

I. Introduction: Joan Barfoot and the Feminist Approach to the Novel

This research focuses on Joan Barfoot's novel *Dancing in the Dark*, a story of Canadian wives under patriarchy. In particular, it explores the subjugation of females through continual betrayal who are compelled to follow the traditional roles and duties that excludes females from important day to day activities. It also focuses on the sense of resistance against the contemporary male domination in the patriarchal society in Canada. In the novel, the protagonist Edna Cormick represents the story of the Canadian women who are victimized and suppressed by the male dominated ideology of the Canadian society. This research is keen to explore the atmosphere of revenge against the domination and betrayal of the males upon females.

Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of the male as the primary authority figure is central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege and entails female subordination. Historically, patriarchy has manifested itself in the social, legal, political, and economic organization of a range of different cultures. In the majority of families, the man is the figure who financially supports a family, while the woman stays at home and cares for the children. In patriarchal social system, women are given that level of economic assistance which is compatible with their daily subsistence and living. For, Kamla Bhasin, patriarchy signifies many things including ideological and institutional. She claims, "Patriarchy is a social and ideological system which considers men to be superior to women, one in which men have more control over resources and decision making. (8)" The excerpt exemplifies how the society constructs the idea of superiority of the male over the female. Patriarchy as a social system considers men to be higher to women and men have dominated role

over resources and decision making. All the system in society is ruled by the power of male and for their benefit.

The concept of feminism actually came into fore after 1960s movements on social, economic, and cultural freedoms and equalities between men and women. It studies women as other who are either oppressed or suppressed or suffered from the freedom of personal expression. All women writers who struggle against patriarchy in favor of womanhood are generally considered as feminists. Feminists demand for their liberation from the patriarchal society. They want to get political, cultural, literacy, spiritual, economic, legal and other equalities and freedoms. Rejecting the tradition of masculinity, feminist writers regard women as human beings and debate for the equality of sex. Taking pride in their femaleness, they make writing as a main tool for the struggle to get rights of emancipation and equality.

The main character of the novel and narrator of the novel, Edna, is forty three and, is confined in the mental hospital for murdering her husband. She spends her twenty years with her husband as a submissive wife by escaping the outer world and by devoting herself to the health and welfare of her husband. She worries if her husband will be happy coming at home. So, in order to make him happy, she keeps the rooms and clothes clean. But when she knows her husband, Harry, has been having an extra-marital affair, her sense of betrayal is maddening. She murders her husband as a slap to the patriarchal society, which is her resistance against this bias system. Patriarchy has become curse to the females, which is hindering to the freedom and justice of women. In this connection, Cranny and Francis define patriarchy in these terms:

A social system in which structural differences in privilege, power, and authority are invested in masculinity and the cultural, economic, and

social positions of men . . . patriarchy remains a contested term. But whether one speaks of patriarchy or hegemonic masculinity, conceiving of gendered differences in power and authority as structural allows scope to both men and women for changes in social policy, for childcare provisions, for flexible working conditions, and working hours, and for policies that monitor the abuse of power and violence.

(17)

Both Cranny and Francis define patriarchy in relation to masculine hegemony. The patriarchal system has given males full authority over females. Females are subjugated in every spheres of their life. They have to walk on the way created by masculinity. In relation to this fact, Louis Tyson, in *Critical Theory Today*, avers, "Patriarchy is thus, by definition, sexist which means it promotes the belief that women are innately inferior to men. This belief in the inborn inferiority of women is called biological essentialism . . ." (85). Under a patriarchal regime, women are excluded from positions of power and authority. A woman should be authoritative towards her children in the home in order to provide a calm and supportive environment for her husband.

Edna is confined within four walls of house. She is devoted in her routine way of life. Whatever she does is for all the betterment of her husband. She is not introduced with the world outside her home. What she knows in her life is to cook food, clean the house, wash clothes, and receives her husband at the gate in the evening when he comes back from his office. For her twenty years of her life, she is lacking her personality or interest in anything other than her husband, cleanliness of her home. She is the object of her husband. Hence, the discourse of gender has an important role in generating and maintaining patriarchy. Gender discourse creates

binary categories and represents them in a hierarchical pattern. At the top of hierarchy, men exist. Men belonging to the privileged class have access to power. Its major function is to naturalize the unequal gender relations. Its normative function supports patriarchal ideology. Gender discourse introduces strategies including scientific research to support its claim. Even if the differences are challenged, a new set of differences are created. In this way, patriarchy works in consonance with the other existing social institutions including family, marriage, religious practice, state's law, rituals, and festivals. All these institutions work to reproduce the interest of the patriarchal ideology at their centre.

The patriarchal society treats females as secondary entities having no separate identity of their own. They are considered as only the means to fulfill the desire of men in the patriarchal society. The society builds various patriarchal norms and values which discriminates female as other and neutralize their economic and social role. In this sense, in her book *Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir argues, "History has shown us that men have always kept in their hands all concrete powers, since the earliest days of the patriarchate, they have thought best to keep women in a state of dependence; their codes of law have been set up against her; and thus she has been definitely established as the Other" (171). According to Simone de Beauvoir, males always kept the females under their power. They have developed different laws and order to follow women and make them dependency for male and they must remain under the shadow of male. In the society, female are attributed different stereotypical images such as emotional, fancy, pretty, imaginative and so on. On the other hand male are presented as powerful, intellectual, bold and reasonable. So, by creating such binaries between male and female, the male dominated patriarchal society abuses female sexually, mentally and physically.

Dancing in the Dark is considered as one of the prominent works of Joan Barfoot. It has received various criticisms from different angles since its publication. Regarding this novel, Karen Grandy on her analysis comments:

Edna Cormick, the narrator of the *Dancing in the Dark* feels nothing but trepidation at the thought of the world outside her haven. Moreover, Edna accepts the Victorian injunction that in order to ensure their safety she must be the perfect wife, her notion of which is derived not from the examples she sees around her, particularly in her own childhood home. (11)

In this way, Edna the protagonist of the novel always loves to be confined to the house and does not concern about the outside world. She is happy in serving her husband. To be protective and faultless wife, she does her best like going to the gate to say bye and to welcome in the evening and she does not want her own sister to be in her house as a guest as she fears her arrival may violate her heaven like peaceful home. Here she highlights the traditional role of the protagonist in the novel *Dancing in the Dark*.

Another critic, Paul Milton focusing on the suburban aspects, asserts:

In Joan Barfoot's *Dancing in the Dark*, Edna Cromick manifests some of the characteristics associated with the suburban wife in the myth. The caricature of suburban bored housewife figures prominently in many versions of suburban myth. Within this caricature, the repressed sexuality of the bored housewife becomes something of a male erotic fantasy as well as the parody of that fantasy. (174)

In this manner, Paul Milton gives his concern to the book *Dancing in the Dark* for its suburban characteristics. Like Edna in the novel, suburban house wives have confined

and bored lives. He compares the text with the suburban myths in which the bored housewives' repressed sexuality is taken as the parody of male erotic society.

