

CHAPTER II

NEW WOMAN IN *A DAUGHTER OF TO-DAY*

**BARR. BALASAHEB KHARDEKAR LIBRARY
SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR.**

Chapter II

New Woman in *A Daughter of Today*

A Daughter of To-day is famous novel of Sara Jeannette Duncan. She creates here the New Woman through heroine Elfrida, who is very active and anticipates the independent existence from her childhood. She is interested in the philosophy of French Philosopher Rousseau. Miss Kimpsey, Elfrida's tutor informs her mother about her reading habits. Elfrida likes Rousseau's liberal views of liberty and hopes to become independent. Hence it appears that she is a very bright student than others in the class. It shows her talent like Rousseau. But her mother Mrs. Bell takes it easy. According Mrs. Bell, Rousseau is a genius Philosopher. Elfrida reads the works of Rousseau and it shows how much she is mature in her early childhood. That is why she does not want to interfere in Elfrida's habit of reading. She wants Elfrida to develop along the lines that nature intends. Elfrida has some extraordinary qualities. Mrs. Bell praises Elfrida for her grasping capacity and remarks that her daughter is genius. Elfrida's quest for self-realization is viewed here. She emphasizes freedom of choice in her childhood. She seems to be the perfect example of the new woman.

Mrs. Bell is always worried about Elfrida's career. She wants her to be an artist. She might not have thought of Elfrida to marry and live her life as a housewife. But Elfrida's father Mr. Bell does not agree with his wife. His idea is that Elfrida should marry like other girls. Here Mr. Bell has the patriarchal views and wants his daughter to marry in very early age. According to him, he has been

giving her education only to support her life. But his wife does not think so. She does not oppose him but her thinking about Elfrida is very high as a new woman. She does not want to create such circumstances which can limit Elfrida's freedom. According to the patriarchal views there is no use of learning for women, and after marriage motherhood is a true source of pleasure for them. It is the women's tendency that they think of their husbands as their Gods, and masters and they are expected to live their life within the home. But the expectations of the new woman are quite different. She fights for her rights and tries to achieve great things with her own power.

It is obvious that Elfrida is the daughter of a new woman Mrs. Bell and it must be the impact of her mother that Elfrida is a new woman. Mr. Bell admires Elfrida's intellectual power as well as her way of life. She learns in Philadelphia and has her own style of living. Mr. Bell understands his daughter very well and thinks that she is a clever girl and in future, she will have a bright future. Mrs. Bell appeals Mr. Bell to accept the fact that Elfrida has attained a good improvement in her personality and Elfrida is consciousness of her own knowledge. Elfrida longs for personal glory which is the feature of a new woman of her time. She says sometimes, when she is in Philadelphia, looking into glass, "but I could bear not to be charming, . . . but I could *not* bear not to be clever"(11). She says "clever," but she means more than that and believes that something other than cleverness has entered into her personal equation. According Janice Fiamengo, Elfrida has a magnified sense of her importance and longing for personal glory which is characteristic feature of a New Woman. Mrs. Bell does

not want to be an obstacle for Elfrida though Elfrida's opinions always resemble her father.

Elfrida's father thinks that the way she develops would not be the headache and hysteria, and she affirms him that she will not behave wrongly. As a polite daughter she conceals her desire of writing and accepts painting as her parents' wish. So she leaves her intention to write novels or compose operas; but accepts to be an artist. She wants to be a journalist. She has written some verses which are locked inside the sandalwood box. She does not tear them up because it is her dream, but she sacrifices it for the sake of her parents. Carole Gerson states that Duncan makes Elfrida a victim of both of patriarchy and of her own "uncompromising ambition"(65). Elfrida's attitude towards her career is presented as "the desire of the moth for the star"(13). The statement expresses the expectation of a new woman, who wants to become famous by writing but obeys her parents and takes painting aimlessly. But it is not her true aim. The author has portrayed Elfrida as a new kind of heroine, who possesses the aim to write by writing as a journalist. Elfrida is the new woman who has full of hopes and aspirations of her destiny. But as a new woman it is obvious that she is deeply aware of the fact that women do not have a right of choosing their career by their own. She always talks about her career and wants to maintain her independent identity. Her antipathy towards marriage and the man and woman relationship is explained by the protagonist Elfrida, who has strong detestation for that. According to Elfrida, "the only dignity between a man and a woman is that of an artistic idea" (Dean76). Miss. Janet, her friend finds Elfrida a woman who possesses savage opinion in this regard. According to

Janet, Elfrida is wrong so she objects Elfrida while she hears her opinion about marriage. But Elfrida firmly asserts,

. . . it does make life more interesting, I admit – up to a certain point. And I suppose it's to be condoned from the point of view of the species. Whoever started us, and wants us to go on, excuses marriage, I suppose. And of course the men are not affected by it. But for women, it is degrading – horrible. Especially for women like you and me, to whom life may mean something else. Fancy being the author of babies when one could be the author of books!" Don't tell me you'd rather! (126)

These are certainly the impressive words that we expect from the new woman. According to Elfrida, marriage cannot be the goal of every woman. She can live alone without marriage in order to enjoy her freedom in a male-dominated society. As a new woman she accepts the new ideas which can change the position of woman in society.

