

Resistance through Solidarity of Sisterhood in Anne Bronte's Agnes Grey

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Abstract

The paper attempts to examine the resistance against cruel patriarchy through the solidarity of sisterhood in Anne Bronte's Agnes Grey. The major character, Agnes, faces many obstacles while she works as governess especially in Mr. Bloomfield's house. The paper concerns itself how the female characters such as Agnes, Miss Murray, Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Agnes and Mary are united with their female bonding and solidarity and resist the male prejudice. In doing so, it specifically utilizes the idea of Ann Jefferson's (2022) idea of female friendship, female bonding and solidarity through sisterhood and of course the major premises of feminism in general. The paper is divided into four parts. In the first part introduces the issue and reviews major works on sisterhood and feminism. The second part presents its methodology. As its methodology, it utilizes the third part presents results and the final part presents discussion. The paper concludes that the male brutalities against women can be prevented if women remain united. The purpose of female bonding, moreover, is not to replace the patriarchy with matriarchy but to establish equality.

Key Words: patriarchy, matriarchy, sisterhood, female bonding, solidarity, feminism.

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to examine how of female characters against oppressive patriarchy through female bonding resist the male domination over women. The novel from the very beginning, presents harmony among Mrs. Grey, and her daughters Agnes, and Mary Gray. The perfect female bonding appears to be a means of resistance in Bronte's Agnes Gray. The first person narrator Agnes faces many trials and

tribulations while working as governess in different houses of the elite. This research concerns how the helpless governess Agnes, centers her ambition to enter into the strong pact and solidarity in order to resist patriarchy. Not only that, she establishes cordial relation with Mrs. Bloomfield, Matilda and Rosalie. Her journey begins from Mr. Bloomfield's house. Bloomfield does his best and characters like Agnes Grey, Matilda, Rosalie and Mrs. Bloomfield are the pathetic victims of rakes, bad practices and domestic violence. Under the leadership of Agnes they work together and ask for decency, standing and take the opportunity to resist against the patriarchal ruler.

Anne Bronte is a well-known Victorian novelist. Like her sisters, she writes on the subjects of women. Everyday life is represented in her novel in a life like way. To some extent her novel seems to be closer to realism. But the strong feminist tone cannot be found in the social realism. Certain glimpses of reality are reflected in her novels not in a crystal clear way but in a subtle and hazy way. Her frank and straightforward style of projecting the sufferings of working class girls in her novel has made her one of the most favorite writer of the Victorian era.

In Anne Bronte's *Agnes Grey*, major female characters like Agnes, Matilda and Rosalie are not secure, free and confident. In the houses of employers, they did not feel secure. They had to undergo several acts of harassment and violence. Rosalie's lover is jealous of her friendship with other men. She is hassled by her lover's mounting jealousy. The economic pressures of Agnes's family crush her terrifically. Not only Grey, almost all the female characters in the novel including Matilda and Rosalie enter into alliance and support. Their increasing sense of willingness to enter into strong pact and solidarity strengthen them to face the threat of dismissal from job of governess, fear of sexual assault, harassment and numerous jolts of domestic violence.

Chris Beasley (1997) " describes Agnes Grey as a novel which takes great pains to announce itself as a bildungsroman. It allows its character to grow up or transform for ideological reasons. Baldrige crosses that "the early emphasis on the bourgeois upbringing of Agnes allows the presuppositions of the reader that the transformative bourgeois class will develop an ideal person of virtue"(23). However, Agnes stalls in her development because of the corrupted nature of the household in which she is employed and the ineffectiveness of the moral transformation, become a static member of the bourgeois, ambivalent to the Victorian value of moral transformation in virtue.

As claimed by Bentley, this is typical of a Victorian novel, which tends to offer only the briefest of summaries after the protagonist's marriage brings about a satisfactory end. But if Anne Bronte self-consciously conforms to this expectation in her first novel, she would challenge it and write beyond it in her second. Some of the Victorian stereotypes are called into question in this novel.

Phrasal expressions and poetic neologism coexist elsewhere in Anne Bronte's *Agnes Grey*. These phrasal expressions convey different kinds of implication. The ethos of Victorian protocol is inherent in these phrasal expressions. In other words, it is fair to say that the glimpse of Victorian mentality is expressed in the way most of sober-minded people of that time use language and phrasal expression.

