

## Truth Problematization and Identity Formation: A Foucauldian Reading of Martin Amis's Money

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### ABSTRACT

*Transgression in postmodern age marked a unique social and cultural aspect in re-forming the identity of the postmodern man. Martin Amis mirrors the identities of his characters through their transgression of the social norms, specifically, the established norms of truth of masculinity. However, this idea of truth transgression in Amis's novel Money has not been fully taken into account and there has been little discussion about it in terms of identity formation. Thus, the aim of this paper is to investigate the way in which transgression of truth affects the idea of identity formation in Amis's novel Money. Drawing on Michel Foucault's technique of problematisation, the present paper investigates the notion of transgressing the historical truth of masculinity which becomes a significant idea that the protagonist John Self manipulates to actualise himself and to pick up his own identity. The paper reveals a conclusion in which transgression of truth can be instrumental in realising the self and re-affirming subjectivity as the case is in John Self.*

*Keywords: transgression; Foucault; problematisation; Amis; money*

### INTRODUCTION

Studies about transgression have been a central area of concern in the modern era. In recent years theorists and researchers reveal an increasing interest revolving around transgression and its effects on identity and subjectivity re-formation. Much debate has been centered on the traditional meanings of identity construction and subjectivity definition which have been subverted in terms of theories of transgression. Supporters of these theories put their observations regarding the identity re-formation in terms of transgression. Transgression is framed as a starting point for their understanding of human identity and subjectivity. Thus, transgression is positioned as a central concept not only because it instigates the idea of limits and boundary crossing but also because it becomes a fundamental site for identity construction and subjectivity reformation.

Chris Jenks reveals that transgression is not a simple act of violation or going beyond limits, rather, it is “a dynamic force in cultural reproduction” (Jenks 2003, p. 2). Transgression is taken to be an effective force of breaking rules and norms that prevent identity development. Accordingly Jenks remarks that transgression “prevents stagnation by breaking the rule and it ensures stability by reaffirming the rule” (Jenks 2003, p. 2). With these functions of preventing stagnation and reaffirming dominant rules identity can be

obviously reproduced. Thus, transgression as a means of reproduction, “is not the same as disorder; it opens up chaos and reminds us of the necessity of order” (p. 2).

Michel Foucault's theory of transgression marked a unique social and cultural aspect in portraying and reframing the identity of the modern man. Transgression in the Foucauldian terms is fundamentally moved in various aspects to express the identity of the individual in subverting historical and dedicated discourses. The truth, as one of these various discourses, plays a central role in this theory of transgression when it is problematised to take a vital role in framing one's identity.

The theme of transgression and its relation to identity re-formation is crucially taken as a modern topic to emphasise the importance of transgression in actualizing the self-realization. In this respect, the study under the title *The Violated Female Body as Nation: Cultural, Familial, and Spiritual Identity in Nora Okja Keller's Comfort Woman* (2011) carried out by Paula Ruth Gilberta examines transgression of the female body in Nora Okja Keller's complex novel *Comfort Woman* by recalling the past. Transgression is addressed to expose its vital role in defining the national identity of the protagonist of the novel. The Korean identity of the transgressed body of the protagonist is conducted to be voiced through death by which Akiko returned back to her rightful spiritual country. The study concludes that transgression is inevitable in actualising the national identity. Besides, the study provides a good discussion of transgression in reframing the national Korean identity by reading the past in Nora Okja Keller's novel *Comfort Woman*.

Slavoj Žižek in his essay entitled *The Inherent Transgression* (1998) evaluates the idea of inherent transgression stating that the ‘value’ of any concept of ideological identification is well known by its transgression. Adopting the Lacanian concept of the ‘decentered subject’, the essay explores the transgression and its relation to the dictated beliefs of nameless powers that tend to leave the subjects to the unknown. The Lacanian theory of transgression is explored to reveal the depiction of the new identity.

