



War of Sexes and Women Empowerment in Like a Bird (2020)

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Abstract: Bangladeshi novelist Fariha Roisin wrote *Like a Bird* (2020). Alyssa, the novel's protagonist, has lost her beauty and charm due to society's norms. Taliya narrates the protagonist's life. Life depends on society's standards, which lead to death, yet empowerment is needed to survive. Textual analysis underpins this qualitative investigation. Grice Atkinson's (1970) view on radical women's rights and snatching is accepted. Radical feminism shows how society treats women as sexual objects and attempts on their lives. Women are subjugated in society. Radical feminism investigates how men snatch women's rights. This theory suggests that women as a class require participation in social politics to overcome life's challenges. Radical feminism in the novel is examined in the study. The findings showed Alyssa's struggle to break her habit, and living way requires a new life despite the social constraints.

Introduction

Like a Bird (2020) is the story of Taylia Chatterjee, who becomes the victim of a savior traumatic situation and loses her blood relations after facing hateful behavior. Taylia is the female protagonist of the novel *Like a Bird*, and she is gang-raped. She is pushed out of her house on the basis of scorn along with color discrimination and distrust; all this tragic situation pushes her towards the desire for empowerment; as a result, a realm of internal instigation bursts out in her, and she struggles to achieve her actually and basic rights; which she, as well as every woman, deserves and desires. This effect cannot be left behind that the writer of this novel Fariha Roisin also faced the same.

The situation of being raped and, then working a lot to be stable again in society can be easily felt that there is a clear depiction of her own

state in the character of the protagonist of the very novel.

There is a history to the concept of patriarchy, which institutionalizes male supremacy in society based on sex differences. Although many people believe that male dominance has always been the norm among humans, this is untrue. Such hierarchies emerged only a few thousand years ago, with the development of agriculture and a significant change in how people interacted with other living things. According to historian Gerda Lerner, men established the intellectual groundwork for all systems of hierarchy, injustice, and exploitation” when they “learned how to turn 'different' into power” at the beginning of patriarchy (Lerner, 1997). Patriarchy can take on numerous shapes depending on the

period and location, but it always reserves for men the majority of the power within societal institutions and restricts women's access to it. But Lerner points out that this does not mean that women are completely devoid of rights, influence, and resources (Lerner, [1986](#)).

Primorac ([1998](#)) calls rape one of the primary aspects where feminist philosophical, social, and legal thought has been especially influential.

Radical feminism is a concept that places a strong emphasis on the patriarchal causes of gender inequality, or more precisely, the social dominance of women by males. Radical feminism believes that patriarchy oppresses women and favours men by dividing societal rights, advantages, and power primarily along sex lines (Lewis, [2020](#)).

Radical feminism is opposed to current social and political structures in general because they are intrinsically based on patriarchy. Radical feminists, therefore, frequently view political activity inside the current system with skepticism and instead priorities cultural shifts that challenge patriarchy and related hierarchical institutions (Lewis, [2020](#)).

The desire for empowerment and radical feminism is the theme of this novel is, resulted from the severe tragic situation faced by Taylia, who's throughout struggle creates an open element of feminism rather than radical feminism as well in this novel which will be analyzed with a feminist lens.

In this research, the war of sexes and enmity is intended to find out about the status of women in *Like a Bird* ([2020](#)).

Statement of the Problem

Rap is the social attempt by a male person to female, which is allegiant of females rather than males. Being called as guilty after being raped reinforce the females to understand their enemy, so in this regard, the social constraints could be challenged to find out the enemy of raped girls.

Research Objective

- To understand the war of sexes due to rape attempts in eastern society.

Research Questions

1. Who is the enemy of women in society in the war of sexes and social constraints?
2. What is radical feminism intended to explore for a female when she is raped?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant as it helps to understand the status of a female who is raped and is intended to live a life of will, but the dominance of social constraints reinforces her to surrender.

