

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Revelation of Patriarchal Social Reality in Sophoclean Tragedies: *Antigone* and *Electra***

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### **Abstract**

This thesis explores the 'Revelation of Patriarchal Social Reality' in the Sophoclean tragedies—*Antigone* and *Electra*. Sophocles has raised some rebellious ladies—Antigone, Electra in these plays in the beginning but in the concluding part, he internalizes the idea of the need for the establishment of patriarchal social system. He has exposed patriarchal social reality in the existing society and ultimate failure of women to establish their own norms due to patriarchal ideology prevailing in the society. Sophocles has done his best to show patriarchy as a necessary institution which is just and according to nature and that its abolition would be unnatural and would lead to anarchy.

## I. Introduction

### General Introduction

This chapter makes an observation about patriarchal social reality which Sophocles has exposed through his plays-*Antigone* and *Electra*. This study aims to show inherent clash between patriarchy and institution of human law. In patriarchal society, males are treated as superior beings and have central authority in them whether that be in a family, social unit or a state. While human law is without bias of gender, which treats all human beings as equal and having authority is the case of personal capacity. This study takes plays- *Antigone* and *Electra* to exemplify relation between man and woman in terms of having authority and influence of patriarchal social reality on that relation which was dominant at that time.

Sophocles has exposed women becoming gradually dominant from his earlier plays to his later plays with a raise of some rebellious ladies in the society, yet in the concluding parts of each play, he has internalized the idea of the need for establishment of patriarchal norms for the peace and prosperity in a state and inability of women to establish her own norms due to restraint of patriarchal social structure prevailing at that time. Sophocles does his best to show that in the existing state of society patriarchy was a necessary institution, its abolition would have meant anarchy perhaps famine and that the institution was just and according to nature. Still he has raised voice against existing society in violent and plaintive collision and appeal through his plays *Antigone* and *Electra*. In these plays women are making themselves distinct through disloyalty to authority and at the end a kind of defeat of women's ideal.

Women were regarded inferior from the beginning of civilization. It was said that the male was always superior to female, males tried to put women under their control. All the world was on the side of males. Females were under absolute power of males and against male authority.

The form of society existed in ancient Greece was patriarchal. Aristotle believed that state is natural form of human life, that it is impossible for man to communicate with other men without the state. As social beings men aspire to unification, to creating a patriarchal family. Rise of amount of the families their unification result in forming state. Aristotle posited that the state power is actually continuation of father's power.

Sophocles, a ruler and priest, states that "silence is the adornment of women" (242). Therefore, it aims at decrying that whatever Sophocles wrote, he wrote under patriarchal dominance. Athenian society was patriarchal where there were patriarchal ideologies such as, if there is conflict between man and woman, man is the winner. Women should remain silent and there was a belief that they should not go outside either. Their task was to please males. The males were thought to be domineering, rulers, protector of women, fighters, courageous, saviours of the state. There was lack of tenderness towards women. These beliefs are not exceptions in Sophoclean tragedies.

The law of state determines the structure of national administration and shape of social organizations. Attic law, the existing law of that society was clearly male oriented and treated women as subjects to be ruled. According to Attic Law-a woman was always under the tutelage of the head of her family, who would as a rule be her father or on his death her eldest brother. The father could transfer his right of guardianship to the husband when he died, the wife either fell under the covertures of

the next head of her husband's family or would be left to some person of her husband's will. Sophocles has raised heroic ladies-Antigone and Electra against the existing system, but on the other hand, has shown that the existing law and system was necessary to save the country from possible anarchy. The very strangeness of these plays are against the beliefs that need patriarchal norms to govern the state. These are the rebellious women who strongly oppose these laws but later fail to make their position at the top of state.

In ancient society theatre was a place where one could entertain thousands of people at a time and made people aware of some contemporary issues with playwright's favour or opposition. The festival of Dionysia happened only once a year, there were other festivals, but this was the most important. The occasion was special, a combination of 'primitive' and 'progressive'. Primitive in the sense that ritual was to some extent irrational and was progressive in so far as the beliefs and values of the society were debated with a conscious appeal to the powers of reason, to the rights and institutions of democratic arguments, the process of law and judgement.

Marxist critics argue that social-economic element in any society is an ultimate determinant of that society's character. Socio-economic means the social relations created by the kind of economic production preponderant in a given society. It is founded on exploitation and is thus a relationship of potential or actual conflict. This basic economic structure engenders a number of social institutions and beliefs.

Sophocles has succeeded in exposing how social structure, values, norms and beliefs play vital role in determining role of gender in having authority. Authority is constructed under the control of power of various aspects. The social structure is shaped by power system prevailing in the society. The existing society was to create and propagate the stereotypes about the women that generalized women as a being



lacking perfection. Such beliefs and ownership of authority by males restricted women having ultimate authority at a social unit and in the state too.

Bible and work of Homer have a great influence on Sophoclean tragedies. Bible itself marginalizes women as the 'other'. The book of Genesis says that Adam, was God's creation and Eve as a part of Adam, as she was created out of Adam's rib. Eve was good. upto her obedience towards God and Adam, her destiny changed when she disobeyed them. Similarly Homer's Illiad also portrays patriarchal social reality. The plot of the great work moves around a woman, Helen, regarded to be the most beautiful of the period, an object to be desired, fought for and possessed by men. Odyssey is the next great work by Homer was also influenced by the patriarchal society of that time.

The focal point of this research will be on the intense textual analysis and finding out the evolutionary role of women from Sophocles plays *Antigone* and *Electra*; and to arbitrate inability of women to establish her own norms in society and how the nature of women is in support of patriarchal system. I will employ Feminist theories that the models created in good works of Sophocles- *Antigone* and *Electra* for the support of patriarchal social principles combining them with criticisms of Sophocles' tragedies for detail analysis. Other theoretical books will be consulted about tragedy if they are applicable to this research study. This study mainly comprises the relationship between patriarchal state authority and women; and her inability to establish her own norms in existing society.

#### Sophocles and His Works

Sophocles was born at Colonus, a village near Athens in Attica in 495 B.C. He enjoyed the comforts of a rich merchant's son and the advantages of a beautiful body as well as the fruits of one of the most civilized epochs in world history. His powers

were developed and refined by a careful instruction in the arts of music and poetry, and to the natural graces of his personality. Further attractions were added through the exercises of palaestra. The little surviving contemporary testimony suggests that Sophocles was a man of great personal charm and happiness.

When he was born the struggle between Athens and Persia was its fiercest, but by the time he was a boy of fifteen Athens had secured her independence. He spent his early years in conflict and was destined to reap full advantage of the peace which brought Athens to its glory.

The commencement of his dramatic career was marked by a victory in competition with Aeschylus, under exceptional circumstances. He added improvement to which Aeschylus made in tragic exhibition. He introduced a third actor, further curtailed the choral parts and gave the dialogue its full development. His odes were with the correctness of their sentiments and the beauty of their lines. His language was for the most part grand and majestic.

