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Performing Male Gender: A Feministic Reading of Jane Smiley's *Good Will*

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This thesis submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Prem Lal Ghimire titled “Performing Male Gender: A Feministic Reading of Jane Smiley’s *Good Will*”, has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research committee.

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Abstract

To read Smiley's *Good Will* is to explore the causes of inferior placement of women and to prove patriarchal norms and values as the root causes of it. Liz, Lydia and Annabel, the female characters are the victim of male chauvinistic mindset. Though they seem docile in the beginning, but later they challenge patriarchy and Liz lives separately from her husband and Lydia and Annabel struggle to get the compensation of their cut coat, lost doll and burnt house. Liz as an advocate of women's independence rejects the so-called self-sufficiency provided by her husband. By all her means she attacks the male-controlled religion, myths and ideologies and wants to set herself free from all form of domination and doctrines which are still prevalent in the society as hindrances for the women's project. Bob and Tommy, the macho characters loaded with masculine values whose unacknowledged desire of ruling upon the female has placed the female in inferior position. Despite all female characters' constant struggle against patriarchal doctrines, their dream never comes true since those doctrines thwart on their project of being free.

I. Introduction

1.1 Jane Smiley and Her Writings

Women have suffered age long pathos of men's suppression and restriction though there are no innate rules or characteristics that could justify the natural hierarchy between sexes in the society. A woman dreams her life to be free from all forms of domination, confinement or oppression, but her wish always remains unfulfilled since there exists patriarchal norms as stumbling blocks. Self dignity is not felt unless freedom is perceived, and women's lack of freedom has been the major issue. Smiley, herself a female, has delved into the depth of women's psycho-social realities and has examined her trauma caused due to lack of independence in her life.

Jane Smiley in her novel *Good Will* has presented some male characters, guided by masculine values and ethos, whose main intension is to dominate female characters like Liz Miller, Lydia Harris, and Annabel. The subservient and passive portrayal of female characters in the beginning of the novel does not persist throughout rather those female characters commence their struggle against the age-old male chauvinism. Despite females' constant struggle, they can not come out of the patriarchal web because the age-long practice of domination is quite difficult to come to its halt.

Smiley's novel has depicted the inferiorized socio-cultural status of female. Though, they are half in number, their presence in the society seem quite insignificant. Liz Miller, one of the main characters, in the second half of her life is compelled to live separately from her husband. But her struggle against those male and their doctrines does not seem so effective for creating freedom for herself and for all female world. Even the female characters of the novel are the victims of a small boy named

Tommy. He not only disregards the female identity but also lights the house of Lyida, the math professor. Along with it, his activity of breaking the dolls of Annabel also signifies his explicit intension of dominating female.

Her both fictional and non-fictional works deal with the issues related to female world. Her remarkable works of fiction are *Barn Blind*, *At Paradise Gate*, *The Greenlanders*, *Duplicate Keys*, *Horse Heaven*, *Good Faith*, *The Thousand Acres*, *Charles Dickens*, *Ordinary Love and Good Will*, along with many essays on various magazines. Her most recent work *Thirteen Ways of Looking at the Novel* is a non-fictional meditation on the history of the novel that spans from *Don Quixote* to the modern literature of today. She has written on politics, farming, horse training, child rearing, literature, impulse buying, getting dressed, marriage and many other topics on women, domination upon women and their struggle to obtain their rights.

Smiley's publishing career officially began with the appearance of *Barn Blind* in 1980.

Smiley's marital history suggests about her personal experience which informs her literary investigations into the politics of love, friendship, female inferiority and family. Her marriage to John Whiston, while she was still an undergraduate, ended in 1975. A second marriage in 1970 to editor William Silag produced two daughters, Phoebe and Lucy, but in 1986 it also ended in divorce. In 1987 Smiley married screenwriter Stephen Mark Mortensen; they had a son, Axel, and were divorced in 1997. Finding herself pregnant for the first time, Smiley "the alienated modernist enamored of existential anomie abruptly became a more tolerant humanist intent on illuminating the hard-fought moments of grace that buffer the follies and griefs of daily existence" (Josephine 71). She subsequently set out to demonstrate that women can be procreative and creative at the same time, in contrary to the literary prejudice of centuries.

Smiley has proved especially adept at writing the maternal experience into literature, challenging both idealizations and caricatures by rendering the mother as an irreducibly complex subject rather than as the loved/loathed object of the disillusioned child-cum-writer. Accordingly, Smiley's fiction boasts a wide array of women with varying aptitudes for the role *Barn Blind's* Kate Karlson demonstrates how a strong parental personality can become the central force holding other family members in her orbit even as she "inflicts deep wounds with her unflinching expectations, unyielding standards, and unquestioning exploitation" (Suzane 13). Only a year later, *At Paradise Gate* demystified the Catheresque earth mother in the person of Anna Robinson, whose grandmotherly demeanor masks deep ambivalences about the choices she has made at considerable cost to her own sense of self. In *The Age of Grief* and *Ordinary Love*, two superbly crafted novellas, from whose economy Smiley regards as fostering a "more meditative" result than the novel, creates female characters whose seeming domestic idylls, the former as a professional partner as well as wife to her dentist husband, the latter as a traditional housewife in the midst of a hive of young children, are ripped asunder by their respective adulteries.

In *Ordinary Love*, Smiley presents Rachel, a female character busy herself with the mundane tasks of cleaning the house and fixing the land mower. Rachel's love of domestic life can be seen in her careful and loving way in which she polishes her house, her love for children can be seen in her memories of their childhood. Rachel seems confounded within the familial issues and restricted within the household activities. Her abandonment from her house at the last of the novel doesn't refer her escapement rather it suggests her strong challenge to the patriarchal norms and values.

Throughout her work, Smiley portrays "the female psychological imperative coming to term with the woman's procreative energies: while one woman cold-bloodedly pursues a likely male simple to ensure her biological density as child bearer" (76). For example, the narrator of *A Thousand Acres* is denied fertility in a bitter symbolic evocation of the larger environmental contamination that figures prominently throughout Smiley's fiction.

1.2 Feministic Approach in Jane Smiley's Writings

An avowed feminist, Smiley has nonetheless made clear her interest in mapping the emotional terrain of men as well as women, children as well as parents. An entire work might unfold from a single point of view, as in the novella *Good Will*. In this work, she assumes the first-person voice of an aging Vietnam War veteran trapped by his own desperate effort to isolate his family from the corrupting influences of the broader culture. On the other hand, she might move the reader through a kaleidoscope perspective, as in *Barn Blind*, where each family member is accorded with an independent point of view on the steadily unfolding tragedy of the Karlsons. In a more lighthearted vein, in *Moo*, even the hapless pig Earl Butz is accorded his own ruminations on his lot.

In *A Thousand Acres*, Smiley transplanted William Shakespeare's *King Lear* and re-imagined it as a tragedy of primal violation and unrelenting vengeance at the very heart of the American nuclear family. Here Smiley "boldly enunciates the links between her feminism and environmentalism by tracing the institutional networks of power that render all nature, be it within the female body or abroad in the landscape, passively subject to the male will to dominate" (Wendy 23). Yet in the face of such hierarchies, Smiley nonetheless insists that her women characters take themselves

seriously as moral beings responsible for their own self-definition even as she elucidates the circumstances that foster their economic and emotional dependencies.

The network of relationship within the family, for Smiley, provides fertile territory to map new ways of portraying women and of developing narrative techniques. She extols mother's natural talents for observation, her own prose in an example of the deliberate honing and channeling of this talent into art. The leanness of her style attests the care that she takes weighing each word and phrase to determine its worthiness to convey the meaning that she intends—the same care a mother would demonstrate in tending to a child, the “Same deliberate strokes a woman would use in polishing pegged-maple floors”(17). For Smiley, the routines familiar to women in their everyday lives can be the foundation of a new literature written by and for them. She enthusiastically anticipates other women writers following her lead in transforming the patterns of their lives into new forms of literary expression.