Literature Review

Jensen ([2019](#)) tells us that any male who wants to go beyond "being a man" in patriarchy and strives to live the ideals of dignity, solidarity, and equality to the fullest must embrace radical feminism. Contrary to popular belief, radical feminism's critique of patriarchal masculinity is vital for men's self-esteem rather than posing a threat to it.

Despite dealing with dark subjects like sexual assault, suicide, and ingrained misogyny, Róisín weaves *Like a Bird* with moments of delight and physical pleasure (Iversen, 2020). It is, in many ways, a joyful book, one that demonstrates our resilience and ability to reimagine our lives in ways that benefit not only us but also our communities. It feels like the kind of book that is especially relevant right now as we all battle to figure out what our future will look like and how to move forward after so much tragedy.

According to Mackay ([2021](#)), one of the major tenets of radical feminism has always been the denial of biological essentialism, or the idea that sex roles are innately biological. Shulamith Firestone, the author of "The Dialectic of Sex", asserted that the ultimate aim of the feminist revolution must be "not just the eradication of male privilege but of the sex differentiation itself: genital variations between human beings would

no longer matter in terms of culture.” Whatever the “actual” distinctions between the sexes may be, we are not likely to know them unless the sexes are treated differently, that is alike, as the radical feminist, poet, and artist Kate Millett stated in her seminal 1970 text *Sexual Politics*. And right now, that is pretty distant from the truth.

Research Methodology

The present study is qualitative and is intended to analyze the text of *Like a Bird* (2020) under the theoretical framework of Ti, Grace Atkinson’s theory of Radical feminism (1970).

Radical feminism focuses on the clash between male and female roles. It highlights the subordinate position the female has been assigned by the male dominators and illustrates the ongoing conflict between masculinity and femininity. This ongoing battle is what makes this theory so successful. Radical feminism is a conflict theory that holds that men are constantly attempting to prevent women from achieving their full potential. There is a presumption that the social structure reflects a notion of “male superiority” (Bromberg, 2011). Fundamentally, “radical feminism originated with the notion that the sexes are inherently antagonistic, that males have power over women, and that the only way to understand society and its different social interactions is in reference to that condition” (Hunter, 2004). Here, men control society’s resources and use them to maintain women’s subordination within the greater social structure. To put it another way, “radical feminists tend to understand the power in terms of dyadic relations of dominance/subordination, generally understood on analogy with the relationship between master and slave” (Allen, 2011). It is a harsh view of how men and women interact in terms of power, where males exploit their position of authority to severely limit the role of women.

Radical feminism has a lot in common with Marxism in its belief that there is a constant battle

for dominance between the sexes. There is the oppressor, who in this case is a male, and the oppressed, who is a female and is subjected to the oppressor’s stern. Both theories essentially address ideas of power relations and “give descriptions of how social systems with systematic inequity might be internally reasonable yet unfair” (MacKinnon, 1982). Marxist principles have been incorporated into radical feminism, which has replaced class distinctions with gender ones. Radical feminism, like Marxist theory, describes this continual struggle as a means of igniting a revolution against the oppressors. Contrary to a Marxist revolution, a feminist one can occur within a capitalist system and doesn’t necessitate a total restructuring of the economy. Instead, it necessitates the overhaul of cultural and social structures in order to put a stop to patriarchal control and restore the equality of the sexes.

Ti, Grace Atkinson’s theory of Radical feminism (1970) the main points of this theory are as follows:

1. The women's movement is at war, but who is the enemy? If it is society or man.
2. Women should understand the battle strategy of men that have kept them so successfully pinned down.
3. Radical feminism believes that women as a group /class somehow fit into a political analysis of society.
4. Women have been measured as human beings throughout history. They should take the position first by engaging in the battle and later on being themselves into the position of dialogue.
5. Women should define what a woman is and what a woman is as a class.
6. Both women and females are terms that favor men.
7. Women are a political class characterized by a sexual function.
8. Women must be given some individual autonomy.