Of all Sophocles' one hundred and twenty dramas only seven have come down to us complete. The first of these tragedies, the *Antigone* was not written until about the year 441, when his position was fully established. About the same time came his *Ajax*, *Oedipus Tyrannus* dates from about ten years later; *Electra* and *Trachinae* must have come between 420 and 414, *Philoctetes* in 409, when the playwright was eighty six years old; while *Oedipus at Colonus* was presented in 402 B.C.

In addition to his theatrical career, Sophocles seem to have held a number of important political positions, thus showing, as with Aeschylus, the strong bond between the city of Athens and its artists. He was a senior administrator in the Athenian Empire in 443, and shortly later was elected as one of the ten generals in charge of military affairs. In 413, he belonged to committee of ten older citizens

(probouloi) which ultimately helped institute a temporary oligarchy. Beyond his political activity, Sophocles also played a key role in Athenian religion. He is said to have introduced the cult of healing god Asclepius into Athens and to have been honored after his own death as the cult hero Dexion. Despite his reputation for conservatism, Sophocles was an extraordinary innovative artist.

#### Antigone and Electra: Reviews

Antigone and Creon are the two main characters in Sophoclean tragedy *Antigone*. Sophocles tries to expose conflict between these main characters as a relationship between man and woman, and also hostile relations between two female characters, Ismene and Antigone. In the beginning of the play, Antigone is projected as the masculine girl who is dominant, powerful, rebellious and strongly against man made laws of the state. On the other hand Ismene represents the female identity of that society, is subordinate, cowardly and who wants to live under established law. For her to be bold and cross the law of state is sin because women mean to remain silent. Antigone argues unflinchingly with Creon the morality of the edict and the morality of her action against state order. Due to her rebellious spirit Creon decides to imprison Antigone in a cave and kill her by hanging. This makes defeat of women's ideal against so strongly existed patriarchal social reality.

In *Electra*, Electra and Clytemnestra are two dominant characters, mother and daughter in relationship and retaliate against each other. Clytemnestra is representing as submissive and supportive woman for patriarchal system but Electra is against Aegisthus but in support of Orestes. This makes her unable to have authority and shows her support for the continuation of patriarchal system and fails to have real identity at the end.

Sophoclean tragedies- *Antigone* and *Electra* have been reviewed in a number of ways from the time of Aristotle to the present. Allardyce Nicoll in *World Drama* compares *Electra* with Aeschylus' works and opines that *Electra* is a tragedy of women rather than of men.

In *Electra*, however, there is a psychological study such as appears nowhere in any of Aeschylus' works. Her position in household is clearly indicated and as scene follows scene her personality unfolds before us. If any persons stand beside her they are Chrysothemis and Clytemnestra-for this is a tragedy of women rather than men-but even they are largely foils for the heroine. (57)

John Gassner in *Master of Drama* says Sophocles has raised problems of women character and states, 'having disposed of the ethical question, he addresses himself to the problem of character' (48). In patriarchal society women are not allowed to be successors of men. In one situation she was told that Orestes was dead at that time she regards herself as the natural successor despite being a woman and in this regard John Gassner further writes:

Electra remained stiffly aloof and consequently became the object of mistreatment and abuse---. When she is told that her brother Orestes is dead she regards herself as his natural successor and appeals to her time-serving sister to aid her in carrying out the revenge. (49)

Gassner believes *Electra* a rebellious woman having an uncompromising spirit while her sister Chrysothemis is submissive and acts as patriarchal social reality demands. For this he writes:

What sort of woman was *Electra* who wanted to see her mother killed, and was ready to do the deed herself? The answer is to be found in her

uncompromising spirit. Her sister Chrysothemis adjusted herself to the murder of her father and to her mother's marriage to Aegisthus. (48-49)

Nicole Loraux in *The Rope and The Sword* writes, "The only ones to take flight are those who are too feminine in any case, whether they are womanly or manlike, women have at their disposal a way of dying in which they remain entirely feminine" (242).

So, Antigone, in *Antigone*, Electra and Clytemnestra, in *Electra* remain feminine in the end of the play and helps for the continuation of the patriarchal system.

Antigone sometimes regarded as a religious martyr and sometimes a more dangerously revolutionary figure. Adrian Poole regards Antigone as:

Antigone has frequently been yoked into the service of religious and political ideals in this way: In the nineteenth century she is usually imagined as setting an example to be approved and admired. In our own century her image of self sacrifice has attracted more skepticism. It has taken the form of speculation about her psychological motives and of fear about the political implications of radical fanaticism.

(Tragedy 187)

Adrian Poole further considers, a conflict between world existing and would be world, which is Antigone's world where things may turn upside down and where Antigone would be at the position of Creon and vice versa. For this Poole says, "Much of the combat between Antigone and Creon revolves around these images of 'up here' and 'down there'. Antigone is indifferent to the world up here until she nears her own end" (Tragedy 178-79).

The elucidation of all these reviews reveals the fact that Sophoclean tragedies- *Antigone* and *Electra* are open but the prime focus, as all of them make, hovers around conflict of gender and authority. Protagonist in these tragedies expose the fact that they are in conflict with existing authority, which is captured by their male family member. This effort of the protagonist in Sophoclean tragedies gives us a sense that they are in clash with existing patriarchal social system but face ultimate defeat in the end because patriarchal social system is so deep rooted in that society. There is every aspect of existing society affected by it. Its eradication or replacement is almost impossible. That is the patriarchal social reality.

## **II. Female, Feminism and Patriarchy**

Right through centuries and ages, patriarchy has determined almost entirely the nature and quality of our society, its values and priorities, the place and image of women within it, the relation between the sexes. Patriarchy is the valuing of men above women. Women's place in patriarchal circle is precarious and unstable. And so the subordination of women is necessity in patriarchy. Economically, politically, biologically and psychologically, it is the foundation on which the entire patriarchal structure rests. In a patriarchal culture, men define the females just as they define nearly everything else.

The influence of gender is greatest in a state, where occupational and ritual specializations, as well as access to basic resources, are more often than not based upon gender divisions. It is the gender that provides the basic paradigm for social and state authority. So pervasive is gender that it is difficult to sort out and categorize the various types of social action encompassed by it. Political, economic and ritual variables are often congruent, state authority and social realities are those which deal with power.

### **Power**

Power in itself is a loaded term. Nicholas (1966: 52) views it simply as "control over resources whether human or material" (qtd. in Blustain 26) Mills (1959: 41) distinguishes three types of power "coercion, authority and manipulation" (qtd. in Blustain 27). A person may be said to have power to the extent that he/she influences the behaviour of others in accordance with his own intentions. The basis of power may vary from situation to situation. Power can be predicated upon brute force, respect, fear, morality, superstition, or personal charisma, bureaucracy, a control of

resources, privilege of being male can be means by which dominance can be maintained.

