, art, and new spirituality, with a closer examination of cultural reproduction of women's identities within Druidry and their implications on gender equality today.

In opera, the marginalization of women often takes the form of constructing “female spectacles” — centering women' s sacrifice as the emotional climax of the plot. This not only fulfills the audience' s aesthetic expectations but also serves as a tool for emotional manipulation and moral discipline. There are many scholars have specifically discussed the situation of women in opera. For example, Clément (1988) made a survey in her study, *Opera, or the Undoing of Women*. In chapter two, titled *Dead Women*, nine of the female characters were killed by sharp objects, two

by suicide, three by fire, three by falling from a height, two by tuberculosis, three by drowning, three by poisoning, and two by fright. Other chapters discuss women's liberation or perfection through death. And there are also male characters who share the same fate as the female characters, known as madmen, Negroes and jesters. Clément argued that these male characters were marginalized because they displayed feminine qualities - vulnerability, sensitivity, crying and lamentation. Ultimately, they are excluded from mainstream male roles by society because of this "feminization." She believes that the female characters in the opera often end in tragedy, and their resistance is finally controlled and dissolved by the plot. Viewers, especially male viewers, can take "emotional comfort" from watching these female characters fail or die.

Abbate (1991) cites Paul Robinson's criticism in her book *Unsung Voices: Opera and Musical Narrative in the Nineteenth Century*: Clément focuses only on how the drama destroys women but ignores the triumph of women's voices in music. She agreed with Clément, but also recognized the musical triumph of the female characters, who were killed by the plot, but whose singing gained eternal power. This also reflects the importance of this study, which suggests to the singers that Norma's performance needs to balance deep emotion and a sense of the sacred, not just to express a tragic emotional victim, but to make her a solemn, transcendent female figure.

3. Methodology and Procedures

This study employs a combination of methods to analyze opera *Norma*, exploring the roles of characters within a patriarchal society and the mechanisms of gender oppression. Through a close textual analysis of libretti, how patriarchal oppression and female resistance are embedded in 19th-century Italian opera.

In literary and drama studies, Barthes (1977) highlighted the role of narrative form in meaning construction, which has been widely used in opera and drama analysis. This study uses this methodology in analyzing Norma's monologue, symbolic images (such as "pyre" for sacrifice and purification), and the development of Norma's evolving attitude toward Pollione, and the development of the plot to analyze how the competition and solidarity between women in a patriarchal world are represented in the narrative.

Secondly, historical analysis looks at how Norma responds to the political climate, culture, and social norms of the 19th century through adherence to the historical context of the text. Scott (2007) argued that gender ~~function~~ should be considered as a historical analysis tool which reveals how power works by constructing gender differences. Beard (2017) examines how women have been excluded throughout history. These are also the fundamental reasons why women in artworks are marginalized. This paper used 19th-century Italian moral values such as women's roles within the family and in the religious sphere, coupled with ancient Roman literature narratives about druids and the appearance of female priests in archaeological diggings, in order to explore the historical truth and fiction of Norma as a druid priestess, and how Vincenzo Bellini and Felice Romani represented this figure on the 19th-century stage.

Finally, feminist analysis explores Norma's power struggles within a patriarchal society through a critical lens, examining the status of women in the family, religion, and society. Tidd (2004) discusses how women are constructed as "the Other." A concept reflected in Norma's portrayal: a sacred priestess in the eyes of her followers, a perfect lover in Pollione's view, yet deprived of the space for genuine self-expression. Adichie (2003) emphasized "bottom power" does not represent genuine female empowerment but rather a compromise with patriarchal society. The study employs self-objectification theory to analyze Norma's priestly authority reflects this idea—it is a symbolic and permitted power, not true power.

The key moments such as Norma's monologue before the pyre and her final self-sacrifice, showing how these scenes reflect her inner conflict and emotional collapse under patriarchal control. In addition, by contrasting Norma and Adalgisa in order to transcend the traditional "female competition" plot to instead emphasize the potential for female solidarity and to examine women's identities in historical and modern contexts.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Status of Women in 19th-Century Italian Society

In 19th-century Italy, women's roles were primarily centered around family and religion. They were seen as the moral foundation of society, responsible for maintaining the purity and morals of the household, especially in educating children. Marriage was the main goal for women, with husbands providing financial support while women managed domestic affairs. Strict societal monitoring enforced premarital chastity. In religious life, women were expected to act as guardians of faith, demonstrating purity and moral responsibility through devout belief and adherence to doctrine. Life in convents offered women a way to gain social recognition.