This research explores how the novel depicts the subjugation, victimization and objectification of women in the patriarchal cum orthodox Canadian society. And it is basically focused to critique the long reign of patriarchy over the othered and marginalized females within the four walls. The study aims to scrutinize the inherent social and religious orthodoxy, which is playing role on the domination of the Canadian females and focuses how women revolt against them when they become aware and conscious about the domination imposed upon them.

To critique these constructed patriarchal norms and values prevailing in the society, this research borrows the ideas from Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Wollstonecraft, Lois Tyson and Elaine Showalter who critique the patriarchal regime. Simone de Beauvoir establishes the principles of modern feminism in her *The Second Sex* (1949). It came as an encyclopedic in its coverage offering historical, biological and psychological perspective on women, a consideration of prevailing patriarchal myth about women, where Beauvoir claims that "what happened is that in the patriarchal regime man became master of woman; and the very powers that are frightening in wild beasts or in unconquered elements became qualities valuable to the owner able to domesticate them" (186). Beauvoir goes against the false assumptions created by male dominated society that is, male's representation of female as essentially 'other.' Female character, Edna Cormick, in the novel is presented as object, limited, weak, mysterious and inferior, whereas male as subject, strong, rational, powerful, and intelligent. Women are limited to the domestic sphere, where they are treated as non-human beings having no feelings, intelligence and so on. These basely constructed myths became the tool to domesticate women. Beauvoir

goes against these binary creations and argues that such kind of mythical representation is the product of patriarchal society.

In the same manner, Mary Wollstonecraft raises her voice in favor of women emancipation in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), which makes a significant contribution in my research. She holds:

Women subjected by ignorance to their sensations, and only taught to look for happiness in love, refine on sensual feelings, and adopt metaphysical notions respecting that passion, which leads them shamefully to neglect the duties of life and frequently in the midst of these sublime refinements they plump into actual vice. (398)

Wollstonecraft goes against the traditional education and the sentimental novel that teaches female to be submissive, sentimental, and emotional which restrict them to proper judgment and power of reason. She argues that the patriarchal society's norms and values turn women not only to adopt metaphysical notions but also leads them shamefully to neglect the duties of life adopting passions which restricts them to get proper education and trainings. The female role is already constructed at the hands of masculinity.

Likewise, Lois Tyson expresses her voice against the patriarchal construction of gender in the book *Critical Theory Today* (2006), Tyson puts on:

Feminism therefore distinguishes between the word sex, which refers to our biological construction as female or male, and the word gender, which refers to our cultural programming as feminine or masculine. In other words, women are not born feminine, and men are not born masculine. Rather, these gender categories are constructed by society, which is why this view of gender is an example of what has come to be called social constructionism. (86)

Here, Tyson critiques the myth making tendency of males. No man and woman come in this earth with the qualities of masculine and feminine, but it is the patriarchal society that teaches them to be accordingly. In the novel, *Dancing in the Dark*, women characters are pathetic and submissive due to the constructed gender role. They have to perform the task made under the male norms. While performing the task, they are given; they come in the position of massive domination.

Similarly, Virginia Woolf, one of the distinguished twentieth century feminist writers gave the first blow on patriarchal structure and a great contribution in the field of feminist theories with her famous work *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Woolf, in this essay, claims that the social and economic obstacles extended before premises, women cannot create their literary works. According to her, due to patriarchal social norms and values in the past prevented women writers to write openly because the work was considered as a sin, at the same time, the women writers who attempted to write were disfigured and deformed. They weren't provided separate rooms for literary writings. In this context, Virginia Woolf argues:

And so, since no woman of sense and modesty could write books, Dorothy, who was sensitive and melancholy, the very opposite of the Duches in temper wrote nothing. A woman might write letters while she was sitting by her father's sick-bed. She could write them by the fire whilst the men talked without disturbing them. The strange thing I thought, turning over the pages of Dorothy's letters, what a gift that untaught and solitary girl had for the framing of a sentence, for the fashioning of a scene. (820)

Thus, the given extract shows about how women are imprisoned within the patriarchal social norms and values and are stopped from the literary creation. It shows that

woman of that time were suffered from their husband's strict rules and regulation. They were deprived for minimal opportunity to compete with male.

The inequalities that exist between male and female are not natural, but social, not pre-ordained but created by men so they can hold power over women. Religion, the family, education, the arts, knowledge systems are all social and cultural structures that enable to perpetuate the inequality. These structures are effective means of reinforcing male domination because they do not appear oppressive. They retain power because the structures convince the woman that she is destined to be subordinated.

The patriarchal ideology as which always encourages women for traditional roles as wife, daughter and mother as ideal ones. In the patriarchal civilization, women have been subjected to a specific kind of repression, and their mental and physical development has been channeled in a specific direction. The male members in the community spend their whole time in outer space doing job and involving in different activities. They do not have boundary. But when women come out of the house everyone keeps an eye in her every step. That is, the society has determined their role inside the four walls of the house, which keeps women in the secondary position.

The society is built upon the patriarchal foundation that has made a male figure. It has superior and strong developed culture, which has carried out the masculine traits and has been emphasizing male interests and objectives. With social organization determined by traditions, women's role and the status have been comprised to their detriment. It has seen women simply as passive victims rather than the co-maker of history and the agents. As a result, women have been considered as the objects rather than the human beings, who have been forced to occupy a subaltern position in the society. They have to remain dominated, invisible, and secondary of

the male authority. Simone de Beauvoir argues that “myth is in large part explained by its usefulness to man” (1999). Whatever roles are given to women, all are for men’s comforts and benefits. It is the patriarchal myths which are in favor of man and treat woman oppositely.

Edna, a submissive and confined housewife, is compelled to accept the domination of patriarchal society. She is expressing her pain and suffering through her note book. She was totally a traditional housewife because she had not any role and job outside the house. She has to walk on the way created by her husband. She does not have her own role to play. It is because of the gender discrimination, which puts female in the secondary category and male being in authority, works as he wishes. Beauvoir, in her book *The Second Sex*, raises the voice against this dichotomy. She opines that “the male ideology makes women the second sex” (1995). Beauvoir has analyzed that the passivity of the women has been shaped by social institutions to fit the roles of women. She asserts that gender is not a biological essence something natural or innate but a social construct, a learned behavior, a product of language, culture and institutions. In the feminist world, she has strongly objected to man’s attitude of discriminating between sexes as ‘self’ and ‘other’, men being former and women the latter.

