

I. Willa Cather and *A Lost Lady*

A Lost Lady, a well-crafted novel by Willa Cather, presents the defiance of patriarchal norms by Marian Forster, the protagonist of this novel. Marian who is initially presented as household and who devotes her time as a housewife helping and caring her husband. His duties are to perform the house chores and keep her myriad desire and intent under control. As the novel moves forward, Marian is shown rather as a rigid character who, after her husband's death embarks on her journey to Argentina and settles there.

Marian a woman of extreme caliber has the quality to walk step by step with her male counterpart in her job. She defies the dos and don'ts and follow her own conscious way of rules and abhors the male norms in this process crossing the threshold created by the male society. The female characters of this novel do not fall into the circumstances as designated by male characters in order to sustain their struggle in self-hood and contestation with male dominated social inhabitation. She is shown as a character who has the audacity or knack to assist her husband not as a woman who blindly follows her husband, rather as a woman who will equally participate in her husband's decision. She is an active lady who knows how to compete with her male counterpart by freely expressing her viewpoints in every decision her husband takes. She even takes the pattern of the male designed life and subverting the rigid regime of the society. She is portrayed as a haughty and strong character, who defies the female character of being emotional and rather impulsive, the traits which is associated with the feminine gender. She is unlike the weak sex; rather she shows prudence in any tough situation. She is not instantaneous rather she is shown as a calm woman who makes effective and wise decision, instead of taking any hasty decision. After her husband's death, she breaks the cocoon of a docile

housewife and rather than being subjected as a poor widow, embarks on the journey of selfhood.

In our society women are subdued and they are termed as a passive and docile. Though time has changed from then and now, women perspectives have a leap frog from the medieval period to the contemporary era. Yet the conservative thinking regarding their home bound nature and passive remains in male hearts i.e. they are to be domesticated and they should be bounded towards their homes only. The male psyche is that women are not capable of handling jobs properly and they are only good on house chores, so they should not be allowed to do outdoors jobs is totally rejected by the female protagonist of this novel. She breaks the male code and abhors the predicament of a poor widow and goes out to explore the world by herself. Her action shows us the common desire of female in the ongoing world. Her move in a way shows us that though males may be physically weak but their action speaks louder and if the chain of domination continues women too can break away from the shackles by such kind of rebellious move. They too have same desires as males have; only the restriction had made them mute.

Radical Feminism, a theory flourished mainly in the 1960s, is used as a methodology in this project. It depicts the male domination imposed towards females. Radical Feminism mainly tries to give counter to the patriarchal norms and values. And it is the common set of rules of do's and don'ts to the feminine gender. The project mainly tries to probe into the issue of how male made norms that female should be under male surveillance are subverted. In many countries females are kept literally in a veil of etiquette. Radical Feminism came in front to show the pain of the females and their experiences, enlisting them in the common sisterhood. It looks forward to tear the veil imposed by the patriarchal society. Likewise, their demands

are equality in each and every sector with the males and if needed to eliminate the patriarchal rigidity.

Willa Cather was born on December 7, 1873 in Back Creek Valley (a small farming community close to the Blue Ridge Mountains) in Virginia. She was the eldest child of Charles Cather, a deputy Sheriff, and Mary Virginia Boak Cather. The family came to Pennsylvania from Ireland in the 1750's.

In 1883 the Cather family moved to join Willa's grandparents William and Caroline and her uncle George in Webster County, Nebraska. At the time, her family included Willa's two brothers, a sister, and her grandmother. A year later they moved to Red Cloud, a nearby railroad town, where her father opened a loan and insurance office. The family never became rich or influential, and Willa attributed their lack of financial success to her father, whom she claimed placed intellectual and spiritual matters over the commercial. Her mother was a vain woman, mostly concerned with fashion and trying to turn Willa into "a lady", in spite of the fact that Willa defied the norms for girls and cut her hair short and wore trousers. While living in the town Willa met Annie Sadilek, whom she later used for the Antonia character in *My Antonia*. Many of Willa's characters are inspired by people she met in her youth. Another notable example is Olive Fremstad, an opera singer, who inspired the character Thea Kronborg in *The Song of the Lark*.

She attended public schools in Red Cloud and completed her school education from Red Cloud in 1890. She soon moved to the state capitol in Lincoln in order to study for entrance at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Her school and University years were very pleasant and successful. She got engaged herself in extra activities, besides her curricular studies. She earned many friends and gained love and inspiration from her teachers. Edith Lewis writes, "She felt that they first taught her to

think, first helped her to find imaginative thought and that she owed to them the early ideas of scholarship and art that gave direction to her own life and work” (19). She was so much influenced by her teachers and friends that she has presented them in her works and made them immortal. During her academic years, she gained the knowledge of Latin, Greek, English, French and German literature and language.

Because of her talent, good presentation and imaginative mind, Cather enabled her to be the center of interest and near and dear to the teachers and friends. She wrote excellent stories and essays and also got opportunities to edit the University Journals when she was still young. Thus, her college life was most formative, productive and creative. At this time Willa was actually interested in studying medicine. In Red Cloud she had spent time with and learned from a local doctor, and she dreamed of becoming a physician. But, when one of Willa's stories for a writing class got published, she discovered a passion for writing had been fermenting within her. In college, Willa spent time editing the school magazine and publishing articles and play reviews in the local papers. In 1892 she published her short story "Peter" in a Boston magazine, a story that later became part of her novel *My Antonia*. After graduating in 1895, she returned to Red Cloud until she was offered a position editing Home Monthly in Pittsburgh.

While editing the magazine, she wrote short stories to fill its pages. Between 1901 and 1906, Willa worked as a high school English teacher. During this period wrote the stories that would be published in her first collection, called the *Troll Garden* (1905). These stories brought her to the attention of S.S. McClure, owner of one of the most widely read magazines of the day. In 1906 Cather moved to New York to join McClure's Magazine, initially as a member of the staff and ultimately as its managing editor. During this time, she met Sara Orne Jewett, a woman from Maine

who inspired her to later write about Nebraska. In 1912, after five years with McClure's, she left the magazine to have time for her own writing. After the publication of *Alexander's Bridge*, also in 1912, Cather visited the Southwest where she was fascinated by the Anasazi cliff dwellings.

