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Subversion of Traditional Gender Role in Erica Jong's *The Fear of Flying*

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Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that Deepak Raj Jaishi has completed his thesis entitled “Resistance to the Traditional Gender Role in Erica Jong’s *The Fear of Flying* ”under my guidance. I recommend this thesis to be submitted to the Research Committee for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled “Resistance to the Traditional Gender Role in Erica Jong’s *The Fear of Flying*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Deepak Raj Jaishi has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

In Erica Jong's *The Fear of Flying*, the main character Isadora resists traditional gender role. She is tempted towards extramarital affair by her nymphomaniac impulse and the compulsion to remain loyal to her husband. Due to her failure to identify the ground reality about the affectionate cooperation of her relatives, she happens to marry a psychotic man. His psychotic temperament and sexual retardation shock her beyond recovery. She discontinues her relation with him and marries Bennett. Despite Bennett's loyalty to her, she is tempted to sleep with other man. However perfect her marital life might be, she is nymphomaniacally urged to sleep with strange man. Her marriage collapses. To her, marriage seems to be a bondage from which extramarital affair can free her. Such rebellious choices and outlook of Isadora makes her socially outlawed and ostracized. She begins to suffer from the fear of being chased by a man who pretends to understand her but finally betrays her. The sinister premonition of being troubled by the so-called honest man dogs her life. She faces alienation and ostracism to secure freedom and to live a life of uncompromising ideal.

I. Conventional Gender Role in Erica Jong's *The Fear of Flying*

This research examines how Isadora, the protagonist in Erica Jong's *The Fear of Flying*, is dissatisfied with the traditional female gender role. When her dissatisfaction with the traditional gender role reaches climax, she rebels against marriage which has been held as an important social institution. Isadora Wing prefers the unconventional things. This preference of Isadora brings her in conflicting relation with the patriarchal society of her time. Isadora is a woman, whose marriage damage, forcing her to seek alternative relation which can be a replacement of marriage. She derives intense pleasure from writing poems and fictions. The idea of reproducing children after marriage is anathema to her. Thinking on the responsibility of begetting children to her husband brings hatred to her. She says funnily that her poems and short stories are the real children she tends to care for.

Fear of Flying is the story of a woman's search for herself. On the surface, it takes place during and after a psychoanalytic convention in Vienna, Austria. It is a record of the emotional frenzy of Isadora's mind. The story begins on the airplane to Vienna, where Isadora is accompanying her husband to the conference. The conference itself is to be a welcoming-home of psychoanalysis to the city from which Sigmund Freud fled before the Nazis in 1938. Isadora herself has a responsibility to write an article for the conference. However, for all intents and purposes she is the traditional wife, going along for the ride. The ride is the first problem. Isadora has a phobia about flying. Nevertheless, she grits her teeth and flies. She focuses mentally in her belief that she is in this way helping keep the plane aloft. In the same way, she handles her other fear of flying as well. She takes off anyway on whatever adventures present them, trying to learn thereby who she is and what she is after.

A large part of Isadora's meditation and wonderings are sexual. She fantasizes about faceless, anonymous sexual encounters with strangers. No sooner do Isadora and Bennett arrive at the conference than she meets the man who will be the focus of her sexual thoughts and actions. Even in her sexual pursuit, she seems to be crazy for zipless fuck. The most ignominious and startling truth about Isadora is that she wants to be fucked violently by another man other than her husband. Though her marriage brings comfort, security, love and affection for her, she is inwardly driven by the sexual fantasy of discovering the body of a strange man. Such a type of unconventional and socially forbidden hunger has become the driving force of Isadora's life.

Isadora's hunger for zipless fuck is not her protest against her marriage because she has no complaints against her second marriage. Nor is it her move towards individual freedom since marriage has not curbed her freedom. Isadora knows that it is ignominious and detrimental to breach the marital tie and social norm for the sake of zipless fuck. Yet she does hang after it. She herself says she does not know what she is doing and where she is heading. Her irrational inclination, her sporadic decision to break her marriage with Bennett and her inability to curb her socially forbidden desires push her life to the traumatic corner from which she hardly recovers.

In parallel to this, the lingering patriarchal biases are also helpful in the inception of her troubled condition. Her first husband stoops fucking her like a machine for a long time. After some months he forcibly inserted his penis into her mouth. All these aggressive and insane activities of Brian paralyze Isadora. The moment she knows Brian is psychotic; she breaks her marriage with him. She abandons him. It is natural for Isadora to discontinue her marital relation with Brian since he is aggressive and puzzlingly psychotic. But the society in which she lives, denounces her as a

callous and insensitive bitch who quits her husband when he is hospitalized and in an urgent need of her help and care.

The patriarchal society is intolerant of Isadora's inclination of Isadora's inclination towards the different. Isadora is not so committed and assertive as she appears to be. To give a different touch to her literary writing, Isadora often dabbles in autobiographical revelry. But Randy dislikes it vehemently. In a moment of fury and ire, Randy calls Isadora's writing as masturbatory and exhibitionistic. Randy admonishes her to quit producing literary rubbishes and reproduce children. For living an abstract, dry and tasteless literary life, Randy blames Isadora. Isadora is accused of sleeping with bald and bleary-eyed professors and writers. Going to the extent of calling Isadora a woman with whorish proclivity, Randy tells her to reproduce baby and enjoy clinging to the secure anchorage of life. Insulted and assaulted by Randy, Isadora is alerted. She instantly feels repentant for being a writer. To write is too equal to her passion. To compel her to stop writing is to kill her vibrant spirit and enthusiasm.

After Randy's insult and invective, Isadora plunges into repentance, lamentation and feelings of futility. All these hurdles and hindrances, which patriarchal society sets for women, affect her. But she acts as though she is endowed with indomitable will. She does not know clearly in concrete terms whether she is on the right track or wrong. After quitting Brain, Isadora marries Bennett. He is liberal enough to handle Isadora and her exotic propensity. Though her marital life with Bennett was harmonious and undisturbed, Isadora quitted Bennett because she found a sexually virile and vigorous man named Adrian. While rejecting Bennett and accepting Adrian, Isadora says she herself does not know what she is doing. She lives with Adrian for some months in London.

Isadora is an American woman whose first marriage crashed and then she marries second times. Her marital life with her second life is not satisfactory. She is immensely oppressed and affected by the oppressive married life and traditional gender role. Her journey to Europe for vacationing brings profound change in her inner self. She freely enjoys her extramarital affair with a man who was already a married man with family and children. The idea of being loyal to her husband disappears as her extramarital affair with Adrian intensifies. The new taste of romantic life and extramarital adventure poison her American notion of femininity and domesticity. Finally she is haunted by her choices and rash decisions taken on the romantic spur of moment. Traveling throughout Europe with a man who is not her husband, she discovers her true self through her complete loss of security.

The journey that the main character takes in order to gain the traits that she sees in her heroines only leads her to find that they were hidden within her. Isadora makes a journey to Europe in the hope of achieving transcendence from the mundane and oppressive life in American society. But she encounters those things which put her on the wrong track. Betraying her husband, she embarks on extramarital affair. After some time her extramarital partner seduces her and abandons her mercilessly.

