

# Unleashing Resistance and Decoding the Backstories behind Six: A Post-Structural Reading of Selected Digital Six-Word Memoirs

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## ABSTRACT

The present paper is mainly concerned with exploring an intriguing minimalist literary genre, known as the digital 'six-word memoir.' A captivating form of artistic expression, this succinct format is a realm whose brevity and timeliness uniquely suits online platforms and remarkably aligns with the preferences of contemporary readers amidst information overload. Transcending its brevity to become a catalyst for reflection, the six-word memoir manages to encapsulate stories of defiance and resilience, displaying the capacity of individuals to stand up for what is right and to fight for what are theirs. For this purpose, the present study embarks on navigating the contours of this genre: Analyzing the societal, gender, and personal manifestations of dissent and exploring the interplay of form and content in selected thought-provoking digital six-word memoirs. Highlighting the subversive power dynamics embedded within the brevity of each snippet, the study demonstrates the way each condensed story, through a deliberate selection and careful arrangement of words, taps into a contentious issue, distills a social commentary, and encapsulates a different aspect of resistance – be it a tale of personal struggle, a call for societal transformation, or a pursuit of justice. As such, the study draws on the Post-Structural Approach, especially, Jacques Derrida's 'Deconstructive Approach' and Michael Foucault's Concept of Power/Knowledge as they highly resonate with the brevity and depth of the self-contained, counter narratives under consideration and serve the purpose of the study.

**Keywords:** Condensed storytelling, Counter Narratives, Deconstruction, Flash Fiction, Post-structuralism, Power Dynamics, Six-word Memoirs.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Problem

#### **The Transformative Potential of Storytelling and the Six-word Memoir as an Accessible Medium of Resistance**

In the digital age, where information overload is becoming rampant, attention spans are diminishing, and brevity is reigning supreme, the way of consuming or engaging with storytelling has undergone a remarkable transformation. In this ever-evolving digital landscape, traditional narratives – with their extensive plot lines and detailed character descriptions – vie for attention with various other compelling, condensed

forms of digital content, known as 'micro-fiction,' 'flash fiction,' or 'six-word memoirs' (Jenkins 2023). Besides, the rise of social media and instant messaging platforms, online writing communities, blogs, websites, hashtags, tweets, and trends related to micro-fiction – as thriving spaces or creative outlets – have introduced new demands and constraints that shape the way stories are created, appreciated, and disseminated. As such, the viral nature of social media has been instrumental in amplifying the wide-spread circulation and collective engagement with these succinct narratives among wider audiences who may be less inclined to engage with longer traditional works (Pertivi et al. 2023).

Aligning perfectly with the bite-sized content that thrives on social media feeds, resonating strongly with

the expectations of online users, and fitting seamlessly into the rhythm of digital interactions, these six-word memoirs – with their accessibility and share ability through digital platforms – take an added significance within the realm of resistance narratives. Acting as powerful vehicles for expression, communication, and advocacy, these condensed forms of storytelling have the innate ability to communicate messages, catalyze dialogues, evoke powerful responses, engage the digital audience, and thrive in a fast-paced, attention-deficient digital landscape. Through their propulsion to the forefront of online discourse, these micro narratives provide unique avenues and subtle, yet potent, means for aspiring authors, enthusiasts, activists, marginalized groups, and dissenters to craft narratives that showcase their experiences, voice their concerns, articulate their aspirations, question power structures, confront adversity, critique oppressive ideologies, challenge societal norms, foster solidarity, inspire collective acting, and offer a means for resistance (Privott 2021). In support of the Loyola Marymount University Anti-Racism Project, Erica J. Privott prompts people to reflect on white America, engage in meaningful dialogue, and become more empathetic and proactive towards a more just and equitable society. Highlighting the power of six-word memoirs to encapsulate societal struggles and effectively capture the essence of communal experience, Privott maintains:

“In six words” will get to the heart of our community’s struggles and fight against the unjust and unequal experiences that plague our society, in hopes of sparking conversation, understanding and empathy, as well as further igniting our desire to become better angels (2021).