Data Analysis

1. "Mama laughed, defusing Alyssa's strange current, the way, even when she was whining, she made you feel like she was revealing an important secret only to you. That was Lyses' strongest skill: her ability to feign intimacy. The two of them went about whispering, and I got up to clear the mood, returning to my own internal dance, where I was paid attention." p.15

Analysis

The lines present the life of a female, Alyssa, who has to offence a crucial attempt of raping by the male members. Her feelings and her gestures denote that she is not in the state to explore and explore herself in a way that she is a member of society. In this regard, her attitude is pointed out in the lines that she is not given the status which she must be given. Even though the roles have been made with the females, the line presents that females have to face the things which are referring to the male members only. This did not the dual aspect that the male members would considered as a surprise, but here the female has to face the status of oppressed, and she is not given the true status in a way that she would have in the society too.

Atkinson (1970) discusses the walls and battles between the sexes, and in these lines, the situation where Taliya pointed out that females are not at the status to have the feelings and the concern they must have in society too, but the things which are crucial in a way are presented that social behavior is not noted by the society members as well. The lines present that females in the society are not dealt with as women but are female and about in the evening to the male members. It can also be observed that females have a lot of problems in society where they have to face a number of things which can marginalize them. Radical feminism points out that females, so being a class, would have a battle for equal rights and equal as equal opportunities to life making too. These things are totally binding in the lines as females are not given the true status even

though she is saved, but in society, she is not at the status of a normal life too.

2. "I couldn't stop thinking about being underground, in a casket, locked beneath the soil with no hope of coming out. I wanted to tell her that I felt Dada-ma, my father's dead mother, deep in my chest, giving me a sign— ghosts, ghosts, ghosts, swishing through me like a carp, guileless in a shallow pond. But, instead, I murmured inaudibly, pushing those imaginations as far from myself as I could." p.19.

Analysis

The lines describe the living aspects of Alyssa, who is in the state of mum due to her rape. It is also closed that she is in the state of being in no action where society has pressure, and the evils of society are totally taking part in pressuring her. Radical feminism raises the question of equality and says that society is cruel and gives oppressive behaviour towards females because females are not tolerated as they must be tolerated, and a normal way can also be. It can also be observed that radical feminism raises a question about equal rights as well as equal protection as males. The narrator, who is the sister of Alyssa and has believed that status should be gained by normal beings and must be given to the world. The words show that Alyssa is in a small pond, denoting that she is in a state of mental turbulence and she has no way to be more conscious about her right hand about her living as well. It also describes that she is in the worst situation where she is not in the state of taking part in the normal activities the normal female does, but the question is raised by the narrator that she has to live according to the new modernization in which the females have the status as they are female are all the women rather than these are the females who are supportive to males only. It can also be observed that society has the power to make females marginalized and put females in a state of turbulence where they are no longer to be proved as normal beings of human society. It can also be observed that radical feminism believes that females will never be able

to get equal rights if they are in a state of only choice and only the weak point. It requires that they should have to fight the social norms and social movements as these are enemies to them, and this makes them only part of the society and engagement with the male members rather than it gives them the freedom of their life.

3. *"How much sooner one tires of anything than of a book!"—her favorite Pride and Prejudice bit to whip out at times of social lethargy. Her faux-English accent, liquid and charming, wooed our guests and her friends; waxing lyrical of nineteenth-century realism, she'd educate us on Austen's history. "She suffered from Addison's disease, just like JFK! Did you know?" I didn't know. "She never married. Can you imagine never marrying, T?" I definitely could."* p.20

