



# The Impact of Societal Expectations among Characters in the Novels of Somerset Maugham: Feminine Attributes

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**Abstract**— This research paper intends to examine the complexity of female characters in five selected novels of William Somerset Maugham and their evolution against their historical, social, and psychological contexts. The prominent themes of personal freedom vs struggle behind perfection, survival vs stability from inner strength, feminine consciousness of working women, self-prioritization vs others' wellbeing, and superficiality to reality, have been uncovered by comparing the motives and characters of the female characters of "Cakes and Ale," "The Painted Veil," "Of Human Bondage," "Liza of Lambeth," and "The Razor's Edge." The results highlight how the evolution of female characters are correlated with Maslow's need hierarchy and how the complex interaction among characters shed light on the expression of female emotional needs in defiance against the accepted Victorian moral codes. The paper notes through textual analysis that the social pressures prompted evolution of these female characters between different stages of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Despite being stereotyped, these female characters exhibit an unfathomable resilience and an incomparable survival instinct inviting a re-definition of femininity.

**Keywords**— Maugham, Feminine Attributes, Cakes and Ale, The Painted Veil, Of Human Bondage, Liza of Lambeth, The Razor's Edge.



## I. INTRODUCTION

The novels of William Somerset Maugham set in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, consistently explore themes of materialism, love, extramarital affairs, spiritual quests, and romance. His unparalleled talent for weaving peculiar and distinct characters from real-life people adds realism to his novels. Being a firm believer in freedom against social convention, his characters are portrayed in various phases of either fighting, surviving, or breaking free from social and personal pressures (Maugham, *Cakes and Ale*; Maugham, *Liza of Lambeth*; Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*; Maugham, *The Painted Veil*; Maugham, *The Razor's Edge*). Researchers have expounded on his literary proficiency and exemplary narration, which, amidst historical changes, makes it both profound and lucid (Chelliah, 5). His characters are found negotiating with individual aspirations versus social constraints, often showcasing rebellion, resilience, and self-discovery often

enough succumbing to temptations and spiraling into grey shades of alcoholism, challenging marital norms and at times culminating in death (*Liza of Lambeth*). Maugham's characters, especially women, often challenge traditional gender roles, and he presents them with a mix of independence, intelligence, and emotional depth. Anna Gazdzinska in her essay "A Woman Imprisoned Analysis of Formal Inferiority of Women in Selected Novels of W. S. Maugham" (2002) notes, 'women'..., "feature prominently in Maugham's works and can often be described as centers around which the action of the book is woven". The present paper examines the "feminine attributes" and complexities of prominent female characters taken from five selected novels of Maugham, including "Cakes and Ale," "The Painted Veil," "Of Human Bondage," "Liza of Lambeth," and "The Razor's Edge."

The "Feminine" in feminine attribute is a social construct that varies across cultures and time. So,

"feminine attribute" is something which is constantly scrutinized and is evolving and being redefined. It basically refers to the evolving roles of women in various social spheres. This evolution is evident in their behaviour, goals, and choices that females traditionally or culturally engage in, which vary due to the influence of historical periods, social classes, traditions, significant historical events, and individual perspectives. In the historical context, females have traditionally been limited to domesticity, marriage, family, and child rearing, which include etiquette, needlework, conversational charm, painting, and skills that enhance social circles (Dewitt et al, 3). Apart from this, they were expected to support their husbands or be involved in philanthropy. In contemporary contexts, feminine started evolving to encompass career achievement, personal development, advocating for radical social change, health and fitness, travel and exploration, and fostering diverse, meaningful relationships and community building (Trifan,76).

Gradually, the spotlight fell on the psychological and personal dimensions of female personality. A special focus was placed on emotional outpourings - leading to fostering and nurturing empathy, intuition, self-discovery, empowerment, and authenticity - as it became prominent that femininity thrived and the feminine attributes found fulfillment in these spaces (Crasta and Dmello, 316).

In assessing Maugham's characters, this paper aims to understand the motivations, ambitions, and journeys of female characters. Thus, the five novels are discussed individually and collectively within a specific theme, and their connection and evolution are explored in relation to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs to establish a connection between the feminine attributes. Also, the female characters of each story are compared to gain more insight.