Barbara, A. (2001) reveals the hidden theme of the double consciousness of those women who are unknowingly conscious of the growing effects of passionate upsurge. Due to the excessive sobriety of Anne Bronte, the doctrine of feminism can hardly be used in the analysis of Bronte's text. The narrator has lost the grace and benefit of coherent consciousness.

Jefferson, A. (2022) shows alternative view of society in which male model of individualism is replaced by politics of partnership i.e. female bonding. Pollok asserts:

The concept has been crucial to the creation of an alternative view of society. The male model of individualism, of operating with the politics of domination, could be replaced by the female model of sisterhood, of employing the politics of partnership. (286)

Karen H. (2002) holds same opinion of towards female bonding. Hollinger asserts: Like so many other popular cultural texts that focus on female bonding, these works offer the promise of female empowerment, but that empowerment ultimately takes the form of accommodation rather than true liberation. (63)

In this novel, *Agnes Grey's* struggles with the hurdles set by patriarchy are exemplary. Lots of lessons can be deduced from the trials and tribulations which she faced on her way to freedom and economic independence. Via supportive, inspiring and strategic help of other female figures of the novel, Agnes finally succeeds in achieving what she intends to achieve right from the beginning. She is a main figure who resists patriarchy via the strategy of female bonding

The more gender differences are narrowed down, the more optimistic scope feminism acquires. If none of the significant differences between man and woman exist, men will automatically come in defense of the rights and freedom of women. Only in the space in which gender differences cease to exist, even the unity and harmony amidst women come to flourish. Only by destroying the patriarchal structure of society, women won't accomplish complete level of freedom and access to different sorts of rights. The researcher focuses on promoting gender bonding and the harmony amidst women.

Method

For its methodology, the paper specifically utilizes the idea of Ann Jefferson's (2022) and bell hook's (1986) ideas of female friendship, female bonding and solidarity through sisterhood and of course the major premises of feminism in general. Based on the qualitative inquiry, the paper eclectically selects Anne Bronte's *Agnes Grey* as its primary text.

The study focuses on the collective efforts of Agnes Gray, her mother Mrs. Gray and her sister Mary as an act of female bonding. Especially, the idea of female bonding as proposed by Wells, "to provide immense emotional, financial and instrumental support" (116-17) will be the throughout provoking tool to prove hypothesis of the study. In addition, the ideas of Miriam Rose, Laura, Helen Cixous, Monique Wittig and Margareta Flannery concerning female bonding and resistance are highly valued for the additional support to both theory and evidences.

Results

The theory of female bonding focuses on the fact that gender is male construct. In a patriarchal society, several practices, norms, trends and institutional cults exist to intensify the gender differences were taught and most people follow it as it were used to be. To justify the actions of patriarchal society and ideology, the notion of gender difference is always intensified but such actions are retaliated and restated through solidarity among major women characters of the novel. So long as gender difference is fostered and disseminated to fulfill the benefit of one group, the other would always be in the disadvantage. And, primarily it is thought males to be benefitted in patriarchal society but Agnes Gray and her surrounding resists to such benefitted group. These major characters dedicate themselves in abolishing gender differences for which they go against their parents, relatives, seniors, and patriarchal agents. To mitigate the female bonding through

emotional, financial and instrumental coordination and shed light upon the minds of the women for the betterment of women and society, the only means is to resist against the traditional norms, values and teachings is proved through evidences from the text as follow:

The novel begins with Mrs. Gray's decision to marry against her fathers' will. She clearly states that she cannot accept her better half on the basis of how much wealth he possess or his higher social status rather she wished her counterpart to understand, care, assist her in her actions. She rejects the proposition of father to marry a rich man, "An elegant house and spacious grounds were not to be despised; but she would rather live in a cottage with Richard Grey than in a palace with any other man in the world" (3). The readers can make sense out of it that she cannot be bought with elegant house and spacious grounds which her father used as an object to tempt her emotions. This rejection is similar to Sheila Ruth's concept of distortion of patriarchal constraints as, "Life and personhood defined within such patriarchal constraints must be distorted" (96). Ruth believes that life and personhood defined by patriarchal society articulates constraints much and freedom less for women. Thus, such constraints are the hindrances for women's liberation. She chooses to live with Richard Grey in a cottage with whom she can live peacefully. Mrs. Gray's actions resisted patriarchal society's will in general and her father in particular.