## 1.2 Objectives

The present study is primarily concerned with attaining the following objectives: First, unearthing the key factors that have provided a fertile ground for the growth of the six-word memoir. More precisely speaking, assessing how this unique literary form – with its limited word count – emerges, takes shape, reflects, and responds to the demands and constraints of the modern world, thus gaining substantial traction within online communities. Second, exploring the subversive power dynamics and the societal, gender, and personal manifestations of dissent embedded within selected thought-provoking six-word narratives, with the aim of demonstrating the way each ultra-short story encapsulates a different aspect of resistance and opens up space for alternative perspectives to be heard. Third, examining the ways by which the stylistic and thematic elements in these impactful narratives

would push literary boundaries, engage readers’ imagination, and evoke powerful responses. Fourth, tracing how these ultra-short counter narratives reverberate with the principles of the Post-structural approach. Finally, highlighting the role of curation and its effectiveness in resistance, social commentary, and addressing pressing societal issues.

## 1.3 Research Questions

Outlining the specific goals that guide this field of inquiry, the present study aims at addressing the following key questions: First, in what way does the highly abbreviated form of six-word memoir resonate with the preferences of contemporary readers? Second, how effectively do six-word memoirs use subtext to challenge societal norms, question power structures, empower marginalized communities, offer alternative perspectives, and engage online audiences? Third, does the brevity of these succinct narratives impact their effectiveness as tools for resistance and social commentary? Fourth, do cultural nuances affect the way these ultra-short narratives are addressed or perceived? Finally, what is the significance – or lasting legacy – of the six-word memoirs within the broader literary landscape?

## 1.4 Theoretical Approach

Revealing intriguing connections when examined in relation to the six-word memoirs, the Post-structural Approach is administrated as it represents a significant paradigm shift in discourse analysis, questioning the objectivity or stability of various traditional interpretive structures, considering them to be constituted by broader systems of power and context (Lewis *et al.* 1982, 2-24). Moving away from the idea of fixed structures and meanings emphasized by structuralism, Jacques Derrida’s ‘Deconstruction’ is particularly suited to analyzing the six-word memoirs because it unpacks the layers of meaning within a text, revealing contradictions and multiple interpretations and uncovering deeper insights and counter-narratives. Encouraging a more nuanced understanding of how language, culture, and society shape our individual identities and subjective experiences, Michael Foucault’s ‘Concept of Power/Knowledge’, as well, aligns seamlessly with the intricate subversive power dynamics at play within counter narratives. Amalgamating these realms – the study maintains – would contribute to highlighting the fluid, deconstructive nature of language, the multiplicity of subjective perspectives, the constant negotiation of meaning, and the complexities of resistance in the contemporary world.

## 1.5 Rationale

Apart from the researcher's interest in exploring the minimalist descriptions and implied meanings embedded within these digital counter narratives, the basic underlying premises behind selecting this area of study are: First, the researcher is eager to provide valuable insights into the concept of resistance and the power dynamics inherent in personal, gender, or political relationships. Second, the researcher yearns to offer a unique lens detecting the creative possibilities, broader implications, and wide-reaching significance of these bite-sized narratives in the context of contemporary literature and beyond. Finally, the researcher endeavours to encourage a broader understanding of language and its potential for multiple interpretations.

## 1.6 Significance

The significance of this study – it is hoped – resides in highlighting the transformative potential of literature in the digital era and showcasing the versatile nature of the six-word memoirs. It is also anticipated that this study would serve as a prompt for a further exploration of these ultra-short counter narratives as effective forms of communication, embodying various forms of resistance, allowing a multitude of voices to be thoughtfully heard, and rendering a wide range of perspectives to be critically evaluated. Primarily, the value of the present paper – hopefully – dwells in providing insights into the thematic and stylistic merits of this minimalist format and opening potential avenues for more experimentation and diversity within the broader landscape of literature.