Smiley explores complex relationship among family members, friends and lovers while providing details of her protagonists. It is her artistry that she can woven very interesting stories exploring the theme of familial relationship. Ann Charters says:

Smiley is fascinated with the subject of family because she feels that what has happened in this century is that all the forms of systematic thought about society and culture have failed. They have proved themselves to be brutal and ineffective. Right now writers are trying to come up with some other system for thinking about individuals as social beings and society as formed of individuals, clearly the immediate form between the individual and society is family. (117)

The excerpt shows that Smiley's inclination towards familial issue and the issues related to female is the result of the failure of societal and cultural ties. The cause of their failure is because of their ineffectiveness in the then scenario of the world.

The writing style of Smiley is simple. It is as if she were sitting at the kitchen table telling a story to a friend, yet she never misses the details. Her keen observation of daily routine and her use of sharp, revealing dialogue serve as effective tools to define her characters and their emotions. Similarly, her fictions become fascinating and exciting because of her technique of juxtaposing past events with the present. Her portrayal of every minimal issue reveals her limited role. The reason behind it is the patriarchal dogmas prevalent during her life time.

Her novel *A Thousand Acres* is a woman's story of domestic life told in a plain style. In the novel, memory plays vital role as a means to chronicle the history of family relationship. Through the simple narrative technique, Smiley explores complex family relationship with emotional upheaval of the characters which untimely derived success in her writing career.

It is central to her vision of the future for women's literature that woman must be treated as autonomous adults, free of the stereotypes created for them by others' needs.

1.3 Good Will and Critics

After the publication of the novel in 1989, it has been analyzed by many critics from own points of view, but not from the perspective of women. Barbara Kitt Seidman, for instance, comments this novel as an effort of an ageing Vietnam War veteran, Bob Miller:

. . . isolates his family from the corrupting influences of the broader culture. On the other hand, she might move the reader through a

Kaleidoscope of perspective which shows each family member is accorded an independent point of view on the steadily unfolding tragedy. (242)

To make unaffected by the corrupting influence of the boarder culture, Bob seems to have created an imaginary island with imaginary sufficiency but his intention is to exploit the female world.

Critic Alfred A. Knopf reviews this novel from social perspective. According to him, this novel “powerfully evokes breakdowns in the lives of American families” (2). The idea of Catherine Morely is identical to the idea of Knopf since he argues this novel “portrays the fragmentation of family” (5). But this fragmentation is not intended by female characters rather it is the design of Bob Miller and he seems successful in his project because the dominating male ideologies are still rampant in the society and they are sufficient enough to thwart the project of female’s freedom.

While reviewing this book on the *New York Times*, reviewer Josephine Humphreys “appreciates Smiley’s controlled use of language and her ability to maintain a sympathetic attitude for characters who create their own destruction” (1).

William L. Howard, commenting on the book states “there runs an under current of betrayal, neglect and violence” (23). Arguing this novel as racist novel, critic William Koon writes:

. . . the activities of Tommy are guided by the exhibition of racist behaviour towards African American professor Lydia Harris and her daughter Annie. These activities result in the family coming under control of the social welfare system and being forces to give up their non conformist lifestyle. (88)

The cruel activities done upon Lydia and Annabel are not only because of their color of skin but they are also female not protected by any male members of their house. They have become the victim of male-centered ego of Tommy who despite his immature age seems efficient to dominate upon female characters.

Smiley's *Good Will* will be textually analyzed and attempts will be made to explore the unprecedented issues as the focus of the novel which threatens her literary reputation. Smiley has chosen female characters and provided them the main role to explore their psychological turmoil in a patriarchal socio-cultural frame. Their subservient role in the society is caused by the ego-guided male character of the novel. The male characters think female characters as weak, inferior and intend to dominate them throughout the text despite females' efforts to challenge.

II. Theoretical Modality

2.1 History of Feminism

Feminism in general is a theoretical discourse which advocates women's rights based on the belief in the equality of sexes. It redefines women's activities and goals from a woman centered point of view and refuses to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women as a sex object, a second sex, and a submissive other. It conjures up various images and ideas regarding the women's issues. Feminism is often represented as a single entity and somehow concerned with gender equality and freedom.

Feminism, as a literary movement began from 1960s but even before that we can trace the seeds of feminism sprouting. M.A.R. Habib argues, "It takes us back to ancient Greece as in the work of Sappho and arguably in Aristophanes play *Lysistrata*" (667). This play depicts women as taking over the treasury in the Acropolis, a female chorus as physically and intellectually superior to the male chorus. Similar traces can be observed in Chaucer's *wife of Bath*, "who blatantly values 'experience' over authority and was more than a match for each of her five husbands" (667). Christine de Pisan, another feminist in Medieval age, Catherine Des Roches of Renaissance, Alphra Behn and Anne Bradstreet in seventeen century were pioneers in gaining access to the literary profession. Mary Wollstonecraft, after the French Revolution, argued that the ideas of the Revolution, and Enlightenment should be extended to women, primarily through access to education. Nineteenth century witnessed the flowering of numerous major female literary figures in both Europe and America ranging from Mme. de Stael, Jane Austen, George Eliot, The Bronte sisters, Emily Dickinson. In twentieth century, Virginia Wolf, Hilda Doolittle, Gertude Stein are the major writers, who advocated for women's rights.

Until recently, feminist criticism has not had a theoretical basis though it is a dominant force in the literary studies. Chris Beasley, in this context, points out that "the point of view of feminist writers is that the western thought is 'male stream' and thus its authority needs to be questioned" (3). It is a doctrine that suggests that women are systematically advantaged in modern society and advocating equal opportunities for men and women. It shares the common theoretical assumption as shared by all branches of the movement that there has been a historical tradition of male exploitation of women. But there are some reasons why some feminists do not want to embrace feminist theory at all. Roman Selden writes, "In academic institutions 'theory' is often male even macho; it is the hard, intellectual avant-garde of literary studies" (135). The manly virtues of rigor, thrusting purpose and rampant ambition find their home in 'theory' rather than in the often tender art of critical interpretation. "Feminists have often exposed the fraudulent objectivity of male science. Freud's theories have been castigated for their blatant sexism, for example, for their assumption that female sexuality is shaped by 'penis-envy' (135). Much feminist criticism wishes to escape the 'fixities and definites' of theory and to develop a female discourse which can't be tied down conceptually as belonging to a recognized theoretical tradition. The psychoanalytic theories about instinctive drives have been especially helpful to feminist critics who have tried to articulate the subversive and apparently formless resistance of some women writers have managed to evoke the possible strategies of female resistance without elaborate theorizing (136).

According to E. Porter feminism is "a perspective that seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex" (qtd. in Beasley 27). From the very beginning of the history, female are

represented as inferior sex and feminism advocates against the unequal treatment, injustice and subordinate presentation. In the same way R. Delmer says:

It is certainly possible to construct a baseline definition of feminism— Many should agree that at the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated, and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would required a radical change— in the social, economic and political order. (27-28)

Female's social, economic as well as political status all seem negated and unsatisfied. So, feminism stands to raise female's voice against all kinds of domination. More recently feminism has been defined not simply as a particular framework set of ideas or analysis or form of critical questioning around a focus on women and power, but also as representing a specific way of experience.

Thus, it is clear that all feminists call for changes in social, economic, political or cultural order, to reduce and eventually overcome this discrimination against women. The bottom-line of all this subordination is the lack of freedom. Of course, several theorists, writers and scholars have underlined this issue from varied perspectives. Marriage has become one of the bondages that restrict women from realizing her independent self. It has been defined by men as a legal authority over women. Feminists address this issue to instill a sense of human existence devoid of sexual biasness.

Feminist criticism was not inaugurated as a distinctive and concerted approach to literature until late in the 1960s. However, behind it lies two centuries of struggle for the recognition of women's cultural roles and achievements and their social and political rights. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) is

considered to be the first formal enhancement of feminist writing though many others had tried their hands before her too. Wollstonecraft in her book advocates for the political and social rights of women and argues that society can never retain women only in the role of convenient domestic slaves and alluring mistresses by denying their economic independence and encouraging them to be docile and attentive to their looks to the exclusion of all else. She stands as a whole against "patriarchal society, traditional education system" (397). She argues that sentimental novels teach female to be submissive, sentimental, which restrict them from power of judgment and power of reason.