In the patriarchal society, the male is the standard and the female is the subordinate. Female cannot get their identity under patriarchy. Women should always be under the rules of it. All the rules and norms are based in favor of males because they are the creators of the very rule which gives them high rank in the society. Women are treated littler more than baby making machines and household servants whose task is to populate the world.

In this way, Virginia Woolf, one of the distinguished twentieth century feminist writers give the first blow on patriarchal structure and a great contribution in the field of feminist theories with her famous work *A Room of One's Own* (1929). Woolf, in this essay, says that the social and economic obstacles extended before premises, women cannot create their literary works. According to her, due to patriarchal social norms and values, in the past women writers are prevented to write openly because the work was considered as a sin. At the same time, the women writers who attempted to write, were disfigured and deformed. They weren't provided separate rooms for literary writings. In this context, Virginia Woolf argues:

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Thus, the given extract shows about how women are imprisoned within the patriarchal social norms and values and are stopped from the literary creation. It shows that women of the then period were suffered from their husband's strict rules and regulation. They were deprived of minimal opportunity to compete with male. By giving the example of Shakespeare's sister Dorothy, she shows how the patriarchal society creates the binary opposition between the male and female. The females have not their own room for literary creation. They are compelled to create their literary

creation even sitting on their father's sick bed. And Woolf imagines a society in which men and women would come together in purpose and desire.

The industrial revolution in the second half of the eighteenth and nineteenth century brought a wave of self awareness in women. The women were only paid and given poor education. So, the women of the middle class raised their voices for equal opportunities and higher education during the period. Several acts were passed for the benefit of women and children. At the same time, women were fighting for political freedom, the right to work and for equality and a number of women writers such as Jane Austin, George Eliot and Bronte sisters who contributed a lot to protest against the patriarchy and condition of women in society. In the late 19th century, women were given education at Oberlin College to make good wives. It brought awareness among women and more came to the forefront. Being aware, some women not only enabled them to work for the equality and freedom of women but also got success to a number of trades and other jobs.

In the span of time, there underwent the different crosscurrent like the Suffrage Movements, Civil Rights movements and Liberation Movements in early parts of 20th century. Feminist literary criticism came into existence as a political movement expressing social, economic and cultural freedom and equality between men and female only after 1960s. During the first half of the 20th century, the early feminists were ultimately successful in gaining the suffrage and protective legislation for women workers in 1920s and 30s. These women concerned with reforms to make better status of women within their separate sphere have been termed as social feminists. At the same time social feminists were challenged by a group of more outspoken feminist the radical feminists who rejected the protective legislation saying inherently discriminatory and worked for equal rights on legislation. The rational

feminists also criticized the patriarchal authority. The new feminism of 1960s and 70s attempted to break down the barriers between male and female spheres more completely.

Gender discrimination is practiced even at the level of language use. A woman's socialization process teaches her a distinction between male and female in language. Several feminists from America, France and Britain have drawn attention to the philosophical, linguistic and practical problems of women's use of language. The linguistic feminists tend not only to discover the sexism in language but also to attack the sexist aspects in the language where they find oppressive aspects for women. Some go to extend of willing to introduce feminist language system. Carolyn Burke writes about the French feminist's intention of finding and using an appropriate female language. They advocate a revolutionary linguistic, an oral break from the dictatorship of patriarchal speech. In this context, Shoshanna Felman argues, "The challenge of women today is reinventing language, to speak not only against but outside of the secular phallogocentric structure" (qtd. in Lodge 340). Robert Graves believes that women's language existed in the pre-historical time. When matriarchy was overthrown by patriarchy along with the beginning of historic era, woman's language went underground. Women's language among American Indians, African's and Asian's were reported by travelers and missionaries in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Yet there is no evidence of gender spoken by female population in a society which differs significantly from the dominant language. In this sense, Elaine Showalter argues:

The task of feminist criticism is to concentrate on women's access to language in the lexical range from which words can be selected on the ideological and cultural determinants of expression. The main problem

lies in the fact what women have been denied the full resources of language and have been forced into silence; euphemism or circumlocution. (341)

Here, the feminist requires the separate domains of language to explore their suppressed desire which is not possible by means of existing bias patriarchal language. The language itself is bias which plays the secondary role with women.

The research, in such context, aims to critique the hitherto existing reign of patriarchy and the biased notions regarding females in orthodox community and their revenge to overcome such situation and to establish their dignity in the society. The traditional society confines women within the four walls of domestic sphere. The orthodox society nurtures gender-biased distinctions by prescribing domestic roles for women through the bearing and nurturing of children, the preparation and serving of food. The myths of women as passive, weak, inferior, dependent, and domestic in the novel are dismantled by making use of feminist theorist especially Simone de Beauvoir, Mary Wollstonecraft, Lois Tyson and Virginia Woolf.

These theorists argue that men's control over reproduction and sexuality of women's bodies is a major activity of patriarchy. For them, sexuality is not innate but reflected in political, cultural institutions and affects the condition of individual women's life. The males being in power create myths about women, which later established as norms. Through the critical analysis of the female characters, who are treated like animals, this research aims at deconstructing the position of women as secondary and submissive, and establishes the women across the subordinate position. Women are equal to men. They are not only the means of bearing children; they should be allowed equal rights as men. The culture, religion, tradition work as the

catalyst to victimize them, that ultimately makes women to sense these discriminations and they resist for their empowerment. Thus, they will help to excavate the oppression and marginalization of contemporary Canadian women under the rigid society which makes binary between the sexes.

To prove those above mentioned hypothesis and assumptions, this dissertation has been divided into three parts. The first chapter introduces the issue, hypothesis, literature review, theoretical insights and overall outline of the dissertation. The second chapter deals with the parody of ideal women and their revenge against the gender biased norms and the last chapter concludes the whole project by delineating how the orthodox society works to victimize and objectify women.

II. Female subordination and resistance in *Dancing in the Dark*

This research on Joan Barfoot's *Dancing in the Dark*, explores into how the dominant patriarchal ideology and the problem of gender inequality operate in the Canadian society. The repressed as well as victimized condition of the protagonist, Edna Cormack, who later realized her situation in the male dominated patriarchal society and develops the sense of resistance against the male hegemony, is the primary concern of the research. Women have suffered a lot and are placed in a subordinate position due to the role of dominant patriarchy. Women are victimized and marginalized at the hands of rigid patriarchy because of the bias treatment between males and females, where societal rules and norms has the powerful tool to dominate women politically, economically, legally, culturally, physically, spiritually and biologically. In male dominated society, females are defined as passive, weak, inferior, domestic, and the second object. They are deprived of taking active roles in the society. They are considered intellectually inferior and their loving and caring nature has been answered with betrayal. Patriarchal discourse creates the biased representation towards females. *Dancing in the Dark* deals with the culture which is ruled by the orthodox patterns of the society that allows male to be unruly while it subjugates females.

