

I. Barbara Taylor Bradford and Her Novel, *A Woman of Substance*

In this novel a woman of substance, there is focus on the self contradiction of the author. Despite beginning with the strong radical feminist approach, the writer has not been able to sustain her motive. Instead of popularizing the feminist ideologies Bradford has identified her protagonist with the privilege of the male world. It focuses on the ironical condition of the women who are still subject to patriarchy thus the author has betrayed herself.

Some critics find Bradford a hardcore romanticist whose novels are based on different locales with diverse settings. Supporting them Piers Dudgeon says:

Certainly wherever the settings of Barbara's novels take us, her values are Yorkshire based, but hers is a moral focus on the history of the place and the spirit of Yorkshire speaks to her through its history as much as through nature's demeanor. There are many allusions to Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* in her novels. (17)

Even though the locales can inspire her, she usually begins with strong characters and builds her plot from there.

She has written in the various novels where we find the basic theme of the strong iron-willed demeanor that lies below the fragile nature of women. The woman can conquer the world whatever their class or background may be and despite the fact that they are operating in a man's domain. Her fictional heroines draw on their creator's character and chart the emotional contours of her own experiences, and whose own history so often emerges from the shadow between fact and fiction. Her technique of writing is simple with occasional use of Yorkshire accent. The social backgrounds of the Victorian and Edwardian periods including the aristocracy and nobility, the upper

middle classes, the middle classes and the working classes were of particular interest to Bradford.

Piers Dudgeon, in *The Woman of Substance: The Secret Life That Inspired the Renowned Storyteller Barbara Taylor Bradford*, salutes Bradford's intrigue-laden books gave rise to her 20 bestsellers. He cites passages from her novel to prove his hypothesis that "her stories germinate from her subconscious process" (46).

In the process of writing fiction, ideas arise which own not to the culture of an era but to the author's experience. The novel belongs something of which the creator as not the master is the subconscious process, signifying its power over the author. Bradford is seen to be very much influenced by her personal life that we see in her novels. For instance, Emma's father, Jack Harte, is based on her own father's sturdy personality. Similarly, her father, Winston Taylor Bradford, was amputated and so is Emma's brother, Winston in the novel. The character, Laura, resembles Bradford's real life aunt Laura Spencer. They are all one seed in the garden of her fiction. None of them is strictly one character, although Barbara regards her mother Freda as most closely to Audra Kenton in *Act of Will*.

These authors' novels are the novels principally of character. The dominant traits are the emotional light and shade of the landscapes of her birth place. Her personal life is clearly characterized in her novels. *A Woman of Substance* launches the whole theme of identity and loss that mirrors a universal sense of loss and alienation as modernity endangers in those who cut themselves off their roots, the value of home. There is the desire in almost all her characters to find out or remind themselves where they are coming from, who and what they are. Bradford's other popular novels are *Act of Will* (1986), *A Secret Affair* (1996), *Emma's Secret* (2004), *Just Rewards* (2005) and *The Ravenscar Dynasty* (2006) to name a few.

According to the *Publisher's Weekly*, *A Woman of Substance*, Bradford's first novel, is the eighth biggest selling novel ever published. Based on the theme of family saga, the novel has the theme of a young servant girl who later develops herself as a woman and a mother. She achieves much more than by an ordinary person and loses also at the same rate. Her main aim is to become 'a woman of substance'.

The plot has been divided into six sections among them the mid four sections are in the flashback. The first part begins with Emma, an octogenarian, a wealthy person who is enjoying the empire that has been established by her own mind. She is training Paula McGill, her favourite granddaughter, to be her successor as the head of Harty Enterprises. Again, on the other hand, she comes to know the conspiracy of her children who are trying to oust her from the business. Hence, she, as the brilliant matriarch, has targeted to outwit her enemy which had begun with the betrayal of love.

In the second part, the protagonist, Emma Harte, has been portrayed from her childhood. She was born in April 30, 1889 in the Yorkshire moors. Now she is 14 and is working at the manor house of Fairley Halls. She is betrayed by Edwin Fairley after he impregnated her. Determined to rise above, she leaves that place and proceeds to meet Blackie O'Neill who once had opened her eyes that she can make a fortune in Leeds. Blackie's distinctive character, "gaity", unquenchable spirit without virulent hate transforms her. He calls her "mavourneen", from the beginning and clarifying her that it is the equivalent of 'luv' in Yorkshire, that turns up in the novel time and again. She represents a new false identity of being the 'wife' of a Royal Navy Officer. She proves herself as a good person to the Kallinski family too. Thus, she befriends with Blackie and David Kallinski who become the pillar of strength and support in her life.

After quenching her thirst of being one of the richest ladies in the world, Emma runs to the dreams of 'love'. However, her success in business does not have match in

her realm of love. Unhappily married twice, loving only the person she can never marry and personal happiness seem to baffle her. In spite of loving David Kallinski, she marries Joe Lowther to expedite her business. Similarly, despite loving Paul McGill, she marries Arthur Ainsley after Paul's long absence. Emma's each marriage is simply a part of her wide business strategy although she tells herself that she needs a suitable man to protect her and Edwina, her illegitimate child. Later, she wants a father of her children and a suitable male head for the household.

Two devastating world wars also occur during Emma's life period and her calculative, shrewd and transmitted plans according to the change of time flow with them. In spite of being successful in outwitting her enemies, she is regretted in the family feud. She wants her favorite granddaughter Paula, to marry Jim Fairley who is from that family in which she spends her life in rivalry. Broadly, she wants to finish the family vendetta of three generations: Squire Adam Fairley and her mother Elizabeth; Edwin and herself and Paula and Jim Fairley.

Barbara Taylor Bradford has received wide range of critical acclaims. She and her novels have been criticized from the different perspectives. Piers Dudgeon in *The Woman of Substance: The Secret Life that Inspired the Renowned Storyteller Barbara Taylor Bradford* writes:

Barbara's childhood was constructed on secrets layered one on top of the other. These secrets provided Barbara with many of the narrative possibilities of her best novels, and one reason why they have been successful is that Barbara is not simply writing good ideas, but ideas that are her inheritance. The novels are the means by which she shares in the experience of her past, her mother Freda's past and that of her grandmother. More strangely still, she does so without knowing

anything about Freda's history or that of her maternal grandmother, the extra-ordinary and beguiling Edith Walker (66).

Therefore, according to Dudgeon, *A Woman of Substance* is autobiographical. Freda had told Bradford a lot about her background and also the fact that Edith was not married when Freda was born. Barbara finds herself inserting this biographical novel, this true-to-life theme, which had been withheld from her and which she did not know to be true but somehow came across in her writing through her subconscious.

Emma Harte, the protagonist in *A Woman of Substance*, is larger than life character whose need for vendetta of six decades, her total concentration with money and its inherent possessions and her incredible success is far sketched. This makes the novel really fantasized and far away from reality.

Thirty years ago, Bradford first published *A Woman of Substance* that depicts Emma Harte's life story. At that time, this character was strong and independent for the control of some of the largest corporations in the world. Her single minded pursuit of power and money led her to make some poor decisions. The author has done an excellent job of characterizing a young peasant girl. It's a terrific book which will make any woman appreciate the opportunities we now have. Besides the themes of power and revenge, the writer also recollects the period of war when the time was grim and distraught and the women had to bear abundance heartbreak and carry the huge family burden under a lot of pressure.