The feminist revolutionary spirit implanted by Wollstonecraft could not accelerate so speedily for more than coming one century. *Women in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) by Margaret Fuller and *The Subjection of Women* (1869) by John Stuart Mill were only the two major works on feminism in the whole nineteenth century. Virginia Woolf by writing *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir *The Second Sex* (1949) contributed greatly for the worldwide emergence of feminism in the first half of the twentieth century. Woolf focuses on situation of women authors throughout the history and their cultural, economic, and educational disabilities within the patriarchal society which had prevented them from realizing their creative suppressed values affecting the concept of power, family and social life that had shaped by men in the past. Beauvoir, on the other hand, insists against "the cultural identification of women as merely the negative object, or 'other', to man as the defining and dominating 'subject' who is assumed to represent humanity in general" (qtd. in Abrams 234). She argues that one is not born, but rather becomes a woman. It is civilization as a whole that produces the creature which is described as feminine. She also attacks the patriarchal myths of women presuming the female

essence prior to individual existence in the works of many male writers. She opines that females are free to choose to come out of void but paternalism regards women as other weaker sex. Women are considered absolutely as the 'essential other' whereas male is considered as 'subject' who, assuming to represent humanity in general, treats women as 'object'. It is the social construction based on male domination which treats women as commodities. In fact, male and female, the gender concept is created by patriarchal society. Similarly, though men and women are indeed mysterious to each other, men see the world from their own point of view and regard women as mysterious. Patriarchal ideology creates myth about women and defines men as transcendental whereas women as immanent.

In the same manner, Delmer asserts that the early women's liberation movement of the 1960s and 1970 largely lacked a developed theoretical approach. Hence the movement could assert without much detailed analysis a notion of unity among women and regard feminism as a framework which reflected that unity. The intention was to find the explanation for women's oppression which could express women's commonality and thus bind all women together politically. However, pluralism and diversity have perpetually occurred between women as regards the issue of woman as subject and the challenge to the woman's oppression. Feminist theories have in fact developed at something of a remote from mainstream social and political thought. Feminists have argued that mainstream thought is simply a part of three ongoing processes: excluding, marginalizing, and trivializing women and their accounts of social and political life.

Feminism, in fact, was established in the form of theoretical discourse in the late 1960s as a part of international women's movement. Establishing gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis it tried, then, to present women reader and

critics with different perceptions to their literary experiences of women in and with literature are different from those of men. Mary Ellman's *Thinking About Women* (1968) is the first book exposing the sexual stereotyping of women both literature and literary criticism and demonstrating the inadequacy of established critical school and methods to deal fairly or sensitively with works written by women. In other words, the book disclosed the derogatory and stereotyped presentation of women in literature and in media. She further contends that western cultures contain a widespread application of gender stereotypes to almost everything. She attacks 'phallogocentrism' in which certain manliness in art is upheld against the so-called hysteric or works at random. Unlike Showalter, Ellman does not identify female writing with female experience, but relates it to certain literary styles. According to her, female writings establish a different perspective which "undermines the definiteness of judgment and fixity of focus "(212). Feminist criticism, then, very quickly moved beyond merely exposing sexism in one work of literature after another promising to begin to record new choices in a new literary history.

Kate Millet's analysis of sexual politics in her *Sexual Politics* (1969) added a note of urgency to the Ellman's scornful anger. The acting out of roles in the unequal relation of domination and subordination is what Millet calls 'sexual politics'. Defining politics as the oppression of power relations in society, Millets argues that "western institutions have manipulated power to establish the dominance of men and subordination of women in society" (36). She also criticizes Freud's psychoanalytical theory for its male bias and analyzes the fiction of D.H. Lawrence, Henry Millar and Norman Mailer uncovering how they dignify their aggressive phallic shelves which degrade women as submissive sexual objects in their object works. Seldon considers Millet's use of the term 'patriarchy' described the cause of women's oppression which

is due to the power that is centered directly or indirectly on male so as to subordinate women. The feminist analysis of politics therefore rose from the fact that women have been excluded from the exercise of political power. Women are still underrepresented in formal political institutions and decision making bodies worldwide. Millet argues that women are impelled to a system of sex-role-stereotyping from early age. She borrows the distinction between sex and gender from social sciences. Sex is determined by biology and gender is culturally constructed. She does not believe in the culturally acquired identity of women who has been associated with such adjective: meek, conventional, emotional, passive, submissive. She says "ideology has become the weapon to dominate women" (46). Since literary values, canons and standards are created and constructed by men; women have to struggle to express their experiences, grievances and concerns in appropriate forms. There is always misrepresentation of woman in media. For instance, the advertisement of electric shower presents a lady tantalizingly dropping her towel to make the male viewers gaze at her naked body which excludes female viewers. She exposes the oppressive representation of sexuality that is to be found in male fiction highlighting the male domination especially in the sexual description in novels by great writers such as D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller. Hence, Millet makes a powerful critique of patriarchal culture in her *Sexual Politics*.

Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelist from Bronte to Lessing* (1997) is a prominent masterpiece of the theoretical work of feminism. It describes the female literary tradition in the English novel from the Bronte onward as a development of subculture by arguing that "since women in general constitute a kind of subculture within the framework of a larger society" their work would demonstrate a unity of values, conventions, experiences and behaviours

encroaching on each individual (1225). Moreover, she introduces the term 'gynocritics' as a program of rebuilding women's position as literary writers and readers in order to ensure their independence from andocentric culture. The program of gynocritics is to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience rather than to adopt male models theories. Gynocritics "must take into account the different velocities and curves of political, social and personal histories in determining women's literary choices and careers" (1228). Showalter defines gynocritics as, "a concern with women as writes the history, styles, themes, genres and structure of writing by women, the psychodynamics of female creativity, the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution and laws of a female tradition" (qtd. in Ruthven 94).

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) is another brilliantly written massive book on historical study of feminism which stresses especially the psychodynamics of women writers in the nineteenth century. Gilbert and Gubar in this book, according to M.H. Abrams:

. . . propose[s] that the 'anxiety of authorship' that resulted from the stereotype that literary creativity is an exclusively male prerogative, effected in women writers a psychological duplicity that projected a monstrous counter figure to the heroine . . . such a figure is usually in some sense the author's double, an image of her own anxiety and rage.
(236)

Gilbert and Gubar's main argument is that artistic creativity of the nineteenth century tradition which is perceived basically as a male quality is in fact patriarchal superimposition upon the women writers who are imprisoned within it. In the image

of 'Divine Creator' the male author fathers his text. But taking the same masculine cosmic author as their model, women end up copying or identifying with the dominant literary images of femininity which comes out of the phallogentric myth of creativity. They suggest the female writers first to struggle against the effect of socialization that becomes struggle against men's oppressive reading of women. But they further argue that the women can begin such struggle only by actively seeking a female precursor who, far from representing a threatening force to be denied or killed, proves by example that a revolt against patriarchal authority is possible. Gilbert and Gubar present a dilemma of women writer in a male centric authorship and make a clear position of the women writer who is squandering without fixity.

The women writer has an anxiety of authorship—a fear that she cannot create, the fear that she cannot fight a male precursor on his terms and, "the woman writer is victimized by the inferiorized and alternative psychology of women under patriarchy" (1237). Women suffer from mental illness because of the patriarchal socialization since they are likely to experience their education in docility, submissiveness, selflessness as in some sense sickening.

According to the above discussions we can divide that development of whole feminist literary criticism into three distinct phases. Out of which the first phase was centered on:

. . . the misogyny of literacy practice: the stereotyped images of women in literature as angels or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature, and the abuse or textual harassment of women in classic and popular male literature, and the exclusion of women from literacy history.

(Showalter 5)

The second phase of it was the discovery that women writers had a literature of their own, whose historical and thematic, as well as artistic importance, had been obscured by the patriarchal values that dominate the culture. Hundreds of lost women writers were rediscovered and the territory of the female imagination and the structures of the female plot were constructed in this phase. And the third phase of feminist criticism demanded a radical rethinking of the conceptual ground of literary study, a revision of the accepted theoretical assumptions about reading and writing that have been entirely on male literary experiences.