But Janet is a woman of principle. Though she is a new woman, she wants to follow the principles of convention. So, Elfrida suspects about her views regarding marriage. She asks, "Do you really hope you will marry?" (124) Janet gives very ideal answer to this question. She presents herself as a common and conventional woman. "Of course I do, and I want to die a grandmother too" (124). Here Janet differs with Elfrida who hopes to die a grandmother. Elfrida explains that though the physical act may be a part of spiritual experience, it is the romanticization of a

biological urge that mankind shares (Dean76). She realizes that Janet's idea of love is pompous. She does not believe in Platonics. Being firm on her freedom and independent existence, Elfrida rejects the commonplace routine such as marriage. Elfrida's statement proves a fact of woman's life because through domestic works woman does not get any prestige or recognition. She cannot take any higher or tougher decision by her own. She cannot share her thoughts with others .She accuses,

Besides, the commonplaceness, the eternal routine, the being tied together, the—the domestic virtues! It must be death, absolute death, to any fineness of nature (126-27).

This feature of the New Woman Elfrida perfectly resembles with Susie Dagget from Shelley Zegart's, *"Old Maid, New Woman"* who remains unmarried till her death. Thus, the novelist has produced the new woman who is able to live her life as a single woman and denies the support of others such as a husband and a lover in her life. She declares that any woman can live her life independently and one cannot dominate her, if she has a daring to do something excellent. According to her, there are many things which woman can do herself; can defend herself being an earner and make her own position. She has the same right to be born and survive. She can shape her life according to her needs and the potential that lies within her. She struggles to find her own voice and struggles continuously to present herself by means of her work. Elfrida is a person who tries to play the role that she wishes to play. Duncan depicts the life of both, a conventional but educated woman Janet Cardiff and the career oriented woman Elfrida Bell ,

who sacrifices all her emotions and joys for her career. Mr. Lawrence Cardiff, Janet's father proposes her to marry him. He cries, "let us have an end of this!" . . . "I want you to be my wife"(161).But Elfrida rejects his proposal by her liberal views. She never changes her decision because to be a wife of someone is quite useless thing for her. This principle is deeply rooted in her mind. She thinks that it will destroy her whole joys in life. She contradicts with Mr. Cardiff, "Oh no! Marriage is so absurd! . . .And I wish I could do what you would like, but it is quite, quite impossible" (162-63).She informs this matter to Janet that she is not interested in Cardiff because marriage is too absurd thing for her. She says,

You know what I think about marriage – there is so much to consider. . . Don't be afraid that I shall become your stepmother and hate me in advance. That is too absurd (180-82).

She thinks that marriage would restrict her career and freedom. She hates marriage so firmly that Mr. Cardiff cannot persuade her. She does not wish to become his wife and put limitation in her career. She is a self-respected woman who explains it to Cardiff. Having independent views, she tells him plainly:

I am so sorry. We could be friends of a sort, I think, but I can't marry you. . . . As your wife I should suffer and you would suffer, in a false position which could never be altered (185-86).

Elfrida desires to live her life in a fullest sense. By rejecting the idea of getting married with Cardiff she gets ready to live her life

on her own terms. She understands his duplicity and deviousness and rejects him as her lover or husband. She trusts that, in reality, marriage shatters all the dreams of a woman. Thus Elfrida has rebellious instinct and wants to build her life on her own. But according to Cardiff he can provide her a good house and identity linked with his name that is why Elfrida should marry him. Here Elfrida comes across a strong patriarchal figure Cardiff.

But Cardiff explains her that he is a man, and she is a woman, so he ought to hope for her love. Then Elfrida explains him her ideas of free friendship regarding man and woman. She likes to keep his friendship but she never likes to marry him. The new friendship is the true explanation of their relation according Elfrida, so Cardiff dismisses the idea of his marriage with Elfrida due to her strong opposition of marriage. She dissuades him from his intension which shows that it is her prominent success by which she can set herself free to take her own decision on her own. She states that marriage brings many constraints to woman. For a traditional woman her husband is a master and she is a slave. She has no choice in the family and behaves according what her husband wishes. She thinks that a woman should have an independent identity.