New York Times editorial review describes the novel as "an extravagant, absorbing novel of love, courage, passion, ambition, war and death" (17). In the same vein, *Los Angeles Times* editorial says that it is "a long, satisfying novel of money, passion, power and revenge set against the sweep of twentieth century history" (12).

Although there have been many reviews on the novel, my study throws light on the overlooked part: the ambivalence of female identity in the characterization of Harte and focus on the fact that not only the women in general but also the so-called feminists are still subject to patriarchy. As the entrepreneur, Emma has proved her worth but having lost much as stated, “her famous smile was intact but her heart was covered with a layer of frost” (473).

Even though the author Barbara Taylor Bradford has been successful to create a landmark for her protagonist, she has deified her keeping up with the male ideologies. In it, she has herself been subject to patriarchy as she has not been able to escape the stereotypical domain of the patriarchal gaze towards women. To portray Emma Harte, the author has only focused on her professional efficiency. In doing so, she has mentioned the fact that Emma is not happy and satisfied with her personal life as she has to bear pain and sufferings.

Elaine Showalter, in her book, *The New Feminist Criticism* says:

During the feminine phase, dating from about 1840 to 1880, women wrote in an effort to equal the intellectual achievements in the male culture, and internalized its assumptions about female nature. The distinguishing sign of this period is the male pseudonym, introduced in England in the 1840's, and a national characteristic of English women writers. In addition to the famous names we all know, George Elliot, Cureer, Ellis, and Acton Bell, dozen of other women chose male pseudonym as a way of coping with the double literary standard (137-138).

In doing so, the feminist content is lost as the illusion of male authorship is seen prevalent. This makes the feminine position displaced, subversive and ambivalent. Feminism rejects all hierarchical positions primarily because they subordinate women.

Women's writing is considered to be engaged with domesticity, marriage and family since the eighteenth century. But the positions have shifted from time to time and culture. Bounded within this social culture women have reached out to define the "self" anew to free themselves from the male perspective. Although they have tried to recover the feminine principle, feminism is seen as a limiting concept. It confines women to a certain position and Bradford has been subjected to the same.

This thesis focuses on the ambivalent condition of women who are subject to patriarchy even now, when the feminist movement has helped them to raise consciousness. Male has been identified as power, authority, dominating and centre whereas passivity, compromise sacrifice and margin are considered to female. Following patriarchal ideology consciously or unconsciously is presupposition of male superiority and female subordination. Patriarchy has subjected the female above and below. Similarly, in one hand, it deifies women with divinity like pure, innocent, virgin etc. and on the other hand, it demonifies them as whore, witch, evil, etc.

This research mainly follows the methodology of textual analysis within the boundary of femininity. Feminism is one of the most important social, economic and aesthetic revolutions of modern times. It is concerned with the social, political and economic equality of sexes. It is based upon the assumption that biological sex should not be the determining factor shaping a person's social identity, socio-political or economic rights. It has become more far-ranging and crafty in its attacks on male-dominated society. However, it does not advocate hating men but rather implies the need for women.

In the first chapter, there is a glance at the ambivalence of female identity. With some of the major works of the author, Barbara Taylor Bradford, and her writing trends of novel writing is there. A critical summary of this text, *A Woman of Substance*, and the views of some critics in it is found there. In the second chapter, the researcher has brought some feminists' ideas. They will help to understand history and concepts about feminism. Likewise, in the third chapter, there is an analysis of the present text, *A Woman of Substance*, with some of the major citations. It helps to know how the ambivalence of female identity lies in the text. In the last chapter, there is the conclusion of this dissertation. Its proof is apparently seen.

II. A Woman of Substance and Feminism

The feminist perspective has its roots up to more than past two centuries. It has surpassed from imitation through protest to self-determination. It carries forth the recurring images, themes and plot that emerge from women's psychological and aesthetic experiences in the male dominated society. So, feminism indicates the attempt against the male order of patriarchy. On the other hand, all the spaces are affected by patriarchy. Feminist ideas are also contaminated by patriarchal concept. In this way, all the women writers including the so-called feminists are inspired by the male ideology, which is the ambivalence of female identity itself.

Although feminist theory is complex being attached with Psychoanalysis, Marxism, Cultural Materialism, Anthropology, and Structuralism, it is simply described as the gender issue. Even though feminist literary theory is often described simply as the use of feminist principles and techniques to analyze the textual constructions of gendered meaning, it primarily deals with the hierarchical relation between the males and females – the politics of gender.

Feminism is a politics: recognition of the historical and cultural subordination of the women, who are the world-wide majority to be treated as a minority, and a resolve to do something about it. The view had been developed since the Suffrage Era, when those who believed in fighting for women's rights rallied around the central cause, women's right to vote. It has always incorporated concern for 'conscious raising' in the public sphere to improve the situation of women's lives. In the field of literature, feminist thought has been very influential: it has pointed out the historical 'silences' of women authors, not included in the 'canon'; it has 'fired the canon' in order to shake up static views about women's literature to be published, read and assessed by all.

Feminists generally believe that the relationship between man and woman is political. The males are supposed to be independent, self reliant, educated and having the knowledge of good and evil, whereas the females are supposed to be dependent, weak, emotional and irrational. This feminism seeks the ways of releasing women from these exploitative mechanism and ideology of the patriarchal institutions of a society.

It is very difficult to define feminism in particular because of its diverse modes and methodologies speaking as to express the subtle link between the male ideology and its representation of women in different spheres of life through both explicit and implicit means. Even Feminist Literary Criticism is an academic approach to the study of the literature which applies feminist thought to the analysis of literary texts and the contexts of their production and reception. As a distinctive and concerted approach to literature, feminist criticism was not inaugurated until late in the 1960s. Behind it, two centuries of struggle exist for the recognition of women's political, social, and cultural roles from the books such as Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) and so on.

Many sub-divisions of feminist ideology have developed over the years. The first wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activity during the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the United Kingdom and the United States. It primarily focused on gaining the right of women's 'Suffrage'. Feminists in these countries struggled for equal pay, equal access to education and equal job opportunities: they fought for free contraception and the right to abortion; they campaigned about unpaid domestic labour, the need for free childcare provision and for both economic and legal independence; they claimed women's right to define their own sexuality; and they protested against domestic and sexual violence against women.

Mary Wollstonecraft is acknowledged as the precursor of the first wave feminist writers. In her *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, she theorizes that women should be provided equal opportunity for education like males. Men and women are inherently not superior and inferior but because gives different nature of education to them. According to her, not only men but also women have ‘the gifts of reason’. She claims that the Enlightenment principals of reason, duty, freedom and self-determination extend to women too. They should be educated rationally. She states that women are silly and superficial by referring to them as “spaniels” and “toys”.