The status of women in the Canadian society represented in the novel is very pathetic. They are treated as commodities, where the patriarchal norms and values are dominant. Edna, the protagonist of the novel, has portrayed as a submissive woman. She has been confined within the four walls of society where she internalizes the patriarchal values. In the society, the male characters are the true representative of the society, who claim themselves as pure, strong, civilized, independent and rational creatures, whereas female characters have been represented as the victims of cultural and social inequalities. Thus the realistic depiction of the pathetic condition of the women in the novel reveals the oppression and objectification of women in the Canadian patriarchal society. In the novel, patriarchy becomes the ruling class and females become the ruled and oppressed class. Regarding this submissive role of females, it would be relevant to introduce Simone de Beauvoir, who, in *The Second Sex*, argues:

There are different kinds of myths. This one, the myth of woman, sublimating a immutable aspect of the human conditions – namely, the “division” of humanity into two classes of individuals – is a static myth. It projects into the realm of Platonic ideas a reality that is directly experienced or is conceptualized on a basis of experience; in place of fact, value, significance, knowledge, empirical law, it substitutes a transcendental idea, timeless, unchangeable, necessary.

(996)

Here, Simone de Beauvoir critiques the division of humanity in terms of man and woman and the way gender identity is constructed in patriarchal culture. These myths are based on binary oppositions. They inferiorize the females and assert the superiority of males. It connotes the binary between male and female where Harry is

allowed to enjoy freedom, goes outside, whereas Edna is confined within domestic chores. The culture creates such stereotypes and that turns out to be realistic. Males assume themselves superior and females like, Edna find their happiness in serving males.

In the similar fashion, the female protagonist, Edna Cormick, is brought up in the first post-war generation, has willingly allowed her life to be created as romantic images of desirable women as lovers, brides and wives in happy marriages and glossy homes. She is happy with her married life and how her husband loves her and cares her. As an ideal wife, she admires her husband's hand as:

Long slender fingers, deft and agile, never clumsy, attached to the fine bones of his hand, tanned flesh over blue veins, colours that blend delicately and well. And ending at the wrists, the prominent, sticking-out bones of the wrists, a dusting of pale hair. Discrete hands. Protecting and capable hands. Hands that knew and saw and did. Hands that would know me and take care . . . they were the instruments of who he was. And of who we were, too. (5)

Edna describes her husband's hands as capable and protecting hands which will give warm love to her. She thinks that his hands are perfect to take care of her. She imagines her beautiful life to be in care of her husband. She internalizes the role of passive women and accepts her role as secondary that she should follow the husband's desires and wants. In this connection, John Stoltenberg claims:

[U]nder patriarchy, that all members of the gender class of males are entitled to obtain their sense of self by postulating the selfness of the gender class of women, their sense of worth by asserting female worthlessness, and their power in the culture by maintaining the

powerlessness of women. Masculinity . . . accrues to every male on account of the global subjugation of women. Thus, masculinity, that cultural construct of human identity, is antithetical to gender justice.

And short: masculinity is immoral. (47)

Here, Stoltenberg holds the opinion that males are creating their self by generating the selflessness of women. They create the myth that women are worthless but they claim themselves having worth. Gender biasness is the cultural construct which is antithetical. The patriarchal society has created such stereotypes that female are feeble, weak and passive, and only males are strong, virile, and active. Activity then is associated with maleness and passivity with femaleness simply because this association justifies patriarchy. Here, the society makes Edna admire and take her husband's hands as shelter for her life.

The real job of women demonstrated in the novel is to be self-sacrificing to love and serve the males. Women do not have any role to play behind cooking and working under their husbands' order. Edna does whatever she can do to make her husband happy. She has been fore grounded as a woman, who has internalized the patriarchal ideology that males are superior to females. Education is for men. Women don't have right to education. If they are given education they don't have right to do job. They are not allowed to go beyond the house. In this context, it is noteworthy to discuss Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, which raises voice in support of women education and emancipation:

Women were subjugated by ignorance to their sensation and only taught to look for happiness in love refine on sensual feeling and adopt metaphysical notions respectively the passion, which lead them

shamefully to neglect the duties of life and frequently in the midst of their sublime refinements they plump in actual voice. (398)

Here, Wollstonecraft means to show that patriarchal norms and values turn women not only to adopt metaphysical notions but also lead them shamefully to neglect the duties of life adopting passion, which restricts them to get proper education and trainings. Edna, being a female, is taught to look for happiness in marriage, neglect her study and care for males. Patriarchal society has already created the notions that female have to serve males in order to win their heart. Females too, being emotional act as per males wish and are inclined to serve them.

Household activities are responsible only for women. Men are supposed to work outside the home. In other words, household production can lead women to become victims because of working conditions such as the types of work and social attitudes toward women as workers. The main character of the novel, Edna is supposed to do the hard and laborious work but her work never gets proper value in the society. Her duty is only to perform the given task. As she describes:

They have washed so many dishes and pushed a vacuum cleaner so many times. They have wiped so many cloths over so many windows, and their fingernails have scratched at so many small stains. They have scrubbed vegetables and peeled them, and they have carried hot things from the stove to the counter to the table. They have picked flowers from the garden, and tins from grocery shelves. They have stitched torn seams and pressed irons over crumpled cloth . . . are docile, dutiful. They have almost always done what they were supposed to. (6)

Edna explains her routine way of household works that she has to perform daily. She does all the tasks alone but there is no evaluation of her work that she has done inside

the house. A man goes outside and does the work in the same length and he gets salary, his work is evaluated. But a woman is neglected. Edna has done work from morning to night. What is supposed by her husband she fulfills all the things in perfect way. Here, we can analyze the discrimination between male and female. The females are brought up making binary roles with men from the earlier times. Regarding this, John Staurt Mill puts it in the following manner:

All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of other. All moralities tell them that it is the duty of women, and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves, and to have no life but in their affections . . . the only ones they are allowed to have-those to the men with whom they are connected, or to the children who constitute an additional and indefeasible tie between them and man. (9)

Men have always kept in their hands all concrete powers since the earliest days. They have thought best to keep woman in a state of dependence. Their codes of law have been set up against the females. The duty of women is to live for others. They have no independent role to play. It is the patriarchal notion that conditions women to the position of inferior. The rules of society, advocate in favor of male which itself, are the masculine construct. By constructing the rigid rules against women, it has become easier for masculine society to rule over women. Reflecting upon the submissive role of wife, Staurt Mill argues that "wives are in general no better treated than slaves; but no slave is a slave to the same lengths, and in so full a sense of the world, as wife is"

(38). The wives are treated as if they have not any important role to play. They are only confined to the household activities.