This tendency can also be seen in many works of art. For example, *The Betrothed (I Promessi Sposi)* by Alessandro Manzoni is not only a love novel but also a great work reflecting social reality. It creates the image of the heroine - Lucia, with the help of the nuns, hiding in the monastery. After numerous tribulations and adventures, Lucia and Renzo were finally reunited and realized their dream of marriage. Her devotion to God, her loyalty to her family, and her tenacity in adversity all fit the image of women at that time.

Another example is Gustav Klimt's painting *The Kiss*, which reflects the contrast of male and female image shaping through the contrast of geometric figures. The figure of the man is shaped by straight lines and squares, reflecting the hardness of the male, while the female body is constructed by curves and flowers, suggesting softness and submission. Men only have their heads, while women's beguiled expressions attract the eye.

Despite shouldering these moral responsibilities, women lacked authority in public life and religious matters. Men held most of the public power, while women were often relegated to supportive roles within the family and church. This gender inequality reflected the societal biases of the time. However, women found limited ways to exert influence through marriage and religion. Although they couldn't directly wield power, they could shape their husbands' decisions through their relationships or act indirectly as mothers and religious adherents.

4.2 The Clash of Female Power and Social Rights

Norma, the central character in *Norma*, embodies not only the dramatic conflict but also reflects the multiple dilemmas and symbolic meanings of women in a patriarchal society. Her journey spans religious authority, motherhood, and ultimately self-sacrifice, making her role rich in symbolism and profound social critique. This complexity warrants a thorough analysis from the perspectives of text and imagery.

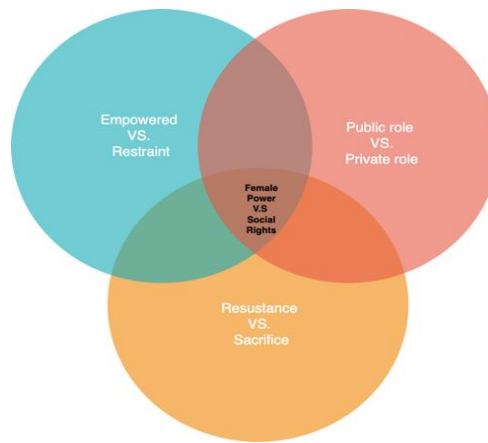


Figure 1. The conflicts framework in text of Norma

The first clash is the conflict between empowered and restraint. The religious power of Norma's people is actualized in her as a Druid priestess, yet simultaneously she has to deal with the dominance of Roman power. Though she is portrayed as spiritual power, she is not in her profession attuned to true social power. Sandwiched between adamant codes of morality, the adjectives "sacred" and "pure" then become limitations on her emotions and also compel her to adhere to patriarchal morality. Recurring altar imagery on stage reinforces her double role as both circumscribed and authoritative, with "pyre" representing double meanings of sacrifice and purification, paralleling her self-struggle for definition.

The secondary contradictions are the public role and private role. The life of Norma as a mother is quite different from what she projects herself to be in the public eye as a priestess. Rhetorical means like "secrecy" highlight her repression of motherhood and how patriarchal culture keeps woman's roles in check. Her affair with the Roman general Pollione and the fact that she has an illegitimate child are against religious duties and societal norms. The imagery of cover-up over the baby, together with fragmented dialogues, reinforces this tension. Most poignantly, her monologue at the altar, where fire is both cleansing and the forfeiture of her femininity, reveals her struggle between two conflicting desires: to protect her child and fulfill her priestly obligation, thus revealing her imprisonment within patriarchal obligations.

The last conflict is between the resistance and sacrifice. Norma's ultimate sacrifice is the emotional climax of the opera, revealing her tragic conflict and condemning the tragic fates of women. Her monologue on the "pyre" both deliverance and destroys. From a feminist perspective, while her sacrifice seems to be voluntary, the relentless emphasis on "purification" underscores her coercive compliance precipitated by unresolved identity conflicts. The symbolic altar scenes entrap Norma, which signifies the breakdown of her roles as mother, priestess, and lover. Her own words about the "end of purity" and "rebirth through destruction" speak to her own destruction within the context of sacrificial patriarchal societal expectations. Beyond merely setting up dramatic tension, these themes themselves call into question the gender inequality present in the societal roles that women are given.