Mrs. Gray's revelation clarifies that her father wanted her to marry according to his choice. He tries to disregard her consent. But being determined on her choice, she decides to marry with the lover. She was given two choices either to choose his fathers' fortune or her lover. Her fathers' expectation is guided by patriarchal instinct that her daughter shall do whatever he tells her to do. His intention was to cool down the passion of the lovers but Gray reveals that he was mistaken in this expectation. This symbolically indicates inability of patriarchal ruler to control the present and direct towards better future. The failure of her father to guide her daughter also indicates that women are no longer to be the silent followers of biased provisions. She denies her fathers' proposal; she resists the idea of being heir of her fathers' property. Her far-sighted vision of life does not permit her to restrict within the petty temptation of property and support of her father.

The readers can reason it out that the definition of weak has greatly changed since weakness also encompasses not only physical health but also the mental ability to manage

stress, pressure and rays of hopes to overcome them. Here, Mr. Gray is feeble whereas Mrs. Gray is bold and enthusiastic, healthy and hopeful both physically and mentally. This evidence breaks the chain of traditional definition that women are not weak in matters that were expected to cool them down.

It is evident that Mrs. Gray's father is not only psychologically disturbed but also physically too. The psychological resistance results in disordered system of nerves which further increased mental trouble. The numerous efforts of her family members fail to convince him that it was actually his daughter's choice to marry whoever she likes, but he is never convinced on that. The gloomy, utterly hopeless condition of his father is symbolic to the resistance of woman in society and its impact on patriarchal rule. The intolerable pain that inflicted upon her father shows his gloomy and melancholic state. The resistance against patriarchy hits on the old patriarchal law and order, the dominating rules which always inflicted upon women becomes helpless and tormented by the decision of women.

Women's assistance to another woman is considered as female bonding. Mrs. Gray assists her daughter with the household work so that she can indulge her time in study. Gray asserts, ". . . for they both asserted that it was far easier to do the work themselves than to prepare it for me: and besides, they liked better to see me prosecuting my studies, or amusing myself" (8). Mrs. Gray prevents her daughter from doing household works for it is the traditional belief that girls should learn do to household chores. She further wants her daughter to be indulging in her study. This indicates the fact that Mrs. Gray, resists the patriarchal ideology and revolutionize the idea of traditional education that her daughter should learn by herself. Agnes does not receive the support from male characters rather she studies herself. The task of teaching herself amuses her and her mother is fond of seeing her amused.

Mrs. Agnes motivates her daughter to paint her best style picture and getting them framed with the water-colored drawing and send it to some picture dealer who knows the value of it. Generally, women's effort are not get paid in patriarchal society but Agnes wants her water colored painting to be sold in the market. She strongly need her labor to be paid off. This resists the patriarchal idea that women are not the unpaid labor only; and labor cannot be distinguished between male and female; for whosever the labor may be it must be get paid. Moreover, the act of selling her picture not only suggests her labor being

paid but also that it challenges by getting herself only in productive works, Mrs. Grey's prevention to work with household work is symbolical to refrain her daughter from non-productive works; works that do not pay them their labor.

The target of being governess is revealed to her father and being a representative of patriarchal rule, he objects her idea by saying that 'they cannot spare her'. Mr. Agnes puts forward, "What, my little Agnes a governess!" cried he, and, in spite of his dejection, he laughed at the idea. 'Yes, papa, don't you say anything against it: I should like it so much; and I am sure I could manage delightfully.' 'But, my darling, we could not spare you.'" (10) Mr. Agnes is astonished by his daughters' idea of becoming a governess. He laughs at her idea for he thinks it is impossible. Agnes pleads with father for not saying a thing against her being a governess. She also confesses that she likes it so much. She says she could manage delightfully.

Her work in Mrs. Bloomfield as a governess gives her an opportunity to look at the lives of elite people where patriarchy itself has been deep rooted. It also brought certain amount of monthly remuneration with which Gray family could survive on its own. This indicates economic assistance between women; for her mother has a lot of things to do at home, Agnes supports her mother with financial assistance. The mother and daughter relationship, assisting one another is strengthening the possibility of progress. Here, Agnes' mother uses counter-strategy as proposed by renowned critic on feminist movement Chris Beasley that women-centered feminists use to resist against patriarchy. Woman to woman relation is essential in strengthening the possibility of progress in feminist movement. If women are driven by the common purpose and goal and they can face any challenge that comes on the way

When Agnes reaches at the Gate of the Bloomfield's house, she collects courage to enter the house. For there is no one to assist her to introduce among strange people, she remembers her mother and becomes thankful for her teaching. She feels as if she is at the 'retired life' which signifies that she has a lot of experience and feels matured in doing because of her mothers' protective care and teaching.