As her childhood was free, loving and unclouded, she became brave, independent, simple and unsophisticated, kind, helpful, social and sincere. She could easily mix up with all types of people. She used to cut her hair short and dressed boyishly. Her behavior and dress as such show her to be an unconventional woman. Thereby, she started showing her boldness and fearlessness as she was of the opinion that both male and female are the equal human beings and should be able to enjoy the equality and liberty. She had already developed the interest in music and opera. Her love of music was born in her friendship with Mrs. Minor. Dr. Tyndale had known her taste well, so he arranged her to go to Chicago so that she could observe the grand opera and gain the knowledge about it.

In 1913 *O Pioneers* was published and in 1917 she wrote *My Antonia* while living in New Hampshire. By 1923 she had won the Pulitzer Prize for her *One of Ours*, and in this year her modernist book *A Lost Lady* was published. At the time her novels focused on the destruction of provincial life and the death of the pioneering tradition.

Perhaps overwhelmed by so much success, Cather suffered a period of despair reflected in the darker tones of the novels written during this period. Despite her problems, she wrote some of her greatest novels during this period, such as *The Professor's House* (1925), *My Mortal Enemy* (1926), and *Death Comes for Archbishop* (1927).

Willa Cather's fiction is infused with many of her deeply-held beliefs and values. Among these values are a reverence for art, for history, and for the "pomp and circumstance" of organized Catholic and Episcopalian religion. Cather also felt strongly that peoples and civilizations that live in harmony with their natural environments are, and should be, sources of inspiration. She decried materialism and the advent of modern mass culture, which she believed blunted human intellectual achievement and polluted public taste.

Women are being dominated and ill-treated according to the deep rooted patriarchal rules and regulations from the time immemorial. Society has been formed by the male-oriented ideology which has kept women in the inferior position. Social norms and values, behaviors and all the other aspects of the society are controlled and guided by the male authority. Men use their so-called superiority to dominate social, political, cultural, economic and religious aspects. These aspects are made easy to fulfill male's purpose. In such a type of society, power is passed from male to male not to female, such as father to son. Daughters are not given any roles. So, women are helpless and their condition is miserable. Willa Cather has raised voice against male-supremacy and endeavors to place women in the position of men. Cather has written many novels and stories. She has written the novels not for pleasure. Her writings attempt to place women in independent and autonomous existence. Most of the novels written by Cather do have women 'heroes' either with autonomous power or with the struggle to keep themselves alive in the society. So, these novels are written not only for the entertainment but also with a holy aim to reform the society. Her novels stand the female heroes to attack the society for not allowing their autonomous role in the society. Cather's novels are written in her different circumstances and different moods, but the main theme of these novels is to pour out her female experience to

portray the true picture of women's life. She wants to improve the condition of women in the society. So, she portrays true picture of women characters as if they are real and lively. The veil of phallogocentric norms is stripped off in her novels. Social realities are mirrored in Cather's novels. To establish female selfhood and autonomy, Cather's characters, in different ways, fight against patriarchal norms and values. From early on in her career, Cather received not only with widespread popular success, but also astonishing critical success. This pattern began to change in the 1930s with the advent of Marxist Criticism. Marxist critics suggested that Cather did not understand or show concern for modern social issues, and they made fun of the romanticism which infused her stories. Whether or not Cather was affected by such criticism, these years were made more difficult by the death of her mother, brothers and her good friend Isabelle McClung.

Cather maintained an active writing career, publishing novels and short stories for many years until her death on April 24, 1947. At the time of her death, she ordered her letters burned. Though thousands of letters escaped destruction, Cather's will prevents their publication. Willa Cather was buried in New Hampshire; in Red Cloud, the Willa Cather Pioneer Memorial Foundation was created to honor her memory. *A Lost Lady*, since its publication in 1923 has garnered widespread criticism and wide-ranging responses. One of the critics name Lionel Trilling says:

It is Willa Cather's central work of her career. Far from being the delicate minor book it is often called, it is probably her most muscular story. Though it might be short but it is "short and Slight" not a great novel, not that very 'rare' thing in contemporary literature, a nearly perfect one. (11)

The novel vividly presents the story of Marian, who in the novel subverts the male norms and value, the male construction of a female identity i.e. of a docile and submissive female persona, who after her husband's death should be bound to be at home, rather she is defies this rule time and again by her bold and valiant conduct and interaction with other male characters in the novel, thus resulting as defiance of the male dominated society. Her motive is crystal clear that being a widow, does not ends a woman's life, she rejects being an orthodox submissive and denies to take the stereotypical image of a poor widow, rather she stands up as a bold persona who open ups after her husband's death. Thus she is portrayed as a bold woman who instead of getting intimidated by the circumstances going in front of her takes her own decision and vilify the male created norms against a widow. In this way she represents the perfect example of a radical feminist, who believes to take the world by her own will rather than blindly following the crowd, she makes her own decision to challenge the world and face the atrocities by her own will.

The first chapter shows the major characters in the novel along with the portrayal of the hypothesis and the statement of problem, which the project is concerned with. Then it shows the writers introduction and his works and literature review. The tool or the theoretical modality is kept as a mixture in the textual analysis, in the second chapter, likewise the third and the final is the conclusion of the project.

II. Denial to Succumb to the Male Created Stereotypical Image

A Lost Lady depicts the defiance of the male imposed norms and values, by the sole female character of the novel Marian Forrester, who avoids the male notion of women i.e. governing her husband as a docile and submissive character and stooping to his every desire and rules, rather she pretends to be a demure woman, in fact she is a free going woman interacting with every male persona to give her presence marking her existence of a strong female. Marian is shown bearing the torch of a defiant character that is a quintessence of radical feminism. Her husband captain Daniel Forrester, is the secondary character of this novel is shown caring and loving her wife Marian Forrester, but as the story moves on the reader will develop an insight that in fact the captain has a domineering character to his wife.