Eric Jong's novels spark plenty of controversies in the circle of the readers of American readers. Her style of dealing with gender issue has provoked controversies. Amidst controversies also her literary writings carry currency. Assuming arrogant and assertive tone, Jong struggles to project her deep-seated anger and bitterness against the oppressive social codes and cultural conviction. Monica Dickens puts forward the following views regarding *Fear of Flying*:

Compulsive daydreamer Isadora Wing does not want much- just to be free and to find the perfect, guiltless, zipless sexual encounter.

Pursuing this ideal across two continents, she discovers just how hard it can be to make one's dreams come true. Though Isadora fears flying, she forces herself to keep travelling, risking her marriage and even her life for her own special brand of liberation. (40)

Monica Dickens is of the opinion that Erica Joong wants to fly in the open and unbounded sky of individual freedom. But she is not confident inwardly in her individual quest. She is already involved in the bond of marriage. She is expected to obey some codes and conducts. Of course she is embittered by the persistent sense of compulsion. She tends to live a spontaneous life. Yet she trembles at the fantastic idea of flying in the world of absolute freedom.

Henry Miller is the leading American novelist and literary critic. He has criticized *Fear of Flying* in terms of its subversive ethos. He goes so far as to say that *Fear of Flying* is the extension of the theme of his novel *The Tropic of Cancer*. Miller makes the following observation:

The major protagonist's journey to Europe is a symbolic journey. It is a journey of self-realization. Haunted by the danger of self-erasure, she makes a continental journey. She learns about the value and importance of caring one's own self for the sake of living a life of dignity and independent cast of mind. By the time she is about return to America, she had achieved a considerable degree of awakening. Her journey implants in her mind a firm sense of epiphanic consciousness.

(17)

Miller assumes that the protagonist's journey to Europe brings profound transformation in her life. But Miller does not talk about how lower she had to fall in order to achieve the higher level of awareness as to the shifting notion of gender

relation and identity. For the sake of cultivating dynamic sense of life, she had to become the cheater and betrayer.

Andrew Sander is one of the noted critics of Erica Jong. He judges Erica's novel on the basis of her power to coin new terms and neologisms to hint at her original idea. Andrew puts forward the following opinion:

This novel of Jong helps the emergence of new notion of sexual freedom and sexual revolution. Jong comes across a new kind of sexual relationship. To describe this new kind of sexual intercourse with a lover a married woman prefers, Jong coins a new term 'zipless fuck'. Zipless fuck denotes that kind of sexual intercourse which is devoid of affection, understanding and familiarity. Such a relation can occur between a married woman and her unprecedented lover. This novel is full of new literary coinage and allusions. (27)

To match with the new notion of radical feminism, Jong coins new terms like zipless fuck and other new phrasal expressions. These terms and phrasal expressions exemplify the fact that Jong is dissatisfied with the languages of dominant discourses. Perhaps, Jong wants to maintain the radical sense of decorum.

Robert Bernard reveals the hidden theme of the double consciousness of those women who conscious of the growing affect of feminism. Due to the excessive exposure of Isadora to the doctrine of feminism, he has lost the grace and benefit of coherent consciousness. She is prone to double consciousness. Bernard opines the following view:

Isadora is torn between the dull security of her marriage to Bennett and the unstable excitement of an affair with Adrian. Having both passion and security, it seems, is too much to ask. Isadora is also a writer who

has struggled for years to find the confidence and discipline to turn her craft into a profession. She may be intelligent and educated, but she can also be terribly immature and irrational. She's not a heroine I'd aspire to be but I admire the fact that she articulates and struggles with her conflicts, and this is where the novel has its greatest strengths - it's sincere and insightful in depicting dilemmas some women struggle with. (37)

Robert Bernard sees no difference between the life of Erica Jong and the protagonist, Isadora. He traces the similarity proximity between authorial life and the individual life of protagonist. Extreme feminist consciousness harms her conscience. Fear of Flying is obviously semi-autobiographical, and Jong seems determined to show off Isadora's intellectual prowess.

Hazra Sudeshna is rather interested in exposing the loophole of this novel. But she does not decline to hail this novel as the remarkable piece of post-feminism. Sudeshna laments that the author has not made effort to distinguish between the voice of nymphomaniac woman and a woman with fragile confidence. Sudeshna contends in the following way:

The novel is much less cheerful than the cover would indicate and far less about the differences conformism and non-conformism. But once readers adjust their expectations accordingly, there is still much enjoyment to be found between these pages, especially for those who enjoy reading about the immigrant experience. There is some difficulty in separating the voices of Randy and Isadora, especially in the beginning of the novel but that becomes easier as the novel progresses. Overall, this had a few problems structurally. It belongs to the category

of woman's writing at the time in which feminism has reached the stage of decadence. (38)

Without having solid knowledge about the decadence of feminism, it would be challenging to make sense out of Isadora's journey and struggle to maximize extreme sexual ecstasy. But the striking aspect of his novel is the boldness and superior rational audacity of female characters who love to handle the suffering of their lives singlehandedly. In this regard, Sudeshna's viewpoint sounds highly contextual and identifiable. But the post-feminist quality of this text carries weight.

In the literary life of Isadora, her personal life and private experiences have left profound impact. The loving and affectionate nature of Bennett has found reflection in her style of caring the sexually virile and virulent man. This kind of conception is developed about Isadora is developed by Kristian Herron. Herron contend:

The ongoing character development of Isadora continues to entertain the reader in this novel. Much of her personal life has come to light over the last few novels and this one adds another layer to the story. Isadora, and those around whom she is surrounded, continue to grow and develop, entertaining the reader throughout. With some great plot and excellent storylines, Jong does not disappoint or leave the reader bored. (22)

To expose prominently the values, ideals and spirit of a character in the center of the novel is to prioritize the art of character portrayal. Apart from dramatizing events in this novel, Jong has given considerable degree of attention to the technique of character portrayal. The real strength of this novel arises solely from the perspective of character portrayal. Herron comes to conclude that Erica lacks substantial power to

dramatize the decisive events of this novel. Rather she is well-versed in the art of portrayal character that is dramatically convincing.

Peggy Antrobus takes *Fear of the Flying* as the dark psychological tale. Opposite experiences are juxtaposed side by side to intensify the psychological effects of incidents and events that occur in the daily professional life of several characters like Briar, Randy and others. Antrobus's view regarding the psychological effect of character is mentioned below:

Writing one of her best, Erica Jong has given us a dark psychological tale, wound tightly with familiar friends and foes. Followers of Isadora will revel in this undertaking. Her relationships with family, friends, and writers --- as well as the truth and the imagined --- all collide in this intriguing story. Beautiful women are tempted towards fascists, according Isadora's opinion. (68)

Though characters are manipulated to act realistically; setting and other narrative atmosphere remain mysterious. Mystery is the most desirable component of crime thriller fiction. Without it, crime fiction loses its identity. But to introduce elements of realism within the framework of mystery is to show a great stroke of action too.

Building suspense is another way to create aura of mystery.