The feminine weakness of the character is often produced by a confined education and the romantic twist of the mind. She says:

Women subjected by ignorance to their sensations, and only taught to look for happiness in love, refine on sensual feelings and adopt metaphysical notions respecting that passion, which lead them shamefully to neglect the duties of life, and frequently in the midst of those sublime refinements they plump into actual vice. These are the women who are assumed by the reveries of the stupid novelists, who, knowing little of human nature, workup stele tales, and describe meretricious scenes, all retailed in sentimental jargon, which equally tend to corrupt the taste, and draw the heart aside from its daily duties (398).

Here, Wollstonecraft probably means the reading of romantic fictions, which is the genre that tends to be most commonly associated with women, to be dangerous.

Romantic fiction has been seen by its critics as a ghetto which imprisons women. This kind of fiction is politically dangerous, a mechanism through which patriarchal culture was reproduced and women have been fed fantasies through them.

Even though Mary Wollstonecraft was the first feminist theorist, Virginia Woolf's role in the modern context of feminism is significant. In her *A Room of One's Own*, she discusses the social, economic and the political condition of the women writers. The 'Room' is not merely means as a separate place in the house but metaphorically a 'space' of the female selfhood in the male-dominated society. Woolf says, "Lock up your libraries if you like: but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind" (82). She ponders the significant question of whether or not a woman could produce art of the higher quality of Shakespeare's sister, Judith to illustrate that a woman with Shakespeare's gifts would have been denied the same opportunities to develop them because the doors were closed to women. This fictional character Judith stands as a representative of all the unrecognized and under-developed female genius of the past.

The second wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activity beginning in the late 1960s and 1970s. It is concerned with the independence and greater political action to improve women's rights. It was the discovery that women writers had a literature of their own, whose historical thematic coherence as well as artistic importance had been obscured by the patriarchal values that dominate our culture.

The books that first began to define women's writing in feminist terms were Patricia Mayer Spacks the *Female Imagination* (1975), Elaine Showalter's *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) and so on. Elaine mentions that there are three phases for approaching the female literacy. She calls these phases the Feminine, Feminist and Female phases. The period divisions of these phases as follow: Feminine from 1840 to 1880, Feminist from 1880 to 1920, and Female 1920 onwards to the present.

In the Feminine phase, the women writers imitated and internalized the prominent male aesthetic standards. Showalter ranks Feminist phase as protest phase, in

which they rebelled against the prevalent patriarchal norms and values. Similarly the Female phase is indicated for own voice and identity of the women.

In her epochal book, *The Literature of Their Own*, Showalter says:

As novelists, women have always been self-conscious, but only rarely self-defining. While they have been deeply and perennially aware of their individual identities and experiences, women writers have very infrequently considered whether these experiences might transcend the personal and local, assume a collective form in art, and reveal a history. During the intensely Feminist phase from 1880-1910, both British and American writers explored the theme on an Amazon Utopia, a country entirely populated by women and completely isolated from the male world. Yet even in these fantasies of autonomous female communities, there is no theory of female art. Feminist utopias were not visions of primary womanhood, free to define its own nature and culture in opposition to the male tradition. (4-5)

In the aforementioned lines, she has argued for a specifically female framework for the analysis of women's literature and to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adopt male models and theories. Showalter has studied British women novelists since Brontes to establish a distinct female tradition. She suggests that throughout the nineteenth century early women writers wrote about the feminine texts that dealt with the sub-ordination of female showing them to be weak, subordinate, soft and emotional.

Some of the important names whose theories will be helpful to analyze the proposed text are that of Simone De Beauvoir, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Kate Millet. Hence, it is worthwhile to discuss their approaches.

The French feminist Simone De Beauvoir's book entitled *The Second Sex* (1949) launches a fundamental critical mode in the feminist world. It is a thorough analysis of women's suppression and a foundational tract of contemporary feminism. Even though her predecessors have indicated the issue of subordination and the domination of the males, Beauvoir stands above them. Beauvoir claims, "One is not born, rather becomes, a woman" (47) intensifies the patriarchal hegemony. It led a full-fledged feminist movement during the 1960s and 1970s. Her analysis focuses on the concept of 'Other' that Beauvoir identifies as radical to women's oppression. In the essay, "Woman: Myth and Reality" she argues that men have women the "Other" with a false aura of 'mystery'. The mystification is the tool as an excuse not to understand women or their problems, not to help and subjugate them. She says:

The feminine mystery as recognized in mythical thought is a more profound matter. In fact, it is immediately implied in the mythology of the absolute Other. If it be admitted that the inessential conscious being, too, is a clear subjectivity, capable of performing the cogito, then it is also admitted that this being is in truth sovereign and returns to being essential in order that all reciprocally may appear quite impossible, it is necessary for the Other to be for itself and other for its subjectivity to be affected by its otherness; this consciousness, in its pure immanent presence, would evidently by mystery (288-289).

She says that men use this mystification as an excuse not to understand women, not to help them and to subjugate them. She again states that this stereotyping was done by the group higher in the hierarchy to the group lower so that the later became the "Other".

Beauvoir further argues that this hierarchal division between men and women is not natural but artificial. The terms 'man' and 'woman' are not neutral. Hence, the man is always considered as positive and standard whereas the woman as negative and the 'other'. The woman has no independent value or identity as "what man is not". Man is always the subject, the 'I', while the woman is the object, the 'other'. This kind of her existential feminism has left the influence in *A Woman of Substance*.

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's combined theoretical works reflect the second wave of feminism. It is either by rejecting entirely the given suppressive, patriarchal, male-dominated order of society, or by questing to reform merely that order. They have analyzed the nineteenth century women writers and their historical contexts. They studied the readings of the authors closely like Jane Austen, Brontes, Mary Shelley, George Eliot, Emily Dickinson, etc. in '*The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*'. According to them, the nineteenth century women writers chose to express their own female anger where the angel and the monster, the sweet heroine and the raging madwoman portrayed their self image as well as the elements of their anti-patriarchal strategy. In *The Feminist Criticism*, Elaine Showalter says:

In 1979, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's monumental study, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, offered a full theoretical account of the situation of the nineteenth century woman writer, her anxieties about authorship as a monstrous and unwomanly activity that transgressed cultural boundaries, and her rewriting of male mythologies in her own texts (6).

The anxiety of authorship/fathership is their basic term. Sigmund Freud's notion of the 'Oedipul Complex' and Harold Bloom's 'anxiety of influence' are mentioned here.

With the view of the Oedipul Complex, there is a fight between the former and the later

author. In the anxiety of influence, a young poet suffers from the anxiety that he will not be successful enough to overcome his literary father – the psychology of belatedness. Here, instead of being frightened by the influence of maternal precursors, the women authors were discouraged by the virtual absence of them because they viewed writing as a male activity – the pen as “metaphorical penis”.

The female artist’s combat is not against the male precursor’s reading of the world but against his reading of her. In the social construction, the prevailing idea is that a female author can not write because she is a woman. Borrowing Freud, Bloom argues that the later author is full off the Oedipal revolutionary idea of the former. Gilbert and Gubar operate this trend in the feminist criticism. There is the battle between these two as male tradition of literature is compared to the earlier author and female writing to the later author. A sort of mental storm arises against man’s writing when the female author starts to write a text. Thus, a figure of ‘emotional madwoman’ appears. Gilbert and Gubar refer this as the keepsake in women’s writing particularly in the nineteenth century. The women’s writing has tormented relationship to female identity as the woman writer experiences her own gender as a painful obstacle. So, the nineteenth century women writers inscribed their own sickness, madness, anorexia and agoraphobia in the text.