Here the novelist has depicted the new woman Elfrida who endeavours to achieve her aim in her whole life. She has been trying to overcome all her emotions, and has to sacrifice the company of her parents as well as her lover Mr. John Kendal. She never expresses her love to Kendal. But inwardly she has been suffering mentally because she loves him. Elfrida is bewildered regarding her decision of love. She cannot take proper decision

about whether to love him or not. While she is informed about the marriage of Janet and Kendal by Mr. Cardiff, she becomes very nervous, but later on she thinks about her career, and feels that it is better not to marry with Kendal because it will be an obstacle in her career. She sacrifices her love and contemplates,

He will marry some red-and-white cow of an Englishwoman who will accept herself in the light of a reproductive agent and do her duty by him accordingly. As I would not— no! Good heavens, no!(206)

Elfrida wants equal rights to women in the society. She argues that marriage is an obstacle in the way of career-oriented woman. She refuses the idea that a woman is a reproductive agent and to do duty given by her husband. She demands for the self-respect and self-existence and leads the idea of an independent woman who is free from the marital bonds and child bearing. She aims to reform this system. Without marriage, she likes to love Mr. Kendal forever. She says, "So perhaps it is as well, for I will go on loving him, of course" (206). The statement makes it clear that Elfrida is an independent person.

Elfrida wants to preserve her self-respect. She is proud of her work. Her ego rises up when Mr. Cardiff compares her work with the literature of the police court. She becomes angry and warns him that he has no right to comment on her work because her work is so valuable for her in the whole world and he does not have a right to cancel it and compare it with the matter of police court. She rejects his help to complete the book. She desires to complete it all alone. That's why she opposes Cardiff's appeal to write some other book.

She is not willing to take his support in writing. She is very prudent and expedient while answering to Cardiff. She says him firmly, "All alone by myself I must do it," ... And I must do *this* book. You will approve it when it is done. I am not afraid"(162). Here Elfrida is bounded up in self. She presents herself as an egotist. According Janice Fiamengo, Elfrida cannot take advice from those she admires. When Janet's father Cardiff rewrites her rejected article on "The Nemesis of Romanticism", she cannot bear to read his criticism and prefers to throw the article in the fire in a gesture at once petulant and self-protective. Later on she does not appreciate the ideal art of Kendal due to her ego. She ignores her feelings for Kendal and announces that love is merely a physical urge, and she does not want to restrict herself by it. Actually human being needs someone's company to live in order to share thoughts, joy and happiness. Elfrida also wants to express her worries and joys to Kendal. Elfrida is failed to connect the ideal art of Kendal with the real world by reason of her ego and pride. She preserves her pride as a source of gratification. With reference to her pride, she admits,

It isn't a source of gratification, it's a channel. And it intensifies everything so that I don't care how little comes that way. If there's anything of me left when I die it will be that little fierce flame. And when I do the tiniest thing, write the shortest sentence that rings *true*, see a beauty or a joy which the common herd pass by, I have my whole life in the flame, and it becomes my soul – I'm sure I have no other! (102)

Elfrida here challenges the convention of society. She has fully realized Mr. John Kendal's intention of exhibiting her portrait

in the exhibition as well as to show it to Janet Cardiff who is her competitor. According her, she is not the thing for presentation or exhibition. She tries to make herself uncommon. Elfrida wants a physical as well as a spiritual union with Kendal. But for him only her physical beauty is important. He only sees her outward nature but does not peep into inward beauty of her mind. He fails to understand her. So, owing to the frustration of broken love and friendship with Janet, Elfrida suffers a lot and destroys her own life by committing suicide. According Thomas Tausky, the novel's ending is simply a failure, Elfrida's suicide "no more justifiable on moral than on dramatic grounds." *A Daughter of To-day* challenges both the social as well as literary conventions which put restriction on woman. Elfrida is a new kind of heroine who trusts in other female women and motivates them to develop individually. After her death, her novel, "*An Adventure in Stage-Land*" has published by Messers. It is a great pity that Elfrida, who makes praiseworthy attempts to be a journalist and novelist throughout her life, unfortunately commits suicide. But it is not the proper end of the novel. As a new woman Elfrida had to face the challenges courageously: Death cannot be an ultimate solution any problem.

Elfrida works hard in her whole life. She wants to live alone independently and takes the opportunity and advantage of being independent. She explains her purpose of writing to Mr. Frank Parke a newspaperman. She requires a special course of training to find out, what to write about. She has to compete with people who know every inch of the ground of society. Elfrida struggles to explore her individual talent. Mr. Frank Parke declares her to assist in her career of journalism. But Elfrida is firmed with her decision.

She asserts, "If I can't write I can scrub, as I said I must find out" (31). Elfrida's mind has been stirred up by Mr. Franke Parke. She strides towards her aim and strives to get local knowledge for the sake of her writing. First she chooses the familiar subject matters to write. She completes her work within three days. Even though, Mr. Frank Parke does not give her the guarantee of its acceptance by any editor. Elfrida has to strive for it. As a journalist, she must have the knowledge of personalities and be careful while writing about them and also she has to follow the rules of the press. So, she does not offend someone by her writing and follows the rules of writing. Actually, Elfrida is not precisely gifted or trained for the profession of journalism. As a new woman she tries to make her own identity in the highly competitive world through her self-recognition and self-awareness. Thus, the novel sketches the intellectual as well as emotional development of the heroine. Elfrida is a caring daughter too. In the financial adversity, her parents appeal her to return home. They know that their daughter is brave and intelligent and can handle such circumstances very skilfully. They are sure that their daughter will support them in the financial adversity. It shows their trust in her. Elfrida's mother Mrs. Bell writes it in the letter:

You have always been our brave daughter, and your courage will be invaluable to us now. Your talents will be our flowers by the way-side. We shall take the keenest possible delight in watching them expand, as, even under the cloud of financial adversity, we know they will (26).