Stefanie Castillo is one of the leading critics of Erica Jong. She goes so far as to seek elements of realism even in the crime fictions. She studies Jong's novels in proximity with the realistic novels of Charles Dickens. Castillo gives the following view in this regard:

Erica Jong retains that finer Dickensian indignation with the ways of the world that had been neglected by the small landscapes of much so-called serious writing. Her *Fear of the Flying* is her most engrossing

effort in years. The world of despair and elation, love and loyalty as created by Erica Jong is fascinating, richly drawn and truly memorable.

She is adept in capturing the passion of psycho-feminist techniques.

(55)

Within the world of love, betrayal and deception, commitment and insanity, Erica has succeeded in dealing with the issues of love and loyalty, trust and the transaction of faith. Castillo assumes that Erica Jong is far more ahead in diversifying scope of psychological fiction by adding variety of issues and themes. It is this skill which has immortalized Erica Jong. Most of Erica's fictions seem to be the hotchpotch of variegated items which are equally thrilling.

According to Jessie Daniel, Isadora is a multidimensional character with twisted and blurred ambition. Yet she is endowed with all the typical qualities of a normal woman. Her power to remain cool and calm in the disastrous moment is highly praiseworthy. Another important fact about her is that she has an insatiable hunger for sex. Under the pressures which can push characters to schizophrenic suffering, Isadora continues to work heedless of the consequences of her activities. Concerning unique personality of Isadora Daniel discloses the following view:

Isadora is a multidimensional character, is believable with strengths and weaknesses. Her joys, sorrows, triumphs, and defeats become the reader's own. Facing a very difficult personal loss fuels her desire to explore the unhampered and unknown territory of life. She encounters difficulties as she races headlong toward the thrilling conclusion which moves at James Bond pace (21)

Daniel claims that Isadora is the realistic character. Her own realistic disposition reflects superb ideals with which everybody is tempted to identify. She has both

strength and weakness. This is what makes her a normal being. But her dedication to her normal side of existence is her distinctive merit. No one can deny the fact that it is her composure and perseverance that have demystified the puzzling case of love and betrayal.

Although all these critics and reviewers examine this novel from different points of view none of them notice the issue of changing gender role in *Fear of Flying*. Since, the topic of the subversion of gender role is untouched and unexplored the researcher claims that it is the fresh, new and original topic. The traditional gender role challenged by Isadora needs to be examined within the broader analytical framework. By using the theory of Judith Butler and Monic Wittig, the researcher probes into this topic. The sufferings faced by Isadora due to her decision to reject the stereotypical gender role constitute the chief domain of this research.

The sexual adventure, deviant sexual passions and going beyond the limits of traditional sexual mores are some of the specific areas which would be probed with an analytical insight. According to Miriam Cooke, “The sexual adventure undertaken by the narrator and other youths needs to be examined within the broader analytical framework. The feminine could never be the mark of a subject”(87). Further, the feminine could not be theorized in terms of a determinate relation between the masculine and the feminine within any given discourse. The relation between masculine and feminine cannot be represented in a signifying economy. The masculine constitutes the closed circle of signifier and signified. The distinctions among the above positions are far from discrete. Each of them can be understood to problematize the locality and meaning of both the subject and gender. Luce Irigaray posits, “The interpretive possibilities of gender are in no sense exhausted by the

alternatives suggested above” (43). The consequence of such sharp disagreements about the meaning of gender establishes the need for a radical rethinking.

The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains “the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it. When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice” (Wittig 65). With the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one, and woman and feminine male body as easily as a female one. This radical splitting of the gendered subject poses yet another set of problems.

In fact, each societal construct of masculinity varies over time and according to culture, age and position within society. Barbara Smith makes the following commentary on the notion of gender dynamic:

Men, though, while unique individuals, share one thing in common gender privilege. The socialization can lead boys and men to feeling justified in subordinating women and girls. Exclusive role that women play in this socialization process itself is confining. The privileging of boys begins early with differential child-rearing strategies and parental expectations. Such strategies are usually reinforced by the more-present mother. (53)

Women, therefore, also contribute to the perpetuation of male behavior and males’ sense of superiority. In effect, these sex roles confine people, forcing us to be what others want us to be. Gendered norms and behaviors are assimilated rather than being natural or genetic. While mass culture likes to assume that there is a fixed, true masculinity.

Yvonne Keller and Michael Warner assert that when human being's deep and innate desire face harrowing situation, any kind of constructed notions of heterosexuality evaporates. In his book, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics and the Ethics of Queer Life*, Michael Warner says that "In keying queer desire enhanced by liberal agency to personal discovery, as well as addressing the question of legitimacy, these accounts gesture toward one of liberalism's intractable values"(46).

This thesis will have three chapters. In the first chapter, the researcher introduces the topic, elaborates the hypothesis, and quotes different critics' views regarding to the text. In the same chapter, the researcher shows the departure also. In the second chapter the researcher makes a thorough analysis of the text by applying the feminist insight. The last chapter contains the conclusive ending of the research.

II. Subversion of Traditional Gender Role in Erica Jong's *The Fear of Flying*

This research deals with a woman named Isadora Wing launches frontal attack on the traditional gender role which American society demands strongly. Isadora Wing is an American woman who is a writer by profession. She is disinclined towards the social obligation to obey traditional gender role. The idea of being a mother is allergic and anathema to her. She is gifted with the innate talent for writing on various subjects ranging from the trivial issues to the serious issues of literary significance. She feels circumscribed in American society. The traditional gender role fixed for woman in the patriarchal society of America stunted her passion for exploring the unknown arena of joys and freedom. She no longer likes to be circumscribed and confined by social restrictions and conducts which an American woman is likely to face. By nature Isadora is a woman having uncompromising ideals.

Freedom is what she naturally sighs for. Of course all the norms and practices available in patriarchal society of America are not conducive to the struggle of women for freedom and identity. The dominant patriarchal ideology of the then American society favors those women who are willing to conform to the patriarchal status quo and ready to internalize traditional gender role. But Isadora does not seem to be fit into the mould of patriarchal society of America. Because she is a writer by profession, she has to take the risk of exploring the unexpected territory of human experiences. By nature she is audacious and inquisitive.

The dominant social ideology and practices do not encourage her to cross the boundary of normative values. Isadora is, right now, living with her second husband named Bennett Wing. He is by occupation a psychoanalyst. Isadora's first marriage with Brian crashed without the utter dismay of Isadora herself. Then she chose Bennett as her second husband. Her marital relation with her second husband Bennett is

running smoothly and harmoniously. Over time, Isadora begins to feel deeply deprived and desperate at the core of her heart. She holds the opinion that marriage facilitates the fulfillment of one type of urges and interest. But it substantially, it restricts other urges and impulses. The following lines describe how marriage restricts the other side of Isadora's impulse:

What about all those other longings which after a while marriage did nothing much to appease? The restlessness, the hunger, the thump in the gut, the thump in the cunt, the longing to be filled up, to be fucked through every hole, the yearning for dry champagne and wet kisses, for the smell of peonies in a penthouse on a June night, for the light at the end of the pier in Gatsby. (9)

The social institution, marriage is called into question by Isadora. It is good to seek freedom. Within the restriction, it is good to widen the horizon of freedom. Isadora passes through those phases in her life over which she finally loses control and command. When women are compelled to assume traditional gender role and forced to make retreat from new modernist role, conflict and crisis arise. In their search for new experiences and freedom, women have to encounter several factors which drag their progressive pace and push them ahead on the way to transformation. As a result, they are disturbed and disappointed by the conflicting attitude.