Feminism has grown into a complex theoretical stream with numerous diversities depending on multiple orientations. It can therefore be sketched in a continuum in order to provide a generalized overview of its internal dimensions and to explore the possibilities. The positions within feminism stretch from those adopting more explicit and specific political commitments which demand less widely inclusive conception of feminism's defining qualities, to those stressing flexibility and diversity related to an emphasis upon historical, local and contextual specificity. In the left of the continuum, we find feminism defined as a definite set of ideas or social analysis. This is a relatively closed approach requiring a commitment to a revolutionary politics. In the middle of the continuum are broad definitions offered by dictionaries and other accounts. This is somewhat less likely to attend to political commitment described by the definite view. The most open definitions of feminism's scope are the right of the continuum. Provisional definitions believe that feminism is open to changing content and hence rejects singular political viewpoints.

2.2 Stages of Feminism

Feminists have offered widely different accounts of the ways in which they are divided. For example Karen Offen divides feminism into two: Relational and Individualistic. The first is said to include the feminists prior to the 19th century who have focused on egalitarianism and liberalism in heterosexual familial settings. They are concerned with the notion of equality, which focus on women's distinct position as women. This asserts the point that women should be able to do what men do.

Individualistic feminism includes a group of feminists who focus on a quest for personal individual independence and downplay sex-linked qualities. According to Elizabeth Grosz feminists labeled under difference are concerned with autonomy and they support conceptions of difference without hierarchy. It is difficult to outline so many view points that may be included under the term without reducing them to more slogans. Although the various traditions do become more established over time, newer feminist trajectories are quite often messy and are not so straightforwardly summarized.

Showalter in her analysis of historical development of feminism presents three important stages of women writing according to their intensity of female voice: Feminine, Feminist, and Female. The first dating from 1840 to 1880 marked the female voice rising in literature buried in so-called feminine substance and got immensely affected by male pedagogy. In this phase women writers like George Eliot and Bronte sisters imitated and internalized the dominant male aesthetic tradition and standards; which required that women writers remain gentlewomen. The main area for their work was their immediate domestic and social circle. The second phase dating from 1880 to 1920 clearly demonstrated the determined efforts for political and social equality and women's literature was able to advocate minority rights and protested

against the unjust treatment of women. This includes writers like Elizabeth Robins, Olive Schreiner who remained dependent upon the prominent masculine aesthetics. Similarly, the third phase dating from 1920 onwards dawned with Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield and Virginia Woolf who ventured to counterbalance the male-dominated literary sphere and realized the historically sex-polarized tendency in literature. In this phase, the dependency on opposition is being replaced by a rediscovery of women's texts and aesthetics. However, they could not dispose the blames put upon them by male writers nor could they explore the actual physical experience of women. It was only with the coming of postwar novelists such as Iris Murdoch, Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble that we see female aesthetics and the distinct female view of life. They have countercharged men for their taboos stamped on women and have focused on all areas of female experience.

As the term 'feminism' covers a broader scope and embraces different aspects of humanity despite its focus on the entire issues of women, several dimensions have been shown ranging from liberal attitude and the demand for equal rights for sexes to the radical one voicing out the extreme ideology that tends to theoretically turn the patriarchy upside down. Liberal and Radical feminism are distinguished in terms of their intensity of demand and the arrogance. While alongside them, other feminists have developed with their affiliation to certain theoretical backgrounds. They include political feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, French feminism, bio-feminism, postmodernist/poststructuralist feminism, post colonial feminism and others. To move into the brief study of these dimensions, it is relevant to first deal with liberal and radical feminism.

Liberal Feminism is a moderate or mainstream face of feminism that explains women's position in society. It addresses the problems of unequal rights or artificial

barriers to women's participation in the public world, beyond the family and household. It shows a critical concern with the value of individual autonomy and freedom from supposedly unwarranted restrictions by others. Public citizenship and the attainment of equality with men in the public area are central to liberal feminism. By presuming the sameness between men and women it reflects the concept of a fundamentally and sexually undifferentiated human nature by emphasizing reform of society rather than revolutionary changes. Liberal feminism draws on welfare liberalism, though it is started as a form of liberal political thought influenced by J.S. Mill. They put forward their main agenda as collective responsibility for the formation and development of liberal society, which supports equal opportunity between sexes. They do not want to either prove women as superior to men or voice their slogans against men. They believe in reform not revolution.

Radical feminism appeared in Elaine Showalter's reinterpretation of gender studies and got nourished by her followers. It has been established as a feminist literary criticism, an extreme rebellious stream which appears as hostile to patriarchy unlike liberal feminism. It offers a real challenge to and rejection of the liberal orientation towards the public world of men. It gives a positive value to womanhood rather than supporting a notion of assimilation into arenas of activity associated with men. They arrogantly focus on women's oppression as in a social order dominated by men. The notion of sexual oppression is intimately connected with a strong emphasis on the sisterhood of women. Chris Beasley reports Johnson as defining it as "one of the basic tenets of radical feminism is that any woman . . . has more in common with any other women—regardless of class, race, ethnic group, nationality than any woman has with any man"(54). It encourages some degree of separatism from men because it recommends putting women first making them a primary concern. Radical feminists

demand in literature an expression of female sexuality which will burst through the bonds of male logic with a poetic power that defines the tyranny of logocentric meaning. Besides sexual oppression, radical feminists often view other forms of power for example, unequal power relations within capitalism—as derived from patriarchy. Radical feminism describes sexuality "as the or at least a fundamental form of oppression and the primary oppression for women" (34). This approach wants to bring about radical changes in the social configuration in which the position of women is not only redefined but also reestablished as a respectable and important, commonly suggesting that the position of man be in a position of power relative to all women, and possibly some men, they have a strong interest in recovering or discovering positive elements in femininity asserting in essence that it is good to be a woman and to form bonds with other women. Elizabeth Grosz calls it a feminism of difference. Radical feminism usually presents a historically continuous clear-cut difference between men and women. This theory generally advocates a revolutionary model of social change. The agenda of radical feminist writings is to counter women's supposedly natural, biological inferiority and subordination within patriarchal society by asserting their at least equal or superior status in relation to men. A crucial aspect of that agenda is for women to gain control over their own bodies, biology and to value and celebrate women's bodies.

Feminism has always been concerned in some way with women's participation or non-participation in paid employment. The activism of women in 19th century radical and socialist movement was principally for women's right to work and to be treated fairly and paid equally to men. Karl Marx underlined that the consciousness is the product of being which is determined by the socio-economic realities. Feminism embracing Marxism was developed as Marxist feminism in the western world in the

1960s and 70s. These feminist thinkers saw the main reason of gender inequality in the unequal distribution of capital. Starting from the issue of the underpayment of women, sexual harassment of female in income-generating sources, Marxist feminists go to the point of defining the position of women in terms of socio-economic basis. They argue that the secret of sexual oppression lies in the unanimous authority of men over property and capital. They place women as proletariat and men as bourgeois and propose to wage a war against the unequal distribution and disrupt the socio-economic structure and configure new which will institute equal opportunity to both sexes and economic hierarchy would be dismantled. Jane Freeman refers to Mariaros Dalla Costa and Selma James's book *The Power and the Subversion of the Community* and notes that women are exploited by the capitalist system as "unpaid workers, undertaking all the domestic works: childbearing and caring which are necessary for the continuation of the capitalist system" (86). By asserting that the class power and class oppression system of the class power and class oppression predate sexual oppression, Marxist feminists attack the prevailing capitalistic system of the West and advocate a revolutionary approach in which the overthrow of capitalization is viewed as the necessary precondition to dismantle male privilege. Thus they combine the study of class with that of gender. They wish to focus on class along with gender as crucial determinant of literary production.

Socialist feminism has combined Marxist and radical feminisms; the former emphasizing the casual role of labor and capital and the latter believing that sexual hierarchy is independent of economic class hierarchy. This theory offers a dual system of social analysis: patriarchy and capitalism. Sometimes it describes a unified system referred to as capitalist patriarchy.