The above confession of Agnes reveals that she is no more a girl of fifteen, she feels herself "gifted with a more womanly address" with great ease and self-possession that she has. She feels that nothing is valuable for her than her mothers' teachings, her guidance, motivation and encouragement. With great courage, she enters the house.

To work under the roof of patriarchy and going against Mr. Bloomfield is not easy for Agnes, she knows that going against any of the members of Bloomfield family and especially his son is not that much easy. But she does not tolerate the injustice done to girls and women, so she tries to resist against it. She warns Tom that he cannot strike his sister for it is not his duty to keep her in order, “‘Surely, Tom, you would not strike your sister! I hope I shall never see you do that.’ ‘You will sometimes: I’m obliged to do it now and then to keep her in order.’ ‘But it is not your business to keep her in order, you know—that is for— ’”(18). Agnes goes against the cruelty and injustice bestowed upon girls in that house. Though being small, Tom has been taught violence by his uncle Robson; and no one dares to question Tom for he is the future master of that house. Agnes, being governess, challenges his actions, she warns him and prevents from doing injustice to his sister. She resists to patriarchy by saying that it is not his duty to keep her in order. The traditional notion of patriarchy is that male should keep women in order, in manner, and free to punish.

Agnes decides to take control of Tom’s violent behavior. She resists against his violence and uses only resource to throw him on his back and hold his hands and feet. This symbolizes taking charge of Tom in particular and taking patriarchy under her control so that harmony can be monitored. She asserts, “I determined to refrain from striking him, even in self-defense; and, in his most violent moods, my only resource was to throw him on his back and hold his hands and feet till the frenzy was somewhat abated” (24). This shows Agnes determination to manage Tom. The nature of patriarchy as violent has been neutralized by her efforts. To this daring voice of Agnes, Maries Mies calls it breaking the conspiracy of silence, “Feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal man-women relationship and who want to change it”(6). We observe Mrs. MacNeil overcoming the unequal relationship between men and women. This taming of a patriarchal agent is allegorical to taming of injustice laid upon women by the society.

The resistance of women can be seen through Agnes Gray as she has to go against Tom during the study and extra-curricular activities. The reluctant Tom purposively blots and disfigures the paper in which he was supposed to write according to the instruction given by governess. To this act of his, she threatens to increase his homework; but no effect is seen in him. Finally she decides to hold his fingers and forcibly draw his hand up

and down in spite of his resistance; the line was completed. This indicates that it is very hard for patriarchal ruler to be ruled by someone else and that is no other than someone whom he always ruled from time immemorial. The determination of Agnes leads to success. The regime of male has been narrowed down and some space for her voices has been established.

But, again patriarchy shows its color and Agnes feels as if she cannot control Tom and his friends. Tom tries to harass Agnes with dreadful acts, not following the lessons, teachings, and disobeying her orders. She has to face several problems which can arise from the temperamental manners of males. In the society where the patriarchy is the real problem, girls like Agnes can hardly feel encouraged. During moments of her life, she was not inspired and encouraged. Whim and impulse of males continue to pose challenge to her. Though Agnes makes lots of efforts to make Bloomfield family cultured.

This time, Agnes is charged of not fulfilling her duty as a governess. She is charged of not disciplining Tom and his friends. Mr. Bloomfield questions her with temper that why did not she bring them in. She also reluctantly answers that they do not listen to her. But Mr. Bloomfield does not see fault in his children. He simply holds Agnes responsible for the misdeeds of his children. Then, Mr. Bloomfield harshly scolds and calls them in. He also threatens them that he will horsewhip every one of them. It is evident from the above quote that patriarchy is reluctant to obey orders of women. But being resistant to Mr. Bloomfield she does not step back for she has done nothing wrong. There is acquaintance and proximity between Agnes and Fanny. But such a bonding is too feeble. Despite the enfeebled nature of this sense of female bonding, it has enabled Agnes to move ahead confidently in her chosen profession.