# 2. THEORETICAL APPROACH

## 2.1 The Six-word Memoir as a Multi-Faceted Form of Storytelling:

### *The Thematic and Stylistic Merits*

Known as 'Flash Fiction,' 'Micro Fiction,' 'Sudden Fiction,' 'Postcard Fiction,' or 'Nano Fiction,' the six-word memoir is a condensed – but impactful, meaningful, and open-ended – form of storytelling, where an entire self-contained narrative is distilled within the tight restriction of six succinct, carefully-chosen words (Sustana2021). A minimalist approach to storytelling, this bite-sized narrative is a literary microcosm, requiring minimalistic yet impactful language, skillful word play, and creative imagination to craft powerful tales and evocative experiences. Whether it is a poignant reflection, a thought-provoking snippet, or even a humorous twist, a well-crafted six-word memoir would maximize the impact

of every word to convey meaning, evoke emotions, and invite interpretation, while stimulating the readers' imagination to fill in the gaps and contemplate the untold details beyond the limited word count. When this is done well, the best six-word memoir "delivers a punch that sets off sparks in our heads" (Rohan et al. 2014).

Though it is challenging to trace its exact origin, the format of the six-word memoir is often credited to the famous author Ernest Hemingway – who was challenged by fellow writers to draft a complete story in just six words: *For Sale: Baby Shoes, Never Worn* (Sustana 2021). Despite its minimal word count, this masterpiece does not lack poignancy. Implying or allowing the reader to infer that something tragic happened to a baby, it sparked interest and fascination in the literary community, inspiring others to explore the idea of conveying a story in such a concise format.

Extremely short, the six-word memoir is a form of storytelling that subverts traditional narrative structures by packing a punch in just six, precise and impactful words (Graham 2013). In the six-word memoir, every word has to be chosen with care, has to carry meaning, peel back a layer, progress the text, resonate with readers, leave an impression and a maximum impact (Majewski 2023). As Shakespeare's Polonius once quipped to Hamlet, "Brevity is the soul of wit!" (Shakespeare 1987, 90-91). William Faulkner suggested this as well: "In writing, you must kill all your darlings" (qtd. in Wickman 2013). Meaning that you must get rid of your most precious, and especially all the flowery or self-indulgent passages for the true core of your literary work.

Implying rather than explicitly stating, this puzzle-like memoir leaves gaps in the narrative, encouraging readers to actively engage with the story, decipher hidden meanings, subtexts, or possible backstories, and create their own personal response through their own interpretive lenses. Through its power of suggestion, the six-word memoir thus creates an air of mystery and intrigue as readers are left with lingering questions and a desire to explore untold stories behind this succinct glimpse (Richard 2021).

An art of carefully chosen words, the six-word memoir communicates profound themes, introduces complex characters, constructs vivid imagery, and encapsulates an entire world within a brief linguistic frame. Every word is carefully crafted to establish an atmosphere, convey multiple layers of meaning, capture the essence of a character or situation, convey a rich sensory experience, and elicit the desired response from the reader. For this purpose, metaphors, similes, and other literary devices are employed to evoke strong emotions and create a sense of depth within the limited word count. The

Careful selection of words enhances the overall suggestiveness of the narrative. The creative use of punctuation, formatting, and spacing as well – though may seem minute details – drastically alters the tone and interpretation of the narrative. A strategically placed ellipse or an unconventional arrangement of words provides subtle cues or emphasizes certain aspects of the memoir. Briefly, one word changes the entire mood of a story, making it joyful, tragic, hopeful, or despairing (Majewski 2023).

Rather than following straight forward linear progression of a traditional narrative from beginning to end, the six-word memoir presents events, emotions, and ideas in a fragmented or non-sequential manner. Jumping across different time periods through time manipulation techniques (flash backs, flash forwards, or shifting perspectives), the six-word memoir lends itself to a multiplicity of perspectives. Moreover, it enables thematic juxtaposition, where distinct moments or ideas are purposefully placed side by side, to create contrast or highlight similarities (2023).

Enriching the narrative, plot twists – with their unexpected turns, revelations, and unforgettable endings – hold a special place in the six-word memoir. Not only surprising, but plot twists also ingeniously upturn the readers' expectations, transporting them into different worlds, leaving them spellbound, contemplating the narrative long after reading, and questioning everything they thought they know, sparked by the desire to revisit the story with newfound understanding (Sustana 2021). Moreover, despite its remarkable brevity, the six-word memoir taps into the readers' empathy, eliciting a wide range of powerful emotions – from joy to sorrow, anger to awe, suspense to wonder, or even bittersweet realization (Majewski 2023).