Edna Cormick has worked hard for more than twenty years to keep her small world in sparkling condition. She has managed all the things perfectly inside the house. And she finds safe to live under the shadow of her husband. She is safe when her husband holds her shoulder and folds his hands around her back. When he comes home tired of day long work, she comforts her. As she asserts:

He came home tense and vivid, and we shared a drink before dinner, and he looked around our perfect living room, all shined and cleaned and plumped and neat, and said, "God, it's good to be home." He made a second drink and read his newspaper. We had dinner . . . I arranged. I was an artist. I created his home. I sketched each moment of the day with care, so that portrait of his desire was precise when he arrived. (9)

Determined to give her best, and to make her husband happy, she does everything she could do. She is like an object to amuse and to comfort him when he comes weary from his office. When he finds the home neat and clean, he is happy. But he does not care how hard it is to make clean and spotless. Her work inside the house is not judged because she is a female. Gender identity results from the norms of behavior imposed on men and women by culture and religion. The story of 'gender' in traditionalist cultures and religions is that of the systematic domination of women by men, of women's exclusion from public power, and of their subjection to patriarchal power within the family. In this regard, Beauvoir claims:

[M]an has succeeded in enslaving woman; in the same degree he has deprived her of what made her possession desirable. With woman integrated in the family and in society, her magic is dissipated rather

than transformed; reduced to the condition of the servant, she is no longer that unconquered prey incarnating all the treasures of nature . . . the marriage rites were originally intended to protect man against woman; she becomes his property. (219)

The rules of society treat women as a commodity which can be bought and sold as it desires. Women are slaves at the hands of men. Whatever is done is done in favor of males. And there are no laws regarding the issues of females. Women are relegated to the margins of society and are provided low status. Women are seen as an object for doing monotonous household works of washing clothes or sweeping floors. Their only role is to look after the house. She says, “My house was always quiet. Any sounds in the day were only mine, and I liked that” (11). She is happy with her role because this task is forced to her by the society otherwise she is out casted. She is compelled to follow the customs though they work in opposition.

Not only does patriarchy mean that males are privileged and dominant, it also means that males occupy the upper levels of the public offices that control and deal with family violence. It is a hierarchical system that often puts women in the hands of men. It creates such environment that puts women in the margin from their birth. When a baby girl is born she is up brought in the different way than the baby boy. The family teaches her that what she is allowed to do. When she becomes younger than there is society to instruct her. After their marriage, there is husband to whom they have to follow and find happiness in serving him. As she writes:

When I was to meet Harry for an evening out, and for the rest he drove me, in the evenings or on the weekends, when there were errands to be done. He did not seem to mind. I liked those times when we were together doing the small things that were necessary; so that our

household was more firmly ours . . . I could sit beside him in the car and watch him, his profile alert to other drivers, other cars, watching for spaces in the plazas, handling so easily, as he did so many things, the steering wheel, casually one handed. My confident, capable husband. (15-16)

Edna admires her husband as confident and capable husband. She finds happiness to have a company with him, to go outing with him. On Saturday, they go out to have food and shopping. She has fulfilled the role of a housewife so her husband is happy and takes her outing. A female alone has not access beyond the house. Men gain a sense of privilege and power having women wholly or partially dependent on them economically and a sense of pride does not have to do women's work in the domestic sphere. Patriarchy is not just an attitude but the structuring agent for ideas about gender.

Women were ideologically constructed as belonging in the private domestic sphere. Hence it devalues the work of household and puts women off from many activities. The relegation of domestic work as women's responsibilities meant that their work is common that is supplemental where males are the bread winner. As Edna says:

It was merely a matter of waiting for the crunching sound of the car in the driveway, the rumble of the garage door opening, the car door slamming, and the garage being closed again, and I was at the door and opening it . . . like waving good bye in the morning, it seemed important to meet him at the door at night. The two acts enclosed my own day. (88)

Patriarchal culture includes ideas about the nature of things, including men, women and humanity with manhood and masculinity. It is associated with being human and womanhood and feminity relegated to the marginal position of other. Focusing on the silencing and marginalization of women in a patriarchal culture and criticizing on other modes of criticism, Wilfred L. Guerin in his *A Handbook of Critical Approaches of Literature* argues:

Indeed, feminism has often focused upon what is absent rather than what is present, reflecting concern with silencing and marginalization of women in a patriarchal culture, a culture organized in the favor of men. In its diversity feminism is concerned with the marginalization of all women that is with their relegated to a second position. (219)

That is, according to Wilfred L. Guerin, feminism brings forth the hidden truth from the society especially concerning the women. The main concern of feminism is to expose the women's suffering in the male dominated society which creates the artificial boundary between male and females giving females as secondary position.

Edna has to be obliged to provide sexual services to their husband according to their needs and desires. As Edna says:

[I]n darkness both of us more placid, more satisfied, things finished, so that we could settle with wine and dinner, an evening reading, watching television, curled together on the couch, which was best, or settled separately to our own amusements, which was not my choice . . . I would have liked to curl my arms around his neck and hang from it, but did not dare; instead sat watching him; myself reading; or watching television, but still glancing at him often . . . I owed him everything, My life, I owed to Harry. (17)

Edna is a submissive wife. She has not upper hand in the house. Whatever Harry says she has to follow as submissive wife. Even she could not express her desires and wants in front of him. She only stares him. When her husband wants she has to be prepared whether she is interested or not that is not foremost thing. Though she has a desire to play with her husband she could not dare to do that what she does is she stares from next couch and dreams. All her activities and decisions are motivated by thinking about what Harry would like or do. Harry is Edna's self. She serves him, cares for him, and anticipates his needs. Not once does she openly show what her desires and wishes are. Not once she does criticize Harry or demand something from him. She wants to be his one and only and stays quiet and hidden, off to the side holding on to the colorful picture of love and marriage as the contentment and aim of life. Here, Beauvoir asserts:

He wishes to conquer, to take, to possess; to have women is to conquer her; he penetrates into her as the ploughshare into the furrow; he makes her his even as he makes his the land he works; he labors, he plants, he sows: these images are old as writing; from antiquity to our own day a thousand examples could be cited: woman is like the field, a man is like the seed; says the law of Manu. In a drawing by Andre Masson there is a man with spade in hand, spading the garden of a woman's vulva. Woman is her husband's prey, his possession. (184)

Edna is victimized by her own husband. He treats her not as a good husband but as a sex prey, who wants to quench his thirst. He never cares for her emotions and feelings. Being a male gender, they are proving themselves strong and bold, where gender is the social construct of the sex. Gender identity results from the norms of behavior imposed on men and women by culture and religion. 'Gender' is the social

construct and also the way for systematic domination of women by men, of women's exclusion from public power, and of their subjection to patriarchal power within the family. As society has constructed her she finds happiness and security in his hands.