Asad (1970: 1) has contended that, 'the structure of political domination is at once a behavioural and an ideological phenomenon'. Ruling person or group promote an ideology which legitimizes its domination and furthers its interests. In short, ideology helps to justify the exercise of power. If men have been able to exploit women, it has not been without the help of ideology which was designed to convince the latter that it is their duty to be exploited. Ancient Greek state authority was both behaviourally and ideologically characterized by male domination.

Blustain in *Power and Ideology in a Nepalese Village* argues that, "Everyone in the society 'believes' in the 'truth' of the ideology involves more than the internalization of the value system" (35). This suggests that the significance of 'legitimation' goes beyond the process of justification in the sense of more endorsement of a political order to include the conceptualization of what order really is. Women accept their position not because they believe in their inferiority in a moral sense, but because they recognize their inferiority in a political sense. Congruence of behavioural and ideological domination is that ideology is merely epiphenomenal, that power is really the glue that holds society together. Yet no power is absolute. Groups with opposing interests often exercise whatever powers they have-however limited-to further their own gain. And this conflict is fought in ideological, as well as behavioural arenas, which leads to manipulation of symbols and ideologies.

#### Feminism

Patriarchy has determined almost entirely the nature and quality of our society, its values and priorities, the place and image of women within it, and the relation between the sexes from the beginning of the civilization. Masculinism in a political



contempt is patriarchy. It is valuing of men above women. Men are always overpowered with the sense of "I am man; she is woman, I am strong, she is weak. I am tough; she is tender. I am self sufficient; she is a needful" (Ruth 54).

Feminism literally means "womanism", Feminism is a massive complaint against patriarchy. The feminists, today, have finally recognized that the world they have described is not the whole world. Its central concern is with social distinction between men and women. It is also a political theory and practice to free all the social bondage's of patriarchy. It is commitment to eradicate the ideology of domination.

Feminism began with the discovery by an individual of herself consciousness as a woman. Feminism, thus, may be defined as:

a movement seeking the reorganization of the world upon a basis of sex-equality in all human relation; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the ground of sex, would abolish all sex privileges and sex burden, and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of woman and man as the foundation of law and custom. (Billington-Greig 50)

Feminism is a movement which declared that women are also human beings equal to men and it is only when both stand, their hands joined together, can lay the foundation of law and custom. Feminism is a voice against the inadequacy, the distortion as well as the ideologies which the males have created.

#### History of Feminism

Women were regarded as inferior beings from the very beginning of civilization. It considered male as superior being, females as subordinate to him. All the world was on the side of male.

But the situation did not remain the same. Women became conscious of their secondary situation and began to question it. They fought to choose their husband. In early nineteenth century England, wives were taken as slave, were sold by their male counterparts, women were taken as weaker sex to the superior physical and economic power of free and independent males. However women were paid less attention than males and they have not been allowed to study or go to school as the males. They were not given systematic training. So Mary Wollstonecraft first raised her voice in support of education and emancipation of women. She was the first feminist theorist and with her publication of 'A vindication of Rights of Women' feminism gained momentum. The lack of sufficient training was felt to be one of the major disabilities in women struggle for independence. The industrial reinduction brought a radical change in the life of the western society in the second half of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The increasing development of industries resulted in the decline of domestic industries which had an impact in the income generation of women. They were underpaid and given poor education. Thus, the women of middle class raised their voices for equal opportunities and higher education. So, the several acts were passed for the benefit of women and children.

At the same time the women were fighting against slavery and poverty. They also fought for the self-consciousness and emancipation of women. Then they entered into social enterprises and formalistic work.

During nineteenth century there were some women writers who focused on feminist perspectives They are Jane Austin, George Eliot and Bronte sisters. Not all the female writers are feminists and feminists may be male or female.

In 1833, Oberlin college was established first for coeducation, where females were given education to make a good wife, Francis Wright, who was one of the first women orators raised her voices for the better education to be offered to women.

American Woman Suffrage Association was established for the betterment of women. Nevertheless, for nineteenth and twentieth centuries the AWSA fought for the emancipation and betterment of women. This culminated in the winning of the vote in 1920. And then feminist movement was dominant for forty years.

After 1960 feminist literary criticism came into existence. The feminist literary criticism is a political movement which expressed social, economic or cultural freedom and equality between women and men.

The feminist theory is used for the study of sex discrimination and their power relationship. It also expresses the female voice against the dominated patriarchal society, which is clearly expressed by Kate Millet. Among the feminist writers Virginia Woolf in the twentieth century was more significant of her writings including *A Room of Ones Own* (1929) supply the consciousness and women's emancipation. The modern feminism is made stronger by the publication of *The Second Sex* by Simone De Beauvoir (1949). In the feminist world a more subtle and radical mode was launched by Simone De Beauvoir. She projects that the male writer usually assumes female as a negative "object" or "other" to man who is supposed to be the dominating and defining "subject."

Gilbert and Gubar's *The Mad Women in the Attic* (1979) tends to see nineteenth century women writers in terms of late twentieth century feminism. Similarly, black women fought for the emancipation of women in America. All feminists were inspired by the male ideology. So Marry Wollstonecraft was inspired

by the male dominated ideas of the French revolution and Simone de Beauvoir was deeply influenced by Sartre's phallogocentric ideas.

The feminist movement has been running since eighteenth century. Different writers played significant roles for the emancipation of women. They developed various approaches on feminist criticism. They all interpret feminism from different angles.

#### Some Feminist Critics

##### Helen Cixous

Helen Cixous argues that until female could express their sexuality in the language, they only can overcome the phallogocentric approach. She describes the psychoanalysis of female. She deconstructed the relation of male and female e.g. sun/moon, culture/nature, man/woman.

These binary oppositions are rooted in patriarchal society. Here she suggests that the active partner is always the richer. So, male is the victor. Female has been always marginalized by the culture traditional value of the contemporary society. With the impression of Jacques Derrida's philosophy she regarded women as the source of energy, because the women used a new language for their writing. Raman Selden said that the female counterparts can overcome the male when they can project their sexuality in their writings. Her famous essay, *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1976) is an example of women's writing where the women put their bodies into writing. She rejects the binary opposition of male and female and supports the deconstructive method of Derrida. Raman Selden suggested that to get rid of the patriarchal dominance women should invent their own language. She admires in women a sexuality that is remarkably superior to phallic single mindedness. She insists on the libidinal impulses in women's writing, Cixous is convinced that women's unconscious

is totally different from men's and that their psycho-sexual specificity that will empower women to overthrow masculinist ideologies and to create new female discourses. She propounds the semiotic discourse toward culmination e.g. the gestural, rhythmic preferential language of such writers as Mallarme, Joyce and Artaud. She argues that if all the biological defenders were swept out then there will be feminists. She rejects the dichotomy between male and female.