Leaving certain elements unresolved or questions unanswered, the six-word memoir offers a blank canvas upon which readers can think beyond the words, expand the narrative, create their own sequels, project their own diverse interpretations, and explore multiple possibilities. Allowing for a multitude of meanings to arise, the open-ended conclusions enrich the readers' experiences, cultivate a feeling of anticipation, and leave the doors open for imagination to run wild (2023).

## 2.2 The Post-Structural Approach as a Paradigm Shift Discourse

Making its debut in the early 19<sup>th</sup> c. – in a politically unstable France – and reaching its apex in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> c., Post-structuralism is a philosophical approach that emphasizes the fluidity of language, the role of power dynamics in shaping interpretations, and the multiplicity

of subjective perspectives (Silverman 2003, 359–374). Though rooted in Structuralism, a Post-structural way of thinking is a retrospective critique to the basic assumptions of Structuralism, aiming at questioning everything including the very existence of a single, objective, or absolute 'truth' (Gutting, n.d.). Briefly summarizing this, Foucault maintains that the general driving force behind the Post-structural critique is

the immense and proliferating criticizability of things, institutions, practices, and discourses; a sort of general feeling that the ground was crumbling beneath our feet, especially in places where it seemed most familiar, most solid, and closest to us, to our bodies, to our everyday gestures. (Bourg 2004, 1-16)

In other words, the goal of the Post-structural is to engage in a kind of critical thinking that destabilizes an existing framework – that would otherwise be taken for granted – thereby making room for the possibility of a new reality. Mainly concerned with challenging dominant cultural narratives, Post-structuralism does not generally seek to make value judgments, suggest a replacement action or thought, seek to form new ethical guidelines, or present a specific world view of its own, but – as Michel Foucault argues – 'only exists in relation to something other than itself' (Flatscher 2020, 24).

Offering a powerful framework, Post-structuralism operates on a few basic tenets which revolve around the concept that literature and art can never reach full closure. Among the Post-structural assumptions commonly disseminated is 'Deconstruction' – the rejection of fixed meanings and structures. As Jacques Derrida states, "there is nothing outside of the text" (qtd. in Turner 2016). This means that a literary text has no singular meaning, purpose, or existence, but is constantly in flux and subject to interpretation because the reader has replaced or decentered the author as the primary subject of inquiry. Hence, the meaning the author intends is secondary, or is a fictional construct, as it shifts in relation to certain variables, usually involving the identity of the readers and their cultural norms. The second reason is that words – always at a distance from the ideas they are meant to convey or signify – are open to a multitude of interpretations through sheer lack of specificity (2016). In tandem with Derrida, Ronald Barthes – in his strongly worded critique – states: "We know that to give writing its future, it is necessary to overthrow the myth: The birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the author" (Silverman 1990, 890). I.e., the author is no longer the focus of creative influence nor the prime source of the work semantic content, but merely a 'scripter' who exists to produce but not to explain the work. The essential meaning of a work – Barthes (1990) confirms – depends on the impressions of readers, rather than the 'passions' or 'tastes' of the



writers; for a "text's unity lies not in its origins, " or its creator, "but in its destination," or its audience. Deconstructing the assumptions and knowledge systems which produce the illusion of singular meaning, Barthes (1977) declares – in a famous quotation – that a "text is a tissue [or fabric] of quotations," drawn from "innumerable centers of cultures," rather than from one, individual experience (146).

Moreover, viewing binary oppositions as proof of the underlying instability and unpredictability of language, Derrida urges readers to be skeptical of accepted binaries (like, for example, black / white; good/ evil; male/ female; rational/ emotional; high / low; etc.) (Kalive 2021), take them apart like a puzzle, examine their individual pieces, and question how each one connects to the other. This would lead – Derrida believes – to a better understanding of the meaning of binaries within the context of the individual text and also within the wider society (Dooley et al. 2007).