## Objectives

The female character arcs are devoid of internal dialogue that showcases their motivations due to the masculine narrative in the existing body of literature. This prompts the study of understanding and unravelling of feminine pursuits and layered traits in female characters of Maugham.

## II. METHODS

The roles of the female characters are studied in-depth and compared with those of other similar and contrasting characters within the theme of the chosen novels. Further, this comparison has been drawn through the lens of the progressive themes of evolution stated under Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

Maslow's Hierarchy of needs is a psychological theory that proposes human motivation progresses through five levels of needs—physiological, safety, love/belonging, esteem, and self-actualization—where lower-level needs gain prominence over higher-level needs because they pertain to safety and security of self. Maugham's novels are an exploration on portraying female characters in myriad shades, seeking to fulfill their emotional needs; however despite the historical context occasionally his female characters attempt to attain the higher order need of self-actualization as mentioned in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.

## III. RESULT

Significant evolving themes have been identified, along with the conflicts the female consciousness has faced in the novels, as discussed in this section.

### (1) Quest for Personal freedom vs Struggle behind Perfection

As suggested, "*Cakes and Ale*" revolves around celebration, enjoyment, and indulging in the finer things of life, in this novel the narrative revolves around two female characters that are parts typical Victorian/Edwardian social settings cast in their socially endorsed feminine roles. The two ladies however are juxtaposed in contrasting female attributes, *Rosie and Amy Driffield*, who navigate societal expectations in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is worth noting that these two characters are seen through the lens of the quintessential narrator of Maugham's works in the shape of *Ashenden*. The reader looks at the complexity of both these female characters through the male lens of *Ashenden*.

*Rosie* is the first wife of *Edward*, whose personal quest for freedom and affection makes her subvert the marital norms of a dutiful, devoted wife of early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. She is someone "who gave herself as naturally as the sun gives heat or the flowers their perfume." (Maugham, 249) but her pursuit of pleasure in her relationships, could be viewed as promiscuity and not as a woman's right to choose her happiness and relationships. Her "childlike innocence" or "naïveté" aside, *Rosie* breaks out of her mold as a graceful lady to exhibit avowed male traits when she discusses issues related to trade breaking the stereotypes, and making *Ashenden* rather uncomfortable as he is not accustomed to females discussing topics like trade. In a society where, "if you play your cards right you ought to marry well" (Maugham, 85). , we get glimpses of the inner working of a woman's mind that comes from the humble beginnings of a war-beaten father but in a sharp contrast from her alleged "lovey, sweet" presence displays her sheer grit and presence of mind, much like a business-woman. She left

her barmaid life behind her to seek a better future through marriage depicting her foresight, sound mind, and intelligence. Even when she plays the cards with the gentry at her home, she is shown to be "quick", "alert", and "volute" in her conversations. *Mary Anne*, who did not like *Rosie*, soon gets charmed by her when she visits her impromptu. *Rosie* could connect with people around her; for those who belonged to different strata of society, this is an astounding trait for a woman in a class governed society. *Rosie*'s positive presence is acknowledged by *Ashenden*, who finds her, "friendly without being patronizing and familiar without being impertinent" (Maugham, 5), here it can be observed that her life's' choices and a search for deeper meaning in life elevate her needs beyond just first and second stages of physiological and safety needs to third stage of love and belonging.

In contrast to the colourful character of *Rosie* is *Amy Driffield*, the second wife of *Edward*. She is known for her devotion, dedication, alertness, and precise care of her husband, who was his nurse first and became his wife only later. She is lauded for all her qualities, which is also evident in *Rosie* at distinct times but is not perceived by others as such. Upon delving deeper, it is evident that *Amy*'s life revolves around her distinguished husband and maintaining him, often shielding his eccentricities from the world. *Rosie*, who married *Edward* in his 60s, depicts his adventurous spirit before fame while *Amy* nurses him as an octogenarian public figure. From the conversation between *Ashenden* and *Alroy*, we get an inkling of how *Amy* is simply a socially acceptable mask to an eccentric and liberated *Edward*, indicating the fractured morality of society where soiled pasts are concealed with veneers of propriety and social standing.