Published in the late 19th century but widely related with the early 20th century is Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis that centered on the issue of human neurosis. Freud has massively brought gender issues as the talks about the formation of unconscious of a woman. He further seems to discover the fundamental differences in dream images seen by man and woman and attributes egoist, ambitious dreams to man and erotic dreams to woman. Freud's analysis is gender biased. Psychoanalytic feminism draws from the Freudian and Lacanian arguments and argues against their depiction of woman psyche as neurotic, vulnerable to slightest simulation and lacking rational faculty. Psychoanalytic feminists analyze the formation sexed identities: masculinity and femininity. To oppose Freudian belief that the father shapes the psychic life of the child, they stress the prior importance of the mother. Such feminists examine the images in literature written by both male and female writers and claim that the male writers have a deep seated psychological bias against women characters that are thus represented as vile or psychologically inferior. Feminists call Freudian analysis a phallogocentrism and phallogocentrism.

The critics of French feminist schools are concerned with feminine writing from the position of woman accept Lacan's account of language/culture as a masculine order but do not accept his positive affirmation of that masculine order as equivalent to civilization or sociality. They question the assumption that femininity can only be seen from the point of view of phallic culture. For the feminine writers the notion of woman exemplifies the cultural and linguistic principle of rendering inferiority which does not fit the masculine norm. They believe that femininity offer a possible procedure for subverting the marginalizing mechanism of power, thereby breaking it up. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* mentions:

French feminists who follow Lacan, particularly Helene Cixous propose a utopian place, a primeval female space which is free of symbolic order, sex roles, otherness and the law of the father and in which the self is still linked with Cixous calls the voice of the Mother. (204)

Cixous, a French feminist sees feminism far from symbolic order and sex roles as designed by patriarchal society.

Many psychoanalytical feminists have adopted myth criticism and have transformed it for the purposes of feminist criticism. Feminist myth critics tend to “center their discussion on the Great Mother and other female images and goddesses some of them being Medusa, Cassandra, and Isis” (122). They even criticize Northrop Frye for ignoring gender in his classification of myths. These critics reject Greco-Roman myths as male constructed and want to go to the study of pro-Greek myths which have abundant examples of matriarchal norms and values in the societies. Feminist myths have been formed for the welfare of men and with a view to dominating women.

Some physiological explanations pointed at a notion that women were physically as well as mentally poor, for their brain size was considered to be smaller than that of men. So, women were thought to be fit for childbearing, breastfeeding and occupying themselves with domestic chores. But the bio-feminists often called corporeal feminists raise the issue of women’s body as an essential part of women’s writing because women for them have more biological experiences than men do. Experiences like menstruation, gestation, ovulation and childbirth are the mere women’s and there lie several important things which are *terra incognita* (unexplored subject) for men. They believe that patriarchal thought had limited female biology to

its own narrow specification and urge for the frank exposition of their body in their writings.

In 1960s a revolutionary phase emerged in literary arena to counter the age old western philosophy and linguistic led by a French philosopher Jacques Derrida. Taking advantage of the poststructuralist theory feminist thinkers argued against malecentrism—male as center and female as margin. Some extremists started calling phallogocentrism to signify that men have dominated the word and have defined the word the way they like and thus they define women as subordinate and secondary.

Though the idea of feminism itself seeks to study the existence of women in the patriarchal society, existentialist feminism founded and elaborated by Simone de Beauvoir primarily focuses on Sartrean notion of existentialism: existence precedes essence. Beauvoir raises this issue regarding woman who has been essentialised “in the society with certain stereotypes like woman as a flesh, related to nature, vale of blood, open rose, siren, the curve of a hill, the fertile soul, the sap, the material beauty and the soul of the world” (1998). Men believe that women cannot transcend because transcendence is a spiritual sublimity which can only be attained by men. Paternalism claims woman for hearth and home and defines her as sentiment, inwardness and immanence. Women are projected as ‘other’ subordinate being. This ‘othering’ mystifies woman’s qualities and pushes her into isolation.

Gender discrimination is practiced even at the level of language use. A woman’s socialization process teaches her a distinction between male and female in language. The linguistic feminists tend not only to discover the sexism in language but also to attack the sexist aspects in the language where they find oppressive aspects for women. Language seems to have paralyzed their gestures including their verbal gestures. The main problem, according to Lodge, lies “in the fact that women have

been denied the full resources of language and have been forced into silence, euphemism or circumlocution" (341).

Post-colonial feminists are concerned with the "double colonization" of third world women under the imperial conditions. They argue the third world women became victims of both imperial ideology and native and foreign patriarchies. They are ghettoized and secluded from the mainstream culture and suffered with their western sibling as well. Non-western woman suffer from a sense of isolation and have had time to express their identity. They are sandwiched between two trends of dominations. Gayatri Spivak puts it as:

. . . between patriarchy and imperialism, subject constitution and object formation. The figure of the women disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third world woman' caught between tradition and modernization.
(qtd. in Gandhi 89)

The post-colonial feminists like Spivak accuse of the mainstream feminists Eurocentric in their attitudes towards women in the countries of their world, trying to impose western model of feminism that is not always appropriate to the particular condition of third world countries.

2.3 Patriarchal Domination and Sexual Differences

Despite the adaptation of various critical modes in feminists' critical theory, most of the writers and critics share some assumptions and concepts about patriarchal domination and sexual difference. Firstly, the western civilization is male-centered, that is, perversely dominated by patriarchal norms and values. All domains such as familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic are organized and conducted in such a way as to submit women to men. Women are brought up and

socialized in such a way that patriarchal ideology is being instilled and internalized within them so that they become co-operative in their own subordination. From the Hebrew Bible and Greek philosophy to the present it defines female by negative reference to the male –as an ‘other’ a kind of ‘non-man’. Secondly, sex is to determine by anatomy, whereas gender is constructed by culture, the omnipresent patriarchal biasness of our civilization. Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* says, “One is not born but rather becomes a woman” (7). So, the masculine is identified as active, dominating, rational and creative whereas the female is identified as passive, timid, emotional and conventional.

Lastly, feminists claim that patriarchal ideology encroaches literature too. The great writings are written by men. The most highly regarded literary works such as *Oedipus*, *Ulysses*, *Hamlet*, *Tom Jones* and *Huckleberry Finn* focus on the male protagonist depicting masculine traits, feelings and interests whereas the female characters are created to submit to masculine desires and are presented from a male perspective. In such works no autonomous female models are created and only male readers are implicitly addressed. So, female readers have to identify themselves by taking up the position of the male subject and assuming male values and ways of feelings. In addition, the canon of literary criticism, the criteria and the standard for analyzing and appraising literary works are immune to total masculine assumption, interest and reason.

III. Textual Analysis

3.1 Male Gender Performance in *Good Will*

Jane Smiley, in *Good Will* has presented some macho characters filled with masculine values, through whom she intends to show the age-old repression of women in male-dominated socio-cultural structure. *Good Will* presents the male version of the self-centered, driven protagonist, Bob Miller. A veteran of the Vietnam War, Miller has created an Island of self-sufficiency in rural Pennsylvania for himself, for Liz, and for their son Tommy. Bob is proud with whatever he has. He has taken his concept of self sufficiency to its logical conclusion for himself but it shows his intention of proving himself as superior and the smell of exploitation takes birth right from the beginning. He, while talking with Tina, the interviewer says:

I would begin with the weight and cottony fragrance of the quilts we've made, an 'All Hands Around' on the bed, a big log cabin in rainbow colors against black on the wall. In sixteen years . . . over the bed. Then, under my feet, I felt the smooth-painted floorboards. The windows are uncontained and unshaded, usually flat gray with morning fog. All of this is familiar and comforting. (112)

The above extract exhibits that Bob has begun to present his self sufficiency even of the quilt's he has and the decoration of the room he has done. He is happy with the cottony fragrance of the quilt they have made and he glorifies with the smooth painted floor boards, rainbow colored log cabin etc. Through this assertion of glorification he wants to prove himself that he has everything and whatever he has they are good and well maintained.