Analysis

The lines show that the heroine of the novel is in a state of turbulence, and she compares herself with Jane Austen, who wrote the novel "Pride and Prejudice". It discusses the life living experiences and the situation of females in society. It can also be said that Jane Austen did not marry due to her own intentions and Alyssa is also comparatively discussed as she is not in the state to have a marriage too. Radical feminism talks about equal rights and equal standards for females in society. It discusses that society is the enemy of females and the intention of the norms are presented by the society in a way that describes the female that is subordinate to the males members and they have to work and pass their life according to the male members of choice of the members of the society too. The fight for equal rights and the fight for success are presented in the lines, and the feelings of such a female who lives in a fundamental society have to grow up, and she thinks that our life is equally presented to them as the life of Jane Austen too. The lines presented in the paragraph depict never marrying, which denotes that there could be some sort of seduction, there could be some sort of rape are there could be some sort of quality it has been put on a female that leads to no marrying. It can also

be observed that life is comparatively could be different, but the main theme is equal to the heroine of the novel, Alyssa is in a critical situation that she is in a state of turbulence. Raising question and raising rights is a fight for success in society and radical feminism have the same point of you intentionally that the females would have a political war and politics of the society. Politics would have a status in society equal to man, but it requires that they would come into the politics of the society and would recognize themselves as to the nature of the rights from the cruel aspects of the society too. Comparatively to feminism, it can also be observed that females discuss society, but feminism only discusses the right giving and the standards, but radical feminism discusses to come over on these hurdles and present themselves to be prominent and the society. It talks about revenge and the criminal type of intention, which make females the subject catered and marginal segment of society.

4. *"I wondered what he was like in his locked room, when he wasn't focused on keeping up appearances. His mind seemed brilliant but dark. I always got the sense that Simon would have loved to watch a beautiful house burn down in a magical, haunting way. Even still, I felt myself being open with him. I wanted him to decide that I was worth looking at, like how I imagined some people look at wolfish dogs: boldly, without thinking it might eat you—or maybe, more accurately, in spite of the thought."* p. 21

Analysis

The novel discusses the immigrant society, which immigrant families who have migrated to western countries but initially are Eastern by birth. It can be observed in the lines that desire of lovemaking, and she is concerned about having equal rights which would be given to her and society as a social norm is diverse from place to place and has many spaces concerning the level of the society. The modern issues but the issue of the females dealing is same as in the West as well as in the east. Being

an immigrant, the family has to live under many social norms of their past and had no choice of living too. As Alyssa is raped and Taliya just asks about her life in the novel so it can be said that she is no longer to be a part of society, and she has to live under suppression and depression too. This depression can lead her towards an animal which has lived under a grave. Radical feminism talks about rights and says that the woman's position has been as a slave and husband subordinated to the males as well and has to live under the and the discursive type of ideologies and discuss the type of power relations in which the females are not given equal status as stated as they must be.

The sexes and their fight between them, and it is sad that they would have ordered the strategy to come over on these issues too. Females would have political power in society as, as the lines depict, that has to live in a room, mourning, but it seems that she has the wish to be a normal person even though she is raped, but it is not herself that she was raised by the male members as well. The question of raising voice and the question of selecting the right is prominent here as the storyteller detects that she is no longer to be the normal part of society, so she has to fight for her position. The lines also depict that women should not be characterized as sexual function objects in society; rather than they must be given natural tendencies and would have been given favour in all terms. It requires that they could be prominent in society, but society does not let them live equally with the prominent because the society is full of manly thinking and transition about the subordination of males and would deal with females in a crucial way.

5. *"Alyssa and I would sometimes watch him, gossiping freely, as he vigorously walked past the edge of our block with a navy umbrella in one hand, always decked in pin-striped pants and crisp white shirts treated with Reckitt's Crown Blue. I once overheard that he had experienced racism similar to Baba. Patients telling him (to his face!) that they wanted the "best guy for the job," when what they really meant was "Get me*

someone white, or get me outta here!" Even still, he desperately wanted to be accepted by white people." p.22

Analysis

Radical feminism is about the war of sexes and has the Wind Rises right in society. It discusses the things which are presented in a society in a way that females are not allowed to live in a linear way. It can be said that the lines present that females are not given the right of choice and right of life living, but the females are given a choice as well as raped and have been impressed, but she is not given the right to live in a normal way. It can be said that things are not the same for them, and there are different standards of society for males and females as well. The storytellers tell Taliya is there, who is the sister of Alyssa and observed that she would never like a normal being, but the social norms as she is raped and she is detected same life choice. Radical feminism views that women should have intervened in the social and political concerns, because females can't have equal rights as they are not brought up equally.