Tricia Sheffield under the title of *Performing Jesus: A Queer Counternarrative of Embodied Transgression* (2008) adopts Bataille's conceptualisation of transgression. The study points out the importance of erotic transgression in framing gender identity. The crucial erotic idea of transgression is addressed to analyse the Augustinian interpretation of Genesis 1–3. The study, also, indicates how such Augustinian reading has been used to support normative gender and sexuality in terms of transgression. The new reading, as Sheffield explained, aims at offering a new understanding for those old narratives which had been condemned because of their ‘heretical’ or ‘monstrous’ characters. As a result, the new interpretation of the ancient narratives provides new site of transgression through which we can rethink the ancient battles and struggles in terms of gender and nowadays religious identification. The study gives a good presentation about transgression as an erotic definition of identity.

Rachael Sara and David Littlefield in their article entitled *Transgression: Body and Space* (2014), explore the wide interrelation of the theme of transgression in the fields of identity, society, and architecture. Moreover, the social role of the carnival is evaluated to explain its role in the field of identity re-formation. The critical essay addresses the new possibilities the concept of transgression may open in revealing its relationship to identity, body, and space. The essay reconsiders our thinking of identity, body, and space to be reframed in terms of transgression.

Collin Jerome investigates the formation of sexual identity in Karim Raslan's short stories. The complexity and fluidity of male sexuality and its mediation through the absence and presence of homosexuality have been discussed. The study explores the depiction of male sexuality in Malaysian literature in English to conclude that the fictional Malay men in Karim

Raslan's short stories "not only transgress the concept of male sexuality but also the socio-cultural and religious norms and boundaries" (Jerome 2008, p. 35).

However, adopting a Foucauldian perspective of transgression on Martin Amis's *Money* suggests a new reading in which identity is re-constructed by transgressing the established principles of truth. Circulating some doubts about deeply determined norms of truth gives such a sense of problematisation about it to be transgressed. In the light of this, transgression of the historical truth of masculinity plays a central role in re-framing one's identity. Accordingly, this kind of transgression manifests itself into a new form of identity that comes into being. Hans Bertens states that "the postmodern self is no longer a coherent entity that has the power to impose order upon its environment" (Bertens 1993, p. 65). Rather, this self is formed through subverting the established norms of truth.

Most accurately, the present paper argues that Martin Amis raises deep questions about the affirmed norms of truth of identity in his novels. These questions are usually meant to problematise the conception of truth itself in order to reveal Amis's vision of modern identity. Truth, as an unfixed notion in his writings, is intentionally subverted to reveal significant assertions on identity of modern man. One of these assertions is that identity produced is a changeable notion; it is not a fixed idea that remains constant. This changeable situation leads to the production of conflicting and contradictory identity. Accordingly, the human self in Amis's novels becomes a fresh site for the contradicted truth of human identity. Further, the traditional conception of human self is subverted in order to reshape the human identity of modern man. In this regard, Slethaug shows that the mission of the modern writers "is to decenter the concept of the self, to view human reality as a construct, and to explore the inevitable drift of signifiers away from their referents". Thus, the human being is taken as "a locus of contradictions in a reality of conflicting discourses and discursive practices". This idea of contradictions is meant to "displace the mimetic stance, values artifice over verisimilitude, substitutes writing for experience, pluralises narrative points of view, and esteems the autotelic and self-referential in fiction". Therefore, "in recognizing previously marginalised modes of narration and depictions of characters, it confirms the split sign, the split self, and the split text" (Slethaug 1993, p. 3).

Hence, the present study aims to examine the transgression of the asserted norms of truth in Amis's novel *Money* as it becomes a technique by which identity is re-constructed and re-shaped. This transgression takes the form of problematising the historical truth of masculinity which is usually mirrored through certain behavioral acts the protagonist gains and/or displays to reflect his new form of identity. Problematising the historical truth of masculinity evolves new techniques in which truth is transgressed to circulate such a new meaning of identity re-formation. This study investigates these new techniques used by Amis in *Money* to reframe the identity of John Self.

#### FOUCAULDIAN TRANSGRESSION

Michel Foucault's essay *A Preface to Transgression* (1977) is a clear elaboration of his theory of transgression as it relates transgressive literature and individual subjectivity. The essay explores Foucault's primary concern of transgression which is culturally and individually related in terms of social limits and boundaries. Transgression, for Foucault, illuminates these limits and boundaries for human self to find its way beyond social limitations. Subject is conceived to collect his/her identity through transgressing these boundaries to be defined. Accordingly, truth as one of these limitations needs to be subverted to allow the reformation of individual's identity.