4.3 Feminist Interpretation of Norma

It is a process that involves the autonomous choice of one's values and lifestyle, shaping oneself, and understanding one's identity, and the meaning of existence. How, then, does Norma seek self-identity in a male-dominated society? We can understand this through the Objectification Theory suggested by Fredrickson and Roberts (1997): self-objectification means internalizing societal views about one's body; therefore, individuals begin to view themselves as

"objects" and internalize external appearance and attractiveness rather than their feelings, capabilities, and self-worth. In the swimsuit study conducted by Fredrickson et al. (1998) at the University of Michigan, researchers found that self-objectification, or viewing oneself primarily as an object for others' observation, leads to emotional strain and anxiety. Participants who wore swimsuits felt more self-conscious and focused on how they were perceived, which impaired their ability to concentrate and think clearly. Norma's dramatic shift in attitude between the first and second scenes, presented her process of self-objectification. In *Act I*, Norma expresses her anger and curses Pollione.

"Vanne sì, mi lascia, indegno!"

Translation: Go away, leave me, you unworthy man!

"Figli obblia, promesse, onore."

Translation: Children, forget your promises and your honor.

"Maledetto dal mio sdegno non godrai d'un empio amore!"

Translation: Cursed by my wrath, you shall not enjoy an unholy love

However, in *Act II*, in the public occasion, she judged herself and even contemplated sacrificing her life to achieve social order.

"Io stessa il rogo ergeste."

Translation: I myself build the funeral pyre.

Following this observation, there is an indication that once people have grown accustomed to seeing themselves in terms of others' judgment, they generally internalize it and reduce the sense of self-worth as well as sense of agency. Consequently, viewing oneself as an "object" can negatively impact mental focus and overall well-being.

For example, in *Act II, Scene XI*, when the tribe learns of Norma's secret, their denunciations and accusations reveal that the priesthood has not granted her real power and authority; instead, it has imposed even greater moral burdens upon her.

"Una spergitura sacerdotessa i sacri voti infranse."

Translation: A priestess who has betrayed her oath and broken a sacred oath.

"Tradi la patria e il Dio degli avi offese."

Translation: She has betrayed her country and blasphemed the gods of her ancestors.

It is apparent that when she does not have actual power and does not live up to society's expectations, she is brutally deposed from her pedestal. Therefore, for women, social power cannot be derived solely from gender symbols or symbolic status. Norma's power dynamics reflect the concept of "bottom power," which is a result of self-objectification. This concept, introduced by Adichie in her works such as *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *We Should All Be Feminists* (2015) has sparked extensive discussions in feminist circles. Adichie highlights that while some women may attempt to gain benefits through "Bottom Power," this form of power is not genuine; rather, it reveals women's circumstances under patriarchy—where their opportunities often depend on how others perceive and utilize them. This reflects the struggle women face in seeking true autonomy within society. Adichie's discourse urges us to reconsider the nature of gender equality and women's power, emphasizing the need for structural changes in societal

perceptions of gender, rather than relying on limited power forms based on traditional gender roles.

Norma's self-esteem is heavily influenced by how Pollione loves and views her. She sees herself through his feelings, which makes her emotions depend on his changing desires. In *Act I, Scene IV*, when she sings the aria "Ah! bello a me ritona," it shows her vulnerability and longing for love, with the fast pace reflecting her shift from being restrained to feeling excited.

Because she relies on Pollione for her self-worth, Norma struggles to feel confident in herself, as she judges her value based on how others see her, instead of recognizing her own worth. Although she is a Druid priestess with some authority, her emotional strength largely depends on Pollione's love. This dependence makes her vulnerable, especially when she learns that Pollione is attracted to Adalgisa. Norma realizes that her place in this relationship is unstable and that the power she thinks she has is not secure. In *Act I, Scene IX*, even after Pollione's betrayal is revealed, he shows no remorse or shame and coldly uses the excuse of "destiny" to justify his actions.

"È mio destino amarti, destino lasciar..."