Similarly, another notable critic, Kate Millet is successful to observe sociological, biological, and ideological context of the society. In her *Sexual Politics*, she talks of the cunning politics of men. She uses the term “politics” not for merely the meetings, chairmen and parties of the outer world but also to the power structured relationships between two inner groups of people. The term, ‘politics’ is linked with ‘sexual’: that the world of men dominates over the world of women. The world dominated by men is the world of power which forms the core of religion, culture,

family and intellectual life and all and all. With Kate Millet's reference of the crafty politics of men, Bhaskar Shukla in her *Women on Women* (2006), says:

Sexual Politics obtains consent through the "socialization" of both sexes to basic patriarchal politics with regard to temperament, role, and status. As to status, a pervasive assent to the prejudice of male superiority guarantees superior status in the male, inferior in the female. The stereotyped words of sex category 'masculine' and 'feminine' based on the needs and values of the dominant group dictated by what its members cherish in themselves and find convenient in sub-ordinates: aggression, intelligence, force, and efficacy in the male: passivity, ignorance, docility, "virtue" and ineffectuality in the female. (41)

The stage of 'politics' occurs naturally when one group rules over another. If such an arrangement is practiced for a long period, it develops an ideology (racism, feudalism, etc.). Their ideology is "male supremacy" which precedes patriarchy. *Sexual Politics* includes historical and anthropological information, as well as misogynistic aspect of Freudianism. Both primitive and civilized world are male worlds as the evidence prove from anthropology, religious and literary myths, and others. Patriarchy has, thus, already established the male as human that has reigned the female as alien, the 'other'.

Kate Millet says, "Femininity is the room of victim of interior colonization where the women suffer self respect and dignity" (36). The solution for Millet is the abolition of gender altogether: she criticizes both masculinity and femininity and instead advocates androgyny.

III. Ambivalence of Female Identity in *A Woman of Substance*

This novel *A Woman of Substance* belongs to the Edwardian Era but the protagonist is a woman of our times with universal significance. The opportunities which Emma Harte avails are available to many as working class exploitation was eased by socialism. Socialism gave way to meritocracy, with the emphasis on the individual, self-respect, self-belief, autonomy and self-sufficiency. Emma Harte, is in the vanguard of this great change.

The term, ambivalence, is defined as ‘simultaneous existence of two conflicting desires’ in Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (4th Edition). Ambivalence is a literary or rhetorical device, in which one expects two opposite opinions together unknowingly. It is seen by only outside audience, which relies on two distinctive poles of the real and the ideal, and which is variously applied to texts, speech, events and acts. All the different scenes of ambivalence rotate around the perceived notion of an incongruity, or a gap between the expectation, and what actually happens. Ambivalence of situation can be traced in the text, which is a discrepancy between the expected result and the actual result. This type of ambivalence emerges from the events and circumstances of the society.

The author, Barbara Taylor Bradford, despite writing women-centred novel, has not been able to escape the patriarchal notion. Therefore ‘Ambivalence of Female Identity’ can be traced in the text is my principal focus of the research. This kind of self-betraying ambivalence exists where the author forms the false image of the character which the reader fails to accept. In this context, Judith Kegan Gardiner’s comment on a feminist Carolyn Heilbrun’s book *Reinventing Womanhood* is useful for the study. In the essay, “On Female Identity and Writing by Women”, Gardiner says: “Carolyn Heilbrun’s brave book *Reinventing Womanhood*, inadvertently illustrates

some confusion about female identity and literature. For example, she claims that successful women are “male-identified” but that it is a “failure” for a “woman to take her identity from man” (1). Identity has become a central concept for much contemporary cultural and literary criticism. Along with the word “self”, identity is a cliché that is ambiguous. This search of identity in fictional women is far sketched. In this novel too, the author, in making her protagonist successful has made her male-identified.

Feminist critics have approached that women’s writings do differ from men’s because women’s experiences are different from man’s mindset. Feminist psychology posits a female consciousness that is different from the masculine minds. However, it is ambivalent that the feminist writers have still adopted the identity theory as it is constituted by the male paradigm. On the other hand, there is a personal identity crisis for a woman as she achieves her socially accepted roles only through marriage and motherhood, through social and biological events.

The terms such as “male-identified” and “female-identified” occur at this point. Male-identified is a term of abuse applied to women who cast their social, political and intellectual allegiances with men. In radical feminist ideology, the female-identified woman has fought patriarchal cultural conditioning so that she values herself.

A Woman of Substance propels the theme of identity and loss that mirrors a universal sense of loss and alienation that modernity endangers to the persons who cut themselves off their roots, the values of home. One lives in one’s basic character. Adversity can develop one’s character or shatter him/her. So many strong characters grow from adversity. Life is hard, but what is important is how we get over our adversities and so does Emma. She has learnt to fight her adversity and has set out to conquer the world.

As a maid servant in Fairley Hall, Emma is so impressed with her mistress Adele Fairley and wants to become a rich lady. She is impressed with the grandeur of the clothes, jewelries and the manners in which the grand ladies speak. The Fairley Hall profusely enriched with cornices and mouldings, the panels, the gigantic chandeliers of shimmering crystals is what desires to possess. Mistresses often gave their maids cast-offs and so does Emma get. She used to wear fine clothes given to her by Adele and her sister Olivia. She has to mend somehow which fuels her interest in tailoring. Emma discovers from Adele Fairley ‘the smell of expensive perfumes, the touch of good linens and supple silks, and the sparkle of brilliant jewels...’ (129). It has aroused her ambition. She observes Olivia Wainright, Adam Fairley’s sister-in-law closely and tries to imitate her manners which help her later in Leeds that no one notices that she is from the working class.

Emma perhaps would not have been so hard on herself had she not been deceived. Her oppression hits her so hard that she becomes the person who is ruthless with a single minded pursuit. There are some aggressive, feminist traits in Emma Harte, particularly in her treatment of men in her life. Emma has created a room of her own in the patriarchal society. Here, Bradford has tried to make her protagonist imbibe the qualities of a male. Emma Harte is very calculative and makes her move towards success with her brain and never lets her heart rule her. She manipulates: “And then with the calculation and consummate feminine wiles, she had set out to inveigle Joe Lowther into marriage. Already in love with her, overwhelmed by her beauty and impressed with her industriousness and business acumen, Joe had been an easy and willing target” (374).

Pursued by Lowther, Emma agrees to marry him, even though she doesn’t love him, Emma uses this marriage as a part of her wider business strategy. She feels that

she needs him to ‘protect her and Edwina’ from the Fairleys especially Gerald Fairley who had attempted to rape Emma. She is using Lowther and that her action is completely unethical but Emma exercises her extraordinary business skills to turn the Lowther properties into an enterprise.