Through the letter Elfrida understands the financial problems of her parents and decides to support them courageously. She confesses

that she has yet to prove that she has any talent. Elfrida is very conscious of her beauty and dress at Lady Halifax's reception hall. She has worn amber and white dress which is made by the Sparta dressmaker. Her hair is massed at the back of her head simply and girlishly enough and its fluffiness about her forehead makes a sweet shadow above her eyes, she is impressive and attractive that night. She says herself, "You are ravishing to-night." (109) It shows that she is keenly interested in her own and others qualities. Elfrida is a member of middle class family but she escapes from her middle class environment and indulges into the fashionable world of modern life.

One of the aspects of her personality is seen in the reception that she does not afraid to introduce herself to Mr. Jasper, who is a great writer and novelist. Mr. Rattray, her friend encourages her to write on social problems. He suggests her new social subjects for writing and thinks that she can find out a leading idea in some of the modern movements. He asks her,

Couldn't you find a leading idea in some of the modern movements. . . in the higher education of women, for instance, or the suffrage agitation? Or University Extension, or Bimetallism, or Eight Hours' Labour, or Disestablishment. (149-50)

He advises her to travel a lot for searching new ideas from society. So, Elfrida travels and tries to get a new idea for her writing. According him, she can go on walking tour through Spain, she can disguise as a nun or something else, and by this way, she will get the new topics for her writing. Thus she can write the novel about

what she sees. Mr. Rattray suggests her that her work must be unusual and it must be interesting. Miss Bell must do something that no young lady had done before. Through her efforts, she does it much better.

He observes that Miss Bell is courageous and she can do any good and excellent work with someone's co-operation. So he wants to help her to build her career. With her potentials and talent, she gets ready to write the novel and prepares to go anywhere in London. She tries to get the material for her novel through the burlesque troupe, the Peach Blossom Company at Cheynemouth. She joins this burlesque troupe in order to know about the lives of the ladies of the chorus line and starts to think over the problems of their poverty, exploitation, money, divorce, second marriage, jealousies, intrigues, as well as their, frailties, way of living and their vocabulary. All these problems, she wants to handle and present to the society. This is a realistic picture of the burlesque troupe of Cheynemouth. As a new woman, she finds out these subjects and wants to raise her voice against this brutal truth. She plays an active role in the area of chorus girls. By exposing the harsh reality, she comments on their lives. She is highly sensitive to the issues concerning the women at Cheynemouth. According her, the ladies in the chorus line need a moral courage to discover their way and regain their own selves. She observes that these women are neglected and do not have proper status. According to her, the material which is taken from the Peach Blossom Company is a fact. She states to Mr. Cardiff,

I am quite one of them—one of the young ladies of the Peach Blossom Company. I am learning all their

sensations, their little frailties, their vocabulary, their ways of looking at things. I know how the novice feels when she makes her first appearance in the chorus of a spectacle – I've noted every vibration of her nerves. I'm learning all the little jealousies and intrigues among them, and all their histories and their ambitions. They are more moral than you may think, but it is not the moral one who is the most interesting. Her virtue is generally a very threadbare, common sort of thing. The other—have more colour in the fabric of their lives, and you can't think how picturesque their passions are (160).

Elfrida's thoughts are innovative here. She understands that other writers have their own attitudes with reference to these burlesque women but according her, they are victims of poverty and their life is picturesque. Elfrida desires to present this reality to the society through her novel. Her approach is realistic while experiencing among them. She feels their exploitation, and starts to understand the reality of tyranny and money in the life of chorus girls. She does not romanticize their pain but thinks that it is her own pain. There are some incidents that Elfrida's experience among the extremely poor and rejected women of the troupe begins to make change in her. She thinks that her material is magnificent for her novel. She tells Mr. Cardiff,

One of the chorus girls has two children, I feel a brute sometimes at the way she. . . she brings their little clothes into my bedroom to make – though there is no need, they are in an asylum. She is divorced from their

father ... and he is married to the leading lady.
Candidly, prejudice apart, is it not magnificent
material? (160)

Considering Elfrida's work preposterous, Mr. Lawrence Cardiff comes at Cheynemouth to remonstrate her from her work because he is the man from aristocratic society and such types of subjects are trivial for him. So he tries to persuade her. But as a new woman she insists upon her decision of writing something on unconventional matter. With regard to this subject, she thinks that his opinion is not only related to patriarchy but is also prejudiced. She is so firm that he cannot convince her. Elfrida is a new woman who understands women's miserable life from woman's point of view. She wants to present it in her novel. Elfrida respects Janet's opinion and her critical comments with regard to the writing on burlesque troupe. She accepts Janet's opinion and likes to make her own independent position among the literary world. It shows her competitive view in writing. Elfrida suggests Janet that she has a full right to comment on the subject of burlesque troupe.