Promising no consistency, the Post-structural is also effective in highlighting the role of power in shaping language and culture. Arguing that power is not limited to overt forms of domination such as state power, but rather is a complex or dynamic relationship operating at all levels of society, Foucault intertwines knowledge and power in what is called a "nexus of knowledge-power" (Flatscher 2020, 24). Maintaining that knowledge is a product of power relations (Harrison 2006, 122-135), Foucault asserts:

Power produces knowledge; power and knowledge directly imply one another, that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute, at the same time, power relations. (qtd in Williams 2005,105-132)

For Foucault, thus, to understand an object (one of the many meanings of a text), it is necessary to study both the object itself and the systems of knowledge which were coordinated to produce the object.

Emphasizing the essentiality of language in producing knowledge and shaping our understanding of the world, Foucault maintains that language is not a transparent medium for conveying meaning, but rather, a site of struggle and contestation:

Discourse is not simply that which translates struggles or systems of domination but is the things for which and by which there is struggle; discourse is the power which is to be seized. (Young 1983, 383)

Likewise, Ronald Barthes states: "Language is never innocent" (1982) but is inherently flawed. Meaning that language becomes "less a neutral, pure medium of communication, than a mediating set of habits,

conventions, values, and prejudices, enabling us to make sense of the world" (Burchill et al. 2013,188).

Offering a more dynamic and fluid understanding of identity and subjectivity and opening up new ways for analyzing narratives, Post-structuralism rejects the traditional notion of a fixed, stable, or coherent entity. Instead, it emphasizes the fluid and fragmented nature of the subjective experience. It posits that individuals have multiple, often conflicting, selves that emerge in different contexts and interactions and that are constructed through language, culture, and social interactions (Howarth2013). Decentering the subject and challenging the notion of an autonomous, self-determined individual, Post-structuralism thus views language as playing a crucial role in constructing the subjective experience and shaping our identities which are inherently unstable, always in flux, and open to interpretation. In other words, it views our sense of selves as not the origin of meaning but produced instead by cultural discourses, power structures, and social practices. This multiplicity allows for a more nuanced understanding of human behavior and social roles.

Hence, the key concepts introduced by Post-structuralism—instability of meaning, the role of power in discourse, and the notion of subjectivity provide a framework for understanding how language operates not merely as a tool for communication but as a dynamic, powerful force in shaping human thought, identity, and social organization.

### 3. CONTENT ANALYSIS:

#### SOCIETAL, GENDER, AND PERSONAL MANIFESTATIONS OF DISSENT IN SELECTED SIX-WORD MEMOIRS

The following are selected thought-provoking six-word memoirs from *Smith Magazine* and *Buzz Feed Community* – platforms for creating, sharing, and celebrating stories in six words or less. Demonstrating that brevity is indeed the soul of wit and, sometimes, poignancy, these life statements encapsulate social, gender and personal manifestations of dissent, opening up spaces for alternative perspectives.

#### 3.1 Societal Reflections

##### "I am Looking for the (g) Riot"

"I am looking for the (g) riot, " is a counter narrative, by Greg Romero (Stevenson 2009), serving as a

rallying cry or call to action for like-minded individuals who are dissatisfied with the status quo and yearn for positive societal shifts or who may have experienced a similar yearning for novelty and adventure. Creating an emotional connection with readers, this yearning taps into the readers' desire for change, excitement, or personal growth.

Carrying political connotations, the memoir encapsulates the subversive potential to foster collective efforts and mobilize communities. By introducing the notion of seeking a 'riot', the text suggests a rebellious spirit, a discontent with the current state of affairs, a refusal to remain complacent, and a willingness to question authority, dismantle oppressive structures, and challenge systemic inequalities and ideologies. This emphasis on agency (apparent in the narrator's usage of the first-person pronoun "I") highlights a proactive approach to seek change and participate in – or support – acts of resistance.

"I am looking for the (g) riot" incorporates various literary elements that contribute to its artistic depth and allow readers to connect with its message on a profound level. The whole phrase evokes vivid imagery, enhances the emotional impact, and engages the readers' senses by rendering them imagine scenarios and settings related to riots, protests, social unrest, enthusiastic crowds, charged atmospheres, and vibrant expressions of dissent. Implying restlessness and discontentment, the phrase "I am looking for" hints at the feeling of being unfulfilled, i.e., a deep longing for something enthusiastic, disruptive, and transformative. It suggests that the speaker is seeking something beyond the ordinary or looking for a departure from the mundane or the predictable. Suggesting a person in pursuit of something significant, "I am looking for" also reveals that the search is an essential part of the protagonist's identity, self-discovery, and self-expression. Moreover, instilling a sense of hope and inspiration, the search for 'a (g) riot' may evoke a nostalgic undertone, as it taps into a yearning for past moments of agitation, resistance, and upheaval when social movements were vibrant and enthusiastic. However, the search for 'a (g) riot' subtly implies a degree of frustration by suggesting that the journey might not be easy or readily accessible.