The captain who is twenty five years senior than Marian is shown as a wealthy persona in the novel still, when he must choose between honoring his responsibility to the depositors in the bank of which he was an officer and providing for his wife's financial future, he chooses to impoverish her. His decision is an honorable one, but it is a form of betrayal of the marriage contract, particularly that implied between a well-to-do older man and a beautiful young woman. He chooses to let her pay for his nobility; and although she accepts his choice as a compliment (89) to her, again she is subtly betrayed or victimized by masculine self-interest. Although betrayed, victimized, Marian Forrester wrests a bittersweet triumph from her refusal to assume the role of victim. Her "musical laugh" dominates the novel; *A Lost Lady*, women are victims of masculine heroics, self-interest and ignorance. (41)

From the start of the novel Marian Forrester is shown as a woman of substance, she dominates the early and the end part of this novel, we could see from the beginning of this novel, her free flowing attitude towards her husband's friends.

Though there are house maids in her house but she feels it is her duty to welcome any male guest, she doesn't mind to welcome them whenever they approach their house, it doesn't matter to her if she is working in the kitchen, she will rush to the door in her dressing-gown, with the apron on whenever Cyrus Dalzell, president of the Colorado and Utah visits her house (3).

In a male dominated society a female is strictly supposed to follow the male accustom but quite contrarily Marian is shown as a woman who defies such rules and regulation and open heartedly welcomes any male visitors in her house. We could see in the opening part of the story, when the boys are shy with her appearance to ask any question, Marian instead approach them first by saying:

Good morning, boys. Off for a picnic? You have a lovely day. How long has school been out? Don't miss it? Run along, and be sure you don't leave the gate into the pasture open. Mr. Forrester hates to have the cattle get in on his blue grass. (5)

We could note from her initial opening line from this novel that though Marian is presented as a demure character in the novel initially but her defiance for the masculinity is hidden somewhere under. She though presents herself as a shy and docile character in front of her husband, but like dormant volcano the substance of defiance and denial for the dominating male hegemony is seen from her tone to the boys in the opening phase of this novel. Her commanding orders shows that she is not to be controlled rather she will control her male counterparts in the novel. After the boys are back from their outing, they ask Marian if she can swim in their reply she says that: "In California everybody swims. But the Sweet Water doesn't tempt me, mud water snakes and blood-suckers do--ugh! (7)

We could sense from her statement that she is not tempted by simple things

rather these lines is evident enough to display how valiant character Marian is. She loves to take challenges in her life and rather taking an easy path she will choose difficult one. She is courageous enough to take the tough path, when in times peoples and mainly female genders are scared of snakes and muddy water, her inclination towards such life threatening things are proof of her brave and solid character. Will Cather in this novel might be trying to show how bold character Marian is, in times when woman were subjected to be confined in their homes and provide food and shelter to their family, she is presented as a brave woman, who will take the bulls by the horns.

She is shown as a character that might be concerned with things but not scared. When some male visitors visits her house to see the ailing Captain, she hospitably made them sit in the couch but rather than asking for any tea or coffee she seems directly ordering her maid Mary to bring a brandy from the sideboard. (14) She is shown defying the rules of a good family throughout the novel and one of the traits of radical feminist is that of avant garde i.e to create a new rule out of the old and existing ones. She is valiant enough to scold the judge for nurturing his nephew in a bad manner, when she sees a bottle of beer and two glasses on the desk among the papers she quickly scolds her judge by saying “Is that the way you prepare your cases, Judge? What an example for Niel!” (19) Marian is shown as a character that disobeys the male norms and male constructed notions of woman as a motherly figure, who has a duty to obey and fulfill the male desires, she is a character who doesn't nurtures any fear to go out from her house to visit another male persona's house at nights and scold them for their uncivilized way of living. She even asks Niel to leave his work long enough to drive her home, as her husband has been detained at the bank (20).

Marian after taking Niel out from his house surprising asks him to have some

quality time with Constance Ogden, who is of Niel's same age counterpart, she doesn't feel shame or any iota of hesitation when she says to Neil:

I'm counting on you to help me entertain Constance Ogden. Can you take her off my hands day after tomorrow, come over in the afternoon? Your duties as a lawyer aren't very arduous yet? What can I do with a miss of nineteen? One who goes to college? I have no learned conversation for her! You're a boy! Perhaps you can interest her in lighter things. She's considered pretty (20).

We could sense from these above lines that Marian is so bold in her words, that she along with flirting with the boy Niel, asks him to have some time spend with a college going girl named Constance Ogden. She is shown here as a woman, who at the times when there was a restriction for female voice, seems hell bent to take the initiative for these two youth couples. She is shown as a woman who has the potential to transcend such male created norms and values. She knows that young couples have a lot of hidden desire underneath their heart so she doesn't believe in relinquishing such desire for the sake of the restricted society; rather such desires should be kept alive and expressed in front of same age peers. Her move might be considered as wrong in the then contemporary society, but she believes that whether wrong or right, a person has to express ones desire completely without taking the societies restricted norms.

After feminism rose to existence, the talk of women rights and equality took pace. Women in every sector, who were earlier dominated and kept into restrictions by male domain, asked for their identity and equality. The term "Feminist" came into use in English during the 1880's, indicating support for women's equal legal and political rights vis-à-vis to men. Radical feminism was first fully articulated in the late 1960's and it argues that men's patriarchal power over women is the primary power

relationship in human society. Radical feminists in Western society believe that the root cause of all other inequalities is the oppression of women; some radical feminists acknowledge the simultaneous and intersecting effect of other independent categories of oppression as well.