Elfrida has presented her independent views on art but Janet thinks that her views of art are not only immoral but also flourished upon it. Elfrida tries to open the reality before the society, though it is immoral. She tries to separate her work from Janet's work and gives the candid explanation of art. She propounds to Janet that their aims and creeds are different and they cannot change it or hold it together. Elfrida presents her own thoughts of art and thus gets success in her work. As she is aware of the chorus girl's life, she is able to write fine and excellent work through this material. Her views are sympathetic towards the chorus girls. She

participates in their troupe and performs a dance on the stage. Thus she herself takes the real experience of chorus girl's life. She alleges,

Perfectly! I am not sure quite sure about the form – whether I shall write as one of them, or as myself, telling the story of my experience. . . a look in to another world, with its own customs and language and ethics and pleasures and pains. . .to be of the life, the strange, unreal, painted, lime-lighted life that goes on behind the curtain! That is something—to act ones part in it, to know that one's own secret role is a thousand times more difficult than any in the *repertoire* (160-61).

Elfrida becomes self-analytical while taking the decision of writing for the press. She is confident of her manuscript which is written on the Peach Bolssom Company. With the help of this material, she longs to write a magnificent novel and considers it as her best thing in the world. Her manuscript becomes her pleasure, and power of her life. The aim of her life is to complete the novel and make the identity of own among the literary world. Therefore she tries hard to complete it. It is obvious that her belief in the God Buddha, and her desire to do something extraordinary finally helps her in making up her mind to write a novel. In this way Elfrida asserts her individuality. It is clear that, if any woman is aware of herself and takes rapid strides towards it, definitely she can get success. She conveys her feelings at little bronze God Buddha.

And there is always this, which is the best of me. . . . All my power, all my joy, the quintessence of my life! I think I shall be angry if it has a common success, if the people like it too well. I only want recognition for it – recognition and acknowledgement and admission. I want George Meredith to ask to be introduced to me! And that Buddha, is what will happen (206).

Elfrida's expression is energetic with regard to her aim. She is not a submissive girl but does all efforts to make it uncommon. So, she hopes that her work should have a bright success. She does not like to be offended personally by someone and this is proved while Kendal paints her portrait. He thinks that it will be displayed in exhibition. He considers it the unique and great portrait as well as his success which he has never done before. He wants to show it to Janet as the best portrait in his life. But self-respecting Elfrida might not have liked Kendal's idea to present her portrait to Janet. She appreciates her own power and status. She is in a confused state of mind due to his intension that how dares he to present her portrait to Janet who is her rival in the literary world. Due to this hostility with Janet, Elfrida does not like to present herself before someone through the portrait. She is hurt by Kendal because of this. The other reason is that she loves Kendal but she cannot express her love to him. Meanwhile Kendal proposes Janet for marriage and both decide to marry. The unsuccessful love with Kendal and her ego are the main reasons behind Elfrida destroying her own portrait. The portrait is created by Mr. Kendal as his best portrait in his life. It is painful for Elfrida that someone uses her as a model. She asks him, "So that is how you have read me"(203).

Elfrida ends her relations with Janet as well as with Mr. Kendal. In the matter of friendship, Janet is not honest with Elfrida because she conceals her love, and in addition to it, she does not let Elfrida to know about her new novel. But Elfrida does not hide her thoughts about Janet with regard to their friendship. She writes,

My opinion of you is naked, uncompromising fact I cannot drape it or adorn it, or even throw around it a mist of charity. It is unalterably there, and in any future intercourse with you, such intercourse as we have had in the past, I should only dash myself forever against it. I do not clearly see upon what level you accepted me in the beginning, but I am absolutely firm in my belief that it was not such as I would have tolerated if I had known. Today at all events I am confronted with the proof that I have not had your confidence. ... I find you a sophist, and your sophistry a little vulgar. I find you compromising with your ambitions, which in themselves are not above reproach from any point of view. I find you adulterating what ought to be the pure stream of ideality with muddy considerations of what the people are pleased to call the moralities, and with the feebleness of the conventionalities (216-17).