As she says:

It would be a matter of man. Who would see beyond my plainness, or lack of loveliness, beyond my silence and my fear to the woman in red singing and dancing on a stage. All the Edna I contained, he would see and want. He would delight in my shyness, and protect me from my fear. He would hold me in the night and keep away the silence and the dark. He would also stand up with me in daylight and say to people, "This is my wife." So there would be no confusion about who I was. (35)

She finds security with her husband who would possess her. Her identification is created by her husband. She does not have single identity. It is linked with her husband. At night he would embrace her and keep away from fear and dark and at day he would recognize her that she is his wife with the outer world. The society has succeeded to mould the women as it wishes that is to follow patriarchal norms and values. Edna, the protagonist of the novel, is shaped according to what society wants. She is only limited to the household activities. She has no access behind that domestic world. She has no experience of things which are beyond those orthodox values. She must live on certain rules and regulations. In this connection, Beauvoir argues:

He is delighted with his domination over her; upon those realistic symbols of the ploughshare opening the furrow are superimposed-when woman is a person-more spiritual symbols: the husband 'forms'

his wife not erotically alone, but also morally and intellectually; he educates her, marks her, sets his imprint upon her.(208)

Here, Simone de Beauvoir argues that women need only lack of discrimination over female not their superior position than male. Females demand only the equal opportunity on the society, family and other sector. They ask only for their separate identity and existence in the society. It is the orthodoxy that gives extra role to women. It is not natural but constructed by males so that it would be easier for them to rule upon females. The women's task is undervalued as if they have no other duties in this earth than producing children. The women's happiness is compared to the task of raising children. It is the cultural construct that puts women in only domestic spheres. Culture is a structure of social institutions which is the important means to exploit women. It is composed of a set of institutions which create the representations of a society within a variety of arenas, such as religion and the education. Patriarchal belief is the core of the Canadian Orthodox society.

The real job of women expected by her husband is demonstrated to be self-sacrificing to love and serve the males. Women do not have any role to play behind cooking and working under their husband's order. Edna endeavors her best to make her husband happy. She has been highlighted as a woman, who has internalized the patriarchal ideology that males are superior to females. She should be submissive to the wish and the desire of her husband. Even in the desire of sex, her role is not upper hand. She has to be ready as her husband wishes. As she says:

He undressed me slowly, gently, and with admiration in each step. He kissed each breast and then, startingly, my thighs. He was - almost pure about it; as if he were removing wrappings from a lovely statue. As if the objects were to worship, not to hold . . . But he did hold. I lay

beneath blankets while he undressed. He was much quicker with himself than with me: swift, efficient undoing of buttons, a shrug to discard the shirt, a zipper rasp, hands thrust beneath elastic, bending, stepping free, sitting in the end of the bed, leaning over for the socks and then standing and this was it, a naked man. (56)

Here, Edna describes her body as a play thing at the hands of her husband. When he desires he is free to play with it. Without any agreement he undresses her and starts to play with her virginity. He is free to touch any organs of her body. Her objects are as she says to worship not to play but he has upper hand on that. He holds and gets pleasure from that. She is not aware whether he is using any kind of contraception or not because it is not her choice. But later, "there was a small damp milky balloon twisted shut with a knot, lying beside the bed. (58)" And the decision for children is also depend upon her husband as she describes: "It was repulsive, a white slug of a thing, and Harry caught my surprised grimace." "It's a safe, honey", he said, and leaning over me, picked it up. "So you don't get pregnant. See all those little maybe babies? Zillions of the little devils.(58)" Husband's role is dominant in any decision at home and family members in patriarchal society. Whatever he decides that is the rule to be followed by other family members. In case of giving birth to the children he plays active role. At the time of sexual intercourse, Edna is unaware of any safety he uses. After the completion of course she knows. In patriarchal society, men construct social values as well as the structures of institutions. It is man who explains, analyzes and describes and directs the female since he has the power to define everything else. In the society women are perceived from the masculine perspective. They attend male dominated schools and colleges and read books prepared by the men. Women are controlled and cultivated through social institution. They are subjects to such social

institutions and naming system and ultimately they adopt the images made by male power. In this context, it is noteworthy to discuss Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, which voices in support of women education and emancipation as she suggests her sex not to read flimsy works which puts them inferior to males. The expressions of those novels are to subordinate women constructed by males, "I advise my sex not to read such flimsy works, it is to induce them to read something superior; for I coincide in opinion with a sagacious man, who, having a daughter and niece under his care, pursued a very different plan with each (399)". She suggests her sex not to read flimsy works that are against the sentiments of women. The education system is also constructed by males to support them which create binary to women. They are represented in such a way that they should be submissive. Edna, being a female, is taught to look for happiness in marriage, neglect her study and care for males. Patriarchal society has already created the notions that females have to serve males in order to win their heart. Females too, being emotional act as per males wish and are inclined to serve them.

In the Patriarchal society, men are supposed to work outside the home. In other words, household production can lead women to become victims because of working situations such as the type of works and social attitudes toward women as inferiors. The main character of the novel, Edna supposed to do the hard and laborious household work but she never valued properly in the society. Her duty is only to perform the given task. She is bound within the four walls of the house where she is limited only with domestic works and to please her husband. As she says:

I kept a house for years and it was spotless . . . the dishes will have to be done again and the floors and windows washed again. It doesn't matter, it must all be done properly, exactly, each and every time.

Some pollution, a taint, will get a grip otherwise. There is nothing menial or unskilled about that. When he came home he found ease and choices. (69-70)

Edna is limited within the household activities. She has nothing to do with the work outside the home. She cleans the house and rooms. She makes everything spotless. When her husband returns he is happy and smiling at her work. When he returns she walks to gate to receive him and serves meal and everything needed to him. She has married to a man who will stand up in the public and introduce her as his wife so that there will be no confusion that who she is. She has no identity without Harry, an ambitious successful salesman who seems to love and care for Edna. In this context, Beauvoir claims: “He” is the subject or “she” is the object or other . . . she appears as the privileged other, through whom the subject fulfills himself. One of the measures of man, his counter balance his salvation his adventure, his happiness (199)”. In these lines Beauvoir argues that the male dominated society presents male as the subject or having separate identity rather females are portrayed as the commodity having no separate identity and personal desire. The male writers create myths which restrict the freedom of women as men have. According to Beauvoir, our language conditions us to speak of mankind instead of humankind and to use the masculine pronoun “he” to represent both men and women. So, to break the patriarchal dominance upon women, it is necessary to challenge men at the level of theory for feminists but without entering into the necessary domain on men’s terms.