The researcher makes use of the theory of Butlerian's feminism. The core concept of Butler's performance based gender is instrumental in conducting the thorough analysis of the text, *The Fear of Flying*. Iris Marian Young says that "Postmodern feminism might have begun somewhere in the early 1980s with the coinage of the term post-feminism which in fact looks critically at the various feminist theories of the past"(65) especially from the second wave of feminism. It also

coincides with the third-wave feminism which began in the early 1990s. According to Marion, Postmodern feminist thought avoids the essentialist definitions of femininity that “was propagated during the period of modern feminism. Modern feminism worked with the existentialist view on women which establishes the argument that “one is not born a woman”(76). Postmodern feminism is a body of scholarship that questions and rejects traditional essentialist practices, as established in and by modernity.

The general premise of postmodern social theory is a rejection of the western ideal of establishing universal grand narratives. Postmodern theory directly challenges claims of a unified subject. Postmodern theory and practices recognize differences, making room for all to contribute and thus having a view from everywhere. The combination of postmodernist theory and feminism allows for, what Mary Douglas calls, “A questioning of essentialist approaches within and outside of feminism. Postmodern thought follows early feminist challenges to dualistic concepts, such as modernist practices of objectivity being favored over subjectivity”(39). It hardly encourages readers to take calmly the belief in rational over irrational thought, and the strength of nature over cultural constructions.

The way women are brought up in society makes them fundamentally different from other men. No matter how much she struggles to be equal to men, they remain substantially different because they grow up by assimilating different sort of norms and values. The internalized codes and conducts compel woman to act and behave in a different way. The demonstration of difference brings them in conflicting relation with society. The society is too dogmatic and rigid to make dominant practices flexible.

Whatever stability and security marriage brings Isadora accepts. She is satisfied with this bright aspect and prospect of marriage. Yet she comes to know that the fresh joy soon sinks below the marriage boredom. Despite the love and affection from her husband, Isadora feels an incalculable hunger for the body of other males. She is inwardly tempted to establish extramarital affair. Slowly and gradually she asks for greater degree of freedom from her husband. The entire American society seems to be restrictive and boring to her. To avoid the pressures of the mundane and monotonous American life, she persuades her husband to make a tour to Europe. To participate in grand conferences on psychoanalysis which is scheduled to take place in Vienna, both husband and wife travel to Europe on plane.

Within a few days of their staying in Vienne, Isadora comes to befriend Adrian who soon appears to be sex dynamo to Isadora. The sex appeal, robust body and frank behavior of Adrian bring Isadora closer to him. Within a flash of moment she happens to know that Adrian has the intense and formidable passion for sexual intercourse with her. The more Isadora's relation with Adrian develops, the more frankly she talks about where lie the discomforts and dissatisfactions of her married life with Bennett. She is not fully able to point out that Bennett is not the good husband who has robbed her freedom and kept her dissatisfied. But Isadora becomes increasingly aware of her new and fresh desires. She is violently turned towards the bliss and joy of extramarital affair. By dodging the eyes of her husband, she goes on to sleep with Adrian. Her extramarital affair with Adrian deepens. She is told by her extramarital partner to abandon her husband. But she does not have any strong reason to abandon Bennett. As a result she is most of the time lost in the turmoil and tension. She is divided between Bennett and Adrian.

At times she is haunted by the traitorous idea of betrayal in her marital relation with Bennett. Though guilty for breaking the tie of matrimony, she is equally excited and frenzied for getting depthless sexual satisfaction from Adrian. As a result, she could not handle her own life. She says she does not know what she is doing and where she is drifting. While befriending Adrian as a sex partner, she could not help comparing him with her husband Bennett. She compares the qualities of her husband with the qualities of her extramarital partner, and finds her husband lagging far behind. Her liking and embarrassing confession of her hunger for extreme satisfaction seclude her from her own reasonable understanding. The following lines show how she compares Adrian and Bennett and flatly challenges the idea of loyalty:

Adrian sensed my explosive feelings and kept looking at Bennett to see what he knew. They only represented the struggle within me.

Bennett's careful, compulsive, and boring steadfastness was my own panic about change, my fear of being alone, and my need for security.

I had never been able to make peace between the two halves of myself.

All I had managed to do was suppress one hold at the expense of the other. I had never been happy with the bourgeois virtues of marriage, stability and work above pleasure. I was too curious and adventurous not to chafe under those restrictions. But I also suffered from night terrors and attacks of panic at being alone. (80)

What brings intense and extreme contentment to Isadora is sleeping with another man except her husband. She feels bore and monotonous to sleep with her husband. She has the irresistible urge to sleep with strange man who is completely different from her husband. The reasons behind her fervent hunger for the strange male body are

numerous. The restrictive measures of marriage are also responsible for it. Apart from this reason, there are several other reasons too.

What is known as postmodern feminism is often associated with the work of Judith Butler. Entire gamut of Butler's thought is marked, in part, by a linguistic turn. This tenet of thought puts forward a view of gender as a discursive construction and performance rather than a biological fact. Butler's view in this regard is cited below:

These theorists criticize the conflation of sex and gender, essentialist generalizations about men and women, and the tendency to view gender as fixed, binary, and determined at birth, rather than a fluid, mobile construct that allows for multiple gender expressions. The gender dichotomy of man/woman so pervasive in Western culture can be understood in terms of the cultural imperative to be heterosexual.

(59)

As claimed by Butler, postmodern feminism rejects a dualistic view of gender, heterosexual normativity, and biological determinism. They point to the inseparability of the body from language and social norms. Postmodern feminists argue against the assumption that all women share a common oppression.

Being within the marital tie, she seems to be attached to her husband on the one hand, and on the other she sleeps with another man named Adrian. She does not think about abandoning her husband and being in relation with another sex partner like Adrian. She candidly and ashamedly says "my hunger probably had no connection with Bennett. Why did it have to be either or like that? I simply wanted them both. It was the choosing that was impossible. Adrian drove us to back to our hotel"(82). Isadora's blatant and embarrassing hunt for extramarital adventure makes her an outsider within the patriarchal society she lives in.