After Lowther’s death in the First World War, Emma falls in love with Paul McGill, a wealthy and a handsome man, owning a regal lineage. His continuing absence from England devastates her. She wants a father for her children and a suitable male for the household. Thus, she marries Arthur Ainsley for all different reasons despite his fragile figure:

Emma knew Arthur was weak, yet curiously she turned blind eye to faults in his character for several fundamental reasons. Arthur did not threaten her; she recognized he would never interfere in her business or the manner in which she led her life; she instinctively knew that she will always retain the upper hand. Aside this, Emma wanted to obliterate Paul McGill by involving herself in a new relationship (470).

She is ready to compromise, to settle for less out of necessity and in the belief that great love is not always the prerequisite for a happy marriage. Here, she excuses her powerful strategy with ruthless precision.

During the period of writing of the novel, *A Woman of Substance*, Simone De Beauvoir coined the phrase ‘women’s liberation’ in her seminal book *The Second Sex*. Another feminist Betty Friedan, set the feminist light in the *Feminine Mystique*. Seven years later came *The Female Eunuch*, Germaine Greer’s bitter landmark examination of women’s oppression. Although, Bradford does not advocate feminism, we see that she is using feminism as a weapon in defining her protagonist.

Bradford's heroine, Emma Harte holds the qualities of men: she is ambitious, disciplined and self-possessed. She can be merciless for winning and she is not reluctant to use her feminine wiles. She advises her granddaughter Paula to take over her business of the Sitex Oil Corporation using the same means.

Being underestimated by men is the biggest crosses I've had to bear all my life, and it was particularly irritating to me when I was your age. However, it was also an advantage and one I learned to make great use of, I can assure you of that you know, Paula, when men believe they are dealing with a foolish or a stupid woman they lower their guard, become negligent and sometimes downright reckless. Unwittingly they often hand you the advantage on a plate. (18)

Emma seems as a strong feminist who is against the patriarchal dominance. Paula knows that her grandmother's life is full of hardships, yet she preserved that tenacity to manipulate men.

A Woman of Substance inspires the female readers to go out and take opportunities that the feminist revolutionaries had opened up for them. According to Bradford's protagonist women should put themselves in control of their own destinies too. Bradford in an interview with Critic Piers Dudgeon in "The Woman of Substance: The Secret Life that Inspired the Renowned Storyteller Barbara Taylor Bradford", says:

For maidservants the dream was only as far as it went their only realistic hope to find a man from a higher class, a prospect fraught with the risk of exploitation and one that invariably led to complete disaster. Not so for Emma of course, whose exploitation by Edwin Fairley ironically gives her the guts, the fury to claw herself up by her own efforts. (89)

Emma's adversity has been begun along with the exploitation at the Fairley Hall. She has been betrayed by Edwin as her mother was also betrayed by Edwin's father Sir Adam Fairley. Even her hatred towards Edwin becomes even stronger, when she knows that her father Jack Harte had died while saving Edwin's life from the fire at the Fairley Mills. With the conditions of her life, she sets out on a pursuit of money for her money is power. She would use it against the world and especially against the Fairleys. She knows without money one is nothing but a powerless and oppressed victim of the ruling class, a yoked and shackled beast of burden destined to live a life of mindless drudgery.

Gerald Fairley, Edwin's elder brother, comes looking for Emma's illegitimate child in Leeds. As if the betrayal of Edwin alone was not enough, he attempts to rape her. At this, Emma's all hell breaks and she pounces on him like a tiger swearing, "I tell you, I will kill you Gerald Fairley, if you don't move that obscene body out of here at once! I will ruin you! All of you! The Fairleys will rue the day they ever heard the name of Emma Harte. Do you hear me? I will ruin you! I swear I will" (359).

Emma is full of her inner strength. She decides to eradicate the oppression of generations of the upper class. Revenge is the major theme in *A Woman of Substance*. It is not only Edwin but also Adam and Gerald Fairley to whom Emma wants to destroy. In the course of the Fairleys' ruin Emma thrashes Fairley Hall to the ground and roars "Demolish it completely. I do not want one rosebud, one single leaf left growing" (481). Emma orders that it could not haunt later. She has been so hurt that she does not want to smell the sweet perfume of rose which is the symbol of love. She has exercised all the ghosts of her childhood; she is free at last of the Fairleys at last. She has taken away their papers, their mills and finally the manor house Fairley Hall from which her journey of hardship had begun.

One of the big blows Emma faces is the betrayal of her own children. Her sons, Robin and Kit plan for their mother's oust from the business and her daughters, Edwina and Elizabeth become the partners in the treachery. Emma is stunned and every bone in her body feels weighted down by the most dreadful fatigue. Emma has an irresistible desire to laugh out loud, a hollow bitter laugh at the irony of her life.

She contemplated her three daughters and her mouth twisted into a grim smile as she considered Edwina, the eldest, the first born of all her children. She had worked like a drudge, fought like a tigress for Edwina had never truly felt the same way about her, oddly distant as a little girl, remote in her youth, that remoteness had turned into real coldness in the later years. Edwina had allied herself with Robin at the time of takeover bid, backing him to the hilt. Undoubtedly she was now his chief ally in the perfidious scheme. She found it hard to believe that Elizabeth, Robin's twin would go along with them, whereas Kit, her eldest son could always be maneuvered into the nefarious scheme. (32)

It is Edwina because of whom the journey of hardships had begun. Emma struggled hard to protect her from the Fairleys and gives the best yet, it is ironical that Emma's relation with Edwina is ever so strained. Emma has come to believe that blood is never thicker than water as the ties of blood did not assure fidelity or love. Otherwise her children would not have turned out to be the nest of vipers. She is determined to teach a lesson and makes the mind leaving them nothing but one hundred million pounds each which was more than enough for them.

Paul McGill recognizes the woman of substance in Emma – "O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide" (442). She is an indomitable woman. To Blackie's wife, the sweet Laura Spencer, there is something frightening about her, the feeling that she

may turn out to be ruthless and expedient, if that is necessary. And yet, they share several common traits – integrity, courage and compassion. Emma has a contained and regal posture, there is imperiousness about her, but she is also fastidious, honest, and quietly reserved. She believes moderation is highly overrated virtue, particularly when applied to work. To her P.A., Gaye Solane, “Emma is indestructible as the coldest steel, unable to be twisted or broken, yet generous, charitable and compassionate” (27). Gaye knows that she is generous of time and money and understanding of heart.

There were very few who really understood Emma. While Joe Lowther, her first husband, accuses her of having “ice water in her veins” (377), for her grand daughter Paula, she can be austere and somewhat stern of eye. There is Yorkshire wariness about her, when her guard is down it is a vulnerable face, open, fine and full of wisdom.

Bradford’s portrayal of Emma Harte as a feminist is, however, not justified as feminism does not have being an unyielding matriarch, imbibes the male ideologies of the patriarchal hegemony and hence is male-identified. Bradford’s position as a novelist seems to have been overwhelmed by patriarchy. In the novel, Emma, the protagonist, imbibes the qualities of men who have been placing themselves as the centre and the woman as the other.

In her text, Bradford particularly centres on a ‘female hero’, involving her own self-definition and emphatic identification with her character. She exercises control over character, creating her from representations of herself. But, she has shaped her character to be male-identified. This self-contradiction is the ambivalence of female identity. There is a strong sense of ambivalence in the reader. Patriarchy has been so overwhelming to the author, which keeps her position of writing a feminist novel to be ambivalent.