Hidden beneath the bitter scrutiny of her morality, *Rosie* seems to be grieving the loss of her 6-year-old daughter to brutal meningitis. She compares her infidelity with that of a husband who cannot bear his wife's labour and sleeps with other women, seldom in love with them. There is a layered sheer grit in her character, likely inherited from her veteran father, who taught her that she could earn her living, while coping up with her loss. This refutes her indulgence in luxury or men, as suspected by *Ashenden*. Rather, it is obvious from her confession that her only pursuit was of relief, plain relief from her grief, "I wanted to laugh", "I wanted to get away from all Ted was feeling", "the child's cot was still there and I couldn't look at it" she says (Maugham, 263). Her childlike openness and smile amidst jealousy, derisive comments, and scrutiny carry her inherent need to be free, to rest in mirth, unlike the ill fate of her screaming daughter. While *Edward* poured his agony into a novel, *Rosie* was not awarded with

such grace. Her pursuits have been simpler and more apparent in her choice of relocation and marriage to *George Kemp*, whom she had liked since her youth. Maugham's characters often operate in morally ambiguous spaces, where the lines between right and wrong are blurred. "Rosie Driffield, the most striking character of the book, is interesting principally because of her surprising ability to be sexually promiscuous and at the same time remains a perfectly self-possessed, integrated character. The world expects one set of actions from her and gets another" (Ross p-118)

## (2) The vile gut of Survival vs the Stability from Inner strength

Similarly, one of the pivotal characters in "Of Human Bondage", *Mildred Rogers*, is constantly in and out of *Philip Carey*'s life, structuring and defining her pursuit. *Mildred Rogers* serves as a training ground and cautionary tale in his journey. She is known for her indifference, materialism, vanity, and callous nature, especially towards *Philip*. Even though *Philip* tries to cheer her up, her destitution keeps her embroiled in self-pity and cynicism. Her outbursts are often filled with contempt when she breaks off with *Philip* and says, "it used to make me sick when I had to let you kiss me" (Maugham, 600) This is extended to her baby as well, where she takes one look and remarks, "Funny looking little thing, isn't it? I can't believe it is mine". (Maugham, 438) It not only indicates her vapid detachment but also her insipidity and selfishness, which are completely lacking in maternal attachment. Much of her conversation revolves around her financial needs and expectations due to her precarious financial situation. Her search is for financial security making her prioritize herself over the human emotions of affection and love shown by *Philip* towards her. When he shares his concern about baby's upbringing, she is quick to negate it by saying, "Don't, be silly. That's when you give woman a sum down to look after a baby." (Maugham, 440). She goes on to elaborate and justify the financial needs more than a child's emotional wellbeing. There is a departure from the normal depiction of women of that era, since emotions and compassion are not her virtues; her personality appears harsh, callous, manipulative and mostly lacking remorse (Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*). Emotions become her weapons which she uses to manipulate *Philip* repeatedly. Her apathy towards her maternal role and her relationship with *Philip* make her an incredibly complex character. Financial security concerns are central in the lives of both *Rosie* and *Mildred* yet they choose alternate paths to resolve their needs, we find *Rosie* from "Cakes and Ale", making efforts to earn money, but *Mildred* remains a victim of her financial circumstances. Both characters do

not shy away from promiscuity, shunning the existing moral codes of the Victorian Age, choosing alternate paths to navigate their reality. *Mildred* slips back to her old ways falling into oblivion after removing herself from *Philip's* life, as it remains her only means of security. This depicts how she is stuck in safety needs of Maslow's Hierarchy Needs.

*Norah Nesbit* poses as a foil to *Mildred Rogers*, bringing wry humour, intelligence, and a supportive presence that not only encourages *Philip* to study but also instils self-awareness over his self-destructive tendencies. She is a divorcee and financially faring well from being a writer, which allows her intellectual exploration and stability. Her affection towards *Philip* is described to be infused with maternal instinct, much like "petting" and loving a pet. Probably, she took pity on *Philip* because of his clubbed foot, but she brings it up for discussion, empathically trying to dilute its impression on people (Maugham, *Of Human Bondage*). In contrast to *Mildred's* pragmatism, *Norah* is realistic, mature, and grounded, primarily attributed to her divorce experience. From *Mildred's* indifference to *Norah's* supporting role, the feminine attributes shift from materialistic security to social needs – under Maslow's Hierarchy Needs. Here, social needs refer to intimacy, friendship, and love, even if it is unrequited on *Philip's* part. She is intellectual even in romantic pursuits, as depicted in the interaction where *Philip* wants to revert her support. She is deeply perceptive of emotional struggles and is not aggressively intervening. Rather, she uses insightful remarks, probably from her own profound experiences. Maugham uses *Norah* as a foil to *Mildred* to develop *Philip's* character arc, and despite her healthier character, her romantic pursuit with *Philip* remains unfulfilled. Post rejection from *Philip*, she is not found pining for him or reeling in dejection, rather her intellectual sensibilities help her move on to a better and reciprocal match in *Mr. Kingsford*. This reflects a shift upwards in the Maslow's need hierarchy from the character of *Mildred* to *Norah*.