When Adrian tells her to abandon her husband and leave in England with him, she is not able to decide what to do and what not to do. She is hoodwinked by the miracle of Adrian's fucking power. Yet she is charmed by the liberal and tolerant outlook of her husband. Deep down in her mind she has the awareness that it is not right to take part in the extramarital spree while her husband loves her affectionately. But the surface of her mind is brimming with sexual fantasies and sporadic hunger. At times Isadora thinks about quitting Vienne and going back to New York. But she cannot do so because she wishes for the complete escape from New York because New York suggests bondage to her. She produces the impression that she is a writer and she has to accept and explore any kind of strange experiences and areas. The following lines illustrate how she responds to the ostracizing treatment by her friend:

I do not even have the guts to stay with him. If you are in love with him-why do not you commit yourself to it and meet his kids and go to London. But you cannot even do that. You do not know what you want. He paused. Have I ever done it before? Have I? Even when you were horrible to me, even that time in Paris when you would not speak to me even those years in Germany when I was so unhappy, when I needed someone to turn to, when I felt so lonely and shut out by you and your constant depression- I never got involved with anyone else. You certainly provoked me then. You used to say you did not know if you wanted to be married to me. (142)

Bennett rightly says that Isadora does not know what she really wants. Isadora too has the same line of perception. She asks questions to herself-why she longs for violent sexual contact with a strange man other than her husband. Marriage looms as the restrictive force to her. She thinks about breaking her marriage with Bennett for

no reason at all. Her desire for extramarital affair and her anxiety of being faithless to her husband create the incurable confusion in her. She remains confused and confounded when the question of choosing the track of marital loyalty or the adventure of extramarital spree. Her extramarital hunt at the cost of marital loyalty appears to be an indicator of how bold and assertive Isadora is. Her challenge to the stability and security brings pain along with the superb sense of individual freedom.

Donna Haraway argues that “in a culture of high technology, the boundaries are no longer clear between human and animal, animal and machine, or human and machine”(136) While not a new observation, Haraway recasts it as a windfall for feminist theory. Hierarchical dualisms such as man/woman, heterosexual/homosexual, and white/black are no longer stable in high-tech culture. Haraway argues that taking the cyborg “as a metaphor for socialist feminist theoretical interventions can be useful for feminist theory. It can help feminist theorists imagine a world that is not seen in or confined to hierarchical dualisms. The cyborg resists and eludes final definitions” (127). There are three potential ways to use the cyborg metaphor as an intellectual tool. Haraway illustrates these ways in the following way:

First, the cyborg as an analytical tool assists in framing and organizing a politically invested cartography of present-day social and cognitive relations. Second, the cyborg functions in a normative mode to offer a more complex and nuanced evaluation of social practices. Third, it as a utopian manifesto for imagining ways to reconstruct subjectivity in the age of advanced technology.(117)

Haraway’s above-mentioned modalities of using cyborg seem pretty unconvincing. Neither feminism nor postmodernism lends itself to clear definition. Both encompass a broad spectrum of theories. Postmodernism defies definition, even description. In its

deconstructive form, it is anti-foundational and skeptical of any form of certainty. The various theories which are drawn together under the umbrella of postmodernism all have in common a repudiation of early modernism. Both feminism and postmodernism have sought to develop new paradigms of social criticism which do not rely on traditional philosophical underpinnings.

Isadora finally leaves her husband for Adrian because Adrian can fuck her formidably and in a more satisfying. She has chosen to leave with Adrian without getting tied in the bond of marriage. She comes to know that in such a life also there are the restrictive measures. Such life put punitive measures on her wildly insouciant life. Wherever she lives and whomsoever she interacts with, patriarchal ideology aggressively holds sway over her. Her ignominious and iconoclastic search for freedom from the restrictive measures of marriage leaves her in the lurch.

Isadora had expected that her new life in London with her extramarital partner, Adrian, would be brimful of limitless joy. She had the anticipation that Adrian alone would be the first man to satisfy her nymphomaniac desire. She hoped that he would fuck her like a machine and give her utmost joy and freedom as well. She had chosen such sort of life with Adrian by kicking her husband because she wanted to taste the new experience of living together yet feeling apart and unhindered by each other. But in this sort of unrestrained and unconfined life, begin to reveal its contradictions and limitations. The revelation of the drawbacks and limitations of living together compel her to cast aside naïve and untested assumptions regarding to extramarital adventure and living together. Except repentance for breaking a harmonious marital relation with Bennett she has no option. The following lines describe how Isadora comes to term with the harsh reality of life, no matter how adventurous it might be:

Adrian made the rules, but he also had a tendency to change them frequently to suit how himself. In this respect, he reminded me of my older sister Randy when she and I were kids. She taught me to shoot craps when I was seven but she used to change the rules around from minute to minute depending on what she rolled. After a ten minute session with her, I would be divested of the entire contents of my carefully hoarded piggy bank, while she wound up as flush as Sky Masterson. No matter how Lady Luck had smiled on me, I always ended up a loser. (194)

Betrayal is supposed to bring profound sense of happiness and freedom in her life. That is why she takes ignominious steps like dumping her husband down and immersing in the extramarital adventure. It is difficult to tell pointedly if marriage as social institution robbed her sense of individual freedom or her unguided feminist tendency landed her in the embarrassing plight.

Some fear that postmodernism's repudiation of the subject would eliminate feminism as a social-political power. There would be no subject woman and consequently no woman's movement. The concept of gender has long been central to feminist thought. However, its evolution over the past twenty years has resulted in a growing consensus among feminist theorists that gender relations need not correspond to anatomy. Simon Watney is critical of the trend to trace feminist essence within the transcendental site. His view is presented below:

Postmodernism with its denial of Universalist and transcultural identities such as gender or woman has impacted even further upon the desexualization of gender for those feminist theorists who subscribe to postmodern thought. Gender need not, in fact, be related at all to

anatomical sex. One advantage of such a carefully constructed postmodern feminism is that categories such as the modern, restricted, male-headed, nuclear family would be understood to be historically specific institutional categories. (142)

They would take precedence over ahistorical, functionalist categories like reproduction and mothering. When misery and despair well up in her heart, she is assaulted constantly by sporadic outburst of despair and elation. Her entire life is rendered futile, fruitless. Increasingly she comes to know that her life is like a container without content. Actually, this is the price she has to pay for individual freedom.

When Adrian begins to act in the same way in which every chauvinistic man acts, and when her anticipation from living together falls flat, she becomes restless and repentant. So long as Adrian fucks her ceaselessly and her desires are fulfilled, she feels elated. Isadora alternates between elation and despair:

There was another reason for our heavy drinking: namely my depressions. I would alternate between elation and despair (self hatred for what I had done, dismal despair over being alone with a man who did not love me, anguish about the future I was not supposed to minion), So we got drunk, and in our giggling drunken antics, the despair would get blurred. It would never quite vanish, of course, but it would become easier to bear. Like getting drunk on a plane to ease your fear of flying, you still believe you are going to die whenever the sound of the engines changes, but you do not care anymore. You almost like the idea. (196)

Not only Isadora's marriage crashes but her extramarital relation also crashes. Neither living together nor marriage brings profound sense of inner contentment and depthless sexual satisfaction. Her search for extreme sexual satisfaction is doomed to fail. No matter how adventurous and intense her romantic pursuit might be, it rather puts her in a state of more dissatisfaction. The increasing realization of this reality puts her on the wrong track. She turns to alcoholism. Both Adrian and Isadora drink heavily and fuck each other terribly.

Arguing that not only gender, but sex as well is culturally constructed, Judith Butler suggests that "When the constructed status of gender is theorized as radically independent of sex, gender itself becomes a free-floating artifice. It brings forth the consequence that man and masculine might just as easily signify a female body as a male one"(175). The social and ethical implications and ramifications of the desexualization of gender are significant.

Nicholson Fraser argues that feminism should adopt a carefully constructed postmodernism, taking the best aspects of each. They provide a lucid discussion of the postmodern and feminist critiques of the subject. Their views are cited below:

Postmodernism provides feminism with a critique of feminism's foundationalism and essentialism, while feminism provides postmodernism with feminism's strength as social criticism.