Control upon Edna is the socially constructed definition of patriarchy in terms of power and domination. Men are supposed to be the strong ones who go out into the social jungle and conquer the enemy thus protecting their dependent wives and children fulfilling their needs. As Harry goes out to earn money early in the morning

and comes home late. She believes that he is trustworthy but she does not know much about him though he is her husband. But she is confined inside the home. She has no role to play with the external world. The prevailing notions of masculinity and femininity generally mean that boys are brought up to be more aggressive, tough, competitive and unemotional, while girls are encouraged to be softer, more emotional and more passive. These gender patterns of behavior and emotionality tend to separate males and females and set them up for patterns of conflict and violence. A husband needs perfect wife as she should run the household activities and care him. As Edna says:

He never asked me to do it. We never set it out in words. But he must have assumed I was the sort of person who would do all these things, care for him as perfectly as I could give him all the comfort I was able to. If he hadn't understood that, I think he would not have married me. He wanted, I think, a demonstration of tears and a demonstration of devotion. Although he never said . . . For years and years my body was trained to wake before the alarm went off, so that I could push the button and prevent the buzzer that would otherwise startle him from sleep. (80)

Edna is expected to do all the activities required by her husband. She is active enough to provide him what he wants. She is devoted to him. Even she wakes up before alarm clock so that he is not disturbed. She carefully edges from the bed so he would not be disturbed. She washes her hands and face, combs her hair, puts on make up in the bathroom. And only she comes to wake him up with charming face and with slight kiss on his forehead. She prepares breakfast as her husband gets freshen up. And her daily routine begins with cleaning the breakfast dishes, washing and drying them,

wiping the table, the place mats, the counter, the sinks, putting away jams and bread "sweeping the floor, moving chairs and table out of the way to do so. To get beneath, a sponge moping every day, once a month stripped and freshly waxed, so that the kitchen floor was never anything but clean and gleaming (82)". But the feminists reject the centuries of male dominated cultures in which women were only valued for the work they produced, they do not accept the cultural and traditional images of women as petty, irrational, silly or even weak. Rather they affirm their capacities to be capable, strong, intelligent, and successful and ethical human beings. The feminists demand the political, social, economic as well as personal independence for women. They have directly and indirectly started revolting against the patriarchy.

Edna spends her twenty years of life with her husband fulfilling her duties as a submissive wife. But slowly she is being aware of her situation inside the four walls of her husband house. She finds her twenty years useless and futile. As she says:

It seems it should be wrong, after a twenty-year investment of effort and work and attention, not to care. But I do not care. Let the place fall down. I can think of only one thing about it that might give me pleasure now. I think that if I were out of here I might drive a bulldozer to that house and smash it into splinters. (98)

After twenty years of her married life she learns about her pathetic situation under male regime. Her rising consciousness makes her speak against her husband deeds and she wants to break that house where she is mistreated. Throughout her existence, she is never treated as a complete individual and she cannot locate herself as a human being. The silent woman becomes aware of her individuality and forces her in the world of man from where she is removed as a useless commodity. As she says:

I wonder what's happened to all my things? The house? Can it just be sold, without my ever seeing it again? Because I don't want to go back. I do not ever want to be inside that yellow kitchen with the white and yellow daisy clock. I do not want to see that living room with its wall of white gold-flecked paper, and I do not want to be upstairs. The pillows alone would break my heart. (97)

Women are not inferior by nature but inferior by culture. They are acculturated into inferiority. If woman is simply a female sexual essence in the domain of nature, she would be also be able to speak her own meanings and experiences, provided she is able to communicate in a language free from patriarchal interference. But woman is not an essence rather a construct in the domain of patriarchal culture as dispersed subject. Biological difference between male and female is natural which is based on reproductive system. But gender is society construct, it is cultural rather natural. So the patriarchal society creates the gender difference inferiorizing females to dominate them.

Women are treated as commodity in the society. They see freedom but cannot experience it. In the family, their voices do not have any place where her husband, son, father and male members are dictators. Their relatives, supposed nearest persons try to impose their desire upon women. When the females know about the reality, they start to protest against such autonomy in their family as well as society, "I wanted to bang on the table or his chest, to get his attention (119)". She is in search of her own room where she finds freedom of this male burden. She is devoted to her husband for these years but she finds her husband having relationship with other woman. As she describes:

One thing I thought during my twelve long hours of thinking, fixed on that wall of gold-flecked white wall paper: that the unique, flamboyant, clever, driving Harry, who hadn't made it home, last night, could have committed such an ordinary, clichéd, banal little sin. That he could have been trapped in one of my magazine article, that is how ordinary he turned out to be, and that was a betrayal, too. (156)

Harry does not seem responsible towards her wife, Edna. Though he has wife at home, he spends the time with another women outside. He pretends that he has more responsibility at his office just to invest with his girlfriend. But Edna is waiting him all day making the house clean and spotless. When she knows she finds "quite a different sort of pain from skinning a knee in a fall, or from cutting a finger on paper. A gap of pain (173)". And she "shocks like lightning behind the eyes, weightlessness, a whipping away of solidity like a table cloth from beneath a setting of dishes, so that I might rise (173)". She begins to feel different after she heard the news of her husband. She finds him alien not a partner, an exotic.

From the time immemorial, women have been chained with the concepts of softness, sympathy, beauty and sacrifice which have further weakened and subordinated them. In all patriarchal society, man is considered as the creator, women the created; man the maker; woman is made. In all traditions, irrespective of religion, country, race and the period in which they live, women have always been considered inferior and incapable of any serious thinking. Men are those who establish the norms and women are always defined as the other with reference to those norms. In this regards, in her book *Second Sex*, Simon de Beauvoir argues:

History has shown us that men have always kept in their hands all concrete powers since the earliest days of the patriarchate they have

thought best to keep woman in a state of dependence; their codes of law have been set up against her; and thus she has definitely established as the other. (171)

Here, according to her, male dominated patriarchal society by creating different code of conducts to be followed by women. They create different myths inferiorizing women to dominate them. And slowly and gradually, the women have been established as the 'other'. Such types of inequality between male and female create the sense of hatred towards male and the victimized one starts rebel against the victimizers. Edna is waiting her husband in the evening. The front door swings open and there are footsteps. A quiet padding of steps upstairs. "I could hear him like a thief. A voice, the friendly ordinary voice but a slightly different pitch, was calling, but so far away . . . it called my name with a question mark, but I was all silence inside (177)". When she learns the illegal relation of her husband with another woman, she begins to feel different and takes her husband as thief. She is determined to take revenge against her husband and she is prepared "I was strong. He could not begin to match me now. I could brush him off like a fly (178)". She is bold enough from her inner heart so that she could do something that would be the blow towards male as well as the patriarchal society which is dominating since time immemorial. She takes action against her husband:

I find myself holding the tomato knife stained brighter than the fruit. Under the tap the stain washes off red and thick and flossy, catching onto fingers and fluttering away under the hard blast of water. I slide my fingers up and down the blade until the red is gone and the shining silver shows through again. The wooden handle, with the carved

indentations for fingers to grip is harder: the red does not come out of the grain so easily. (180)

She takes the ultimate option that is by killing her husband she will get emancipation. This is a slap in the face of patriarchy of its age long domination on women. Because of the male oriented social structure from the very beginning of the social history, the concept of the society about women is born hostess. Women are expected to stay at home and confine themselves to domestic duties and social graces-playing music and decorating themselves for men. In a sense, they are satisfied with their given status in the society. They have no idea about their secondary object like female position in the family. Simon de Beauvoir, an existential feminist critic and writer of France, strongly opposed the tendency of twisting women as second sex, born to assist their male guardians. She believes that existence always precedes essence. Beauvoir objects to men's attitude of discriminating between sexes as self and other men being the former and women the latter. In the feminist world, a subtle and radical critical mood was launched by Simon de Beauvoir with her book entitled *The Second Sex* (1949). Through this book, Beauvoir established the principle of modern feminism. She focuses upon pitiable condition of the women in patriarchal society stating that where a women tries to define herself. In this context, Beauvoir states: "Women have been essential as the one born, to be a wife or a mother. But she is stripped off motherly rights because motherly rights overpowered by fatherly rights. A wife's duty is to be in the bed to gratify the husband lust (145)". The woman is granted as essential in the eyes of men who want to accept her as other. She vociferously refuses the notion of female essence prior to individual existence and attacks the patriarchal myths of women that presume the false essence. Edna finds freedom after killing her husband as she states: "I can dance now if I want. So I whirl around this small room,

between the beds and dresser; I hum music to myself and lift my feet. Dancing alone. I can move my body as it wants. If I close my eyes, I am a dancer (182)". She finds complete freedom. Now there is no suppression and burden of her husband. She can run her life as she wants. She kills Harry hoping to be reborn herself. Beauvoir, going against of the patriarchy, holds a strong view of the destruction of the male constructed myths. She rather goes for the creation of the balanced relation between males and females. She also talks about a female existence holding the view that "one is not born rather becomes a woman" (17). She does not see any difference between sexes as males and females, in the process of biological creation rather, according to her, what is masculine and what feminine in identity and behavior are largely cultural constructs that are made by the pervasive patriarchal bases of our civilization. She further argues that there is not a thing called 'feminine nature,' it is merely a patriarchal construct. There is not any physical or psychological reason why women should be inferior to men but women have always been treated as second sex through the history and across the culture. The inferior position long occupied by women in patriarchal religious society has been culturally produced but not biologically. She makes the pungent criticism of the patriarchal myths regarding females that are constructed by the males to project females as inferior to males.

Thus, this study explores the dominant patriarchal ideologies and the problem of gender inequality in the Canadian Society. Females are subordinated, victimized, and objectified at the hands of patriarchy. The gender ideology has become a powerful tool to dominate women biologically, culturally, physically, legally, economically, and spiritually. In Patriarchy, males are constructed as strong, rational, active, intellectual, and powerful, whereas females as weak, inferior, dull, passive,

object, emotional and secondary. They are deprived of taking active roles in the society. Patriarchal belief is the core of Canadian Society.

III. Female Consciousness for self-autonomy in *Dancing in the Dark*

Joan Barfoot depicts the very nature and repercussions of the patriarchal system of the contemporary Canadian community in *Dancing in the Dark*. In his treatment of male and female characters, we can distinctly feel and observe the deeply ingrained assumptions and ideas of patriarchy. The conservative society signifies systematic inequalities in employment opportunities, recruitment patterns and the system of payment, household work, and childcare provisions for women. These inequalities are directly propagated and promoted by the community. It prohibits any experience of the outside world to women. As a result, the women are reduced to objects at the hands of their male counterparts at several levels. Being deprived of their subjectivity, they are treated as baby producing machines. The father gives the daughter to a man along with dowry. In a way, she, as an object to be possessed, is transferred from one male to another male.

This study thus explores this kind of pathetic status of the females in the Canadian Society where they have been subordinated and victimized at the hands of patriarchal mindset. Females in the patriarchal society cannot share freedom and justice with their male counterparts. They have been made dependent by the male in the all

spheres of life. The family property is owned by the males and the females do not have any property rights. They have been compelled to serve men for their survival. They have been forced to work as slave on their own house. But during the course of time, the characters in the Barfoot's *Dancing in the Dark* develop the sense of resistance against the then existing male oriented norms and values and start to challenge it. They are heading towards the way of emancipation and freedom after facing a long time domination and victimization. Edna, the protagonist of the novel, has portrayed as a submissive woman. She has been confined within the four walls of society where she internalizes the patriarchal values. In the society, the male characters are the true representative of the society, who claim themselves as pure, strong, civilized, independent and rational creatures, whereas female characters have been represented as the victims of cultural and social inequalities. Thus the realistic depiction of the pathetic condition of the women in the novel reveals the oppression and objectification of women in the Canadian patriarchal society.

In the novel, patriarchy becomes the ruling class and females become the ruled and oppressed class. The main character of the novel, Edna supposed to do the hard and laborious work but her work never gets proper value in the society. Her duty is only to perform the given task. She is bound with in the four walls of the house where she is limited only with domestic works and to please her husband. Edna spends her twenty years of life with her husband being follower of duties and demands of her husband. But slowly she is being aware of her situation inside the four walls of her husband house. She finds her twenty years useless and futile. She learns about her pathetic situation under male regime. Her rising consciousness makes her speak against her husband deeds and she wants to break that house where she is mistreated. Throughout her existence, she is never treated as a complete individual and she cannot

locate herself as a human being. The silent woman becomes aware of her individuality and forces her in the world of man from where she is removed as a useless commodity. She takes the ultimate option that is by killing her husband she will get emancipation. This is a slap in the face of patriarchy of its age long domination on women. Edna finds freedom after killing her husband. She finds complete freedom. Now there is no suppression and burden of her husband. She can run her life as she wants. In emotional outburst, she kills Harry. Later, when she realized her act of killing, she comes to a realization that he deserves it. It was just revenge against his prolonged domination and betrayal he imposed upon her in support of patriarchal ideology.

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