Emma is a warrior woman who goes out to the man's world and conquers it however she needs the support of a man at every instance. It is first Blackie who makes Emma realize that a young girl like her could make the fortune in Leeds. Emma's heart was pounding so hard that she thought her chest would burst and asks, "Can a girl like me make a fortune in Leeds?" When she savours it, Blackie sees in her face "ambition, raw and inexorable" (94). Had it not been for Blackie who installs the seeds of it, Emma would probably have suffered the way her mother Elizabeth suffered by giving birth to her illegitimate baby in the village. When Emma leaves the Fairley Hall swearing not to see Edwin again in her lifetime, she goes looking for Blackie in Leeds. But when she doesn't find Blackie there, she invents a story of being a wife of a Navy Officer Winston Harte who was away in the sea. When asked by Blackie's friend Rosie, the owner of Mucky Duck, who she was, Emma says:

‘It's Emma Harte’, she said, and added to her own amusement, ‘Mrs. Harte’. Rosie's eyes widened. ‘Are you married, then?’ she asked thinking. And where is the husband? But, refrained from prying. Emma nodded, not trusting herself to say anything for the moment. She had surprised herself more than she had surprised Rosie. (264)

Having children out of wedlock was a taboo during 1905, the time when Edwina was born and not accepted to the society then. It was hard for a single mother to survive with her illegitimate child. Although the writer has attributed the qualities of a radical feminist in her protagonist, she has shown the importance of a 'man' behind a woman, focusing the male hegemony. So, patriarchy is overwhelming in *A Woman of Substance*.

The issue of writing a father's name comes on the birth certificate of her illegitimate daughter by Edwin Fairley. For the child's sake, the identity should be

established clandestinely. Emma does not know to deflect her pain when her daughter Edwina asks her who her father is. She gaps at her daughter when asked:

“And what am I supposed to call myself, might I ask, mother dear? I don’t have a name, do I? Is it O’Neill? Or Harte perhaps?” Edwina sucked in her breath harshly and her eyes metallic. “You are a lying, immoral bitch!” Emma recoiled as if she had been slapped but she ignored the abusive remarks and took control of herself. “Your name is Lowther, Edwina. Joe adopted you and gave you his name” (501).

There is a desire for secrecy over the identity of the father of Emma’s illegitimate daughter Edwina, the son of the lord of the manor Edwin Fairley. But it is ironical that she is named ‘Edwina’ after him even in that case. Emma imparts the half truths to Joe Lowther whom she later marries and to brothers Winston and Frank she invents a nebulous gentleman whom she had met in Leeds.

Later Emma decides to tell Edwina the truth about her father as she believes she owes to Edwina her rights. As Blackie’s name was on her birth certificate, Edwina thinks that her father is Blackie but she hates him. Emma feels she needs to clarify with her daughter that Blackie had provided his name on the certificate to save Emma from humiliation. Emma tells her:

“Your father was Edwin Fairley”. Edwina leaned forward alertly”. “Do you mean Sir Edwin Fairley was a brilliant barrister and renowned throughout the country, and, perhaps more importantly, he was a gentleman’. Edwina stood up. ‘I wish you had been honest with me years ago mother. Things might have been different between us” (550).

Despite writing a feminist novel, Bradford has given very much importance to a man’s name and lineage. It is a social conditioning that women can not ignore a man. There is

also the vanity that comes with being a noble class. Even though, Emma but not Edwin had brought her up, Edwina feels proud for being the descendent of the gentleman even though she is illegitimate. Through both of these above instances, Bradford has been proved unable to break out the preconceived mould of the society. This shows how patriarchy is so overwhelming.

Emma has used the means and modes of patriarchy and has treated her men in the same weapon. It is the Jewish family, the Kallinskis, which establishes Emma when she first arrives in Leeds by giving her work in their textile industry. But as soon as she sees that it is Joe Lowther who can support her and give name to her illegitimate child, Emma despises David Kallinski's love and marries Joe Lowther. She knows that Joe loves her and doesn't interfere in her business what she wants. The problem is that she doesn't love him. She marries him just because she could expedite her business and her illegitimate daughter would have the name of a father. She realizes his worth and grieves inconsolably for the loss of a decent man when he gets killed in the war.

Again she marries Arthur Ainsley even though she had loved Paul McGill with all her heart. But there were obligations as Paul was a married man who could not get separated from his ailing wife and had to leave England frequently. She sought a companion, a man who is easy to be with, Arthur Ainsley, to be a male head for the household and a father for her children. Here, Bradford's protagonist is a self observed woman with immense capacities yet ironically needs a 'man' to rescue her and help her in achieving her objective.

Bradford has written the novel identifying her female hero's exceptional success with the power and privilege of the male world. Her protagonist has really frightened the men with her revolutionary aspirations which demand freedom of mind and body. Her portrayal of feminist ethos is for encouraging women to take power as a weapon.

But Bradford's position as a feminist is ambiguous as she has shown her character to be penitent towards the end, which makes itself revolt against feminism.

However successful Emma Harte may have been in the Corporate world, there is pain, utter loneliness and suffering of a woman who has fought so hard.

Foregrounding Emma's sacrifice, Bradford says:

Sacrifice. That word was held in her brain like a fly caught in amber. For indeed she had made tremendous sacrifices to achieve her unparalleled success, her great wealth, and her undeniable power in the world of international business she had given up her youth, her family life, much of her personal happiness, all of her free time, and countless other small, frivolous yet necessary pleasures enjoyed by most women. With great comprehension she recognized the magnitude of her loss, as a woman, a wife, a mother. Emma let the tears flow unchecked and in their flowing, a measure of her agony was assuaged (45) .

Passionately devoted on a single pursuit, in which Harte family lived, Emma is concerned only with becoming rich and powerful that blinds her to everything else. She has lost her mother, her father, and the man she loved the most, Paul McGill. Tragedy has struck her many times in life. It has caused her to falter but Paul's death is a swift blow that brings her to her knees. She has been writing great white lies to her father saying she is living with a grand lady in London, while he had been lying cold in the grave next to her mother. She has always been crossed in love. She loved Edwin, then David, and later Paul with whom she could never be settled. Emma always found herself to be lonely and abandoned as Blackie and David had been away in the war. The children were always closer to the men in her life, be it Joe or Arthur, Bradford displays Emma's confusion as:

Emma was holding a silver bell in her hand. “Where shall I put this dear?” she asked smiling at her nine year old daughter. Edwina made no response. She looked up at Joe and flashed him a radiant smile. “Where should it hang daddy?”... “You put the bell on the tree daddy, anywhere you want. I think you should be the first”... This little ritual continued for several minutes. Whenever Emma picked up an ornament and suggested a spot for it, Edwina took it from her quickly, ignoring her suggestion, deferring always to Joe. Stunned Emma stepped away from the tree uncertainly, acutely aware of the sight. She was the interloper, the unwanted. (397)

Emma realizes that one is the author of his/her own creation. It is her fault what they have become. Some she has neglected and some she has loved too much. She vows to stop depriving her children of love but her expanding of business always comes first.