The whole memoir has a metaphorical nature that adds layers of meaning to the narrative. Introducing an element of uncertainty, the inclusion of the letter 'g' within parentheses intensifies the emotional impact of the phrase. Meanwhile, the word 'riot' – resonating with readers who have witnessed social unrest and upheavals and triggering a wide range of emotional responses such as anger, frustration, empowerment, and solidarity – hints at a desire for transformative experiences, social change, or an exploration of the

unconventional. Moreover, the unidentified nature of the 'g' riot (which may symbolically refer to gender, grass roots, or guerrilla) creates intrigue, incites curiosity, and invites readers to reflect on its meaning, purpose, nature, and consequences. On the other hand, the parentheses create a visual distinction, highlighting the importance of understanding the broader context and possibilities associated with the identified symbol. Over and above, the rhyme, rhythm, and harmonious word play exhibited in the phrase by repeating the "i" sound creates an auditory cadence and contributes to the aesthetic experience, enhancing the overall artistic value of the phrase.

Potentially signaling resistance against dominant ideologies and power structures or possibly hinting at a quest for an alternative or subversive identity, the bite-sized narrative "I am looking for the (g) riot" resonates with the Post-structural notion of subjectivity as a product of social and discursive practices. Moreover, the counter memoir subtly employs the Post-structural deconstructive method in destabilizing fixed meanings and disrupting established categories. Recognizing the potential for playfulness and subversion within language and discourse, the text exhibits this through the brevity of the memoir, the ambiguity surrounding the letter 'g', the insertion of the parentheses, and the blurring of distinction between 'g' and 'riot'.

Echoing Post-structuralism, "I am looking for the (g) riot" allows for multiple interpretations. Hinting at social unrest, dissatisfaction, upheaval, or disruption in a broader context, the memoir can metaphorically refer to the narrator's desire to actively search for, participate in, or witness a literal riot. It can also be read as the narrator's quest for authentic identity, internal turmoil, or rebellion against personal constraints or societal expectations. It can also allude to expression of artistic intent, with the narrator seeking a 'riot' as a source of inspiration or creative energy.

### 3.2 Gender Considerations

#### ***"She Felt Caged but also Free "***

The six-word memoir, "She felt caged, but also free" by Claire West (Patel 2016), is another potent piece of concise storytelling touching, this time, upon a relatable gender experience, capturing the internal contradictions and complexity of emotions that females often encounter in their lives.

Holding a significant subversive potential, this condensed memoir, at its core, taps into the universal gender constructs that restrict females through physical, emotional, or cultural means. Suggesting a sense of confinement, oppression, or entrapment,

'She felt caged' serves as a critique of oppressive power structures or gender roles that restrict personal freedom and individual expression. However, the inclusion of 'but also free' adds layers of resistance, resilience, and agency to the narrative. This inclusion implies that despite the confinement, oppressive circumstances, and restrictions, the female protagonist manages to resist, navigate, discover her freedom, and assert her autonomy. This subversive potential is amplified through the open-endedness of the statement, where the reader is invited to contemplate the reasons behind the female protagonist's feeling of being 'caged' and then her personal interpretation of being freed.

Sparking introspection and empathy, the memoir incorporates several artistic and literary elements, enriching its narrative and evoking deeper emotions within the reader. The use of vivid imagery and symbolism immediately allows the reader to visualize the paradoxical feelings experienced by the female protagonist. Having symbolic and metaphorical potential, the words 'caged' and 'free' extend their meaning beyond physical confinement or liberation. The word 'caged' – symbolizing broader aspects of life such as societal expectations, emotional struggles, personal relationships, or existential dilemmas – conjures up images of confinement, restriction, imprisonment, and suffocation, whereas the word 'free' invokes feelings of liberation, release, and autonomy.