Barbara does not encourage the trend to study the problem of a single woman as an individual being having distinct sensitivity and understanding of her own. According to Barbara, women are viewed as social grouping and if their problems are studied in terms of the loopholes of this social grouping, certain uplifting measures can be taken to achieve the intended goals of women centered feminism. Otherwise it would remain a tough and impractical job. This idea also resists to Weston's objection to ladies educational attainment. But, being strong enough to answer, Agnes clarifies that he has no such inclination but she definitely will do what she likes the most.

The female bond between mother and daughter takes them towards doing something of their own than to work as a 'governess' or work under the command of some rich person. Both of them reject to fetch themselves at the service of others. Agnes' mother believes that the collective efforts of them will result into something else. She decides to settle her plan for which preparations were to be made. She busies with the plan on the one hand and her daughter Agnes' leaves for Horton Lodge to resign from 'governess' and return back to involve herself with her mother. Both of them indulge themselves for the speedy commencement of their school.

This final act of Agnes' and her mother is much symbolic to patriarchal society that both of them refuse to serve to the house of patriarch rather they like to establish a school of their own where they will educate ladies. The establishment of a school of their own is open challenge to patriarchy that women no longer accept the patriarchal teaching which teaches them to be submissive and be pertinent to the needs of the male ruler. Agnes does not feel being liberated because she still has to carry out the works on her own. But the empowerment ultimately is a kind of accommodation rather than true liberation as Karen Hollinger holds same opinion of towards female bonding. Hollinger asserts, "Like so many other popular cultural texts that focus on female bonding, these works offer the promise of female empowerment, but that empowerment ultimately takes the form of accommodation rather than true liberation (63). It shows that Agnes and her mothers' bonding have promise of female empowerment and that empowerment takes the form of accommodation for them. All this is possible due to female bonding that mother and daughter with same motif, collective work, self-determination, motivation and courage to deliver the most cultural teachings they always wished.

Miss Murray realizes that husband is more responsible for his wife. Unlike traditional thinking that women should please men, she advocates that husband should please his wife. She further believes that if husband is not satisfied with her as she is, he is not worthy of her. She shows her determination that she will not trouble herself for whatever her husband acts or does. In this regard, as feminist critic and author Miriam Rose opines that women centered approach is what feminist movement focuses on. The entire novel is centered in the affairs of women. Agnes is always in the center and with her mother, sister and Mrs. Murray, Mrs. Bloomfield and Miss Murray and other female characters. This presentation of novel is quite similar to that of Barbara's idea of social

grouping of women as a means to maintain the integrity of individual differences and social recognition. She makes a call to respect those qualities which make woman a distinct individual. Social grouping and harmony amidst women belonging to any community and culture is instrumental in actualizing the long cherished visions of freedom and prosperity. Barbara asserts, "Feminism not only decenters the usual assumptions about what is central and what is at the margins, but also shifts the subject of the analysis, in that the notion of woman is placed in center stage" (16). The issue related with women is placed at the center of feminist discourse. Even the subject of analysis undergoes change. Nothing related with women is left as irrelevant and negligible.

This idea of centering women for Miss Murray is realized towards the end of the novel for she now does not care about his husband too. She also rejects to reform her husband for she has many other things to take care of. Miss Murray's indifference towards her husband is true resistance against patriarchy. She no longer obeys her husband or tries to persuade or satisfy him; for now she thinks it is his duty to satisfy her. She blames patriarchy for all the misdeeds.

The novel, towards the end shows even Miss Murray going against her husband. She understands the domination, exploitation, neglectfulness of males towards their wives and now advocates for equality. She strongly deters her husband in particular and the male regime in general. She also asserts that if Agnes knew him, she would also not blame her rather Mr. Ashby. Miss Murray also reminds her of her mistake that she already knew him before getting married. This mistake for which now Miss Murray suffers, has turned herself not less resistant than Agnes herself.

Agnes' determination not to prolong her journey refrains herself from taking part in the events of Horton Lodge. She feels as if her mother would be lonely without her. Since her father has already passed, she does not like to meddle with the tasks there. The female bonding, not only requires economic assistance but psychological and physical intimacy too. The physical appearance and estimation of her mother impatiently expecting her return signifies the emotional bond between them.