Furthermore, a carefully constructed postmodern feminism would avoid any type of universalisms such as early feminist attempts to find one universal explanation of sexism that would be cross-cultural. (175)

Nicholson and Fraser conclude that carefully constructed postmodern feminism would embrace the death of the subject. Rather than a Universalist notion of woman or feminine, social identity would be a multi-strand conception including class, race,

gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age. Because Isadora challenges the essence of traditional gender dichotomy.

During the time in which she contemplated abandoning her second husband Bennett; Bennett had said that freedom in an illusion. But she had not accepted this view of Bennett. She madly sought for freedom. But now she comes to the painful realization about how hazardous the search for freedom really is. When an individual does not know what he or she really seeks, only confusion and chaos erupts in life. But in Isadora's life, the irresistible lust for sexual contact with the body of a strange man is the real problem. So long as she is trapped in the hook of marriage, she would be deprived of a chance to fulfill her irresistible hunger.

Peculiar sexual hunger for a man other than her husband, unidentified voice within, baffling thump in her gut are some of the inner throbbing of her life. Instead of finding out if these desires and urges are genuine or not, she blindly yields to such desires. The following lines capture how Isadora is endowed with power of endurance to face hazards resulting from her choice of radical path:

Everything, I am very dependent. I fall apart regularly. I go into horrible depressions and hardly come up for air. Besides, no man wants to be stuck with a lady writer. They are liabilities. They daydream when they are supposed to be cooking. They worry about books instead of babies. They forget to clean the house. Jesus Christ! You are some fine feminist. Oh I talk a good game, and I even think I believe it, secretly, I am like the girl in story of O. Every woman adores a fascist, as Sylvia Plath says. I feel guilty of writing poems when I should be cooking. I feel guilty for everything. Women are their own worst enemies. (144)

Isadora composes poems; she writes short stories and novels. She takes subjective approach in choosing and expressing her view. Her creative pursuit has killed her desire for child. She abhors the idea of reproducing children. Her sisters had already given birth to several kids. Isadora has not yet thought about giving birth to children. She maintains that the idea of giving birth to children stunts her creative power.

Rather than choosing children, she chooses the creative pursuit in her life. Her immersion in the creative pursuit at the cost of normal biological duty has alienated her from the normal reality of married life. The idea of being a mother is a burden and a stumbling block on her way to the accomplishment of freedom. The idea of mother is anathema to her. She knows how to get fucked not only by her husband but by unknown stranger whom she meets while travelling to the different places of Europe. Her mad creative pursuit forces her to tread on the forbidden territory.

Isadora expected that writing poems, short stories and novels would enable her to overcome the fundamental drawbacks of her life. She seeks to cope with the disadvantages of not reproducing a child by turning to writing. Right from the age of ten Isadora had initiated her literary pursuit. For her giving birth to a child is almost tantamount to creating a fine piece of poetry. In the name of giving continuity to her creative passion and pursuit, she should not have gone to the extreme. But at last, she discovers the fact that writing has rather brought forth terrible problem like loneliness. More than pride and self-assertiveness, it is loneliness that has appeared as the smart outcome of her singular and undivided involvement in literary creations. The following lines describe how she has to endure extreme loneliness to explore and assert her rush for freedom:

The loneliness of writing terrified me. I looked for every excuse to escape. I had no sense of myself as a writer and no faith in my ability

to write. I could not see then that I had been writing all my life. I had begun composing and illustrating little stories when I was with. I had kept a journal from the age of ten. I was an avid and ironic letter writer from age thirteen and I conspicuously aped the letters of Keats and G. B. S. throughout my adolescence. At seventeen, when I went to Japan with my parents and sisters, I dragged along my Olivetti portable and spent every evening recapitulating the day's observations into a loose leaf notebook. (63)

Isadora seems to be far more assertive and iconoclastic in her personal liking and individual choices. She leaves her first husband and marries Bennett. In the course of time she leaves Bennett and turns to Adrian. Her sister Randy had told her to reproduce a child and enjoy the bliss and contentment of motherhood. But Isadora challenges her sister's suggestions. Thereafter she follows literary pursuit as the substitute to kids. But none of such choices and activities brings comfort, bliss and harmony in her life. For each act she performs she has to repent.

Jane Flax approaches gender from the vantage point of gender relations. Gender relations have for the most part been simply relations of domination. Flax describes gender relations as:

Differentiated and asymmetrical divisions and attributions of human traits and capacities are difficult to chart and document graphically. Through gender relations two types of persons are created: man and woman. Man and woman are posited as exclusionary categories. One can be only one gender, never the other or both. If gender relations are not to continue to be relations of domination, then gender itself needs to be problematized. (173)

Flax eschews Enlightenment essentialisms and universalisms. She, too, finds that feminist notions of self, knowledge, and truth are too contradictory to those of the Enlightenment to be contained within its categories. She suggests that both sex and gender find their origin in social relations, rather than in a natural or essential difference in being.

Most of the writings of Isadora are full of autobiographical elements. Her own personal experiences and incidents are mentioned in her literary writings. Once, in one of her writings Isadora included some personal incidents from the lives of her sister and brother in law. When Isadora's sister Randy comes to know that her own life is described in Isadora's writing, she bursts with anger and blames Isadora's writing as masturbatory and exhibitionistic. Such a blame and invective weaken Isadora mortally. She feels so shocked and estranged that she felt repentant for choosing the literary path. The following lines represent how her sister's fury and ire produce temporarily the restrictive effect in Isadora:

Randy called my poetry masturbatory and exhibitionistic and reproached me with my sterility. You act as if writing is the most important thing in the world, she screamed. I was trying to be rational and calm and well-analyzed about my family that weeks so I was painfully withholding the explosion I felt coming. Randy, I pleaded. I have to think writing is the most important thing in the world in order to go on doing it, but nothing says that you have to share my obsession, so why should I have to share yours? (48)

To dream about carving a literary career and be the advocate of woman's freedom is one thing. Everyone has the right to follow this line of thinking and activities. If a writer succeeds in creating a fine piece of writing out of one's autobiographical

details and private life, it should be considered as the mark of genius. But no author is allowed to tamper into the life of her relatives. Isadora includes incidents from her sister's life. Her sister Randy becomes terribly infuriated. She scolds Isadora harshly calling her masturbatory and exhibitionistic bitch.

Judith Butler, best illustrates the postmodern feminist position with regard to gender. She is profoundly influenced by the thinking of Michel Foucault, especially in regard to the death of the subject and the theory of the body. In agreement with Nicholson and Fraser, but contrary to Flax, Butler questions the "assumption that there is a subject-woman. In fact, the notion of the decentered self is essential to her postmodern critique of gender" (171). The consequences which follow from a thoroughly postmodern feminist theory of gender become most apparent in Butler's work. Citing Foucault's idea that juridical systems of power produce the subjects they subsequently come to represent, she notes the importance of the question of the subject for politics in general.

Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow. Rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time. It is instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts. These acts give the illusion of an abiding gendered self. Butler's view is mentioned below:

The body performs or acts out what the dominant heterosexual culture determines to be normative for one sex or the other. In this way the dominant heterosexual culture conceals the fact that gender is performative. It need not be limited to those acts which the dominant culture determines to be normative heterosexual acts. The internalized norms inscribe interiority in female body. (147)

The gendered body has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. As regards the individual nature, woman is defective and misbegotten, for the active force in the male seed tends to the production of a perfect likeness in the masculine sex; while the production of woman comes from some defect in the active force or from some material indisposition.

Insensitivity on the part of her family members like mother, sister and brother in law for her unusual and quirky passions is also accountable for Isadora's traumatic life. Scolded bitterly by her sister and brother in law for madly choosing writing rather than a child, Isadora thinks about reshuffling her choices. She thinks about renouncing her passion for writing and reproduces a child for Bennett. She is assertive and non-assertive; she is committed and non-committed at the same time. She is utterly unaware of why she is choosing and why she is abandoning. Her entire life is governed by forces over which she has no control. The following lines reflect one glimpse of Isadora's troubled condition:

Really, I thought, sometimes I would like to have a child. A very wise and witty little girl who would grow up to be the woman I could never be. A very independent little girl with no scars on the brain or the psyche prefers no toadying servility and no ingratiating seductiveness. A little girl who said what she meant and meant what she said. A little girl who was neither bitchy nor mealy-mouthed because she did not hate her mother or herself, Isadora is keen and avid for strange joy.

(51)

Randy advises her to reproduce a child and make her marital life productive. In the face of the futility of her literary life, she is on the verge of thinking about changing the direction of her life. But she is trapped in such a condition which does not allow

her to take decision freely and spontaneously. She is hassled by questions. She is so engrossed in her past pattern of behaviors and thoughts that it takes her sufficient time to decide. She is slow to follow a new advice since her head is brimful of questions and curiosities.

Butler characterizes gender as the effect of reiterated acting. It produces the effect of a static or normal gender while obscuring the contradiction and instability of any single person's gender act. This effect produces a narrative that is sustained by the tacit collective agreement to perform. On Butler's hypothesis, the socially constructed aspect of gender performativity is most obvious in drag performance. Rather, Butler suggests that what is performed can only be understood through reference to what is barred from the signifier within the domain of corporeal legibility. Butler explains that “a masculine gender is formed from the refusal to grieve the masculine as a possibility of love. A feminine gender is formed through the fantasy which the feminine is excluded as a possible object of love” (154).

Amelia Jones Amelia proposes that the erstwhile mode of viewing gender offered “a way to move beyond the theories of the gaze and sexual fetishism which had attained much prominence in academic feminism, but which by the 1980s Jones viewed as outdated methods of understanding women's societal status”(63). Jones believes the performativity power to act out gender is extremely useful as a framework. It offers new ways to consider images as enactments with embodied subjects rather than inanimate objects for men's viewing pleasure.

According to Butler, gender performance is only subversive because it is the kind of effect that resists calculation. She delivers the following contentious claim:

Signification is multifarious. The subject is unable to control it.

Subversion is always occurring and always unpredictable. The political

potential of gender performances can be evaluated relative to similar past acts in similar contexts in order to assess their transgressive potential. Only the transgressive act is likely to guarantee freedom to an individual trapped in the bondage of tradition. (121)

Butler's concepts of gender performativity are a misguided retreat from engaging with real-world concerns. She suggests to her readers that this sly send-up of the status quo is the only script for resistance that life offers. Butlerian feminism is in many ways easier than the old feminism. It tells scores of talented young women that they need not work on changing the law.

Isadora longs to go ahead on her own terms. When she has to face mockery and bitterness, she becomes tempted to reshuffle her life and habit as per advice of her well-wishers and relatives. The following lines describe how Isadora is traumatized by the jibing remarks and mockery:

Why did my sisters and my mother all seem to be in a conspiracy to mock my accomplishments and make me feel they were liabilities? I had published a book which even I could still stand to read. Six years of writing and discarding, writing and changing, trying to get deeper and deeper into myself I got nothing. And readers had sent me letter and called me in the middle of the night to tell me that the book mattered, that it was brave and honest, and that I was brave and honest. Brave! Here I was in a closet hugging my knees! But to my family I was a failure because I had no children. I was absurd. I knew I was absurd. (51)

For not reproducing children, Isadora is mocked. For immersing madly and fruitlessly in creative literary pursuit, she is discouraged. Her life is not judged in terms of how

many literary creations she had accomplished but what she has lost. Actually a woman with the independent cast of mind should be judged on the basis of things she has achieved. But her own family members try to judge her solely in terms of those things which from which she is deprived and detached.

Monique Wittig talks about the political assumption associated with the percolating principles and practices of feminism. Attention should be paid to these remarks in a sensitive way. Wittig discloses the following remarks:

The political assumption that there must be a universal basis for feminism often accompanies the notion that the oppression of women has some singular form discernible in the universal or hegemonic structure of patriarchy or masculine domination. The notion of a universal patriarchy has been widely criticized in recent years for its failure to account for the workings of gender oppression in the concrete cultural contexts in which it exists. (94)

It has been to find examples or illustrations of a universal principle that is assumed from the start. That form of feminist theorizing has come under criticism for its efforts to colonize and appropriate non-Western cultures. By so doing it tends to support highly Western notions of oppression. The urgency of feminism to establish a universal status for has occasionally motivated the shortcut to a categorical universality.

Without thinking about the consequences, Isadora decides to explore new and unknown sphere of experiences. While sleeping with her husband, Bennett, she begins to questions all the trends and regulations set by the normal course of social life. When she judges her life from the vantage point of her principle, she feels triumphant. But viewed from the perspective of other people, she seems to be utterly vanquished

and nullified. It is at this time that Isadora does not have any framework to deal with these challenges. The following excerpt dramatizes Isadora's hunger for zipless fuck and sinister premonitions which arise in her mind persistently:

I was wide awake now and could hear birds making a racket in the garden behind the hotel. At first they comforted me. Then I remembered that they were German birds and I got depressed. Secretly, I hate travelling. I am restless at home, but the minute I get away I feel the threat of doom hanging over my most trivial actions. Why had I come back to Europe anyway? My whole life was in pieces. For two years I had debated whether to get pregnant or strike out on my own and see some more of the world before settling down to anything permanent. To undertake responsibility for a new life when you had no way of knowing what it really meant, they would surely be overwhelmed with doubt. What was wrong with me? Was I unnatural?

(43)

The search for newness, freshness, and difference is special to Isadora. She has distaste towards seeking fresh experiences within the boundary of marriage. Normal and repetitive practices suffocate and stifle her passions. She can hardly survive without cultivating new experience.

The notion of a generally shared conception of women has been much more difficult to displace. The masculine/feminine binary constitutes only the exclusive framework. In every other way the specificity of the feminine is once again fully decontextualized. Indeed, the premature insistence on a stable subject of feminism inevitably generates multiple refusals to accept the category. To quote Wittig again:

These domains of exclusion reveal the coercive and regulatory consequences of that construction. Indeed, the fragmentation within feminism and the paradoxical opposition to feminism from women suggest the necessary limits of identity politics. The suggestion that feminism can seek wider representation for a subject that it itself constructs has the ironic consequence. This problem is not ameliorated through an appeal to the category of women for merely strategic purposes. (95)

By conforming to a requirement of representational politics, feminism thus opens itself to charges of gross misrepresentation. Obviously, the political task is not to refuse representational politics. The juridical structures of language and politics constitute the contemporary field of power. Within feminist political practice, a radical rethinking of the ontological constructions of identity appears to be necessary.