Likewise Marian is shown as a woman who not only believes in female equality in voice rather her conducts shows she is confident enough to take her stance with the male occupied and dominated society. Her rigid behavior of pouring a glass of brandy to the guest and then another one in her glass shows that she doesn't need any permission from her husband to drink even in front of a visitor. (21) Her brave gestures give us a vivid impression that she is not bothered with any rules of courtesy and female code of conduct. Without any hesitation she discloses that she drinks regularly in her home, we could sense from her valiant words:

It does no good to be glum about it, does it? I always take a little sherry at this time in the afternoon. At Colorado Springs some of my friends take tea, like the English. But I should feel like an old suppressed woman, drinking tea! Besides, sherry is good for my throat. (22)

In the above lines Marian is shown as a shrewd character, she is aware from the fact that for a woman, drinking in front of guests are not a socially apt behavior, it is woman's duty to serve the guest with proper food and their male compatriot are seen drinking with the guests, while female duty is to prepare good accommodation for them in food and shelter, but unlike the old days, Marian is seen breaking the code of rules and setting one of her own, by drinking and sharing drinks with the guests in front of her husband. She is not hesitant enough to accept the fact that she used to drink it regularly every afternoon as the drink is good for her health; she goes a step

ahead by presenting her views that her friends take tea, like English people at afternoon, but she is modern enough to avoid tea and coffee for Wine. Thus it reflects what kind of character Marian is. She is brave and she believes to walk step by step with her male compatriot, she believes in equality in both sexes, avoiding the contemporary idea that male are born to dominate female and the latter are subservient towards the former.

The male notion of women as a child bearer and strictly confined in the boundary of home, whose primary work is cleaning, washing and nurturing a child into an adult is challenged by Marian, in this novel. Shame which is termed as an ornament of women is disallowed by the female protagonist of this novel instead of producing a negative consequence of this harmful conduct; she is loved by many male characters in this novel. In the novel we see that not only she demands for male recognition but she throws a caring and protecting glance for her husband. We had seen in most of the cases that male are protective over their female companion but here we could see a different story as she discusses with Niel:

A winter in the country may do him good, he loves this place so much. But you and Judge Pommeroy must keep an eye on him when he is in town, Niel. If he looks tired or uncertain, make some excuse and bring him home. He can't carry a drink or two as he used. He is unsteady in his conduct. He had trouble always in his life (23).

The way she narrates a previous incident to Niel she seems she is not the woman who should be taken care of, rather she is the one who is solid enough to take care of her husband. She wants her husband to take some vacation in some chilly place so she asks Niel, to take him somewhere where there is cold, and that might be good for his health, we could see as the passage ends her anger for him, these anger itself is

evident enough to give the readers a hint that though the captain used to show to the peoples that he is treating his wife well, but deep inside he was a failure towards his wife, as she was nurturing a rebellious perspective for her husband. Though in this statement she is sounding protective from the surface layer, but inner level itself denotes that she longs for her husband departure from her house, so that she could live alone for some time, without her husband's presence and without his so called troubling attitude.

We could see the defiant attitude of the female protagonist of this novel when she finishes her brandy and asks for Niel brandy, when Niel courteously asks her to take it from the bottle she rudely answers "No I don't want those. I want the one in your glass; I like it to taste of something!" (27) We could see the audacity in her gesture. She is not a bit hesitated to ask from another man's glass, though she could had the drink from the bottle, but she rather apt for Niel's one, this gives us a vivid idea that, she was not a person who had any guilty feeling for such a conduct, being a woman living in a male world and rules, she has to follow some rules and regulations at least in the territory of ones homely surroundings, but she seems reluctant to follow such etiquette. The novel shows the submission of female desire by the male society and consistent defiance by the female protagonist of this novel. In a way we could see the tendency of Radical Feminism hatching in the story.

These other categories of oppression may include, but are not limited to, oppression based on gender identity, race, social class, perceived attractiveness, sexuality, sexual orientation, and ability. Patriarchal theory is not always as single-handed as the belief that all men always benefit from the oppression of all women. Patriarchal theory maintains that the primary element of patriarchy is the relationship of dominance, where one party is dominant and exploits the other party for the benefit

of the former. Radical feminists have claimed that men use social systems and other methods of control to keep non-dominant men and women suppressed.

Radical feminists believe that eliminating patriarchy, and other systems which perpetuate the domination of one group over another, will liberate everyone from an unjust society. Redstockings manifesto of 1984 reads that radical feminism “got sexual politics recognized as a public issue”, “created the vocabulary [. . .] with which the second wave of feminism entered popular culture”, “sparked the drive to legalize abortion”, “were the first to demand total equality in the so-called private sphere” (housework and child care [. . .] emotional and sexual needs), and “created the atmosphere of urgency” that almost led to the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (2). The influence of Radical Feminism can be seen in the adoption of these “personal” issues by even such liberal-feminist groups as the National Organization for Women.

By the early 1970s these new ideas were reflected in a substantial body of literature that included Kate Millet’s *Sexual Politics*, Shulamith Firestone’s *The Dialectic of Sex*, Germaine Greer’s *The Female Eunuch* and Eva Figs’ *Patriarchal Attitudes* (all first published in 1970); anthologies of some of the new manifestos, speeches and articles were also published in Betty and Theodore Roszak’s *Masculine/Feminine* (1969), Robin Morgan’s *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970) and Michelle Wandor’s *The Body Politic* (1972).

Radical feminism in simpler forms also indicates that women are not docile and they are not going to tolerate any misbehaving from the male society. Equality is what their demand is. So if they are treated badly then sudden outcry of protest is what we witness. We could see the same situation in this novel. The female protagonist seems nurturing herself with the same value of rebellion, where the

society consists of certain norms and values of do's and don'ts for a female gender, she vilifies such norms and though she is a married woman she nurtures a rebellious desire inside her, which does not suits the contemporary social norms.