Foucault's idea of transgression is not a simple violation of social laws and norms; rather it is a process of 'contestation' that comes through 'problematization'. Transgression is not a mere 'generalised negation' of universals and constants but; rather, it is a notion of

contestation in which there is “a radical break of transitivity” (Foucault 1977, p. 36) represented by deeply settled truth. Foucault goes even further to assert that contestation is not a mere denying of ‘existence or values’; rather, it is “to proceed until one reaches the empty core where being achieves its limit and where the limit define being” (p.36). Further, this act of contestation usually raises a lot of problems about the essence of truth asserted on certain concepts. To illustrate, this contestation leads to problematise concepts themselves to invoke a sense of transgression. Therefore, the act of transgression is explicitly increased and elevated whenever the act of problematisation is acted and imposed till the definition of identity.

Accordingly, Foucauldian theory of transgression is a process of going beyond the social borders to undermine the inherent truth throughout problematisation. Foucault’s conception of problematisation starts with something that “must have happened to have made it uncertain, to have made it lose its familiarity, or to have provoked a certain number of difficulties around it” (Rabinow 1994, p. 117). Rabinow believes that Foucauldian idea of problematisation is constituted as a “specific work of thought” when certain given idea is developed “into a question, this transformation of a group of obstacles and difficulties into problems to which the diverse solutions will attempt to produce a response” (p. 118). Moreover, Colin Koopman distinguishes two main functions for problematisation in terms of Foucault's theory of transgression. The first one is to “clarify extant problems” and the second one is to “intensify the force we feel in confronting these problems” (Koopman 2013, p. 100).

On the other hand, the absolute truth and certainty, in light of Foucault's theory, are so dangerous and they are as red rags to a bull. The truth of fixed inner essence that frames individual's identity is completely undermined and rejected. Accordingly, people for Foucault do not have reality or a real identity within themselves as a fixed and inner essence. Rather, Foucault believes that the common sense of reality within people is a matter of discourse people usually use to talk about themselves and it is not a real truth. Thereby, problematising the universal and inherent truth is essential for Foucault to know the truth of our identity.

Moreover, the idea of problematisation occupies a great part of interest in Foucault's theory of transgression. This interest comes through Foucault's excessive use of this notion in all of his works, lectures, and interviews in various occasions. Thus, Foucault in his *Fearless Speech* (2001) asserted that “what I tried to do from the beginning was to analyse the process of problematisation- which means: how and why certain things (behavior, phenomena, processes) became a problem” (Foucault 2001, p. 171). This notion of problematisation, as Foucault explained, involves a movement “in which one tries to see how the different solutions to a problem have been constructed; but also how these solutions result from a specific form of problematisation” (Foucault 1984, p. 389). Accordingly, Foucault placed the “theoretical coherence” of his works “in the definition of the historically unique forms in which the generalities of our relations to things, to others, to ourselves, have been problematized” (Foucault 1997, p. 319).

Further, Foucault, in an interview with Francois Ewald 1984, defined the idea of problematisation as the essential element of all of his works from *History of Madness* 1964 onwards. Therefore, he remarked that “though I had not yet sufficiently isolated this notion. But one always moves backwards toward the essential; the most general things appear last” (Foucault 1989, p. 295). By this particular record, Foucault had moved his interest of analysis from exploring the problematisation of frenzy and emotional instability, to the problematisation of relations amongst misconduct and discipline of certain courses in which sexual action was problematised (Barnett 2015, p. 1). It is in light of these sorts of Foucauldian comments that Arpad Szokolczai has contended that problematisation is “the

guiding thread of his work” and Colin Koopman has argued that it is the notion that refers to “a kind of master concept for Foucault’s methodology” (Szokolczai 2013, p. 20).

#### TRANSGRESSING TRUTH AND SELF-REALISATION IN MONEY

Martin Amis, in his essay *The War Against Cliché* (2014), emphasises his portrait of the idea of the 'New Man' as one who considers “the female is not merely equal to the male but is his plain superior”, and that who thinks the cultivating of the feminine part in his personality is a kind of “a homage to a better and gentler principle” (2014, p. 4). Also, Amis claims in his interview with James Naughtie that “maleness has become an embarrassment” (2001). These two citations carry a lot of Amis's perceptions of the image of the modern man and most accurately his masculinity in the modern age.