Isadora's first marriage with Brian ends in disaster. She marries Brian because he is jocular, funny and extroverted. In practical matters he is far well-versed than she is. To her, Brian seems to be a source of energy. Later on she tells that she was in illusion about his vast sexual stamina and strength. Though Brian fucks her like machine and satisfies her sexually to the utmost, there is something really lacking in him.

From her distant friend, Isadora comes to know that there is something odd in Brian. But Isadora is not convinced because Brian has been fucking her to the depthless joy. She gets what she expects from Brian. So she is cool and calm so far as the behavioral sanity of Brian is concerned. But the real problem arises when Brian stops fucking her. Brian not only stopped fucking her but also behaved strangely towards her. In this situation, a girl like Isadora, who needs high dose of sexual

satisfaction regularly, is afflicted with fuck-mania. But she waits hopefully so that Brian could improve and begins to act normally and reasonably. The following lines describe how Isadora is afflicted with sex mania as her search for extreme individualism hits its point of extremity:

Our marriage went from bad to worse. Brian stopped fucking me. I would beg and plead and ask what was wrong with me? I began to hate myself, to feel ugly, unloved, bodily odiferous- all the classic symptoms of the unfucked wife; I began to have fantasies of zipless fucks with doormen, derelicts, counter-men at the West End Bar, graduate students- even professors. But what was the use of these pathetic fantasies? My husband had stopped fucking me. He thought he was working hard enough as it was. (213)

The above-cited paragraph makes a heart-rending description of a woman who is facing humiliating condition. Her first husband Brian is a psychotic man. While marrying him, she does not know if he is psychotic or not. At the time of courtship he had demonstrated normal behavior. But truth revealed only later on when she finds him sexually impotent. Affected by the bout of psychosis, he became unable to fuck her in a satisfying manner. When Brian becomes sexually dysfunctional, she weeps and passes her nights on bed with him. She passes several nights by masturbating on the toilet. For a girl like her who needs to be fucked ceaselessly, it is really painful. She finds herself in dilemma as to whether to leave Brian in his psychotic condition or cling to him in this mood of extreme sexual dissatisfaction. Finally she decides to quit him and breaks her marital tie with Brian. For her selfish and inhuman choice she is mocked by her friends and relatives.

If a stable notion of gender no longer proves to be the foundational premise of feminist politics, a new sort of feminist politics is now desirable to contest the very reifications of gender and identity. To trace the political operations that produces and conceals the juridical subject of feminism is precisely the task of a feminist genealogy of the category of women. To dwell upon the concept of feminist genealogy, Luce Irigaray makes the following observation:

In the course of this effort to question women as the subject of feminism, the unproblematic invocation of that category may prove to preclude the possibility of feminism as a representational politics. The identity of the feminist subject ought not to be the foundation of feminist politics. Representation will be shown to make sense for feminism only when the subject of women is nowhere presumed. (164)

The unproblematic unity of women is often invoked to construct solidarity of identity. A split is introduced in the feminist subject by the distinction between sex and gender. The distinction between sex and gender serves the argument that whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed. Hence, gender is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex. If gender is the cultural meanings that the sexed body assumes, then a gender cannot be said to follow from a sex in any one way.

To cut the entire matter short, Isadora's radical choice yields freedom along with intense sufferings like alienation and ostracism. The society harshly excoriates these negative traits of Isadora. The antagonistic social prejudice and Isadora's one track mind come into conflict. The outcome would be delightful sense of accomplishing individual freedom and boldness to give a jolt to what tradition dictates.

III. Jong's Vision of Gender Equality

The core finding of this research is that one has to endure plenty of harsh treatment, alienation and estrangement while challenging the deep-rooted patriarchy. The deep rooted patriarchy limits women in traditional gender role. Being confined in traditional reproductive role, a woman cannot cultivate her creativity and career. In Erica Jong's *Fear of Flying*, the female protagonist named Isadora is affected severely because the social surrounding in which she lived mocks her literary pursuits and her sexual fantasy. Patriarchal society is always intolerant of every woman, who does not conform to the patriarchal status quo.

Isadora wants to be different. She takes literature as her pursuit. When her poems and fictions became popular, she is discouraged and denounced in a callous manner. Although she marries twice, her marriage crashes disastrously. Fed up with the restrictive measures of marriage, she chooses to live in a different way and with different purpose. Without marrying third time, she lives with Adrian in London. But that man too betrays her. From every corner of traditional patriarchal society she has to face hurdles and setbacks. It is not fully autobiographical presentation. It is semiautobiographical.

People with a narrow perspective and rigid mentality produce hostile and harsh remarks. The society laughs at the chronic failure of her marriage and interpersonal relation. The society prides not on her success but on her self-destructive and humiliating failure. All these responses begin to inflict traumatic injury in her mind. Isadora does not produce a child. She is married; yet remains barren, which means not having children. Barren life is good for her. Or her own poems and short stories are the real children for her. She takes as wastage of time and energy the task of reproducing children.

Dissatisfied with the traditional gender role, she chooses to live this sort of life. But her sister Randy calls her a total failure in real life. In a mood of fury and ire, Randy calls her writing masturbatory and exhibitionistic. This kind of harsh denunciation and lacerating remarks depress and traumatize her. Isadora takes marriage as a restrictive institution. She feels that marriage restricted her inner longings and unidentifiable urges. Once, she acknowledges the restrictive influences of marriage, she leaves her second husband and goes to London to live with her lover.

Depthless fulfillment of sexual hunger is the sole and whole concern of Isadora. She is tempted to break and breach the marital tie, rather than keeping it intact and unharmed. Her desire for zipless fuck is dreadful and ironically ennobling. Only the search for freedom is not going to solve the problems. One has to be tactful and prudent as well to manage all the challenges that come on the way to freedom. While seeking freedom, it is necessary to abide by certain normative principle. It is not totally bad if desire for extramarital affair comes in one's mind.

The society laughs at the chronic failure of her marriage and interpersonal relation. The society prides not on her success but on her self-destructive and humiliating failure. Long could she stand up to such social treatment? All these responses begin to inflict pain in her. But she goes through all these setbacks like knife through butters. Isadora does not get engaged in a relation forever. For her it is imperative to change. She cannot live without changing sexual partners. She takes as wastage of time and energy the task of reproducing children.

Despite the fact that Bennett loves her too much in an honest way, Isadora leaves him and goes on to leave with Adrian. Marital loyalty is nothing for her. She just wants to be fucked by a virile man other than her husband. Such an insane desire and wrong track of passion implant a traumatic blow on her. The hunger for zipless

fuck and her inability to subdue this hunger are equally liable to her traumatic agony and torture. In the face of any kind of trouble and mishap she cannot endure it. Except lamentation she has no option.

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