Marian is a lady with a determination which is not fluid rather it is as solid as a rock; she can even make her husband shameful in some extent. When he tries to talk about his future plans she mockingly tells him: "And now tell us your philosophy of life,-- this is where it comes in, and if some of us have heard it, we can hear it again. Go on! (32) We could just note the irony in Marian used in the last part of the sentence, it seems that she was fed up off with her husband's way of defining an dream, she mockingly tells him to explain his dream by changing it as a 'philosophy', such behavior results the captain into public humiliation, yet he cannot utter any word against his wife. She seems in a commanding position when she delivers this line, keeping even her husband in the back foot. Latter when he explains his plan to the spectators, she even mocks and interrupts his line; we could see her attitude clearly to her husband's dreams.

It is simple that she doesn't care about it. Patriarchy always imposes curtailment or a boundary towards women's freedom but defying such curtailment and coming out as a victor seems to be the job of Radical Feminist. Modern feminist based in United States took their impetus from civil rights, peace and other protest. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1977) signifies a significant stage in 'political' feminist writing on literature. Millet's use of the term 'patriarchy' described the cause of women's oppression. Men enjoy power through constraint 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 under represented in formal political institutions and decision

making bodies worldwide. Millet devotes a large section of her book to ‘deconstructing’ the portrayal of sex in the work of four major twentieth-century writers (D.H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer and Jean Genet) so as to reveal the crude sexual domination involved. Love, too, can be but a confidence trick, part of a patriarchal ideology designed to hide the realities of power; not until patriarchy has been overthrown and sexuality radically transformed can men and women relate in any ways as equal human beings.

Thus we could say that these above ideologies regarding Radical Feminism and the condition of being a radical feminist suits to the lady protagonist of this novel. She is such a character, when her husbands to have sex with her, at first she pretends to follow him but in another instance, she re-hooks the shoulder of her gown, taking a nightcap and tells her husband:

Be careful, I have a distinct impression that there is someone on the enclosed stairway. There is a wide crack in the door. Ah, but kittens have claws, these days! Pour me just a little. Thank you. I’ll have mine in by the fire (35).

We could at first notice her as an eccentric person by the above line, which seems like a dramatic persona, by her conduct. At first she seems to accompany her husband only to betray his desire in the next moment. In the next move she orders her husband to pour some brandy in her glass, which is an rigid order to him, and instead of assisting him for his desirable act, she seems indifferent and asking him to follow her instead to the fire. These lines are ironic, because a man when he is in hunger for sex if denied, feels that he does not belongs to the category of a man, rather a eunuch. Marian in this move has turned her husband similar to a eunuch. Avoiding sex is also a trait of Radical Feminist, as they think that sex is not integral part for a female gender, as

they can obtain such pleasure, where a male's presence is not required.

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 the essence. Beauvoir raises this issue regarding woman who has been essentialized in the society with certain stereotypes like woman as a flesh, related to nature, vale of blood, open rose, siren, the curve of hill, the fertile soil, the sap, the material beauty and the soul of the world. Several essentialist thinkers believe that the woman is doomed to eminence but has a passivity to bestow peace and harmony. Beauvoir's central attack is on the attitude of the scholars and writers towards woman's position. According to them, woman is a 'privileged other'.

Patriarchy always imposes curtailment or a boundary towards women's freedom. Thus for example Adrienne Rich's account of patriarchy explicitly abstracts the position of women from any social context:

Under patriarchy, I may live in purdah or drive a truck; I may rise my children in a kibbutz, or be the sole breadwinner for a fatherless family... I may serve my husband his early-morning coffee within the clay walls of barber village or march in an academic procession; whatever my status or situation, my derived economic class or my sexual preference, I live under the power of the fathers, and have a access only to so much of privilege or influence as the patriarchy is willing to accede to me, and only for so long as I will pay the price for male approval (58).

Adrienne Rich's account of female living inside a boundary itself is a fact that it is natural instinct of male hegemony. Though they may sound protective towards their

female counterparts, but in some sense it really looks like domination. Radical feminists believe that eliminating patriarchy, and other systems which perpetuate the domination of one group over another, will liberate everyone from an unjust society. As a form of practice, radical feminists introduced the use of consciousness raising groups. These groups brought together intellectuals, workers and middle class women in developed Western countries to discuss their experiences. During these discussions, women noted a shared and repressive system regardless of their political affiliation or social class.

Women from time immemorial have been termed as the other of man. We could find in Bible that women were created from the ribs of man. A mark of otherness is one's inability to shape one's psychological, social and cultural identity. Men believe that women cannot transcend because transcendence is a spiritual sublimity which can only be attained by men. They project women as inherently demure creature and man powerful and virile so that the latter can achieve transcendence. Some male critics attribute mysticism to woman. Patriarchal theory maintains that the primary element of patriarchy is the relationship of dominance, where one party is dominant and exploits the other party for the benefit of the former.

But Marian in the novel seems hell bent to defy all the male imposed rules to the female persona, when her husband asks her to be in the home all day, she denies his words by saying that she longs to see the river by herself, and she hates being shut up in the house. Instead she forces Mr. Forrester to go out to see the town (37) Her fluctuating behavior projects that she instead is masculine in her character and her husband is feminine in male standards, as the latter obeys the former's orders.

Before her marriage to Captain Forrester, she had a previous relationship with a man who was her boyfriend named Mr. Frank Ellinger, in one scene in the novel he

tries to dominate Marian, for not replying his letter, he is shown as a robust man, who tries to take some physical advantage with this lady, due to her negligence on replying his letters, he feels offended and ignored so he tries to take revenge on her by physically abusing her, but she refuses instantly and orders him instead and changes his hostile attitude towards her as a caring one: I don't remember! You don't write so many. Be careful, Frank. My rings! You hurt me! Drive slowly, it doesn't matter if we are late for dinner. Nothing matters (41).