Based on Foucauldian theory of transgression and its conception of problematisation, the present paper will investigate Amis's perceptions to show that they provide not only a new portrait of masculinity but also a transgressive one by disabling the traditional norms of truth and reality of manhood. The contribution of the paper reveals that this disability takes the form of problematisation which is used to question and de-familiarise the traditional conception of masculinity. In this way, *Money* reveals Amis's dynamic and evolving representation of masculinity in an attempt to explore the modern portrait of his conception of the 'New Man'. To be more precise, the traditional and historical truth of masculinity in *Money* is problematised in order to be transgressed. This transgression is substantiated through Amis's presentation of the idea of the New Man.

Taking into consideration Amis's unique portrayal of the protagonist in *Money* (2000), one may point out a crucial moment in presenting a real image of manhood and masculinity in postmodern age. The novel explores various strategies of transgression to portray the masculine identity of the modern man as a New Man. The usage of these strategies subverts the typical and historical portrait of masculinity throughout the presentation of the protagonist in the novel. One of these strategies is the transgression of truth which is depicted to reveal the identity of the new man. This kind of transgression is not a simple going beyond the historical conception of truth. Rather, it is a technical process in which transgression takes the form of contestation that undermines the traditional norms of truth through problematisation. According to Foucault, this problematisation is essential aspect of transgression that paves the way for a new framing of masculinity and manhood (Foucault 2001). The inherent conception of masculinity is variously problematised and transgressed by going beyond the traditional norms of truth circulated about manhood to portray a new identity of postmodern man.

It is interesting to observe that John Self, the protagonist of *Money*, is differently portrayed to be de-familiarised with traditional and stereotypical conception of masculinity. His de-familiarization can be used to reveal some problems about his identity. These problems are meant to contest and invoke some questions about his identity as a 'New Man'. Besides, this idea of difference may raise some questions that problematise the reality of one's identity. In this regards, Amis's portrayal concurs with Foucault's idea and theory of transgression and its important conception of problematisation. The traditional and inherent norms of truth circulated about masculinity in the novel are destabilised and then problematised. In this connection, we can argue that Amis's manipulation of the problematised truth of masculinity, through Self's portrayal as a different identity, goes along with Foucault's ideas of difference and self-definition in terms of transgression. For this reason, Self's different portrayal is problematised to reveal a long list of problems around his identity.

Masculinity, as a one of these problems raised about Self, is taken to be a notable one because it exposes much of his different personality and identity. Masculinity is early problematised in the novel when Self points it out to be one of the postmodern concerns. Self's remark to one of the important characters of the novel (the script writer who is given the name of Martin Amis) that he has a real problem is an important example. He explores that “we have a hero problem. We have a motivation problem. We have a fight problem” (Amis 2000, p. 237). This sense of problematisation is fully compatible with the essence of Foucault's theory of transgression when Self concludes that “we have a realism problem” (p. 237). Moreover, this idea of problematisation explores Amis's high concern of the identity of postmodern man. It asserts the dilemma of masculinity in the novel that Amis tries to highlight throughout Self's identity which is variously portrayed as a transgressive one. The traditional reality of masculinity is problematised when Self himself shows a poor need for change. Self's request for change is a frank expression and a clear indication of his own rejection of the fixed reality and truth prevailed. This rejection gives a sense of transgression to the norms of truth traditionally and historically determined. Self's transgression of traditional reality and inherent truth is substantiated by his call for others not to be like him when he remarks that “don't be like me, pal. Sister, please find another way” (Amis 2000, p. 380). This call for transgression is a clear sign of Self's dissatisfaction with himself. It implies a call for a change that he wishes for his identity. On the other hand, Self's call for change concurs with Foucault's main principle and concept of identity construction and subjectivity constitution. Foucault believes that:-

We must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted discourse and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. (Foucault 1993, p. 340)