Elfrida's pride is hurt by Mr. John Kendal and Janet. Mr. Kendal only creates her portrait but he cannot consider her self-respect. When she gets the news of his marriage to Janet, she becomes angry and destroys the portrait. She writes to Mr. Kendal

I have come here this morning determined to either kill myself or IT. It is impossible . . . that both should continue to exist you must not ask it of me. You may not believe me when I tell you that I struggled hard to let it be myself. I had such a hideous doubt as to which had the best right to live. But I failed there- death is too ghastly. So I did what you see. In doing it I think I committed the unforgivable sin – not against you, but against art. It may be some satisfaction to you to know that I shall never wholly respect myself again in consequence. . . . Understand that I bear no malice toward you, have no blame for you, only honour. . . . And I am glad to think that I do not destroy with your work the joy you had in it. (224-25)

At two pound a week Elfrida does a job as a reporter in *Illustrated Age*. She earns money for the survival in London. But she has not enough salary so she is not satisfied. She realizes that two pounds is not sufficient for her. Elfrida is proud of her appearance and likes to live like the aristocratic people. She does not like to be bourgeois; she is very conscious about her appearance and has developed an elusive beauty. Her height, her symmetry are great joys to her. Elfrida reflects here her views on fashionable life and luxurious living. In London, she works in *Illustrated Age*. The novelist has drawn here the heroine with self-respect. She wants to use her own impression of writing while sending the first article to *The Consul*. She addresses it to the editor. Luckily, she is already introduced with him by Mr. John

Kendal and knows that Mr. Curtis is the editor of *The Consul* but she does not write the editor's name in the address intentionally because she wants her article should accept upon its own merits absolutely. She understands the competition with the other writers of chosen journalist profession and improves her ability in writing. She knows and understands that there is a male-domination and competition in journalism and she is a competitor in this business. In London her article is rejected for thirteenth times. She is frustrated and reveals her agony to Mr. Golightly Ticke who is her friend and neighbour at Fleet Street in London. She remarks, "I could never bear to become – less attractive than I am now"(53).

As an honest person, she confesses her wrongdoings before the little bronze God Buddha, an idol whom she always reveals her thoughts. She has been considered it as her friend and shares her happiness as well as her worries with it. She has confidence in her work that's why she I myself read them with interest, I who wrote them, and examines the article which is sent back from *Athenian*. She expresses,

surely that proves something! . . . I find here true things and clever things, . . . Yes, and original, *quite* original things. That about Balzac has never been said before—I assure you, Buddha, it has never been said before! (47)

Duncan has depicted two heroines in this novel, Elfrida and Janet who are independent by nature. Elfrida has her own point of view with the writings of Howells and Janet has her different conventional attitude with Howells' writings. Elfrida argues with

Janet on this point. She expects some real *romans psychologiques* which finds its subject matter in the "scientific" portrayal of illegitimacy, prostitution, alcoholism and murder. Her views are against conventional work by Howells that aims to portray the whole of society. She comments,

Howells would do if he would stop writing about virtuous sewing-girls, and give us some real *romans psychologiques*. But he is too much afraid of soiling his hands . . . his *betes humaines* are always conventionalized and generally come out at the end wearing the halo of the redeemed (91).

As a new woman Elfrida expects new subject matters from Howells writing, but Janet's thinking is conventional. Her opinion about his writing is sincere and moral. She says,

The *bete* is too conscious of his moral fibre when he's respectable, and when he isn't respectable he doesn't commit picturesque crimes, he steals and boozes. . . he's bestial enough, but pure unrelieved filth can't be transmuted into literature (92).

Elfrida and Janet, both have their own different attitudes towards art. Janet's is a practical woman. She has a sense of reality which is very important. She is a successful writer of magazines, whose name is very familiar to the people who write for those magazines. She has very good associations with the reading public. Comparatively, she does not accept Elfrida's opinions in artistic matters. But according Elfrida, any writing should be

representative and present the truth of the society. She comments on Howells writing:

Art has no ideal but truth, and to conventionalize truth is to damn it. In the most commonplace material there is always truth, but here they conventionalize it out of all (92).

But in some proportion, she admits Elfrida's opinion that Elfrida would do better in future. Though Janet has the experience of four years, in the end Elfrida would do better, stronger, more original work than her. According Janet, Elfrida is an enigmatic girl and she will be a famous writer in publisher's advertisements one day. Janet is always curious about Elfrida because as a writer, she understands her and knows that Elfrida is really a fine new woman. She shares her opinion of Elfrida's writing with Mr. Kendal that Elfrida is attempting to write something new and unconventional, and thinks over even in the minor aspects of the society with new insight. Janet suspects that she has been doing something out of London. She asserts,

I – I have no right to think, . . . I am not in Frida's confidence in the matter. But of course she is perfectly right, from her point of view. . . . If she wants to do this thing, she has taken, of course, the only way to do it well. She does not need any justification – none at all (169).

Elfrida Bell is a daughter of to-day and the protagonist of the novel. She has been studying to paint at Lucien's art studio in Paris. There she bears the taunting of Lucien who is her art teacher. He

admires the sketches of her rival Nadie. He objects, "In you, smademoiselle. . . I find the woman and the artist divorced" (21). Nadie cannot separate her art from her feminine gender. In the same way Lucien has been criticizing Elfrida in the studio because Elfrida too cannot separate her work from her self-conscious awareness of her sex. He comments, Your drawing is still lady-like, your colour is still pretty, and *saprist!* you have worked with me a year (23)!

Elfrida appears serious and strict in her friendship with Nadie. She does not like any emotional attachment in it. She criticizes her friend Nadie Paliscky for her kissing while she comes to share her happiness with Elfrida. It shows her dislike for passionate activities. She feels it childish and prevents Nadie.