We could guess in this line that she is not a normal kind of lady, who just succumbs towards the male desire rather she is such rigid and clever character which can turn a man's lust into something else. At first she blatantly says that she doesn't remember about the letters, and counterattacks Frank by saying that he writes so less letters. But she is not obliged to answer any one of them. She seems clever enough to deviate Franks lust into a wandering, he was attempting to harm her physically but in another instance she changes his mind by asking him instead to take for a ride, and also instructs him to drive slowly and the last line suggest that she is not scared with her husband presence and it won't matter if she arrives home very late. This kind of statement is itself evident that she is not a bit scared about the male characters in the novel and she does what her heart says.

Radical feminist label has been applied in recent years to a confusingly diverse range of theories; it is the site for far-ranging disagreements at all levels of theory and practice. It is essentially a theory of, by and for women; such, it is based firmly in woman's own experiences and perceptions and sees no need to compromise with existing political perspectives and agendas. It sees the oppression of women as the most fundamental and universal form of domination and its aim is to understand and end this. As Redstockings manifesto of 1969 reads:

Woman are an oppressed class; our oppression is total, affecting every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants, and cheap labor. We are considered inferior beings whose only purpose is to enhance man's lives [. . .] we have been kept from seeing our personal suffering as a political condition [. . .] the conflicts between individual men and women are political conflicts that can only be solved collectively [. . .] we identify the agents of our oppression as men. Male supremacy is the oldest, most basic form of domination. All men receive economic, sexual and psychological benefits from male supremacy. All men have oppressed women (598).

Thus Redstockings statement shows that young women role was essentially that of secretary, housewife or sex object, servicing the political, domestic and sexual needs of male activists; any attempt at raising the subject of women's exclusion from decision-making was met with silence, ridicule or contempt.

Marian's conducts itself shows us that she is transcending the orthodox position of a female persona, that of docile and servile, rather she seems quite confident to broke away with such norms and values, whenever her husband takes a nap, she make sure that she leave the house with her effervescent behavior. As one day when her husband slept she asks Niel:

Come, Mr. Forrester is asleep. Let's run down the hill, there's no one to stop us. I'll slip on my rubber boots. No objections! Not a word! I can't stand this house a moment longer. You see there is nothing for me to do. I get no exercise. I don't skate; we didn't in California. I shall dance till I'm eighty. It's good for me I need it (47).

We could assume from the above line that she believes in breaking the rules set by the

patriarchal society. Whenever her husband is taking a nap she escapes from the boredom in the house. Though wives in the old society were to be home bounded, they were to perform the daily chores and wandering around was not cup of their tea, but things are all different with the Marian, she believes in roaming around her house, though she takes time for her husband's nap, but what if once he is already awake when she is out? Yet she is a risk taker and don't have any afterthoughts for such kind of consequences. She doesn't care about any mishap as the second line of this statement shows "no objections", her not tolerating the house itself shows that she is fed up off living with her husband. The latter part of this statement shows how ambitious Marian is, she believes in stretching herself, that getting proper exercise like the male do, she believes that she will continue to be healthy and hale till she turns eighty. This shows that she nurtures feeling of an ambitious yet rebellious woman. The male domain will attribute such quality with another name as Niel's thoughts "Beautiful women, whose beauty meant more than it said was brilliantly always fed by something coarse and concealed? Was that their secret?" (53) Such lines depict that male are on the back-foot by the female radical behavior so they are pretending to find fault in the female behavior regardless of their own male hegemony towards the female genders.

M.H. Abrams in his *Glossary of Literary Terms* mentions:

Western society is pervasively patriarchal, male centered and controlled and conducted so as to subordinate women to men all cultural domains: familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic. Patriarchal ideology pervades those writings, which have been considered great literature. Most of them are thus male characters; Oedipus, Ulysses, Hamlet, Tom- Jones, Huck Finn etc.

Female characters are given marginal and subordinate roles,
represented as complementary in opposition to masculine desires. (84)

The patriarchal power of men over women is therefore basic to the functioning of all societies it extends far beyond formal institutions of power. It overrides class and race divisions, for economic dependency means that women's class identity is a "tangential, vicarious and temporary matter", while "sexism may be more endemic in our society than racism" (*Politics* 38-39)

Marian is shown as a woman, who doesn't believe to be simply a cog to her male companion, rather she is a woman of substance and things to equally participate in the decisions which her husband makes. She in her actions and words moves a step ahead then her husband when suggesting Niel about life and its complexities. Though due to some reasons Marian and her husband had turned bankrupt yet she assures Niel to assist him financially in his endeavors as she says:

Don't forget us, but don't mope. Make lots of new friends. You'll never be twenty again. Take a chorus girl out to supper—a pretty one, mind! Don't bother about your allowance. If you got into a scrape, we could manage a little cheque to help you out, couldn't we, Mr. Forrester? (61)

Such statements might have placed her husband into the back foot, as they had recently gone through financial crisis, it might work as an irony to her husband, in the sense it gives the negative connotation that a man who is earning for a family has turned into an impotent subject. Though she knows the negative aspect of her line, she is least hesitant to put her mind in front of her husband and Niel. She even jokes with Niel to make new friends and also a girlfriend. And pretty mind in the above statements suggest that her husband might be dull, as he lost all his property and

turned bankrupt. Her intention is to plummet her husband identity and making him realize that he was not in the right track and he doesn't have the rights to dominate a woman, as from the male observing nature he was male no more, as he was unable to support his family. Thus Marian announcing towards providing Niel financial assistance and asking her husband in a mocking way indicates that she is making fun of her husband.

She is a woman who has the guts to show the male persona their own traits, which are unknown to them, as she points indirectly towards her husband's flaws, but she is outright to present Niel's specialty too when she visits his house:

And how handsome he's grown! Isn't the old judge proud of you! He called up last night and began sputtering, 'It's only fair to warn you Ma'm that I've very handsome boy over here.' As if I hadn't known you would be! And now you're a man, and have seen the world! (66)

Marian seems crossing her lines of male domination with the above statements she has made. As male feelings is to attribute female with certain things such as rose and moon. As Simone De-Beauvoir wrote in her second sex that from time immemorial women were attributed with different terms by the male domain sometimes love, fragile and delicate beings, and even sometimes they were compared with orgies and demons, but in the above lines we could see Marian praising and defining a male persona, which itself shows the rebellious nature of this lady protagonist of the novel.