The novel successfully explores resistance against patriarchy through female bonding, presents its major characters Agnes Gray, her mother, Mary, Mrs. Murray and Miss Murray collectively act against the patriarchal rule, norms, values and teachings. All of them go against the rule of the patriarch before or after. When the realities of

patriarchal domination and exploitation come to light, finally Miss Murray joins Agnes and becomes determined to go against her own husband. The female bonding based on assisting each other in forms of economy, emotion, motivation and positive vibes strongly resists against the patriarchy.

Discussion

Based on one of the strands of feminism, that is, solidarity of sisterhood, as advocated by bell hooks and Ann Jefferson, this study contends that female bonding is instrumental in women's resistance against patriarchy. The female characters in the novel develop gender bonding to resist the pressures and constraints imposed by patriarchy. More particularly, Agnes remains poised and unmoved to resist oppressive conducts of patriarchy. She continues to endure and strategically overcome it. She does not feel resigned and defeated. On the contrary, she demonstrated that brand of subjectivity which is indomitable. For a short span of time, she tends to be depressed and disappointed. But she transforms her misery and melancholy into the higher level of power.

In the novel Agnes Gray's struggles with the hurdles set by patriarchy are exemplary. Lots of lesions can be deduced from the trials and tribulations which she faced on her way to freedom and economic independence via supportive, inspiring and strategic help of other female figures of the novel, Agnes finally succeeds in achieving what she intends to achieve right from the beginning.

Woman to woman relation is essential in strengthening the possibility of progress in feminist movement. If women are driven by the common purpose and goal and if they are sensitive to the suffering of sisterhood, they can face any challenge that comes on the way. There is a stronger bond of familiarity amidst Matilda, Rosalie and the maid. They are already familiar with the internal conditions of Murray's house. Their guidance and advice help them to cope with occupational difficulties comfortably. Agnes vouchsafes to undertake the sending up of my things. The growing sense of mutual help guide not only Matilda and Rosalie but Agnes and maid too. Mrs. Murray is inspiring in her attitude and behavior with Agnes. She prefers to move and motivate her governess. If Murray is chilling; Mrs. Murray is charming. It is this charm and compassionate disposition of Mrs. Murray that keeps Agnes in Murray's house. Mrs. Murray often says that she understands the woe and agony of female workers. In comparison with other male workers, female

workers have earned maximum favors from Mrs. Murray. Due to the soft and compassionate manners of Mrs. Murray that helps Agnes to forget all the harsh rules and aggressions of Mr. Murray:

In the household dominated by aggressive misdemeanor, it is really tough for Agnes to give continuity to her work. But good manners and cooperative attitude of Matilda and Rosalie help her to adapt to the difficult situation. Murray sisters are very friendly and cooperative in their dealing with Agnes. To the utter dismay of her offenders, Agnes cultivates strong sense of determination to fight against the entire patriarchal system. She has to fight against her employers that takes delight in mocking her. Amidst strong public mockery and mendacity, she affirms her sanity. Her battle for justice takes momentum due to her strong determination. Agnes's awareness of her importance ranges from her submissive tone to assertive stand and from assertive outlook to compromising viewpoint. She is ready to display any kind of temperament and disposition to create favorable situation in which she is deprived of nice opportunity.

Despite difficult situations, Gray increasingly appears to be strong and more resisting. Despite tough and adverse conditions, she relies on her premonition and intuition that situation, no matter how hostile, can turn to her favor. Her reliance on her intuitive mode of perceiving reality has helped her a lot. That is why her troubled subject position sometimes verges on disintegration and picks up to the level of confidence and assertiveness. Agnes's victory shows how assertion of female subject position is going to be successful. After establishing her innocence and justice, she succeeds in gaining back those things which she had lost in the course of fighting against hazards and hindrances. She expresses her wish to attend to the ordinary domestic world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be said that the more Agnes faces adverse charges leveled against her, the more assertive and bold she appears to be. Singular line of reactions and responses cannot take her to the intended destination. This bitter fact is internalized by her. That is why she is far more flexible and adaptive. To be more specific, question of surviving with dignity in hostile society is inextricably related to Agnes's adaptability, flexibility, sentimentality, fortitude and assertiveness. The idea of female bonding or the solidarity of sisterhood is the only factor that can empower women to survive in society

with hand-in-hand with the male counterpart. However, the purpose of the female bonding is not to create hierarchy but equality.

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