Translation: My destiny is to love you, and to leave you...

Pollione's words completely shatter Norma's self-worth, making her feel that her emotions and priestly identity mean nothing to him. Knowing this, she is consumed by anger to the point that she considers murdering her child, which symbolizes her rejection of motherhood. She would rather ruin everything than confront her feelings. When Pollione's betrayal is discovered, Norma is consumed by anger but is unable to do more than vent her rage with words. Pollione's insensitive and cold response demonstrates that her role as a priestess makes no difference to him whatsoever. This lost sense of helplessness stands in stark contrast to the power she formerly wielded, and it points out the irony of her circumstances and how low she has sunk.

"Ah, qual suon! Sì, la sprezzo. Ma prima mi cadrà il tuo nume al piè."

Translation: Ah, this sound! Yes, I despise it. But first, your god will fall at my feet.

Pollione's disdain for her makes her vulnerable with her power and increases her self-doubt and emotional breakdown. It also points out the weaknesses of basing self-worth on the approval of another. When she loses Pollione's approval, Norma not only loses the emotional support of Pollione but also herself, ultimately leading to a fatal death. In the opera, the conflict between Norma and Adalgisa illustrates the common struggle of women who find themselves competing in a patriarchal society. Pollione's changing affections provoke feelings of jealousy and betrayal in Norma, as her self-worth is closely tied to male approval. One way to overcome self-objectification is through self-awareness and female solidarity.

In *Act I, Scene IX*, although Norma knows that Adalgisa is not aware of the truth, she takes her arm and forces her to look at Pollione, mocking her for wanting to escape to Rome with him. This act is symbolic; Adalgisa, trembling, does not wish to turn away from the truth and does not wish to witness her lover's infidelity, whereas Norma forces her to face the bitter truth.

Adalgisa (trembling):

"Che ascolto! Ah! Deh parla..."

Translation: What do I hear! Ah! Please speak...

(Adalgisa covers her face with her hands. Norma takes her by the arm and forces her to look at

Pollione.)

In an era when women are competing for men's affection, resulting in rivalry among them. However, the encounter between Norma and Adalgisa becomes a redemptive experience that reaffirms feminine solidarity. With gentle persistence and encouragement, Adalgisa reaches out to Norma, resonating deeply with her maternal instincts. This transformation illustrates the strength and potential that arise when women focus on supporting one another rather than engaging in competition.

"Mira, o Norma, ai tuoi ginocchi questi cari pargoletti."

Translation: Behold, oh Norma, at your knees these dear little children.

"Ah! Pietade di lor ti tocchi, se non hai di te pietà."

Translation: Ah! Pity on them may touch you, though you have no pity on yourself.

This line prompts Norma to re-examine the meaning of her self-sacrifice, challenging the patriarchal narrative of "female opposition." They gradually move from conflict to reconciliation, reclaiming strength through mutual support and empathy.

4.4 Discussion on the Modern Feminist Perspectives from Norma's Fate

From the perspective of agency, Norma's final decision is one of submission wherein she owns up to her transgression against religious duty and atones for it through self-sacrifice. While this apparently is an extremely admirable thing to do, it is actually surrendering oneself to the requirements of the patriarchal institution and religious orthodoxy and thus characteristic of women's dilemmas in the 19th century under social oppression. This again can be regarded as a very complex exercise of agency. Norma is not able to reconcile the conflict between her religious duties and her personal wants; she reconciles the contradictions by way of her self-sacrifice, which is her personal will in the teeth of adversity.

From a postmodern feminist standpoint, Norma's self-sacrifice is a reflection of her disempowerment and reconstituting of her subjectivity through social oppression. Under patriarchal systems, the myth of self-sacrifice becomes idealized and honored, especially where the devotion of women is pledged to men and society. By way of sacrifice, Norma once again seizes control of her fate, only to have this control further delineated by the mores of society and is thus unable to be autonomously independent and free. Therefore, it is a form of struggle waged in the rigid walls of patriarchal norms—thus, could not transcend the boundaries of patriarchal society, and it is a demonstration of defeat of female superiority in a passive manner. But on behalf of her own need and sacrifice, Norma is trying to reassert her power once more in a hostile setting as well, which marks the ambivalent and contradictory nature of feminine assertion.