She becomes much economical while she acquires the news of her parents coming for London permanently and living with their daughter Elfrida. According her, she is not yet successful in the career and in addition to it, her parents are coming in London permanently. In Landon the food is very expensive and the earning is very difficult. She knows that the only Americans who are happy in England are the millionaires. Elfrida considers that she is not one of the millionaires in England. So, she tries to acquire her position as a millionaire and support her family because her parents are not in good economical condition, which is why she supports them as their son. Mr. John Kendal, who is also the student at Lucien art and a friend of Elfrida, knows her attempt in writing as well as her abilities. He finds in her more than a fantastic young woman with an appreciation of certain artistic skills. He identifies her desire of doing something which will be different and unique.

the *Illustrated Age*. Mr. Rattray, the sub-editor of the *Illustrated Age* wants to bring Elfrida before the public through her writing. He feels that something must be done to become successful in journalism. He thinks that, she must do something to become successful in journalism. Mr. Rattray knows that, Elfrida is an unconventional woman and she must write some new and fresh ideas which people demand. He has guarantee that she will be successful in journalism. According him, she needs the material which she has to treat unconventionally. She can prove her ability to do more sustainable work; she can include the unconventional matter in the book and then any publisher will look at it. So, Elfrida tries to search for new material for her book. After getting the inspiration from Mr. Rattray, Elfrida decides to write a novel. But at first, she is not firmed at her decision. She discloses her disability of writing a novel and confesses it honestly to Mr. Rattray. Here the new woman is not overconfident about her abilities. She is a new woman who enjoys smoking as well as drinking. She likes the rich standards of living and hates being in debt so adjusts her spending very skilfully. In Paris, she feels that her life has taken the turn in a new direction. She enters into the new world with proud. At Lucian art, she feels a splendid confidence in the beginning. Elfrida is much attentive with her life style and speaks like aristocratic people while she asks Nadie to dine with her in Babaudin which is an aristocratic restaurant and she does not like to go Papaud's which is the restaurant for the middle-class people. She is not ready to behave like bourgeois. She argues with Nadie,

Papaud's is cheaper. . . The few Englishmen who dine at Babuudin's behave perfectly well. I will not be insulted about the cost. . . . I can afford it. (24)

A new woman cannot bear her insult in any field. She feels jealous when Janet Cardiff publishes her novel "*John Camberwell*." According to the critics in London, it is one of the valuable books of the year, showing grasp of character and keen dramatic instinct. It has a distinctly original vein, too slender a plot for perfect symmetry but a treatment of situation at once nervous and strong. Janet's novel has been getting a surprising success but Elfrida does not accept this fact. She feels jealous of Janet and confesses it to Janet:

I know I'm a beast – I can't help it. Ever since I heard of your success I've been hating it! You can laugh if you like, but I've been *jealous* – oh, I'm not deceived; very well, we are acquainted, myself and I! It's pure jealousy – I admit it. I despise it, but there it is. You have everything; you succeed in *all* the things you do - you suffocate me – do you understand? *Always* the first place, always the attention, the consideration, wherever we go together. And your pretence your *lie* – of believing my work as good as yours! I believe it – yes, I do, but you *do not*. Oh, I know you through and through, Janet Cardiff! And altogether, it has been too much for me. I have not been able to govern it. I have yielded, *miserable* that I am. (181)

Though Elfrida has jealousy towards Janet, she shows courage and straight forwardness. Janet is not satisfied with Elfrida's work. She considers her work as a vulgar but Mr. Golightly Tick appreciates Elfrida's abilities. According to him, she is today's new woman and has got the style and ideas of writing. So, any editor will appreciate her writing. He advises her to take the articles herself to the editor of the *Consul*

office. He encourages and makes her aware of the present condition in journalism. He taunts her saying,

You may be a George Eliot or a—an Elizabeth Barrett Browning, but in these days you want every advantage, Miss. Bell, and women who succeed understand that (55).

According him, Elfrida must do her work at her own level best. Unluckily, she has been unsuccessful again and again but she does not underrate her intelligence and her articles. She fails to understand why her articles are not suitable for the paper. In this critical situation, she has to overcome the fact and ply her self-respect with assurances that it can be happen in the game of life and it is a superb thing to play the game. She strengthens her moral power to face the situation in career and decides to take her article to the *Consul*. She has to walk through the heavy rains. Duncan has explored Elfrida's will-power in the incident. Elfrida wants to earn money at any cost for the sake of her survival in London. She does not demand any more money from her parents. She whispers, "I ought really to be *very* careful. . . I've only eight sovereigns left, and I can't-oh, I can't ask them for any more at home"(57). On the way to *Consul*, the policeman misinforms her, the rain comes again. She finds it difficult to find the address. She reaches there with damp skirts and muddy boots. It has been a long walk. Her article upon American social ideals becomes limp and spotted. Again she faces bad luck that Mr. Curtis the editor is not present in the office. She cannot meet the editor of the *Consul*. In addition to it someone steals her purse and she loses all her money as well as the articles, in which she has a last hope of her journalistic future. Elfrida feels herself lonely without a penny but she does not feel depressed as she has her own brain in which she believes most. With new energy and purpose she walks once again. Mr. Kendal is