Another significant character who eventually marries *Philip* is *Sally Athelney*, a young girl who is often calm and domestic, and regards everything with quiet efficiency. *Sally's* discretion with boys is reiterated in the novel. *Sally* lacks theatrics and overt romanticism when she agrees to marry *Philip*. Her attitude towards life is practical, which could have been honed by the thriftlessness of her father and the tiresome domestic life of her mother. She grows into a headstrong, young, feminine woman with a great sense of humour. It seems that she has always favoured *Philip* as she does not address him as "Uncle *Philip*", unlike her younger siblings. Mature beyond her years, she quietly takes in the

opinions of others without compromising her sense, and at times, she finds amusement in observing others. She possesses an inner strength and intelligence that was not fully acknowledged by *Philip*.

### (3) The Split in the Feminine Consciousness of Working Women

In 'Liza of Lambeth' Maugham portrays *Liza*, *Sally*, and *Mrs. Kemp* as individuals battling survival, marriage, and consumption in the face of limited opportunities within a working-class environment (Maugham, *Liza of Lambeth*). Set in the harsh realities of 19<sup>th</sup>-century slums of London, *Liza* grapples with her low economic status of a typical slum dweller, for sustenance, she works in a factory which helps her to take care of her old and alcoholic mother. *Liza* is portrayed as direct, defiant, and high-spirited. Among his female characters, "Liza was considered a shockingly out-spoken heroine" (Colegate p. 17), she is very expressive during her dances, here she vocalizes her pure sensations of enjoyment in "This is a jam!", and then "swaggers." (Maugham, 6) Other times, her confidence converts to triumph in "Knocked 'em in the Old Kent Road!" and her jaunty retort addressing *Bill*, "Ave yer bought the street, *Bill*?" (Maugham, 5). *Liza's* assertiveness is rather unusual; highlighting her individuality she is most unlike Maugham's other heroines who normally belong to middle classes. When *Liza* is teased about her dress, she fiercely defends it making her point clear by saying, "Garn! I'll swipe yer over the snitch if yer talk ter me..." (Maugham, 7). She is quick-witted and proud of her earning capacity, much like *Rosie*, here her confidence and enthusiasm are overt. The independence of *Liza*, her capability to manage her finances adds deeper layers to her personality when she seeks the forbidden path of falling in love with a married man not to be mistaken for a beguiled beauty, she is capable of being assertive enough to follow her heart and her needs extend from the simple safety and security to love and belonging.

It is difficult to infer whether Maugham is more sympathetic to *Liza* or *Rosie*. However, Maugham introduced *Sally*, *Liza's* friend, who is embroiled in an abusive marriage, as a realistic depiction of women of that era. Her persona and needs are not self-driven but rather an utterance of societal expectations, within which *Sally* is actively battling. Trying to preserve the picture-perfect image of a "good wife" drives her to endure the regular abuse at the hands of her husband. She is too ashamed to disclose that she is abused by her husband providing an insight into the life of women in the slums of London and the family pressure which women were subjected to. This gives rise to a subtle pursuit of endurance and evolves into

camaraderie, as she later confides in *Liza*. The need for solidarity in working-class women hints at Maslow's social needs. This character can be compared with *Amy Drifford*, who was keen on projecting herself as a "good wife". The conflict in *Sally*'s character is rather apparent and profound than the linear character arc of *Amy*. *Sally*'s pursuit for companionship, starting from an initial blissful marriage to a close confidant in *Liza*, entails her social needs for bonding. It not only highlights the invisible influence of societal perspectives regarding the choices of women in the face of adversity but also pitches itself as a parallel pursuit for a search for identity and agency.