#### Luice Irigrary

Luice Irigrary emphasizes on the need of woman language based on Locan's concept of symbolic order of language, they develop 'Ecriture Feminine'. She argued that female sexuality is an unknown identity. She opines that women specificity distinguishes them sharply from men. She rejects the view of Freud and Plato about women that women are irrational and invisible as imperfect man. She supports Cixous and says that male's language is rational because their sexuality is centered around the penis. Whereas female sexuality is diffused over their body and therefore, the writing of the female has a force which can overcome the patriarchal language. Their writing is expressed through their body.

Irigrary further expresses that female sexuality represents women's relationship to masculine and language. She opines that, "Women like the mystic is able to lose all sense of personal subjective being, and is therefore able to slip through the patriarchal net" (Newtman et al. 89).

She expresses that male sexual organ is centralized whereas female gets pleasure in touch and therefore woman's writing is connected with fluidity and touch. As a result her style of writing will overcome the male's style of writing. Thus, female's writing should express their body to female cannot be defined.

## Julia Kristeva

Another important feminist is Julia Kristeva. She focuses on the differentiation between semiotic and symbolic order of language. She questions femininity and prefers to see it as a position. In her view femininity is marginalized by the male dominated society. She opines that feminist language is semiotic and pre-oedipal. Semiotic means the stage where baby and mother are fused together inside the womb of the mother. And symbolic is associated with the law of father. Avante Garde poet are regarded as semiotic because they enter the body of the mother and resist the body of the father. She sees these poetic renovation as the feminist liberalization. Thus, the feminist movement invent anarchism which are found in Avant Garde. They used this to dominate the male dominated society. And associated with the mother feminine language is threatening the patriarchy culture.

French feminism has been much influenced by psychoanalysis, the psychoanalysis of Lacan. "French feminist by following Lacan's theories have overcome the hostility towards French shared by most feminists" (Selden 145).

To derive the meaning of the text they placed the language as the political agenda. They opine phallogocentric as their language. This comes from within the signifying process. According to Lacan, a child when identifies himself with the phallus of the father and it will enter the linguistic order and symbolic order of language. The father signifies what Lacan calls the 'Law' and entering into father the child will fall in post structuralist anxiety. The woman is a signifier and not a biological female. Lacan says that woman cannot identify with phallus and thus cannot enter into male symbolic order of language.

## Kate Millet

Millet an American feminist critic. American feminist criticism focuses on the text analysis. There are two modes of American feminism. They are feminist critique or feminist reader which is propounded by Elaine Showalter e.g. Kate Millet, Carolyn Heilbrun and Judith Fellerly are some of the feminist reader. Feminist critics may deal with books written by man. Kate Millet in her *Sexual Politics* expresses about the male author e.g. Norman Mailer, Henry Miller and D.H. Lawrence. They follow the ideological model. These critics examined women's position in patriarchal ideology.

Kate Millet expresses that feminism is a political theory a cultural and spiritual product where gender discrimination is wiped out and women were allowed to take free breath as man do in the society. Millet's approach is concerned with the study of social, institutional and personal power relations between the sexes. Troil Moi opines that for "Millet the essence of politics is power" (Jefferson 205). Male is the overall in society and females were kept under the patriarchy which forms the ideology of power. She opposed this view of cultural tradition and struggled for the emancipation of women from such oppression. Her sexual politics opened the way for women's emancipation. It clearly marked the way in the political feminist writing on literature. She opines that patriarchy (the father figure) oppress women in the society. They treat women as inferior, taken as a good wife and underpaid. They were bound to stay under the four corners of the domestic rule. Millet tries to differentiate the gender and sex. Gender has a cultural meaning attached to sexual identity whereas sex is biological aspect with the sexuality the gender should not be isolated. Male should not dominate the female. Sexual politics means fighting against unequal relation of domination and subordination by male counterparts.

The modern feminist writers are Kate Millet, Germaine Greer, M. Ellmann who emphasize on the emancipation of women and express their aggressive feelings.

Women were taken as inferior and they were looked as black, working class. But Kate Millet approached the view that these all should be wiped out and women should be treated as human not as female or oppressive group. Gender plays an important role here. Gender should be treated equally by the cultural and traditional as well government's rules and regulations. Raman Selden adds:

The arguments of each oppressed groups takes, similar forms: the oppressor is seen as consciously endeavouring to sustain the oppression indefinitely through ideology; each defends its members against misrepresentation and stereotyping in fiction and the media; and each conducts a 'political' struggle to raise consciousness among the oppressed to effect a radical change in the power relations between oppressor and oppressed. (138)

This argues that this theory is one which helps to wipe out the ideological oppression of women by man. In *The Sexual Politics*, Kate Millet becomes a critic of patriarchal culture. She point at male's oppressiveness on females in her book. The domination and subordination among genders is regarded as another hetero-sexual oppression. She opines that male writer in their fiction exposed oppressive sexual politics. They (feminists) regard male dominance as the primary thing which is unique in social and economic forms of oppression.

Another group of critics including Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar and Elaine Showalter propounded other models of feminism. They prefer feminist writing or gynocriticism. Gynocritic means the study of women as writers and its subjects are the history, styles, themes, genres and structure of writing by women. Showalter's



*Literature of Their Own* (1977) and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *The Mad Woman in the Attic* are only the most valuable examples of gynocritics.

#### Marxism: A Method to Answer Feminist Questions

Marxism is a method of social analysis, can be used to answer feminist questions. Capitalism is the fundamental economic structure while patriarchy is the fundamental ideological structure. The original and most basic class division is between the sexes. Patriarchy is a system of relations between men which forced the political outlines of feudal and some pre-feudal societies. It is a pre-capitalist form of social organization. It is a set of social relation between men, which have a material base, and which though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women. It is a hierarchy in which men have different places, but they are united by their dominance over women. No matter what their position, all men are brought off by those in higher positions by being able to control at least some women.

Marxist feminism arises out of the doctrines Karl Marx, whose theory is centered less on the material aspects of life than on more broadly defined social ones. Central to Marxism is the idea of the divisions of labour, which are familiarly evident in the capitalist system. Marxist feminist, base their arguments of moral right and wrong in reference to the corruption of wage labour that is in itself an expressions of class distinctions. Women are inevitably enslaved under a system of production where deprived of knowledge and skills, they are reduced to practically nothing.

Marxist feminists identify capitalism as the material base of a class system which is the main source of all oppression of women. They foresee no real change in sexual division of labour as the economic system unchanged. They suggest that

gender equality will be attained only with the complete alternation of the economic system Barbara Milech says:

Marxist feminism concentrates on the way in which industrial capitalism organizes women's labours, ensuring through its ideologies of family and motherhood that women willingly undertake the unpaid reproductive work of bearing and raising the next generation of workers. Similarly, unpaid domestic work of caring for the current generation and poorly paid productive work of providing a cheap labour force that can be moved in and out of the economy as necessary. (125)

Women help to maintain the current economic system through their responsibility for family consumption and childcare and they guarantee a market for products and train the new generation of disciplined workers. Despite these facts women are accused to be uncommitted workers and are poorly paid than male workers. So, Marxists feminists are convinced that women's suppression has been caused by the unequal economic system of our society.