there but she passes on, unnoticed from that place because she does not like to be emotional before him for her misery which may lose her confidence. So, she controls herself from meeting him. For her lunch and the further expenditures, she has to pawn her mother's watch into a pawnbroker's shop. She realizes that she will have to pawn something all her life. It is an effective extremity of a new woman. Duncan has portrayed here a new and independent heroine who overcomes the emotionalism, pettiness, and self-effacement to build her career. Meanwhile, Elfrida goes to the newspaper office of *Illustrated Age*. There she meets to Mr. Arthur Rattray, who is one of the sub-editors of the *Age*. He gives her opportunity to write for *Illustrated Age*. He is impressed by her narration of the American social ideals. There is a light in her eyes which seems to be the reflection of success. Rattray recognizes it and gives her a chance of writing.

Unlike Mr. Rattray, Mr. John Kendal is a man of prejudice. He irritates when he comes to know about Efrida leaving Paris and coming to London. While arguing with John Kendal, Elfrida proves her abilities and establishes her independent identity. Nadie Palicsky who is Elfrida's friend in Paris has strong friendly affection for Elfrida, which shows that Elfrida is such a new woman who believes in good social manners and conduct. In her absence, Nadie reminds her for her cherishing attitude. Elfrida wants to do something better than her present life. In the *Illustrated Age*, she writes the reports on the artists but she is not satisfied with her present work of reporting. She asserts Mr. Kendal, "... I shall not be content to stick at this – ordinary - kind of journalistic work. I shall aim at something better-something perhaps even as good as that ..." (76). This is a fine example of her new expectations that she does not believe in ordinary life as other common women may think of.

Duncan introduces another new woman Janet. Elfrida and Janet are quite different from each other. Janet is the journalist of *Decade*. At the age of twenty four, she is a successful woman. She is a daughter of Mr. Lawrence Cardiff who is a retired University professor. Elfrida is impressed by her talent and wants to follow her in writing. Janet is four years elder than Elfrida and has the excellent experience of journalist. She has taken quite a leap and right direction in the journalism. Her father helps her at every step; on the other hand Elfrida has herself to build her career. Janet is the competitor of Elfrida. Considering Janet's reputation in Journalism, Elfrida remarkably manages herself in the *Illustrated Age*. According Mr. Rattray, Elfrida's article upon Latin Quarter is much impressive but it has not been that much successful. She writes the graphic naked truth but it is not accepted by the readers. She has to revise that article for the third time. Mr. Rattray observes that Miss. Bell under proper guidance can do some fresh and unconventional work for the *Age* because she has the freshness and unconventionality in her writing. He also realizes that, there are many issues concerning women which can be dealt with and which only a woman can handle. The editor is not hold the same opinion with Mr. Rattray that Miss. Bell should be taken on the staff on trial at two pounds a week. He tells plainly, "But the paper doesn't want a female Zola . . .you can tell her that" (81).

Elfrida has social sense so she observes the social issues keenly and tries to collect the information of Arcadia club through Mr. Golightly Ticke. She meets with most interesting people, painters, sculptors, actors, novelists, musicians, journalists and a great many ladies, who are the members of the Arcadia club. She meets especially to Mrs. Tommy Morrow who is the editor of the *Boudoir*. She also meets with a few women who are chiefly rather elderly unmarried, and who immediately

mention to her the paper they are connected with. One or two of them, learning that she is a new comer, give her their cards and asks her to come and see them on any second Tuesday. After this meeting Elfrida realizes that the ladies are more or less emancipated. Almost each one of them suggests her that she might have decorated the staff of her journal. In Arcadia club, Elfrida is conscious of her appearance and dress. She is dressed effectively and has keen instinct that assures her that she would win. She is much curious to meet with and know about the towering personalities in the reception hall. he meets with Sir Bradford a soldier, and Mr. George Jasper, the author of "*The Alien*", "*A Moral Catastrophe*", "*Her Disciple*", and a number of other volumes. Other publishers envy him. Her manner of meeting with Mr. George Jasper is not aristocratic. She meets him directly without any formalities of greetings. It indicates that the new woman Elfrida is very bold while introducing herself to the towering personalities in the reception hall.

In this way the novel presents the New Woman Elfrida who is courageous, confident, hardworking and straightforward. She has the consciousness of her own rights and potentials by which she struggles to the society on her own level best. She remains unmarried because she does not want to create such circumstances which can limit her freedom. Elfrida denies to be a housewife or full-time homemaker. She emphasizes education and self- confidence to achieve rights and success.

BAHINJI CHAVAN MEMORIAL LIBRARY
SHIVAJI UNIVERSITY, KOLHAPUR.