Foucault's words for circulating such a multiple and unstable discourse of identity conception are interpreted to be a remarkable call for change in terms of identity conception. This call for change is substantiated in Amis's novel *Money* with the presentation of Self's identity. Self is portrayed differently in various ways. The variety of portrayal is a creative technique of transgression that comes through the conception of problematisation. To be more precise, Self's identity is variously presented throughout different contradictive discourses that he uses to identify the truth of his identity. For this reason, we can say that Self's character is conceived to conform to Foucault's perceptions of identity which should be “neither uniform nor stable” (1993, p. 340). Foucault's basic principles of contrast and disability can be recognised in the novel when Self's identity revealed to be “neither uniform nor stable” (p. 340). Furthermore, with this non-uniform and unstable character, Self is presented to be socially and culturally constituted and his identity is not a matter of inner fixed essence. The constitution goes into different discourses to show that Self is the product of his age and not a traditional formation. Self himself asserts this idea of affiliation when he says that he is “addicted to the twentieth century” (Amis 2000, p. 32). Self's affiliation to the twentieth century identifies his prominent features as a 'New Man' from one perspective, and it's a clear reference for his discontinuity of the past centuries from the other perspective. Also, Self's addiction which is embodied through the signs of the modern age like fast food, sex, pornography, and hedonist nature is a notable remark of his changeable identity.

Another aspect of Self's changeability is confirmed by the protagonist's name as he starts the novel with John Self and ends it with Fat John. Lamidi and Aboh suggest that “the use of names also substantiates the claim that identity is a fragmented concept that is subject to change” (Lamidi 2011, p. 47). Accordingly, changing names leads to a significant change

in values. In other words, the change in names is likely to witness a change in the concepts and values that lead to a clear shift in identity. For this reason, Self's change has been accompanied by a significant change in his personal values and identity. John Self who opens the novel with ironical reference to his name as he says "I am called John Self, but who isn't?" (Amis 2000, p. 100) is exposed to be fragmentally identified. On the other hand, the novel closes with Fat John who loses all of his fortune, yet he is still able to laugh and is circumspectly hopeful about his future. Similarly, the name of the film that Self is invited to make in New York is started as 'Good Money' and later changed to be titled as 'Bad Money'. Consequently, all of these changes are clearly consistent with Foucault's call for change of discourses and identity performed in accordance to these discourses.

Besides, Foucault believes that individual's identity "is dynamic and capable of change" and this change usually comes in a contradictive form (Lalabakhsh 2012, p. 50). In this context, Amis's viewpoint in portraying Self's identity corresponds to Foucault's perception of changeability and contradiction. The protagonist is conceived as someone of variable and contradictory identity. He is misogynistic/emotional and impotent/macho at the same time. Self's misogynistic state is well revealed by his relation to his girlfriend Selina Street. Parker suggests that the girlfriend's name metaphorically presents her as a 'street walker' and thus, her relationship with Self is sexually judged and depicted (Parker 2006). Self remarks that "Selina has always said that men use money to dominate women. I have always agreed. That's why I've never wanted to give her any" (Amis 2000, p. 90). Self's agreement is a frank indication of his personal misogynistic nature.

Further, Selina's body becomes a satirical site of reflecting the dehumanised and misogynistic nature of Self's identity and character. Self's way of framing her in sexual discourses exposes much of his misogynistic identity. She is presented in such a dehumanised way that makes the reader raises a lot of questions about her character. Self describes his sexual affairs with her as "she turned to me, with one leg still hooked over the headboard, and said, 'Do it, anywhere, anything'" (Amis 2000, p. 86). In this description Amis problematises the bad relationship of sex and money, and he describes the role of money in framing the dehumanised identity of human beings. Accordingly, Self asserts that "she does all this not for passion, not for comfort, far less for love, the proof that she does all this for money" (p. 37). With this framing of the relation between sex and money, the novel problematises the truth of modern identity to invoke questions about that kind of relationship. In this context, problematisation asserts the misogynistic aspects of Self's identity since Self himself is essentially involved with this type of relations. From the other hand, problematisation reveals the transgressive nature of Self's personality because it subverts the social borders of truth of sexuality. In such doing, the novel suggests a critical tone for identity of the new man who subverts the traditional and historical affirmed norms of truth circulated about masculinity.