Even he glorifies his hard-working and admits that the family raises or makes everything they eat and use he argues, "Farm work doesn't have to be backbreaking. It

can be as aerobically sound and healthfully taxing as other sort of exercise"(112). Liz calls this "spading-as-sport" as his private obsession, but another early morning pleasure is her sleepy, admiring rake of fingertips over "pectoral and abdominals" (112). This expression suggests that he expects to get fingertips in his pectorals and abdominals from his sleepy wife despite her hard work in farming.

By looking at the room of his son Tommy, he enjoys and relaxes himself. He exclaims:

When I look into my son's room, my pleasure is the knowledge that I have bought all of my being to bear here not just hands and brains, but seed, too, and not just seed but hands and brain, too. If he were really afloat, his bed would bump against the window, and he could look upon the orchard I planted, then bump against the shelves I built, where he could snatch down tops and cars and blocks and tools and dolls we've made him; this is lovely sea, I think, tiny, enclosed, friendly, all his, and his alone. (113)

Observing around Tommy's room, Bob, as the representative of male chauvinistic attitude and taking the same room as the proof of his concept of self-sufficiency cherishes himself.

His degree of possessiveness reaches its climax when he utters, "we have fishing rods and ponies and bicycles, a Canoe, plenty of tools . . . and a cow but she gave too much milk. This horse has . . . with a big pearly oval of etched gleam" (113). To have a cow with a lot of milk, horse, ponies and bicycle, for Bob are sufficient to assure his wife about his possession.

Of course, the beginning of the novel with a startling premise and proud of Bob Miller help to prove the concept of self-sufficiency that Miller inherent in his

mind with "the fifty-five-acre farm" outside the village of Moreton, Pennsylvania, Bob Miller, the narrator, his wife Liz, and their seven-years-old son Tommy live richly on "less than \$350 a year"(107).

Along with the physical property he has, Bob thinks his wife, Liz, as his own property in order to use her in accordance with his will. He never asks her about the existing condition of the family rather he himself makes her listen about the things they have. He orders her to be happy with him despite of the dissatisfaction she has. This is the evidence of male's suppression upon the female's fundamental right to expression. Women in the society are expected to accept blindly what male members say and do.

Even from the very beginning after buying the land, Miller intends to show his perfectness to the other. Miller thought:

. . . when I had first bought the land and was building the big compost heaps behind the chicken shed, I used to imagine some interviewer just like Tina passing through, showing just her degree of dignity, respectability and knowledgeable interest. I used to plan how I would guide her around the beds, then undug, show her through the house, then unbuilt, seat her in the chairs, feed her off the table, entertain her on the porch, and through imagining her. I saw all the details she might like. (109)

In the above extract, Miller's imagination to show his superiority can be observed. Bob imagines about the arrival of any interviewer like Tina. If anybody comes, Bob expects to guide her around his decorated beds, to let her sit in chair feed her very comfortably in order to show his superiority.

Henry Miller opines that ideology has become the weapon to dominate women in patriarchal society. By creating male discourse Bob labels women as inferior and shows his sense of hatred towards them. It shows the negative image of women presented in Bob's mind. He labels them as 'hostile' by saying "they are hostile" (223). This expression proves that when a girl or woman does not confirm to the social dictations or tries to defy the constraints, she is labeled as 'hostile', indecent and characterless.

In a scene, while Bob was being interviewed by Tina, Bob himself knows that the way of his interview is disliked by his own wife Liz but he doesn't stop to magnify himself. He says "Liz doesn't like my brusqueness" (114). But despite her distaste towards his argument, she couldn't interrupt him, though she wants to do so.

Bob wants to entrap his wife and other family members in his utopian island where:

. . . everything is perfect. The natural landscape offers enclosed, familiar, pleasing curves, softened with August haze and prolific vegetation- sugar maple, black cherry, hickory, butternut, walnut, beach, yellow birch and while oak are some of what I can see from here-and I respond, unfailingly, with love From everywhere else on the property, I must view my own mistake, the house. (118)

Creating a heavenly island, he wants to rule and intends to expose his masculinity to his wife. It shows patriarchy as a hindrance for females to enjoy fundamental rights by simply giving them false assurances. Man shows his dual opportunities nature in front of a female and acts quite tactfully so as to deceive her. He easily changes his form as per the situation just to take undue advantage from the females.

The picture of their son is drawn very strongly. Though he is of only seven years but he is shown bold enough. "His face is too bright, his eyes too eager; a kind of rigidly seems to grip him when he is still, but when he moves, the movements are quick and broad" (118). Tommy's perfect image not only signifies Bob intention to present a strong picture of male character but it also represents the superior image of whole male race.

Despite the hard-work Liz does throughout every day she is still busy in doing household works. There is nobody to help and even to console her but looking at the tired appearance of her son she requests him "to settle down for [his] rest" (121). Furthermore she says, "You want some milk before you go up? Sit by Daddy and I'll pour you some" (121). This quote suggests that in the male dominated society, man never pays due respect to the feeling of women. Women's prime duty is to as per males' sentiments. Liz looks after her son despite her busy schedule not because it is her duty to care her offspring but more than it he is the representative of male world.

Bob Miller imagines a majestic image of his son Tommy. He expresses:

He might sit. He might run into the other room. He might knock over his chair. I must have had the look, too, when I was his age, because I remember the feeling perfectly, a feeling of imminent eruption, fearsome, alluring, uncontrollable. It was like standing in a dim, warm, small room and having an astonishing bright light switched on every so often, and when the light was on I couldn't remember what it was like for the light to be off. (122)

The above quote shows that, Bob Miller, the father remembers his past life, compares it to the life of his son and feels relaxed. He is satisfied with the activities of son because Tommy is also a male, an agent to continue his thoughts and values.

Patriarchy discourages women to participate in any kind of public assembly and limits them in the position of domestic slaves. Being far from public participation causes lack of power of judgment and power of analysis in them. For the same purpose, Bob has created an island of sufficiency to entrap his wife. In order to bring his plan into active, he "hasn't managed radio and television" (136). Male members in the society, like Bob in the novel, fear the possible protest that females can wage against the patriarchal domination if they are given access to public knowledge.

The narrator's rhapsodies on the place he has made and his family's life there are too beautiful as to divert attention, initially, from Bob Miller's fatal flaw; his unacknowledged desire to be God, the creator and master of a world. To the woman who comes to interview him he asserts that "my aim wasn't to choose the hardest path and prove I could do it. It was the same as everyone else's aim. It was to prosper . . . we're self-contained, not isolated and hostile" (121). Nothing could sound more reasonable yet subtle clues to his blind egomania are woven all through the story. He and his wife haven't used birth control yet had only child. Bob declares:

We haven't used birth control since our marriage and she only got pregnant once. Most of the time, I forget that it could happen again. Secretly, I have only ever managed to imagine one boy child. May be imagination is the key there too -as if his wife had nothing to do with it. The son, his creation is miraculous . . . enthusiastic and open and receptive to guidance, though in need of molding" (125).

Males consider themselves as the one, subject, superior, god-like, intellectual and females as the other, object, inferior, malleable and inert. It has been classified by the activities done by the boy called Tommy, even if he is only seven years old. In a letter sent by Miss Bussman, the second grade teacher it is written:

Dear Mr. Miller,

The noontime, while the other children were at lunch Tom went into the cloakroom and found some toys, two dolls that rare owned by another child, Annabel Harris. He twisted these dolls until they broke apart, and tore some of their doll clothes. Annabel is aware that she should not have had the dolls in school, but Tom did take them out of her school bag. He says that he is in sorry for what he calls, "the accident." I have told Mrs. Harris that the dolls will be replaced. One is a 'Jem' doll and one is a 'Kimber' doll. I would like to speak with you about the incident. It has been most disturbing.

Sincerely, Leona Bussman. (131)

This letter shows that the small boy is also negative towards the female world.

Annabel, the daughter and Lydia Harris, a college professor have recently moved into Moreton. As a macho character the boy doesn't hesitate to break the dolls of Annabel. Though he breaks the possession of Annabel, Tom seems unmoved. To much dissatisfied by the activities of Tom, Miss Bussman, his teacher writes a letter to Bob Miller to control his son's activities towards a girl of Tommy's class.