Marxist analysis examines the relationship between women and the economic system, which is under male control. It sees women's oppression a result of their connection or lack of connection, to production. It defines women as part of the working class and subsume women's relationship to men within the relationship between workers and capital.

Marxists attributed the inferior position of women to the institution of private property in those families. Women's participation in the labour force was the key to their freedom. Capital and property are the reasons women are oppressed just as capitalism is the cause of workers' exploitation in general.

Capitalism created the separation of family and work life and has not included women in the workforce to the extent men as Engels predicted. Sexism has worsened under capitalism because of this separation of life and women's increased suppression is a result of their exclusion from wage work. Men are oppressed under capitalism by having to work for wages and women are oppressed by not being allowed to work for wages. In fact, capitalism created this exclusion of women because it created wage work outside of the home and requires women to work for wages. In fact, capitalism created this exclusion of women because it created wage work outside work in the home to reproduce the workforce etc.

Marxists approaches emphasize housework and understand women's oppression as an aspect of class oppression and attempt to count women as part of the working class.

Marx has said for the women oppression and Engels in the origin of the family opines that the first class oppression coincides with that of the female sex by the male, thus legitimating the familiar equation of husbands with the bourgeoisie and wives with the proletariat.

(Ruthvan 29)

Marxism identifies capitalism as the class system. Capitalism is a source of all oppression and opines that the subjection of women will be due to the oppression. So, when such capitalism is discarded from the society then only suppression of women will be removed from society.

Marxist feminist, Heidi Hartmann argues sex as two separate but interlocking sets of social relations, capitalism and patriarchy. It views men in terms of class and race ideologies, class and race relations.

### III. Revelation of Patriarchal Social Reality

This study deals with 'Revelation of Patriarchal Social Reality' in Sophocles' *Antigone* and *Electra*. It will show how structure of society, prevailing values and norms and existing law affects in providing power to some section of society and marginalizing those whom society considers inferior. In Athens, during Sophocles time women were not allowed to take part in any dramatic exhibition, however, dramatists of that period portrayed women in their plays by disguising the male characters as female with the help of masks. Women's lack of access as an actress on stage gives us indication of social structure of that time and who controls it. Under this patriarchal society Sophocles raised some rebellious ladies against it but destined to face ultimate defeat. Either they have to follow prevailing value system or escape from this world. To show this, it will sort out some extracts from the texts which will focus on how society is in favour of husband or father or brother, and though women are against the system, still they have obligation to follow the system or sacrifice themselves.

Evaluating an artist or a writer from an angle and label him feminist or masculine, atheist or immoral will be unjust. Open or plurality of approaches is preferable for an objective evaluation of a writer.

Sophocles has been studied from different approaches; autobiographical inspection is one of these. Interpretation based on this note have concluded that he is a masculine writer. Bible and Greek mythology have influenced his dramatic success. Moreover, there is host of influence on him by Homer and contemporary writers.

Feminist critics have commented that Sophocles projects women as subordinated and silent beings. Women should always please men to lead successful and complete life. In the absence of man woman has no identity. Sophocles has

exposed rebellious females such as Antigone, Electra and Clytemnestra who want to destroy male hierarchy but who after all help the continuation of patriarchal system either by marriage or by dying or by creating enmity between themselves for the sake of male character. Female character in Sophoclean tragedy are initially rebellious to existing system later submissive and dependent to male dominated social structure which create enmity between women so that they can easily be dominated. Helen Cixous, French feminist, argues that binary opposition are rooted in patriarchal society which is created by male ideology which shows male as independent brave and dominating being where as female are marginalized, dependent and other being. Sophocles himself has said, "silence is the adornment of women" (204).

Women are neither outside nor inside neither known nor unknown. It is this position in andocentric which has enabled males to vilify women as representing darkness and chaps-the other world; sometimes they are elevated higher as purer virgin or a goddess. But neither of these positions corresponds to any essential truth of women. It is an andocentric wish.

Patriarchal ideology pervades Sophocles' plays, especially, *Electra* and *Antigone* which have traditionally considered as great literature. It is civilization as a whole that produces hierarchy between male and female. By cultural process masculine in our culture has come to be widely identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational, creative; the feminine by systematic opposition such traits has come to be identified as passive, acquiescent, timid, emotional and conventional.

Sophocles assumes the Athenian principle, "lack of tenderness towards women was the rule at Athens" (136, by Gilbert Norwood, *Greek Tragedy*) and torture women characters in his plays having them die by hanging and before they hang themselves they have been made to repent either for their wrong doings or for

their love for their male counterparts. In *Antigone*, Antigone weeps for being a virgin and dies for her brother's sake. Women in Sophoclean tragedies are extremely tortured and have been given no place while alive and even after death. So they are degraded in Sophoclean tragedies Sophocles concept is similar to Simone de Beauvoir who says "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman ... It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ... which is described as feminine" (89 qtd. M.H. Abrams)

In *Antigone*, Creon calls Antigone "girl" throughout the play and for him a wife is "a field to plough" (569). The sentiment of Appolo's idea must be recalled here, "since the male seed is all important, any female with suffice" (657). Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* the phallus/plough, woman/furrow as a common symbol of patriarchal authority and subjugation of woman. For Creon women should be demure and submissive. He considers woman as other or an object. In *Electra*, Electra is in a derogatory situation and has become mad for her brother's love. She is helpless but her brother hides and observes her suffering. He has no tenderness towards her suffering. He assumes himself as an active and powerful male to launch action, so he kills his mother. This type of character of male elucidates patriarchal social reality in the play.

In the period between Homer and the tragedians the city-state with established code of behaviour had evolved, and the place of women as well as of other disenfranchised groups in the newly organized society was an uncomfortable one. Many tragedies show women in rebellion against the established norms of society. As the *Oresteia* of Aeschylus makes clear, a city state such as Athens flourished only through the breaking of familial or blood bonds and the subordination of the patriarchal family within the patriarchal state. But women were in conflict with this political principle, for their interests were private and family related. Thus, drama

often shows them acting out of women's quarters and concerned with children, husbands, fathers, brothers, and religions deemed mere primitive and family oriented than the Olympian, which was the support of the state. This is the point at which the image of the heroine on the stage co-incides with the reality of Athenian women.