Self, on the other hand, is depicted to be differently emotional character whose needs are widely established with such a sense of 'human touch'. This sense of humanity gives a frank indication of Self's emotionality which is related in a way or another to the feminist touches that Amis explored as prominent aspects of New Man's identity (Amis 2011). These aspects, most accurately, suggest the transgression of the historical and patriarchal norms of truth about masculine identity. For example, Self missed his 9 am breakfast meeting with Martina Twain and arriving at 9 pm because of his bad drunkenness. Finding out his mistake, Self started to cry loudly which makes a stranger sympathizing him. With this sympathy, Self replies "I really don't know what I would have done without the old guy in his boiler suit. I really think I might have died, without that human touch" (Amis 2000, p. 44). This human touch is taken to be an accurate description of Self's emotionality that subverts his sense of masculinity. This subversion goes through problematizing Self's feelings and emotions. Problematisation starts with raising questions about the idea behind this kind of emotion and

its effect on Self's identity. Also, Self's words of 'human touch' can be taken further to reveal the shallowness and fragility of his identity and life which could not go on and may be ended without such a sense of emotion. In this connection, Self tells us that "I can't go on sleeping alone – that's certain. I need a human touch" (p. 60). This frank indication of Self's shallowness and fragility exposes the emotionality set by the human touch in his identity. Such a kind of emotionality is revealed as something unfamiliar with the traditional norms of masculinity. In this way, sense of emotionality goes parallel with the misogynistic nature conceived as an inherent feature of the New Man.

Further, Self's human touch in the novel may be read as a problematisation of his emotional and feminine aspects of identity which are articulated and confirmed as something unfamiliar. For example, Self says that "a man is womanish without a woman and vice versa" (p. 258). This articulation puts into question the typical truth of masculinity of the protagonist of the novel who himself admits his womanish feelings. Self's explanation that he feels like a woman in her occasion is another important example to be mentioned in this context. Self stated that he felt like Lady Diana on her "wedding day" after the delivery of his bags of shopping to his hotel (p. 191). In another example, Self's feelings 'like a real chick' is widely expressed in the novel especially when he had sexual affairs with Butch as he says "oh man, some girls – they make you feel like a real chick" (p. 277). Further, his hosting to the moneymen makes him "like a mother-hen or an orchid-fancier" (p. 332). This feminine sense is a primary part of the identity of the New Man Amis followed to assert through Self's personality. Moreover, this sense is also a frank allusion to the transgression of the historical truth of masculinity which is problematised and depicted in the novel as a major technique of constructing Self's identity as a New Man.

On the other hand, Self's identity is paradoxically depicted as impotent and macho at the same time. Body performance, in the historical and traditional conception, is one of the rules and devices that display masculinity through competitive sports. Accordingly, Connell remarks that "in historically recent times, sport has come to be the leading definer of masculinity in mass culture. Sport provides a continuous display of men's bodies in motion". Further, Connell explains that "the constitution of masculinity through bodily performance means that gender is vulnerable when the performance cannot be sustained" (Connell 1995, p. 54). For this reason, Amis makes use of this technique of body performance to disable Self's masculinity. The unsustainability of body performance (or discontinuity in Foucauldian words) goes on to play a vital role in conceiving Self's masculine identity. Discontinuity in the Foucauldian account refers to the notion that the historical transition from one time to another should imply a clear shift and "things are no longer perceived, described, expressed, characterised, classified, and known in the same way" (Foucault 1972, p. 217).

Accordingly, this notion of Foucauldian discontinuity may be used as a clear reference to the idea of problematizing the historical and traditional conception of masculinity in Self's portrayal. Self's distorting body is portrayed as unable to go on in competing sports. Self's distortion of the idea of traditional masculinity suggests a sense of problematisation through his body performance. Self is widely described as impotent in the novel especially when he is compared to the moneyman Goodney Fielding's sporting skills. His American business partner Fielding is described as "precise in his stance, measured in his action, with a touch of the severity that all natural ballplayers have" (pp. 2-31). This kind of description goes along with the historical and traditional conception of masculinity which is involved with body performance. On the opposite, Self's body performance exposes his impotency rather than masculinity. Self's description of his physical impotency differently reads:-