Paula McGill, Emma Harte’s granddaughter, falls in love with Jim Fairley, the grandson of a spitting image of Edwin Fairley. Jim works for Emma looking after the Harte enterprises. Even Paula and Jim are mad in love with each other, Paula is ready to sacrifice her love for the sake of her grandmother as she is aware of the pain the Fairleys had inflicted upon Emma and her vendetta of more than sixty years. However, Emma loves Paula so much that she feels Paula deserves happiness. She tells Paula:

I am an old woman, Paula. A tough old woman who has fought every inch of the way for everything I have. Strong, yes, but also tired. Bitter? Perhaps I was. But I have acquired some wisdom in my struggle with life, my struggle to survive, and I wondered to myself the other day why the silly pride of a tough old woman should stand in the way of the one person I love the most in the whole world. It struck me I was being

selfish, and foolish, to let events of sixty years ago could my judgment now. (63)

As Emma becomes richer her hatred towards the Fairley family, who have exploited and brought her down, diminishes so that in the end she wants to forgive by forgetting, and allow Jim Fairley to become engaged to her favourite granddaughter Paula.

Bradford's omnipotent persona informs the readers that Emma thought of the Fairleys. All of them were gone now, except for James Arthur Fairley, the last of the line. She asked herself aloud "Why should she suffer, and Paula, for the mistakes of a dead generation?" (65). Emma's life had come to a full circle, beginning and ending with the Fairleys. She did not want her Paula suffer from her mistakes and be deprived of her love.

Constantly striving for power and money has made Emma realize that she has become an utterly lonely and a sad woman. Money now does not have the same status as it used to be before. She feels that "Money is only important when you are truly poor, when you need it for the roof over your head, for food and clothes. Once you have these essentials taken care of and go beyond them, money is simply a unit, a tool to work with" (20). Money was what Emma had pursued so hard. The value of money for Emma has been lessened than in the past. She had become lonely, lost much in her personal life and was hurt by the deceit of her children.

Moreover, Emma, the protagonist, has suffered much in life seeking the sympathy at the later part. Unlike his brother Gerald, Edwin has been shown as a good character. His only weakness is that he could not accept Emma after he impregnated her. Perhaps, it was because of his immaturity of 19 years teen age and his fear might be that his father would not accept a maid servant as his daughter-in-law.

Edwin did not abandon his love to Emma even after his marriage with a lady of the noble class. He belonged to Emma; that was unalterable except in case of death. And after death too, he dreamed to be united at the top of the world, their former meeting place of Ramsden Crag. While hearing from Gerald that he had tried to rape Emma, Edwin says, "I happen to be very proud of Emma. She's made something of herself and she's a damned sight better than you. You – you – piece of scum! ... If you so much rest your eyes on Emma I will kill you. Kill you! I swear to God I will!" (467).

It was Edwin's love, affection and admiration to Emma. He was proud to see her begin with the various shops and spread her business. He was happy and relieved when Emma took over their newspaper Gazette. Perhaps, this was his redemption from the guilt he bore.

At the end of the novel, Jim comes to Emma with a pebble having the carving of Elizabeth. Edwin and Emma had found it in the cave of Ramsden Crag. Edwin had cherished it for years and felt it rightly belonged to Emma. Jim says:

My grandfather gave it to me the day he died ... he wanted you to have it ... when grandfather gave me the stone for you he said that the Harte women had always held a fatal fascination for Fairley men, but they had been ever crossed in love. "Doomed by circumstances of birth" was the phrase he used. "Tell Emma to end it now. Tell her to let this generation have the happiness she and I were denied, and which her mother and my father were denied. Tell her that in all good conscience she must end it, once and for all. Tell her it is she and she alone can join the two families together in holy matrimony". (553)

Emma feels that scratching the wound is not good. Paula and Jim deserve all the happiness and the generations of feud should end. Emma wished Jim would come to

her earlier as it had been three months since Edwin had died. He had not forgotten her even in his deathbed.

Emma grieves when she realizes her mistakes. She feels her vendetta had been futile as Edwin's intentions had ever been good. Kneeling down on the floor at Emma's feet, Jim takes her hands and further says:

Grandfather asked me to do something else Mrs. Harte. Just before he died, he said, "When you have told Emma all this, I want you to get down on your bended knees and beg that woman's forgiveness for everything the Fairleys have done to her. In particular, ask her to forgive me. Tell her I've never stopped loving her all the days of my life, and that without her my life has had no real meaning. And a part of me died the day I repudiated Emma in the rose garden and I have paid dearly for what I did". I promised to faithfully do as he wished, Mrs. Harte, but grandfather suddenly became agitated, and made me promise over and over again. He also said in the most sorrowing voice", Jim, it will be an unquiet grave I lie in if Emma does not forgive me. Implore her to do so Jim, so that my tortured soul can rest in peace ... I knew he was slipping away. Quite unexpectedly, he smiled and it was triumphant happy smile. He cried in the strongest voice, "Emma! Emma! I'm going back to the Top of the World", and then he died peacefully in my arms.

(554)

Emma is filled with repentance when she hears Edwin's silent suffering. He had a tortured guilty soul of his injustice towards Emma.

After knowing all of this, Emma realizes that Edwin had suffered equally along with her without ever letting her know anything. She compassionately utters letting her tears:

“Poor Edwin, Poor Edwin”, I think perhaps your grandfather suffered more than I did, after all ... I forgive them, Jim. All of them, and most especially Edwin”. She touched Jim’s face lightly, and with affection. But it was Edwin she now saw kneeling before her. “I’ve spent a lifetime seeking revenge for what you did to me, she thought. But it wasn’t really necessary. Your own conscience did my work for me. If only I had known what a lot of pain and effort it would have saved. You wanted me to win. It was a salve for your overwhelming guilt. That’s why you looked so relieved when I stole the Gazette from you. You know the vendetta was finally over. (554)

The author has made Emma regret her vendetta of more than six decades. Because of the family feud Emma has lost the small pleasures of her life. And it is ambivalence that the sympathy goes to Edwin instead of Emma at the end of the novel, despite Emma suffering much. Edwin is shown to be a gentleman of noble background although he betrays Emma. The readers feel doubt that Edwin did not have the time to think and he was not mature enough to handle the situation. Emma took this as his weakness and as she had dream to make a fortune, become a grand lady, ran away from the village. Except this, whenever Edwin is mentioned in the text, he is always represented as a fine human being who wishes Emma the best forever.

Had Bradford not portrayed Emma as such a strong, ruthless, inscrutable and manipulative character, perhaps readers would have felt sympathetic for her loss. She is marvelous at her excellence in the corporate world, but has been justified as an

unsuccessful wife, unsuccessful mother and basically a very unhappy and a lonely woman. A woman of substance would be a woman who is successful in her private and public world. Being merely a successful woman in the business penetration can not truly mean being a woman of substance. Bradford has distinguished Emma's success into the man's domain. Her matriarch protagonist imbibes the features of a man. The writer has shown the importance of men on her character at all the times.