As for some radical feminists, the whole idea of the competitive pursuit of power is rejected as an embodiment of male values, and conventional politics is abandoned: organizational hierarchies are avoided; political struggle is relocated from the ballot-box to the bedroom, and separatism is favored over participation in existing organizations or institutions, which are seen as a mere playground for male egoists.

For others, however, the identification of patriarchal power within the state is an insight that can further the feminist cause by providing a more realistic assessment of political possibilities than that provided by the liberal approach.

Marian is a woman who has a rebellious attitude towards the male dominated society. She believes equality with the masculine world, she would rather demand for equal position with her male counterparts. As we could assume from her conversation with Niel regarding female uprising and equality:

And tell me Niel, do women really smoke after dinner now with the men, nice women? It's all very well for actresses, but women can be attractive if they do everything that men do. I think just now it's the fashion for women to make themselves comfortable, before anything else (68).

Her defiant nature itself presents a strong reason that women are subjected to be treated equally and they should instead get a chance to smoke with the male in some occasions too, though to our eye it might sound rather absurd, but her reason that women looks attractive while smoking shows that she is inclined to defeat male perspective of not allowing women to smoke, but Marian believes that if men could smoke than why does it matters when women do. She believes that women should be comfortable doing things rather than strictly following the male parameters of doing this things and boycotting another things. Main thing is women should feel comfortable in whatever they do and must not have concern over the male idea of social etiquette for women.

Normally we had seen male dominating female, but in this novel we could see a different story, Marian is the center character and she is dominating her male counterparts. Her radical thoughts can be seen when she says to Niel that her presence

is solely weighty to the house in front of her husband, as she retorts: “That house! Nothing is ever done there unless I do it, and nothing ever moves unless I move it.”

(69) Her words reverberates that her husband is mere a statue in the house, she is the sole proprietor and owner and his works remains only in words, and he is similar to a non-living being in the house hold. Thus, her words might sound harsh but in real sense she is radical with her thoughts.

She believes in taking her own decision as Niel argues and tells her that she shouldn't care about Ivy Peters, the judge who is impudent with her. But she instantly argues back and says:

He has a lease for five years, and he could make it very disagreeable for us, don't you see? Besides, there's more than that. He's invested a little money for me in Wyoming, in land. He gets splendid land from the Indians some way, for next to nothing. Don't tell your uncle; I've no doubt it's crooked (75).

The lines which is depicted above gives us a vivid idea that Marian is a shrewd character, who knows how a business is conducted. She is shown a woman with grit, though Ivy Peter had once treated her very badly, yet she is firm with her negotiation with him, as she knows well that, she can dominate later part of the preceding when things works well with them. She is a woman who denies the old image of a woman and assimilates with new one. As we could see from the lines below which she converses with Niel:

I could dance all night and not feel tired. I could ride horseback all day and be ready for a dinner party in the evening. I had no clothes, of course; old evening dresses with yards and yards of satin and velvet in them, but I looked well enough! I always look better after the first

glass, it gives me a little color, its only thing that does. When I'm alone here for months, I plan and plot (77).

Marian's above statement give us her confidence defined in words, though she is female, the male society has always attributed this female world as a weak and docile being, but her statements shows that she is not demure rather she has the potential and zeal to fight with male parameters. She bluntly expresses her desire for alcohol, in male world woman's affiliation with binge drinking is considered as an inappropriate act, which is abhorred by the male dominated society, but Marian is shown breaching such rules and expressing her own desire of drinking without caring for the male dominated society. She is not a housewife material woman rather, in her leisure time she plans and plot for her future endeavors. She is shown as a woman with masculine traits and strength in her character is vividly presented in the above lines.

She is a woman who could make the male shiver by her act of stubbornness and if her longing is not fulfilled then she will hit the ground with her leather rubber boots with full fury and such things will make the spectator shiver with fear, as it happened on one stance when she was talking with Nie (80).

Her relations with her male counterparts are very slippery, she believes that if male has the audacity to dupe their female companion than she too could perform such things. So when she hears that her previous boyfriend was married with another woman she calls him to give some advice and a bitter lesson to him, we could see from her telephone conversation with her earlier boyfriend Frank Ellinger:

Is that you Frank? This is Marian. I won't keep you a moment. You were asleep? So early? That's not like you. You've reformed already, haven't you? That's what marriage does, they say. No, I wasn't

altogether surprised. You might have taken me into your confidence, though. Haven't I deserved it? (82)

Initially she seems courteous talking with Frank in the above lines but as the line moves forward she is shown taking irony as a weapon. She is sarcastic in the sense, she is giving suggestion regarding marriage in the first part, but latter on she demands attention, that why she was not informed regarding the marriage. She is not a woman who should be kept in dark for a long time, though she was married earlier than her boyfriend, but she demands explanation that why she was not informed about the development. As the conversation moves forward she doesn't leave any words and any stone unturned by her harsh words, she says:

Play safe! When have you ever played anything else? You know, Frank, the truth is that you're a coward; a great hulking coward. Do you hear me? I want you to hear! I don't want you to come here! I never want to see you again while I live, and I forbid you to come and look at me when I'm dead. I don't want your hateful eyes to look at my dead face. Do you hear me? Why don't you answer me? Don't dare to hang up the receiver, you coward! Oh, you big... Frank, Frank (83).