Essentially, since women began contributing economically, their plates have dwindled, and the pressure seems to remain mounting. Feminine consciousness has suffered a classic split between pursuing a career and running a household (Porter, 283). The "perfect homemaker" versus the "perfect career woman" pushes working-class women into identity crises, stripping them of any sense of adequacy in either sphere. The lines blur in the pursuit of "having it all" and gender competency traps that push guilt, shame, and frustration into the mix. Maugham, by introducing *Sally*, opens the spilt wider and allows space for companionship and solidarity amongst women. *Liza*'s mother, who is a drunkard, is a typical representation of an elderly working class woman who succumbs to alcoholism without remorse.

#### **(4) The Conflict of Self-prioritization vs Others-wellbeing**

Maugham's *Isabel* in "The Razor's Edge" is an affluent American socialite whose desires centre around her financially comfortable upbringing. She values wealth, social standing, and an abundance of material comforts. Her materialism is practical to her due to her lifestyle and is depicted in the following lines. "You're impractical. You don't know what you're asking me to do. I'm young, I want to have fun. I want to do all things that people do..."(Maugham, 76). Her upper class status is highlighted when she asserts that "one can't live on three thousand a year"(Maugham, 75). Her need for materialistic wealth and status overshadows her capacity to experience genuine love from *Larry*, who is more inclined towards his spiritual quest. Though she breaks off with *Larry*, *Isabel*'s feelings for him remain. Her needs are neither intellectual nor spiritual; instead she has a self-assured identity. She is satisfied with the privileges of her life; hence, her pursuit is not of wealth but a subtle comfort in her life that affords her "power, influence and social consequence." These comforts are provided by her father's wealth, creating a certain show of class as shown in "It would mortify me that you shouldn't be perfectly dressed."(Maugham,61).

According to her, it is natural to earn a living to fulfil materialistic desires, which is why she tried convincing *Larry* to take the job offer from *Maturin*. She is emotionally expressive and yearns to know what ails *Larry*, as she gets teary-eyed in trying to understand him. Her clear understanding of the existing societal norms prompts her to marry *Gray Maturin*, a wealthy businessman. Despite choosing *Maturin* *Isabel*'s, love for *Larry* remains undiminished, her possessiveness for *Larry* moves her to the extent of sabotaging *Sophie*'s engagement with him. She manipulates *Sophie* out of jealousy, and in a calculated move, she slyly puts alcohol to tempt her, fully aware of her addiction. *Larry* confronts her, but she struggles to grasp her digression. Compared to *Larry*'s spiritual fate, *Isabel* settles into an "assured position backed by a substantial fortune"(Maugham, 343).

On the other hand, *Sophie*, *Isabel*'s friend, a tragic character, is experiencing grief from losing her husband and child to a car accident. Her descent into despair led her to alcohol addiction, drug abuse, and involvement in extra-marital engagements. Here, we can draw parallels with *Rosie* from "Cakes and Ale," who engages with several men in her life as a means of coping with her grief. *Sophie*, unlike *Isabel*, does not display an emotional resilience falling into oblivion, from which *Larry* attempts to rescue her leading to her recovery. She is emotionally fragile and gravely tempted by alcohol that offers an escape from pain. In this regard, she is like *Mrs. Kemp* from "Liza of Lambeth", in choosing an emotional weakness, succumbing to circumstances leading to self-destructive tendencies. She dies from a violent cut to her throat depicting the destructive power of societal insensitivity towards women who choose paths not defined as normative. (Maugham, *Liza of Lambeth*)

"The Razor's Edge" is a quest of a man to unearth spiritual purpose; however women are shown to abide by the societal norms of pursuit of wealth and status. Spirit essentially means 'soul' and 'life', which gives a sense of fulfilment (Jung & Hull, 319). The novel highlights values of spiritualism, being contrasted with materialism, where wholesome fulfilment is afforded only through spirituality (Dahanayake, 314). Materialism only affords temporary happiness that needs constant tending, which is why it requires socializing and putting in deliberate effort. The novel's title suggests that the spiritual quest is challenging and requires sharp attentiveness and balance. However, for women, are shown to choose the alternative pursuit of materialism, where the eternal pursuit of life remains unfulfilled due to societal expectations of gender roles. It restrains women and keeps them financially dependent on men with little personal freedom or free will. *Isabel*'s

needs of financial security make her bury her need for love and belonging.