After reading the letter Liz "makes a little sound, between a cry and a groan, very soft, as she reads, but says nothing afterward"(132). She is badly affected by his activities but as a female she remains silent instead of scolding him for not to repeat the mistake again.

Later very softly Liz asks, "But why did you do it, Tommy?" (133) But instead of answering her, he gives her a long, careful look, then return to looking at his foot.

After a long interval he utters "She's a nigger" (132). This statement clarifies that the boy is not only gender conscious but also race conscious. He, at first, dislikes her for being 'she' then for her blackness.

Every activity of a female is viewed through the eye of suspicion and scrutinized to a large extent. There is a deep insult to the sentiments of a woman. Females are not supposed to think and act beyond the parameters assigned to them by the conventional patriarchal dogma. But even the bad act of this boy is not taken seriously. Even after insulting her as a nigger the boy is "toe-tapping, wiggling, sniffing and fidgeting" and showing as if nothing has happened (132). Instead of realizing his mistake he has been showing his rigidity and perhaps the male ego that he has inherent with his birth.

Liz after sometime, "steps over to him in a businesslike fashion, takes his hand, and pulls him up" and requests him to go to his room and she says "and we'll talk about it later" (133). This quote shows that the mother, a female figure is compelled to manage the anger of her son, though, she knows, it is Tommy's mistake to break the dolls owned by Annabel.

Social surroundings shape the mind and behavior of the people. Most of the members of the society are overwhelmed by the old convictions and stereotypical notions. Male members in the society easily suspect women but they never accept any types of suspicions upon their activities by females. Some thing happens in the novel. Ill-treatment of Tommy to Annabel being gender conscious even at the age of seven is intolerable. But neither the father nor the boy himself is quite upset because of the activity done by Tommy.

It is reasonable to believe that men's domination of discourses has trapped women inside a male 'truth'. Power has made the male members blind and crazy. Bob

Miller, who has gone to the school, while talking with the class teacher of his son, seems to defend his own son. He argues, "Miss Bussman, I can say with certainty that Tommy has never heard that word at home. In fact, he says he heard some of the teachers using that word early in the school year" (136). Despite the fact that Bob has understood the reality, he tries to hide the mistake his son has committed.

Miller becomes angry with the response made by Miss Bussman when she says "That's absurd, Mr. Miller" (136). In response he seems to be impatient. He reacts:

The visceral knowledge that Tommy's teacher is predisposed against him, for whatever reason, makes me a little breathless. I say, heavily, "well, thank you for talking to me. You shouldn't have any more trouble with him, and I'll arrange things with the Harris's about the dolls. (136)

This excerpt also shows that Bob Miller is still expressing his male ego in front of the class-teacher of his son. Bussman has done nothing wrong but has been trying to suggest him to control his son. But Miller exposes his desperate anger with the innocent woman.

How male underestimate women can be known from the reaction of Bob Miller in a scene when he visits to Dr. Harris. He evaluates Harris as a woman " who is dressed in peacock-blue sweat-clothes. She is not pretty, but her face has a pleasant, knowing look. Her hair is pulled back, giving her head a sculptured quality" (138). Bob evaluates the appearance of Harris and concludes her of not being pretty. It signifies Bob's way of judging female character.

Male's perception of women as submissive creature can be noticed from the letter sent by Lydia Harris to Mr. and Mrs. Miller. The letter reads:

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Miller,

Annabel is very pleased with the dolls. Thank you for taking such good care for her. Incidents such as this can easily become disasters. It was your prompt and responsible reaction that prevented that in this case. I am new in Moreton, but I hope you will consider me a friend.

Yours truly, Lydia Harris. (141)

Harris shows her satisfaction with the dolls she acquires as the compensation of Tommy's ill-treatment towards Annabel. On the last day of November, next incident of domination is seen in the school premise of Tommy and Annabel. Tommy "took the scissors out of the teacher's desk during recess" and cut Annabel's coat (153). As evidence Dr. Harris, the mother of Annabel comes to the home of Miller with the cut coat in her hand. There were other children who were the eye-witness of his performance of macho posturing. At the time of cutting "some other children were watching him. He asked them to watch him" (154). Tommy's pre-planned cut-coat scenario simply reflects his male guided ego despite his age of seven.

While talking Miller is trying to cover the disaster caused by Tommy but Harris's limitation of tolerance has crossed the boundary, however with sad smile she reacts patiently and says, "It was a pretty coat, too. I love that color" (155). Lydia tolerates every misbehaviors done upon them. She simply shows her distaste saying it was liked by her.

Bob is proud of being a male. He says:

There is plenty of time for me to contemplate how fatherhood has made an actor of me, and a good one. As with any role, it has given me new feelings to feel as well as to express, and when I am preparing for one of fatherhood's dramatic moments, as I am now, I always have a sliding

sensation. (158) Bob seems happy with what he has. So, he shows his pride on the preparation of his fatherhood dramatic moments.

When Tommy comes back home, a conversation takes place between Bob and his son Tommy about the incident to confirm about the incident:

"Son did you know whose coat you were cutting?"

"Yes, Daddy."

....

"Did you ask other kids to watch you, or did they just watch you?"

"I asked a couple."

....

"Don't you like Annabel?"

"She's okay."

"Then why hurt her this way? Does she provoke you?"

"What?"

"Does she say mean things to you or about you?"

"I don't know." (159-60)

This conversation exhibits the ego-guided mentality of Tommy. The prejudiced perspective towards female has been inherent in his mind from the time of his birth. So, he frankly talks with his father about his intolerable misdeed upon Annabel.

Even the attitude of Bob Miller towards Annabel is not satisfactory. In an incident Annabel cuts her tongue with her teeth. Hearing this event of her, nobody expresses the word of sympathy to her. Instead of it Miller's reaction is "I'm glad she's not our kid" (189). This line exhibits that all male figures are always in opposition to the female world.

Male's perspective towards female is always biased. They always consider themselves as superior, active one and godlike but the woman always opposite to them; they are passive, malleable, inferior etc. Once Tommy makes a remark, "she follows, self-contained but docile", referring to the incident of Annabel's following to him (113). This statement proves that when a girl or woman doesn't react against the social dictations, she is labeled as 'docile'.

The novel reaches its climax when Tommy lights the house of Dr. Harris. One day Tommy goes to Harris' house and "looked things over pretty carefully, including the satellite dish; Annabel's playhouse, the sleds and cross-country skis leaning against the back porch, the open garage" (212). He tried the door knobs, but the doors were closed. He went back to the garage a second time, and that's when he found the kerosene Harris kept for heating the upstairs on especially cold days. He used the kerosene to light Lydia's house as Tommy's reaction against Lydia and Annabel.

Later, Tom took the kerosene out to the satellite dish and began to pour it at the base of the stand. He also found safety matches in the garage which Harris used for lighting the workshop heater. As a whole, he lit the house of Harris thinking them as female whose supportive male were not in their family.

The driver, who was along Laurel Creek Road, smells the smell of burning from his ventilation system. He checks his engines but finds no problem at all. Immediately, he "looks in the rearview mirror" and sees "black smoke pouring upward from Lydia Harris's house" (213). In the mirror "Flames can be seen, shooting from the roof. A little boy is standing at the edge of the yard, just where the creek flows under the road, his hands in his pockets" (213). Very easily Tommy shows his anger against Harris family. Even he does not hesitate to change Harris' house in a heap of ash.

The above references clarify that Lydia Harris, an African professor new to the university, and her daughter, Annie, arrive on the scene does the story intensify to its climax. The agent of destruction in this case is seven-years-old Tommy, who gets progresses from exhibiting racist behaviors toward Annie at school to cutting her coat to ribbons to setting Lydia and Annie's house on fire in a fit of envy and his concept of begin a male, the superior over the other and inferior women. Tommy's arson being in effect is a physical image, a dramatic actualization of the narrator's hidden corruption.

Tormented by jealousy, particularly of a new satellite dish, he sets the house on fire and it burns to the ground. Here, it becomes apparent that in choosing Bob Miller as the point -of -view character, the author has taken a major risk.