Society is made of male members who give way only to the male members and has no sympathy for the females, so it requires that a female would have political power and would handle the society themselves too. Females are not given an equal choice of living too. In this regard, it requires that females as a class would not be dealt with as they are not in a position to have false, something that they are not allowed to live freely, but they must be. The natural concern which would which are the rights of a female, but as the female is raped, she is not given the right too. Here is a clear radical feminist point of view that the war of sexes is present in society and, this word cannot be worn by the female members of the women without taking part in the politics of the society too.

6. *"But I had never had a man call me at home before and I was hungry for that kind of love, for Mama to see me receive it. But I also felt silly thinking Simon Sharma could love me. He*

wanted to get drinks, “possibly in a critical situation. Tonight?” I said of course. Of course I said of course. He gave me some time and I said sure, then with determination he hung up. I still held the phone to my ear, listening to the sound of an empty line. I looked Mama in the eye and she smiled. It was the first smile I had seen in months.” p.32

Analysis

Atkinson (1970) has to gain status through the sex worker as society is biased toward male people. In this concern, it can be observed in the lines that the narrator of the story Taliya is talking about Alyssa, who is in a state of turbulence and determined by male members. It denotes that her silence and her roaming attitudes have no impact on the family and family members as well. It can also be said that their relationship and home are fully biased where the female has to be dealt with as a female, not the woman. Radical feminism discusses the rights snatching from society, and it says that without the intervention in the social phenomena, the rights cannot be attained. Many of the aspects can be concerned in it and the lines that describe the nature of the females as the females are given no status in the society where the society is wise to the male members only. The example of the mother denotes that the females not only have to have freedom of action and freedom of thought in many concerns. Radical feminism discusses the radical behaviour of the males but on the other side, it also discusses the exploration of radical feminism by the female members to attain their rights and goals in the society.

The autonomy of the female is discussed in a way that she does not get to the society and it is bound to the norms of the society too. Radical feminism says that the females would gain the power through the political ways, and these political ways can be obtained only by standing before the male members as they are in a position to catch the rights of females but the radical feminism says that these rights would be snatched by having the political background in

the society too. The autonomy of the female is discussed in a way that she does not get to the society and it is bound to the norms of the society too. Radical feminism views that the females would gain the power through the political ways and these political ways can be obtained only by standing before the male members are the member of the society are in a position to catch the rights of females but the radical feminism says that these rights would be snatched by having the political background in the society too. The marginalized segment and those things are described and the lines where the females are raped but their lives are snatched.

Conclusion

Being raped is a sin in view of society, but the biased society does not take steps against the rapist, so the women would take part in the social politics to gain the power to make their voice more perfect. Female members have to face a number of problems, including the remarks by the society as Alyssa has faced. The power of women would be overcome so that the little girl's intervention in society would favour the female members. Human psychology would not be allowed to play with the feelings of females as females are considered subjugated members of society.

The political power could retrieve the rights of females as Alyssa has to fight a war against the nexus of society and the dual norms of the society. Dual standards of the society denote that the male members love making intentions are not called a sin, while the "weakness" of female is called as "sin" even though Alyssa is raped, but she is called sinful rather than the male members.

Empowerment of females is only possible through war, and this war has to be fought against the male members of the society who are dominant. The tendencies of society are not to build women but to de-motivate women to live as Alyssa has to face.

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