#### Patriarchal Social reality in Antigone

In approaching *Antigone* as it reveals patriarchal social reality, the preceding events associated with a doomed house must be appreciated. The house is the house of Laios in Thebes. Laios has sinned, and upon his son Oedipus the curse has descended. After many torments Oedipus dies, leaving behind him two sons, Eteocles and Polyneices, who, quarrelling, die by each other's hands in battle. The lordship of Thebes is taken by Creon, who gives the body of Eteocles all due rites, but issues of proclamation to the effect that the body of his brother—because he laid on alien host against his native city—shall remain unburied. Of the children of Oedipus only two are left, the girls Antigone and Ismene.

Though real successor of Theban authority would have to be Antigone or Ismene, as they are the daughters of late king. But power has been transferred to Creon as he is the nearest male relative of the late king. Patriarchal society is under male authority whether that be nation, state social unit or family. Female head is generally out of thought. Values, norms and conviction all are determined by males. They create such beliefs that females are borne to be ruled not to make any objection. to inherit these beliefs in the mind of citizen they have created superstitious ideas. In the beginning of the play, Antigone herself accepts a superstitious belief as Oedipus' downfall is due to curse of divine authority.

Antigone: Ismene, dear sister

You would think we had already suffered

enough

For the curse on Oedipus. (72)

Curse, divine authority, upper order are the beliefs which compels person to be submissive in front of existing power system. These ideas have made deep effect in the mind of Antigone but she does not bow down to existing authority.

Antigone, moves around three characters. Creon, representative of male ideology, Ismene, more fragile, submissive, lady to accept orders in other words ideal woman who supports and follows patriarchy and afraid of what her sisters obstinacy may bring. She may or may not support the patriarchal system but with lack of courage she hesitates to defy order of authority and says:

But oh, Antigone

Think how much more terrible than these

Our own death would be if we should go

against Creon

And do what he has forbidden ! We are only women

We can not fight with men, Antigone

The law is strong, we must give in to the law.

In this thing and in worse. I beg the dead

To forgive me, but I am helpless: I must yield

To those in authority. And I think it is dangerous business.

To be always meddling. (73)

Ismene is the typical female who has the same obligation to her brother as Antigone, pleads her quiet life after the dire misfortune of her family and wishes to take no risk. She has her argument that women can not fight against men and must give up to the stronger. She says that Antigone is in love with the impossible thing.



She says that it is not right to haunt the impossible. She seems to speak from the authority of established morality and recalls what happens to women who aspire above their stations as Pindar's *Coronis* did when she was after what was not these and came to a ghastly end. Aristotle has said that courage of a woman is shown in submission and C.M. Bowra elates Ismene's submission as woman's courage.

Patriarchy prevents women from social, legal and cultural freedom and equality. Ismene is moved not by principle but by timidity. She is fully under patriarchal system. She says "I have no strength to break the laws that were made for public good" (65). She is afraid of acting against males in society. She respects the males and patriarchal rules. Sophocles has portrayed her as extremely womanly. Ismene internalizes herself as not being equal to men. Sophocles encompassed Ismene under Athenian rules that the males are bearer of culture and are born to rule and women are born to be ruled.

Patriarchal laws are made for the benefit of the male and for the exploitation of females. Breaking law is one aspect but women have no right to speak against male laws. In this regard, Creon says to Antigone "this girl is guilty of a double insolence/ breaking the given laws and boasting of it" (79).

Patriarchal ideology considers women should be passive and demure because they are subordinate beings who have no courage, strength and they are physically weak so they need protection from the males. In *Antigone*, Ismene gets love and protection from Creon till she is silent. As soon as she appears bold and rebellious to help Antigone in burying her brother's dead body Creon says, "Gentlemen I beg to/observe these girls:/One has just now lost her mind the other It seems/has never had a mind at all" (82). This way of dealing between the male and female is the cause of gender discrimination.

Society is understood by cultural constructions and norms. Human as a social being has to obey them. Antigone the main character defies order of authority to perform her moral duty to bury her brother Polyneices. It is her conscience that teaches her to be conscious and she is capable to defy orders whatever may be its consequences. It seems that Antigone has invented the concept of struggle for existence. Here existence means reputed personality. To get social reputation one must struggle. So, Antigone is famous among other characters because she overrides patriarchal norms in her struggle for performing her duty. It is her personality that spontaneously leads her to do her duty and still expresses her anti-patriarchal tendencies.

Woman is one of the two biological categories of a human being. Culturally she is quite different. As a woman, Antigone is quite unique in that she suggests Ismene to help in her struggle against to authority. She has a strong belief that she could overcome the hurdle in her way, as she says "Creon is not strong enough to stand in my way" (73).

Prevailing culture of the time has rigid traditional norms. At that time women used to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their families and others. Sacrifice is sometimes situationally needed in human life. It should be semantic and valuable. That age was challenging for all beings, and it was a greater challenge for women because women had to struggle more to get her rights and to establish her as a human being.

Antigone as the play begins has been depicted as bold courageous and man like character who exhibits her extraordinary strength which makes the audience feel she is stronger than Creon. She says, "I am not afraid of the danger; if it means death" (72) Antigone takes upon herself to defy the law or what is at least believed to be the

law. The Greeks prided themselves upon the laws, Athenian orators stress that they must go not before but after the laws. But Antigone challenges man made laws and wants to eliminate them. In this regard C.M. Bowra says, "Antigone, in defiance of all this established sentiment, sets herself above Creon's law and claims to know better what is right. This is dangerous in anyone and especially in a woman" (83).

Antigone continuously defies orders imposed by male authority. She believes real law is God's laws, man makes laws for his own benefit and to suppress women. So she dared to reject those laws and orders and she says, "I dared/It was not god's proclamation. That final justice/That rules the world below makes no such laws" (79).

Patriarchal society considers male all in all. In *Antigone* Sophocles has created Creon a character as a completely male ideological representative. Politics is the policy of all sectors and state head is created by values and norms prevailing in the society and vice versa. As Creon says, "The state is the king !" (84). King is in itself a male term. Creon's speech reveals the fact that king is all source of power in a state. Creon thinks women are subordinate beings and they have to behave in that way. Creon says to his son Haimon, "that is the way to behave subordinate" (83). He makes aware of the fact that women may make man emotional and a fool so "Not to lose your head over this woman" (83). To support woman is to defy patriarchal norms. When Creon finds Haimon completely in love with Antigone he says, "This boy, it seems, has sold out to a woman/Fool, adolescent food ! Taken in by a woman/You girl struck fool, don't play at words with me" (84).

Patriarchal social reality is that which provides women no room for their development, have authority and live with honour. Antigone as she is rebellious and defiant at the beginning cannot remain same at the end and the cause is existing law of state which was male dominated and in favour of them; and society during that time

was deep rooted with the culture of patriarchal system. This caused Antigone to surrender and sacrifice at the end.

Antigone is dissatisfied with her life in patriarchal society which had made her life miserable. She says, "It's good to die" (91). She finds comfort in her thought that her death will be noble. She tells Creon that her life is a misery and that she counts death again. Her death will bring comfortable life because her present life is full of misery. Her wish for death is due to her belief that she could not penetrate prevailing patriarchal system and would not be able to establish her own norms in the society and state.