The above statements presents Marian's bitter feelings towards Frank, it's her valiant words that made Frank mum. He was just spell bounded by her sudden outburst. She was just firing words and he was unable to retort him. We could see her sharp and pointed words towards Frank, her valiant words pushed Frank to the back foot and he was offended for sure. Right from the beginning of her statement she is mocking Frank for not playing safe, though we are not aware what did she meant by her words, as Cather too in her novel didn't mentioned it clearly, but we could guess by the fact

that she is blaming Frank of not being a proper human being. She even moves ahead by saying him a coward. She proclaims to not see him in her life, and after death too she is reluctant to show up her cold and lifeless face to Frank. She is angry with Frank and hurls him with her furious words.

Political feminists believe that politics has been historically dominated by the masculine to express their identity implicitly or explicitly. Women have been driven to private sphere. Despite their active participation in French revolution, post-revolutionary regime they are excluded from full political citizenship. Men believe that women cannot transcend because transcendence is a spiritual sublimity which can only be attended by men. They project women inherently demure creature and man powerful and virile so that the later can achieve transcendence. Some male critics attribute mystical to woman. Such notions have been overcome by the lady protagonist of this novel. She is not a demure and docile character rather she is a character which develops towards maturity and domination as the story moves forward.

Her attitude with the male dominated clan is very rigid. She won't tolerate her husband rude behavior and when he was drunk, she orders Niel to take him out of the party as she says: "Better get him out, no matter what, that, and his cigar, are the only pleasures he has left" (88). This line depicts her rebellious attitude towards her husband. She is not taking his bad behavior lightly, she is not a woman who will take her husband's misbehavior taking it as her fate, rather she is a fighter and her radical thoughts are itself proof enough that she is not a lady to be underestimated and messed up with. She changes herself a lot after her husband's death and transfers into a new woman. Once Niel suggest her to stop interacting with Ivy Peters, as he was not a good person, she instantly argues with Niel and says:

Mr. Peters is my lawyer and my tenant; I have to see him, and I'm certainly not going to his office. I can't sit in the house alone every evening and knit. If you came to see me any oftener than you do, what would make talk. He is trying to make this place presentable; pulling down the old barn that had become an eyesore, putting new boards in the porch floor where the old ones had rotted. I know people call me the 'Merry Widow.' I rather like it! (97)

Her rigid strength in the character is shown vividly in the novel, she avoids Niel suggestion and she is not bothered with what the people in the town talks about her, she only cares about her. She doesn't have any complains over the rumors and she is not bothered with any grapevine. She rather enjoys being called by the town people as "Merry Widow", she likes their derogatory meaning of this title. This shows she is a woman who won't care about the peoples conservative thoughts. She means only business so when people in the town talks about any of her relationship or the probable relationship building with Ivy Peters, she confirms that it was only for business sake so after she sells her land and property, in which case Ivy Peters was giving a helping hand, she might leave the town, so she plainly refuses any relationship with Ivy Peters.

Her relationship with Ivy Peters might be true or false but we could see in this case too she doesn't ends up in the dominated side as she orders Ivy Peters with her sour tone:

Are your cocktails ready, Ivy? You will have to wait for me a moment, while I put some powder on my nose. If I'd known how hot it would be tonight, I'm afraid I wouldn't have had a roast for you. I'm browner than the ducks. You can pour them

though. I won't be long (100).

We could make a guess from her statement above that, she is in the dominating position even after her husband's death and though Ivy is her lawyer, who is helping her for getting her property collect a good fortune, she is treating her not equally well, she is ordering him to when to start a dinner, Ivy is guest in her house yet he himself has to prepare his cocktails and he had to wait her for the impending dinner. We could see in the latter part of the novel, after her property is sold by Ivy Peters in reasonable amount, she collects the amount and leaves not only the town but the country to visit and settle in Argentina. Thus we could conclude by the portrayal of characters in the novel that Marian the lady protagonist in the novel strongly belongs to a character who is not easily swept away by the male dominated society, rather she demands her own position and though she seems breaking the rules here and then in the story but in the end she completely emerges as a victor by selling her husband's business posthumously and getting her desired things.

III. Conclusion

As a whole, the novel presents the valiant female character restricting and subverting the notion of the social norms and values. Whatever she does and feels and acts are arrow to the patriarchal standard. Though the male character in the novel is seen dominating Marian in a hidden way but Marian does not stoop over such form of domination and throughout the novel she seems defying such male domination with her swift and effervescent behavior. She is shown as a docile and subservient character, but when the story moves on we see her continuous defiance and escapist route from the household chores and her husband's strict eyesight. It looks at first that she is a like a girl who had just crossed her teen age, but her shrewd behave of governing and assisting her male counterparts is itself evident that she is clever and woman of substance. She now and then is shown breaking the male restricted zones and transcending these so called zones by surpassing such limitations.

A woman, who is married to a man and it beautifully presents the life of a couple living in perfect harmony but as the story moves on, we can see the male character, like in the present world lip-servicing towards the female gender, she is promised a lot by her husband yet delivered very little. Marian's fight with this male society with determination and courage is presented inherently, she has inherent conflict with her husband desires, but as the story moves forward, she comes strongly and her character is consolidated with her radical thoughts and after her husband death, she turns into a woman who is free to do her own things for bettering her living. Though before her husband death she is transcending the limits of the male created rules and taboos by a woman, she tries her very best to live the way of life, she is presented as a fighter and as a determined character, which has the trace of masculinity in her character and the determination to walk step by step with the male

dominated society.

In short we can say Marian represents the new woman. Initially Marian is shown as a homely housewife character, but she has a grit and determination to uproot such character in the novel. She knows the domination laden by her husband and her war with her husband is inherent and she plays her part silently. She is shown placing orders to her husband and breaking the docile image, which the readers might have thought from the start of this novel. We at first might think that she is like other orthodox character in the novel, but her character develops into a robust and haughty. She is shown as a woman who presents her desire and feelings in front of another male persona. To conclude she is a woman who defies the male rule which was attributed to the woman, that a woman should be homely and docile, such traits has been defied by the lady protagonist of this novel.

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