### (5) Piercing the Veil of Superficiality

Maugham, in “*The Painted Veil*”, finally penned a female character who forges through illusion and finds reality. *Kitty Fane* is not only a female counterpart to *Larry* from “*The Razor's Edge*”, but also a redeeming character from all five novels included in this paper as she ends up pursuing as well as achieving spiritual attainment in her journey (Maugham, 293). In the beginning, her security needs, much like *Isabel*'s, led her to pursue a good marriage, not out of love, but for social standing. All the key female characters in Maugham's novels have been starkly aware of societal norms rather than following the need for love and belonging, when making life's choices they always chose marriage except *Liza*.

The need for social acceptance drives the feminine consciousness to superficiality. In that folded reality, women seek pleasure and excitement that their marriage fails to provide leading to extra-marital affairs and infidelity. *Kitty* marries a bacteriologist, *Walter Fane*, with whom she never feels fulfilled, and then has a clandestine affair with *Charles Townsend* solely for satisfying her physical desires. There are fleeting moments of validation and happiness, and hence, her unfulfilled reality remains stark. She wants to be admired in her circle through gossip and appearance. She has been found to be constantly looking at herself from other's lens. Nestled in the illusion of happiness, she tumbles into self-deception. Avoiding confrontation with her feelings due to a lack of connection with *Walter*, she painted over the *veil*. The said “*veil*” is the restrictive social appearances that keep her limited in constant discontent and disconnected from the true reality. When *Walter* discovers her affair and takes her to remote cholera-affected place in China, she is thrust into a world of poverty and death, devoid of any means of social gratification. This allows her the space to confront both the external and internal vagaries of life. She questions her moral bankruptcy, which draws in pain and sends her into pursuit of self-awareness (Wang et al., 700). Her lens transforms as she watches and begins to admire her husband for his selfless dedication. This way, she lifts the *veil* as she starts to explore her emotions for *Walter*. Nearing his death, she realizes that she loves him, as depicted in these lines “*She now thought not of herself but only of him*” (Maugham, 225). She rises from her physiological needs to follow higher order needs of care for other self.

Death and grief touch her soul and gift her with compassion, love, and tenderness that were missing in her materialistic confines. The spiritual awakening in this

character is mesmerizing and humbling, as depicted by her realization- “*She felt in herself the strength to accept whatever was to come with a light and buoyant spirit.*” (Maugham, 293). Compassion and empathy flow through her as she joins the French nuns in the orphanage. Her altruism opens the door for seeking meaning beyond superficial pleasures. Reconciling with forgiveness of her past self, she frees herself from guilt and makes space for human complexities (Liu, 3). She realized that the world on the other side of the *veil* is the world of authenticity that she pursues for personal integrity (Bailian and Giulian, 218).

## IV. CONCLUSION

The female characters of Maugham provide an interesting landscape for character studies and the play of emotional frailty in face of circumstances. Maugham's women occupy the central space in the plots and themes of his works. Though belonging to late Victorian and early Edwardian era his women portray different stages of following their inner self, pursuing different stages of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. He even ventures to depict women pursuing higher order needs of self – actualization as in case of *Kitty Fane* from *The Painted Veil* and *Rosie Driffield* from “*Cakes and Ale*”, even in case of *Liza* she rises above the simple safety and security needs to attempt a quest for love and belonging although meeting a tragic end in the process. In each case women are peripheral to the story and each has her own way of countering the mounting social pressure.

This paper has tapped into the larger themes of survival, resilience, authenticity, connection, spirituality, and self-discovery within the evolving feminine attributes. However, it is important to note that in going through Maslow's Hierarchy of needs feminine pursuits are not disjunct from masculine pursuits. They often intersect and influence each other as they share a common journey. In fact, in Maugham's “*Liza of Lambeth*”, the emotional connection between the characters serves as a revelation of the central strength and guiding principle of feminine attributes, as women are forced to take up traditionally masculine pursuits. In the pursuit of self-discovery, femininity is being redefined not by how it contributes to the collective journey but by its essence, as shown in the evolution of *Kitty*, who was out of society and devoid of a partner. Thus, it is justified to state that feminine attributes are ever-evolving and societal pressures and other factors only instigate further evolution, either directly or indirectly.

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