Due to dominance at all corners of life at that time Antigone becomes passive and submissive girl who repents her past at the end of the play. Her condition becomes extremely pathetic due to the patriarchal ideology that women are dependent, timid and silent creatures who should never be proud and defy man made laws. She is well aware of patriarchal social reality. She thinks that she can do nothing, so she wants to die. She is going to be deprived of two worlds, that she will belong neither to the living nor to the dead. She contrasts this life underground with her hopes of marriage which would support her because she starts thinking herself as subordinate being that she needs support in every walk of her life. Marriage may become a life boat to rescue her. But she sees in it a new kind of marriage in which there is no bridal bed, wedding song, no bridegroom but Acheron. She says:

Good bye to the seen that shines for me no  
longer  
Now sleepy death  
summons the down to Acheron, that cold  
Shore;

There is no bride song there, nor any music. (85)

Creon's rule is a strong wall against Antigone. Creon the domineering male is constantly anxious about being bested by a woman and warns his son against such a humiliation. He says, "I want no wicked women for my son !" (82). When Creon realizes that Antigone is determined to give her brother a proper burial. He wants to restrict her from doing anything against his will. So he resolves to punish her declaring that she is not a man. This declaration of Creon creates further harassment in Antigone, which supports meeting her belief and her rebellious attitude and ready to accept death. Chorus says, "you are woman, woman born" (85) which is the ultimate fate of women at that time. Antigone is very strong and courageous in the beginning as she says, "Creon is not strong enough to stand in my way "(73) and at the end she realizes that she, being a woman, has to suffer her whole life. She gains nothing but humiliation, torture and death at the end. She finds herself a stranger in her own land only because she is a woman and she says, "I have been a stranger here in my own land: all my life/ the blasphemy as my birth has followed me" (86).

#### Patriarchal Social Reality in Electra

Tragedy revived patriarchal ideology which separated men and women in the society by exposing certain laws for women and men. It is the representation of social and political hierarchy. So tragedy gives birth to gender discrimination. So the world of tragedy is on the side of the male and female role in tragedies is like that of a doll or plaything which can be modeled according to the wish of the player. Tragedy is the product of the patriarchal norms which establishes a long dichotomy between male and female. Tragedy teaches that a decent woman should not even attempt to cross the established rules and regulations of the society and should not revolt against men that she should be demure not dauntless, she should always be under the control of men.

Patriarchal society is structured under male ideology. Structure of society is in favour of males. Females are just supportive to males. In patriarchal state replacement of ruler is only possible if that be himself a male. In *Electra* Clytemnestra kills her husband creating a ploy but the herself cannot hold power because she is a female. She cannot replace it through her ideology. Once she expresses her desire to have power and rule, she says "Let this royal power be mine/this house of Atreus, so until I die/My peace untroubled my prosperity unbroken" (122-123).

As patriarchal society demands women to be married and have children, they have to sacrifice all their desires to male partners. Electra expresses her grief not as that society demands, she says "but I , year after year, waiting for him, tread my weary path, unwedded, childless," (108). Electra foresees her future as lived in grief. she thinks she has to face more troubles without having male partner in her life. This reveals her desire,

Electra: But how much of my life has now been spent,  
 I am alone, without the comfort of children; no  
 Husband to stand beside me, and share the burden;  
 spurned like a slave, dressed like a slave, fed on the scraps,  
 I serve, disdained by all – in the house of my fathers. (148)

Sophocles has exposed rebellious females Electra and Clytemnestra in the play *Electra*. They want to destroy male hierarchy but who after all help for the continuation of patriarchal system either by marriage or by dying or by creating enmity between themselves for the sake of male character. Electra though is rebellious, she has a strong belief that she can do nothing without the help of male character. She expresses her grief of missing Orestes on her mission. Thus:

My cry is for Orestes and his coming

to put an end to this. O, I am sick  
 The heart from waiting, he is holding back  
 And his delay has broken all my hopes  
 Enduring hits my friends, how can I follow  
 Wisdom and pity? Among such evils  
 How can my conduct not be evil too? (112)

Electra, Chrysothemis and Clytemnestra are three main female characters in *Electra*. Chrysothemis is a passive and submissive female character who is afraid of coming to public place and revolting against established laws of patriarchal society. She thinks that women should not go outside the home or to public places. She internalizes the reigning patriarchal ideology and is conditioned to derogate her own sex and to cooperate in her own subordination.

Chrysothemis says, "Why have you come again outside of the gate" (113). For her it is dangerous to fight against rules and laws of the society. She thinks that the males are powerful and women are powerless and helpless. She internalizes the gender discrimination which categorizes women as submissive beings. At this she says:

But we are helpless; we should ride the storm  
 With shortened soil, not show our enmity  
 When we are impotent to do them harm.  
 Will you nor do the same? the right may lie,  
 On your side, not on mine, but since they rule,  
 I must submit, or lose all liberty. (113)

Electra wants to avenge her father that is why, she spreads her talk outside the gate which had been forbidden to women to do such manly deeds in the male

dominated society. The play moves round her dilemma to avenge her father. She is a girl who wants to kill her uncle, Aegisthus and her mother Clytemnestra. This type of nature was unacceptable to Athenian society of that period since that was completely rooted in patriarchal belief.

Electra seems rebellious against existing society, values and norms. It spreads but she finds her self incompetent to struggle against it without male support. Electra waits for Orestes to take revenge of her father's death but message comes that Orestes is dead. She starts thinking that now all her dreams are shattered, she can do nothing at all. This shows her acceptance of male ideology. She expressed her grief in this way:

My dear Orestes ! you are dead; your death

Was killed me too, for it has torn from me

The only hope I had, that you would come

At last in might, to be the avenger of

your father and my champion. But now

Where can I turn? For I am left alone,

Robbed of my father, and of you. Hence forth

I must go back again, for ever into bondage

To those whom most I hate. (128)

There is hierarchy between male and female created by a patriarchal society. This hierarchy depends on the domination of one sex group by the other, gives rise to certain ideology for both male and the female, consequently this ideology defines the male as the human norms, creative, ruler, independent and protector. Whereas, the females are defined by negative reference as the other, subordinate, imperfect,



submissive because of her lack of the identifying male organ. In the process of being socialized, the females intermediate the reigning patriarchal ideology about the male superiority and the female inferiority.

Deprivation of women in every sector of society and in having authority is one of the features of patriarchal society. Women are deprived of power, resources and income generating activities. They are just passive recipient of males sympathy and support. Property transfer is also patriarchal. As a rule when father dies right to property goes to male successor instead of equal distribution. Electra also follows the same rule she thinks the property of Agamemnon should be of her brother Orestes not hers. "Of all the wealth that rightly should be yours !" (133).