Millar dislikes his wife's' praying and churchgoing "never failing to undermine her", until finally one Sunday, for the first time in more than a year, she stays home (210). A quarrel issues, and finally, as her reason for giving up something that was clearly of great importance to her. She says that "there wasn't room in my life for two of you" pressed. She goes on to clarify, "you and God" (207). To express her dissatisfaction she labels Bob and God in equal position and both of them have no room in her life.

Liz, who has been entrapped and modeled by Bob, now doesn't like to be limited within the periphery created by him when there was a kind of 'aimlessness' in the activities of Bob; Liz challenges him as a strong woman who also has to enjoy the right of liberty and independence.

Along with the challenges of Liz, Bob also realizes his false assurances of self-sufficiency. He understands the cause of his wife's dissatisfaction that is the lack of even necessary elements of a happy family life of then time. Bob remembers:

But it seems to me that what they want of me is to make another whole thing, the way I made a whole of my family, my farm, my time, a bubble, a work of art, a whole expression of my whole self . . . let Liz's grief for the farm lie next to her blossoming in town; let my urge to govern and supply every element. (217)

In beginning Bob was self-satisfied with whatever he had. His family raises or makes everything they eat and use. What they can't make themselves, they gain through barter. But he seems not conscious of modern equipments which they scarce and due to which his wife also expresses her dissatisfaction towards his false assurance that he has created in that island. Bob's utopia of self-sufficiency fails to be proved and his unacknowledged desire of being the master also doesn't find its logical end.

As the story begins, everything seems to be sufficient. Miller family eat the product from the gardens which "Lie around the house in a giant horseshoe, five ranges, forty-five separate beds of plant; meat from the livestock they raise; trout from the pond; wild food from the woods and fields. Bob built the house and its furnishing; every tool came to him as "a gift, an inheritance, or a castoff" (112). To the interviewer he shows his building" that was built from the chest of a black walnut, Liz and I chopped down ourselves" (116). He and his wife have made twelve quilts in sixteen years. This kind of happiness has stored by Bob with his success and has done his level best to convince to his wife to be happy with the success they have.

But Liz can't remain within the periphery created by him. One day she challenging her husband leaves the home and lives in a town by making friends.

Much would have been distorted, much remained shadowy. Here, Liz Miller is clearly a strong, intelligent, passionate woman, but because the narrator's view of her is so limited and possessive, only we know a very little part of her inner life. This is a

serious loss. If she is given an opportunity to speak, moreover, she would surely provide crucial insight into the psychology of her husband. Despite some constraints, she opposes the patriarchy and challenges the macho characters to be free from the claustrophobia of male-ruled society. She wants to make her own identity and intends to enjoy the independence and rights they/female can use as equal as their male-counterparts.

3.2 Images in *Good Will*

Understanding the meaning of some key images is vital to the full appreciation of the story. Within each narrative segment there is often a central and powerful symbol that serves to add meaning to the text and to underline some subtle points Smiley is making. Images are the implicit expressions of ideas and they carry more intense and more artistic perception of the issue. *Good Will* is replete with images all adding up to the central theme of performing male gender and female's struggle to come out from this trap.

The images used in the novel also suggest the scene of restriction and confinement. The most frequently recurrent spatial images are the house with "self-sufficiency" in Bob's term and explicitly bounded setting which symbolizes limitations that society can impose upon the life of an individual. Critic Stephen J. Burn has also viewed images like 'room' 'house' as the symbol of restriction. Imprisonment is a threat to personal identity: and this is what exactly happens in Liz's life in the novel. More than this, Dr. Harris's house has been put on fire and her daughters' dolls have been destroyed and coat has been cut. The imaginary island itself is a strong symbol of limitation and restriction, which blocks women's struggle for independence.

The vast difference between the island created by Bob and the outer world of freedom is vividly imaged in the novel. Contrary to the assurance of Bob they lack

many things in their house. "Annabel Harris got a satellite dish. They got a hundred and thirty-seven channels" (206). This reference is the outcome of the dissatisfaction against Bob's concept of self-sufficiency. Moreover, looking at the free and easy going life of outer world, the sense of dissatisfaction arises in the mind of Liz. But her challenge is also not so forceful because the long-rooted patriarchy can't be destroyed with the individual attack of Liz.

Religion has been used as a powerful tool of the suppression of women in the society. All the religious doctrines, norms and values are the products of male-centric ideology, which restrict women from realizing their creative possibilities in different spheres of life. Religion for Miranda is "all the meanness and the selfishness and the lies" (186). Religion adds more suffering and pain to the wound of woman.

Thus, the exhibition of male's gender superiority being based on the long-rooted patriarchy obstructs the female race to enjoy the freedom and independence. Bob's creation of imaginary heaven in an island is his intention to trap the women within that periphery. Tommy, though small in age, doesn't hesitate to affect Annabel and Lydia sometimes by breaking the dolls, sometimes cutting the coat and even up to the scene of arson in their house. These all are the products of males' egocentric attitude in the name of so-called superiority.

IV. Conclusion

The novel *Good Will* presents some macho characters guided by their male ego with the intense desire to dominate the female. In the beginning, all the female characters are seen subservient and docile but when the process of suppression crossed its limit, they challenge the deep-rooted patriarchal system. The novel exhibits the age-long male domination which acts as a hindrance in the path of female's freedom and independence along with the subsequent effect of domination on female race.

The detailed description of the beauty of life close to nature and the patterns of life for a family subsists on their own efforts. All of these incidents, however, are explained and effectively suppressed by Bob's force of character and his belief in the goodness of the world that he has created and of the members of his family.

Only when Lydia Harris, an African-American professor new to the university, and her daughter, Annie, arrive on the scene does the story intensify to its climax. The agent in this case is seven-year-old Tommy, who progresses from exhibiting racist behavior towards Annie at school to cutting her coat to ribbons and set Lydia and Annie's house on fire in a fit of envy only because they are women. This final act results in the family coming under control of the social welfare system and being forced to give up their non-conformist lifestyle. At the end, Liz seems to be adjusted well in her new surroundings in town and is functioning well but Bob is undergoing intensive therapy for depression and an inability to adapt, his pride and confidence crushed by the realization that he had ignored the needs of those he professed to love most.

Since the human civilization that dawned and flourished in different parts of the world, human beings have been persistently endeavoring to explore new thing

regarding independence. Everyone in one way or the other strives for freedom though the causes and the consequences of it remain unknown. In the same way, females like Liz and Lydia have been constantly revolving for independence against patriarchal domination imposed by males like Bob and Tommy. The process of providing assurance of self-sufficiency to his wife, creation of an utopian island in Bob's term, are the outcomes of the sense of so-called male superiority, but in real sense, they are severe attack upon women's rights for freedom. Tommy's activities of destroying Annabel's property and lighting the house in blaze even at the age of seven shows that he has inherent the ego of being a male in his mentality. That's why, he reveals his maleness in doing these activities. Every physical facility that Bob provides to Liz is trivial in comparison to the dream of independence of entire female race. To ignore all the physical luxury assured by Bob proves Liz's well-built advocacy for women's independence. Patriarchy subordinates the female to the male or treats the female as an inferior male. Power is exerted directly or indirectly in civil and domestic life to constrain women from realizing their creativity. Patriarchal ideology produces stereotypes of strong men and feeble women. Social values and conventions have been shaped by men to suit their own purpose and women have been struggling to express their concerns in male-made society. Religions and myths are heavily biased as both are the product of patriarchal mindset. Characters like Bob and Tommy exhibit their male ego throughout the novel. So, physical insufficiency is not the cause of Liz's challenge to her husband rather it is due to unwarranted suppression imposed upon her by male chauvinistic society. Ultimately, she leaves the home and frees from her male-counterpart but whether she obtains that intended freedom in the same society or not, is still uncertain because patriarchy is still prevalent in the society and male ethos and values are still dominant throughout.

Thus, the achievement of freedom, for Liz, is incomparable to anything else. Despite her challenge to the society it is obvious that the real freedom for female is unimaginable until and unless patriarchy comes to an end. Patriarchal values play as obstructive elements in the path of female freedom because these values are functioning from age-long above to the present though many declarations have been made with the slogan of equality between male and female.

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