It is only through their manipulation has Emma been successful in her business. Be it Blackie O' Neill, David Kallinski, Paul McGill, Arthur Ainsley, Joe Lowther or her financial manager Henry Rossiter, Emma has always needed a man behind her.

By making Emma penitent in the end Bradford has made her protagonist revolt against her initial feministic approach. It has shown the general belief of the patriarchy that however hard they try women are weak, dependent, sentimental and irrational still. Emma too is shown to be weak and fragile at her loss. This is where Bradford is influenced by the male hegemony.

Her brother Winston and her friend Blackie for sixty four years notice that Emma is irrational even though she is strong headed. They think that she has outstripped them all and discuss. Winston says:

“Do you know the secret of my sister's great success? Sure and I do. I attribute it to a number of qualities. Shrewdness, courage, ambition, and drive to name only a few, *abnormal* ambition, *abnormal* drive, Blackie. Emma has the killer instinct to go to the top”. ... “Killer instinct! That's a hell of a thing to say about her. You make her sound ruthless”. ... “She is in some ways, don't tell me you've never recognized that trait in her”.

(460)

We know that Emma has been driven by her insanity, the killer instinct. Beyond this periphery, neither she has time for anybody nor for herself even. Like Beauvoir argues that women have historically been considered deviant and abnormal, we can find these traits in Emma and her thirst for success. While analyzing the nineteenth century women writers and their historical context, Gilbert and Gubar have said that their writings are the outcome of the then social conditions of their lives. Bradford too seems to be expressing her anxiety and her female anger through the characterization of Emma.

For Wollstonecraft, women should aspire to be the ideal like men. Going against Wollstonecraft Beauvoir claims that this sort of her perception has limited women's success and such limitations make women simply emulate men. Beauvoir confirms that women are capable of making choices to elevate themselves moving beyond the immanence to which they were previously resigned and reaching transcendence where one can choose one's freedom. The author, in this novel, instead of achieving salvation in the transcendence, has been entangled in the net of immanence of the patriarchy.

IV. Identity in *A Woman of Substance*

The text *A Woman of Substance* has multiple meanings instead of a hardcore fixed meaning. It depends upon the situation and ideologies of the reader. Even there are several former analyses by many critics, the interpretation of ours at the present time becomes different. Among these multiple meanings, my research focuses on the self-contradiction of the author through her protagonist, Emma Harte who despite beginning as a feminist, has not been able to escape the predominant masculine values of the society.

A Woman of Substance makes one think about destiny, fate and free will. The central character is a matriarch who with the help of her strong will and strength turns around her position as a victim of abuse and cowardice to a successful, powerful woman with strong business acumen and farsightedness. Her journey of battle is wondrous in which she wins, gets much and loses also.

Like other abundant fictions in the horizon of the feminism, Barbara Taylor Bradford's *A Woman of Substance* centres upon the female protagonist's entanglement with the patriarchal norms. Through Emma, we can see the early stage of female self-awareness against the oppression. She triumphs over all the odds even she is poor, improvident and sexually humiliated. The readers too, would not tolerate such type of situation, are forced to recognize that they are or could be like her in similar circumstances. This makes them enraged at the patriarchy and sympathetic to its victims. In the literary genre too, the woman author who writes as a woman and for woman has not been able to break the prevalent norms and values besides aspiring for it. In the attempt of popularizing the feminist ideology, they have identified the power and privilege of the male world. Feminine novels, thus, come from women wishing they were men, with the freedom and superiority that masculinity bestows.

Bradford's trend of writing seems the following tool of the radical feminist ideology. Emma is in the quest of her identity. Bradford has tried to portray her as a female identified woman who fights against the patriarchal cultural conditioning. But it is self contradictory and ambivalent that the author has not been able to escape the man's world. While proving Emma a woman of substance, Bradford has characterized Emma as being male identified giving upper hand to the reigning patriarchal supremacy. The world dominated by men is the world of power and control and Emma has been associated with it that masculinity hinges on. She is involved in such a blind way that she forgets her motherhood.

Bradford not only makes the protagonist male-identified, but also shows the importance of men throughout the novel. To materialize her dreams, Emma has always taken the support from men. She has been unable to deal boldly with the issues of marriage and illegitimacy which were and still are taboo in the society. After completing her vendetta of sixty-plus years, Emma has achieved her economic independence and subsequent freedom. With her success, she should have been a satisfied and a female-identified woman but she can not. She has achieved great success in the corporate world and has defeated the Fairleys. After which, she has realized herself as a lonely and unhappy that it was her vain pride which led to the unnecessary family feud.

Display of her penitence in the end is betraying as it puts the whole motive of Emma's vendetta into question. Her pursuit for power and money began with the betrayal of Edwin, hence it is ironical that the ultimate sympathy goes to Edwin in spite of Emma's endurance. Edwin is presented as the man having good will who is forever pining for Emma's love and for her success. From this, it is justified that the author is unable to break the romantic twist of mind through which patriarchal supremacy have

been reproduced and fed as fantasies. The women writers have always been acquainted with romantic fiction and Bradford is not exempt from the linkage which deprives her of having strong feminist ideology.

The author writes with the dream of the feminists aspiring for women's economic independence and freedom. She, therefore, ought to have given importance to femaleness and celebrate the feminine values and traits. But her position as a feminist is proved false as the totality of her work seems to be self-betraying. So, she has not been able to sustain the motive with which she began writing the novel and ambivalence of female identity lies there.

Works Cited

- Adams, Hazard. *Critical Theory Since Plato*. Rev. Ed. Florida: Harcourt, 1992.
- Beauvoir, Simone De. *The Second Sex*. Trans. Ed. H. M. Parshley. London: Vintage, 1997.
- Bradford, Barbara Taylor. *A Woman of Substance*. London: Diamond Books, 1979.
- Bloom, Clive and Gary Day. *Literature and Culture in Modern Britain*. England: Pearson Education Ltd., 2000.
- Delap, Lucy. *Feminist and Anti-feminist Encounters in Edwardian Britain*. Master's in Arts.: Blackwell Publishing Limited., 2005.
- Dudgeon, Piers. *The Woman of Substance: The Secret Life that Inspired the Renowned Storyteller Barbara Taylor Bradford*. New York: St. Martins Press, 2005.
- Gardiner, Judith Kegan. "On Female Identity and Writing by Women." *Writing and Sexual Difference*. 8.2 (1981): 347/61. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press: 1981.
- Goodman, Lizbeth. *Literature and Gender*. Routledge: London, 2001.
- Hollows, Joanne. *Feminism, Femininity and Popular Culture*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000.
- Jain, Jasbir. *Gender Realities, Human Spaces*. Rawat Publications: New Delhi, 2003.
- Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970.
- Pratt, Annis. "The New Feminist Criticism". *College English*, 32.8 (1971), 872/78.
- Showalter, Elaine. *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literary Theory*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1985.
- . *A Literature of Their Own*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Shukla, Bhaskar. *Women on Women*. New Delhi: Sarup and Sons, 2006.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Literary Theory and Criticism: An Oxford Guide*. Oxford: OUP, 2006.
- Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One's Own*. Ed. Jenifer Smith. New Delhi: Manas Saikia for Foundation Books, 2001.