The evocative nature of the condensed memoir is further heightened by the inherent ambiguity in the phrase 'feeling caged but also free!' Providing no explicit details about the nature of confinement or freedom, the dichotomy in ('caged' and 'free') encourages introspection, personal connection, and further exploration of the metaphorical implications and various contexts in which these contradictory feelings can coexist. This thought-provoking quality adds depth and intrigue to the female protagonist's experience, fosters a deeper engagement with the narrative, enables the reader to mentally traverse between the restrictive and emancipating emotions, and intensifies the overall evocative quality or emotional impact of the memoir.

A closer look at this six-word memoir reveals that it resonates with the Post-structural approach. The whole memoir embodies the idea of deconstruction – a key aspect of Post-structuralism. It suggests that the traditional binary oppositions or fixed meanings associated with concepts like 'caged' and 'free' can be blurred or challenged. Inviting us to question the stability and coherence of these categories and explore their fluidity and interplay, the memoir emphasizes another Post-structural tenet, the subjective experience; specifically, the internal emotions of

the individual referred to as 'She'. Moreover, since power – within the Post-structural framework – is seen as pervasive and intersecting, affecting various aspects of our lives including how we perceive and construct our identities, the tension between 'feeling caged' and 'experiencing freedom' thus reflects the intricate relationship between power dynamics and female agency. Furthermore, fragmentation – the central theme of the memoir which is recognized in the protagonist who is shaped by various discourses and power dynamics – aligns also with the Post-structural approach. This fragmentation is clearly exhibited in the multitude of overlapping and inconsistent identities and contrasting emotions of feeling both 'caged' and 'free'.

The memoir aligns again with Post-structuralism in emphasizing the role of subjective experiences, cultural backgrounds, and social contexts in the production of meaning. For this purpose, the memoir can denote an internal struggle or conflicting emotions within the female protagonist who is torn between feeling trapped or restricted by circumstances while also experiencing a sense of liberation or personal growth. It can also allude to a journey of self-discovery, where the female protagonist navigates the complexities of her desires, obligations, and aspirations. The memoir can also convey a sense of the female protagonist being trapped in an unhealthy or unsatisfying relationship, while finding liberation and autonomy through other relationships or personal endeavors. The memoir can hint at societal expectations, sexist practices, or cultural constraints that confine the female protagonist who, despite feeling caged by these pressures, finds moments where she can break free, embracing her individuality, authenticity, and personal aspirations. The memoir may refer to a physical setting, confined space, demanding job, or oppressive environment where the protagonist feels trapped in. It may touch as well upon the emotional vulnerability of the female protagonist and her subsequent journey towards emotional healing and personal empowerment. It may also grapple with existential themes like identity, purpose, and the paradoxical nature of human existence.

### 3.3 Personal Associations

#### ***"My Empty House Still Speaks Volumes"***

One more potent piece of concise storytelling that may carry a powerful subversive potential is the six-word memoir, "My empty house still speaks volumes" by Veronica Wand (Patel 2016). Suggesting that there is power in the overlooked, resilience in the abandoned, and resistance in the face of neglect, the concise narrative – through a non-binary or gender-neutral lens – encourages readers to find strength

within unexpected places and uncover presence within absence.

To begin with, the inclusion of the possessive pronoun 'My', implies that the narrator is the owner or inhabitant of the empty house, emphasizing personal ownership, autonomy, agency, and control over it. Meanwhile, the 'empty house' – likened to a storyteller who conveys significant messages and emotions – evokes implicit gender overtones despite the lack of gender-specific language in the memoir. In spite of being an abandoned or unseen entity, the house – devoid of physical occupants – refuses to be silenced, dismissed, ignored, or marginalized. Given agency and having a voice of its own, the speaking house may subvert the conventional understanding that it is a predominantly female domain representing domesticity, caregiving, and emotional labor. More precisely speaking, the house may challenge the traditional gender roles that typically associate men solely with external public spheres of influence while relegate women to domestic spaces devoid of meaning and significance. Carrying gender overtones as well, 'still speaks' may suggest that despite the absence of a tangible female presence, there is an underlying communication or expression and a determination to be heard and recognized taking place. It may hint at the resilient female voices which continue to have a lasting impact and enduring power even when physically absent or ignored by society. Within the context of gender, the term 'volumes' also reinforces the depth and significance of what the empty house is expressing. It symbolizes the rich experiences, stories and struggles faced by women who exist in abundance and carry significant weight but are often unheard or undervalued.