I lolloped and leapt for my life at the other end, 200 pounds of yob genes, booze, snout and fast food, ten years older, charred and choked on heavy fuel ... My opening serve



flopped into the net, six inches from the ground. My second serve is a dolly and Fielding murdered it in his own sweet time. (Amis 2000, pp. 31-33)

The comparison made between Self and his business partner Fielding is meant to show clearly Self's sporting failure. From the other hand the comparison is a frank reference to self's physical performance which is portrayed as impotent. Further, it is also important to mention that Self's disability and failure of achieving manly status is a frank problematisation of Self's idea of masculinity which is historically known with sporting competition as a "leading definer of masculinity" (Connell 2005, p. 54). To be more precise, Self's sporting failure and physical impotency are conceived as a prominent problematisation of the patriarchal truth inherent in masculinity and manhood. This kind of problematisation leads to invokes questions around the truth of masculinity through Self's identity and performance. The affirmed norm of truth is transgressed and undermined to frame Self's new identity as a clear construct of the New Man.

*Money* may be examined to suggest this strategy of transgression in which problematisation is used to be vital in subverting the historical truth of masculinity. The status of impotency is used to expose the protagonist's personality which is depicted as shallow and brittle. Circulating such a discourse of weakness asserts Self's transgression that goes through his own personality and identity. Self is presented physically and emotionally in a very poor condition. This condition takes different forms of fear and scare which are attributed to his character. The condition starts with his saying that "I am weak and scared" (Amis 2000, p. 10) and then indicates that "every hour, you get weaker" (p. 62) and finally, concludes "I am weak, wanton, baffled, faint" (p. 101). This condition of weakness is revealed throughout Self's unreliable presentation. His poor presentation undermines the patriarchal truth of his reliable identity as a man. Sometimes, says Abdullah and Wan Yahya, unreliability, as a matter of weakness, is attributed to short-sightedness or limited knowledge (2015, p. 923) which might be traced in the identity of Self himself who indicates that he is ignorant when says "I know nothing" (p. 101). Consequently, the unreliable identity of Self is used to be a clear suggestion of transgressing the confirmed norms of truth in which Self's identity is drawn to undermine his masculinity.

Self's portrayal, also, can be considered as a new embodiment of macho culture whose language reveals aggressive attitudes of one's identity. In this respect, the truth of the traditional macho culture is transgressed and problematised to circulate a new portrayal of masculinity. Amis's suggestion of this new kind of culture is a clear manifestation of a problematised masculinity in which the essence of the historical and traditional truth of masculinity is transgressed. According to Patricia So Fong White, Self, most accurately, is a frank representation of a new culture in which macho is not a real one and there is no sense of masculinity in being macho. In this regard, Self in his inauthentic macho culture presents an indication of the identity of the new man who undermines the historical truth of masculinity. For example, he keeps saying "I tell you, I am terrified, I am fucking terrified. Just give me the fucking money okay!" (p. 80). The repetition of the word 'fucking', which is usually seen as an aggressive language, suggests the kind of culture Self would like to impose on others. This kind of culture reveals a new portrait of masculinity Amis turns the attention to (White 2007).

Another technique of transgression in which masculinity is clearly presented via Self's language and expressions may be suggested in Amis's *Money*. The language and expressions used are problematised to circulate a new discourse in which traditional norms are undermined. Self's language is identified with expressions that expose the masculine part of his identity rather than the subjects or themes that he talks about. In such a usage, Self's tries to assert "the passive objects of men's desires, instead of the self-affirming subjects of their own" (Segal 2001, p. 101). In this connection, Amis transgression of the thematic purposes

and function of the language can be taken as a successful technique of understanding in which some of language expressions are problematised. To demonstrate, Self refers to women by using the term 'chick' rather than using familiar words like 'woman' or 'girls'. Lynne Segal explains that this usage is not only to subjugate the women but also to relegate them (Segal 2001). Self's usage is a clear comparison of women with 'chicks' from a hand and a clear degradation for the position of woman as human being from the other hand. Further, this sense of subjugation and relegation of women is a frank promotion of man's masculinity. Thus, Self's usage of such a term 'chicks' is hitting two birds with one stone: implying for his subjugation of women and a promotion of his own masculinity. He, for example, refers to Martina as "a real boss chick by anyone's standards" (p. 14), and justifies his relation to women as "I've got all these chicks to support" (p. 15). It seems that Self finds support of his masculinity with women and with this support he finds himself.