From the perspective of literary and dramatic creation, the final scene in which Norma walks toward the flames under the gaze of her followers can be seen as a representation of the "female spectacle." In many operas, films, and literary works, the death of a woman is often used to create an emotional climax, evoking strong emotional responses from the audience. This dramatic use of female sacrifice not only caters to aesthetic expectations but also imbues the female character with tragic beauty and moral significance.

Norma's decision aligns with the religious and societal commandments of patriarchal society which require women to be models of self-sacrifice and compliance in religious matters as well as

family. Yet, her self-sacrifice can also be seen as the act of regaining the willpower in control of destiny. At the moment that she decides to take a walk to her death, Norma stops being a passive victim waiting for the other party to take charge of her life. Instead, she makes a choice to bring her relationship with Pollione to an end. The action gives her a sense of control over her life. With her sacrifice, she redefines her own value, embodying not just the oppression she experienced, but also the defiant against social pressures.

This struggle of emotion and power is debated in varied terms throughout history and literature, even for men. In Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607), for example, Antony tries to reconcile the struggle of emotional necessity against political obligation, but his emotional choices never materialize in total shame; rather, death is his fate in the form of suicide as a political loss and maintaining honor. Similarly, Goethe (1961) also committed ethical errors through his devil's bargain but ultimately gains a degree of redemption. These tales depicted how male heroes win the respect from society by pushing their confusion caused by passion and responsibility issues via struggles. On the other hand, though, Norma, as a female character, cannot find the same road to redemption for her betrayal of love. Her gender very strongly limits her options, and she is forced to follow the demands of society through self-sacrifice.

Enloe's (1990) insights help explain Norma's decision. As Enloe explains, women are often relegated to the roles of "peacemakers" or "guardians of the family" in society, barred from contending in the power struggles for which violence might prove a means. Norma resolves the conflict through reconciliation with Adalgisa, emphasizing solidarity, emotional understanding, and moral influence among women rather than resorting to violent confrontation. This approach aligns with Gilligan's (1982) "different voice" theory, which posits that women are more inclined to prioritize care and empathy in the face of conflict rather than using confrontational tactics. Even when confronted with betrayal, Norma's anger does not manifest as violence; instead, it is expressed through emotional outpouring and moral condemnation. This reflects the cultural expectation for women in society to resolve conflicts through self-sacrifice and non-violence, which is also one of the reasons behind Norma's final choice of self-sacrifice.

4.5 Practical Significance of Norma

In modern society, Norma's self-sacrifice shows the dilemma that most women face between family and career. Although women of today can enjoy social and commercial life, familial responsibilities often weigh on their shoulders too, and they have to make sacrifices between career and familial duties. This choice resonates with Norma's conflict between feeling and power, echoing the internal tension women experience when confronted with cultural demands. This symbolic reading is common in modern feminist thought, which encourages women's quest for self-actualization and liberation from passive sacrificial roles. In reality, however, many women are still trapped by conventional role definitions, compelled to make similar sacrifices.

Moreover, the character of Norma represents a variety of characteristics of the power of modern women and the formation of their means of opposition. Women during Norma's time had no chance to manifest opposition either in violence or in open action but had to restrict themselves within moral persuasion and self-sacrifice. Contemporary women have embraced all forms of conceivable means of advocacy: political, entrepreneurial, social, and media presence to express one's voice. They are now changing their fate and the attitude of society towards them. The spirit of Norma embodies an inner strength of women against oppression, a strength that is now expressed and brought to the fore through many channels. Moreover, the modern feminist movement is built on solidarity, as between Adalgisa and Norma. Through social movements and community, women empower and support each other instead of being isolated and powerless. It is

this solidarity that enhances women's powers of resistance and their influence in general.

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

Through the narrative analysis, historical analysis and feminist analysis of Norma, the conflict between empowerment and restraint, motherhood and the loss of femininity, as well as resistance and sacrifice, runs throughout "Norma." The self-objectification of women leads to difficulties in concentration and rational decision-making. To break free from these limiting shackles, unity among women is essential, providing vital insights for actors studying the drama. This understanding enables actors to grasp the psychological transformations of the character Norma. Ultimately, Norma's persona highlights the challenges women face in aligning themselves with societal expectations, motivating women today to continue striving for true equality and self-emancipation.

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