Analyzing the concise memoir through the lens of Post-structuralism, the study highlights the influence of language and discourse in constructing meaning and shaping reality. This is evident in constructing the meaning, impact, and power of the house to communicate and evoke emotions. Like Post-structuralism, which aims to deconstruct established discourses and subvert hierarchical systems of thought, this six-word memoir challenges perceived notions and offers new perspectives. For the traditional associations – of loneliness or loss of an empty house – are deconstructed. Instead of being seen as negative, the 'empty house' becomes a source of power and communication. Moreover, this condensed memoir follows Post-structuralism in challenging binary oppositions, questioning the assumed stability of language, and encouraging an exploration of its fluidity by blurring the boundaries between presence and absence demonstrated in the concept of an 'empty house'. Like Post-structuralism which highlights the gaps, absences, and silences within texts, the memoir – with its emphasis on the 'empty house' – suggests that meaning is not solely dependent on the explicit

words, but also on the gaps and nuances between them. Again, like Post-structuralism which challenges notions of unity and coherence, the memoir consists of disconnected words and phrases that reflect the fragmented nature, the multiplicity of meanings, and the absence of a fixed truth.

"My empty house still speaks volumes" lends itself to numerous interpretations and allows for a potential plurality of open-ended meanings that can vary depending on the reader's perspective. One interpretation perceives the memoir as a metaphorical mirror reflecting the beauty of solitude, self-reflection and introspection. Devoid of human presence and distractions, this empty, tranquil, serene, and peaceful house allows one to elicit contemplation, delve into personal thoughts and emotions, and trigger memories of past inhabitants or experiences. Another interpretation of the memoir may tap into the enduring impact of loss and power of memory resonating within the vacant space. In other words, how the essence, stories, and invisible presence of loved ones – who have come and gone – still linger, continue to resonate, leave an imprint on the space, and add depth and complexity to the house's silent communication. Carrying connotations of power and influence, the memoir may also point to the marginalized voices of women and the influence they possess despite societal limitations. Though bringing to mind the traditional association of 'home' as a feminine space related to home making and care giving, the 'empty house' can be seen as a representation of a space beyond traditional binaries, existing outside conventional predetermined gender norms. All in all, the absence of explicit details of the house suggests that a deeper exploration is needed to reveal layers of hidden narratives permeating the empty house and shaping its identity. For this absence evokes the possibility of deprecated emotions, neglected experiences, abandoned narratives, hidden stories, and buried secrets, lurking within the walls of the house and waiting to be expressed, explored, or acknowledged. Left unaddressed or overlooked, these secrets may represent personal or collective stories that have been consciously or unconsciously silenced, suppressed, marginalized, or omitted from the broader narrative, waiting for someone to uncover.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Revealing intriguing connections when examined in relation to the principles of the Post-structural approach, the digital six-word memoirs are perfect examples of how Post-structuralism can be applied to literature. Transcending their brevity, the six-word memoirs become catalysts for reflection through their careful selection of words, strategically placed ellipses, time manipulation techniques, multiplicity of perspectives, thematic juxtapositions, plot twists,



open-ended conclusions, and overall suggestiveness.

To conclude, just as the traditional narratives have long been powerful tools for rebellion and social change, resistance finds an intriguing outlet within the confines of the digital six-word memoirs. In a world brimming with narration, the immense power of these bite-sized stands as a testament to the transformative power of literature. Sharing one common thread – the unwavering

determination to uphold one's values, beliefs, dignity, and freedom in the face of adversity, these minimalist narratives prove their capacity as potent acts of resistance, affecting meaningful changes, bringing personal transformations, challenging societal norms, subverting cultural biases, empowering marginalized voices, inspiring collective activism, and shaping destinies.

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