Moreover, Self is revealed to be a suggestion of the new macho culture who is posturing the people into objects in accordance to that culture. In this connection, Self gives a clear reference to his new macho culture when he remarks that "the first thing I wonder about a woman is: will I fuck it? Similarly, the first thing I wonder about a man is: will I fight it?" (p. 238). Amis's manipulation of these expressions can reveal the Foucauldian idea of problematisation by reducing the images of man and woman. Women are reduced to be framed into sexual objects dominated by men and similarly men are reduced to be framed within their physical force. With these kinds of framing, Self tries to circulate his discourse of the new macho as a masculine identity. This discourse takes into account the macho behavior as main tools of masculinity. In this connection, Mills asserts that Self, as a kind of "lifeless vehicles of an ideology of macho behavior" suggests a good representation of postmodern critique of masculinity that Amis followed in his framing of the identity of the New Man. (Mills 1995, p. 208). Self, in such doing, undermines the historical and patriarchal norms of truth about masculinity by disclosing and framing it with these terms. This framing enables the reader to have a look on the new portrait of the new man as a transgressive one in these terms.

By this kind of contradiction, *Money* may be taken further to suggest a new way of understanding the identity of the modern man throughout the transgression of the historical and patriarchal truth of masculinity that comes through the concept of problematisation. Relying on the Foucauldian idea of contrast and change, implied in Self's character, the present study suggests a new perspective of Amis's formless shaping of the truth of the new man. This formless shape of truth comes through problematizing the traditional truth of masculinity. Amis's assertion of this formless truth can be assigned as an instrumental problematisation and a prominent feature of the new novel that "tends toward the formless, the random, the diffuse, the anecdotal" (Amis 2014, p. 305). Self himself enhances this sense of formlessness when he says that "the truth is very tactless" (Amis 2000, p. 70). Also, he expresses his hatred of truth when he says "how I hate the truth", and when he accompanies his girlfriend Selina and "went to bed and lay together in the dark, like patients" he was "waiting for the truth to make its rounds" (p. 87). The expression of truth with the sexual presentation is meant to subvert the concept of truth itself. The historical and patriarchal meaning of truth of masculinity is subverted and transgressed to reveal the Foucauldian conception of the uncertainty of this truth.

The uncertainty of the historical truth of masculinity is conceived in the novel to make it lose its familiarity and then to invoke certain problems about it. In this conception Amis goes compatible with Foucault's theory of transgression and its concept of problematisation. Rabinow asserts that Foucauldian theory of transgression comes through the notion of problematisation which starts with making a thing uncertain to lose its familiarity and then to stimulate or give rise to some problems about it (Rabinow 1994). Therefore, Amis's

manipulation of all these concerns of contradiction and change about the truth of masculinity are taken to reveal that truth as relative. This relativity is essential idea of Foucault's conception of truth. The idea of contradiction and change comes obviously with the identity of the protagonist Self who is portrayed as a collection of contrastive and changeable fragments. However, the uncertainty of truth represented in the novel through the life of its protagonist himself is a matter of joke and illusion. Self's unstable life as he is travelling between London and New York is a clear indication of his unstable personality. The state of two positions and no fixed home affects Self's sensation of stability.

## CONCLUSION

Transgression in Martin Amis's *Money* had been given a little concern which is not enough to reconsider the idea of identity formation in the novel. Applying the Foucauldian theory of transgression and its conception of problematisation on the novel concludes that Amis's obvious manipulation of transgressing the established norms of truth marks a turning point in his literary production, and mirrors a new dimension of his identity re-formation. His employment of problematizing the historical truth of masculinity constitutes an effective literary tool in depicting a new identity of contrast and change attributed to the protagonist of his novel. John Self, who is a collection of contrastive and changeable fragmentations, is transformed into different positions and versions to be a 'New Man'.

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