In patriarchal society females are always ridiculed. It places women in an extremely terrible situation such as in the vault, cage or in the room where they must realize their misdeeds which the patriarchal society assumes. This way of projecting women in the work of art is to make the patriarchal ideology strong and make women aware of themselves. This leads them to violate the law and resulting in their pitiable condition.

Only way to answer female mockery to them is despise those who ridicule them, since they find themselves helpless and careless. In patriarchal society women are kept away from power, representation and voice. If everything is taken out of them, then why is it necessary to fear? In this regard Electra says:

O by the virgin goddess, by Artemis,

I despise them those in the palace —

Women, useless and helpless ?

O, why should I fear them. (143)

Electra is aware of the fact that she is ruled by male who takes away her father's throne. Being aware, she is so weak that she can do nothing to them. "Who murdered my own father; I am ruled by them, and what I get, what I must do without depends on them" (111). This is patriarchal social reality, females are ruled by males, they contempt it still they have no other way than surrendering in front of these rulers. Electra realizes, "I need no teaching; I have learned at last, that I must live at peace with those that rule" (151).

Degree of ownership to power and resources determines level of independence. If you have more power and property there is chance to be more independent. Obligation of deprived is to accept rule over them. Patriarchy is basic norm is that male should be at the top and own all power.

Woman in patriarchal society is scapegoat due to male domination. Clytemnestra is a woman who kills her husband, hates her children and creates enmity with her children. She is rebellious and violent woman in the sense that she accepts to have been her husband's criminal and she wants to create oppression and violence. Later she surrenders to male authority and she is as oppressive as male rulers are. Her decision to imprison Electra proves this. She wants Aegisthus to be powerful so she does all the supportive acts for this purpose such as killing Agamemnon, imprisoning Electra. But later Orestes kills Aegisthus and authority transfers to him but Clytemnestra becomes helpless.

At last Orestes kills Aegisthus as Electra desired but patriarchal authority transferred to Orestes. In one or the other form, whether ruler be cruel as Aegisthus or mild as Orestes the system remains the same

Chorus [chants]: Children of Atreus, now at last

Your sufferings are ended. You have won

Your own deliverance; now once more

Is the line of your fathers restored. (152)

Patriarchy believes father as protecting and ruling figure whether that be in a family unit, society or in the nation. Restoration of line of fathers means restoration of patriarchal system. There is no possibility of ruling by females in the society where every nook and corner is influenced by patriarchal value system. Women in this system either have to surrender or be ready to get penalty as the system demands. So *Electra*, by Sophocles exposes patriarchal social reality.

#### IV. Conclusion

Sophocles has contributed to the literary world by making revelation of patriarchal social reality in his plays – *Antigone* and *Electra*, which widens and enlarges frontiers of thought in the field of playwritings. These plays are the reflection of Athenian society, which took it for granted that males are bearers of culture, they are propounders of all norms of society and under them everything should exist. Men should rule over women.

From the beginning of the history of civilization and art, women have been portrayed in the works of art written by male writers. A work of art in the classical age was greatly influenced by socio-cultural surroundings. Mythology and philosophy took more space in the creation of literature. They took it for granted that God is the generator of the worldly truth. For them women were the defective men. Whether classical philosophers made the maxims to guide artists or they observed that they certainly accepted that creation begins from a super soul or a super man. Women therefore were incomplete. The literary works of classical period amply exemplify the artist's conformation with the norms of patriarchal society and their presentation of women as subjects of entertainment or of wish fulfillment.

Sophocles has done his best to make people aware of something that is fact in his time. He has raised some rebellious ladies – Antigone in *Antigone* and Electra in *Electra* but in the concluding parts of those plays he has internalized the idea of the need for establishment of patriarchal norms or follow them for stability and harmony in the society. He has also exposed the patriarchal social reality of the existing society through inability of women to establish their own norms due to restraint of prevailing patriarchal social structure at that time. As Sophocles shows in his plays-*Antigone* and *Electra* patriarchy was an unalterable institution, alternative to patriarchy is

patriarchy. Its abolition would have meant anarchy and the institution was just and according to nature.

During Sophocles' time women were not allowed to take part in any dramatic play and exhibition in Athens, however, he wrote plays making female character the protagonist and title of the play also with their names – *Antigone* and *Electra*. These females Antigone and Electra are rebellious to some extent but later they realize that they cannot be perfect without male support whether that be the father's, brother's or husband's. So women in Sophoclean tragedy have been created out of male ideology, what role women should perform in a society, what they should behave and how they should look like. These women are not real women but disguised males who have internalized patriarchy that is natural and should be followed.

Patriarchal society demands women to be submissive, demure, weak followers of male ideology. Females either have to follow males or have to be ready for sacrifice. In *Antigone*, Antigone is destined to face ultimate defeat because the entire values, norms and laws in that society were against females. Ismene, another character in *Antigone* is good until she supports existing patriarchal norms. In *Electra*, female protagonist Electra is in constant struggle with Aegisthus but she never tries to establish herself in his place. It shows that she is not born to rule but to be ruled and to be subordinate to males. This deep rooted belief in their mind makes women unable to establish their norms in society.

In *Antigone*, Antigone in the beginning has been projected as a rebellious female but later patriarchal ideology forces the nature of Antigone to change and she becomes submissive and womanly. As she repents for being a virgin, her desire to be a bride shows her acceptance of the patriarchal system. In *Electra*, Electra and Clytemnestra are dominant and rebellious women. Clytemnestra's support for

Aegisthus in place of Agamemnon and Electra's support for Orestes show they have internalized patriarchal social reality.

Patriarchal ideology pervades Sophocles' plays especially *Antigone* and *Electra* which have been traditionally considered as great literature. It is civilization as a whole that produces hierarchy between male and female. By cultural process masculinity in our own culture has come to be widely identified as active, dominating, adventurous, rational and feminine by systematic opposition to such traits.

In plays – *Antigone* and *Electra* males have been considered as human norms, rational and powerful while females as 'other' or kind of 'non-human'. In *Antigone* Creon calls Antigone 'girl' throughout the play and for him a wife is "a field to plough" (659). The sentiment of Appolo's ideas must be recalled here, "since the male seed is all important, any female will suffice" (657). For Creon women should be demure and submissive because he considers women as other or an object. In *Electra*, Electra is in a derogatory situation and has become mad for her brother's love and his establishment to authority. She is helpless but her brother hides and observes her suffering. He has no tenderness towards her suffering. He assumes himself as an active and powerful male to launch action, so he kills his mother.

Deprivation of being in power, victimization and internalization the patriarchal ideology about the male superiority and female inferiority of women character expose the fact that society is patriarchal. This patriarchal society has prevented women to live as human beings and to have equal authority. The patriarchal ideology degrades women as subordinate beings. This patriarchal ideology determines beliefs and thoughts of women and forces them to be in subsidiary social roles that is the patriarchal social reality which Sophocles has exposed through his plays-*Antigone* and *Electra*.

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