
GAIL HIGHTOWER VS MISS REBA RIVERS: TWO GENDERS OF AMERICAN SOCIAL CONCERN

Dr. Vibha Manoj Sharma

*Assistant Professor in English
Swami Shraddhanand College, University of Delhi, Delhi, India.*

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Abstract: Two genders on American social concern are active in the name of Gail Hightower, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, an authority, and Miss Reba Rivers, a Memphis Brothel Keeper of lower strata, respectively; and that, too, in so called patriarchal system of the American society, in William Faulkner's (1897-1962) fiction, **LIGHT IN AUGUST** (1932). With the mentioning of their work and status, an emergent combo of +ve and -ve effects imprints on the mind of the reader, as that used to be produced on their socially concerned sectors, respectively, in the fiction. As far as patriarchal factor works in Yoknapatawpha, Miss Reba is not shown any lessen authority as her gender is concerned in comparison to Reverend Gail Hightower. His gender is not supporting him to develop 'Christian Faith' as Dilsey in **The Sound and Fury** (1926) owned; neither he could think like Addie's belief in **As I Lay Dying** (1930) of her resurrection by her son, Jewel—from a priest, Reverend Whitfield, whence his own wife needed solace; and again, nor he could believe like Nancy Mannigoe in (**Sanctuary** (1931) and **Requiem for a Nun** (1951) after the suicide of his wife, Mrs. Gail Hightower, in the brothel of Reba. Although, the two genders in the article are depicted as contrary and seemed confronting each other on social issues, yet shown very important for social causes and effects. The gender study reads both the characters, in their specific roles and duties, in American patriarchy as success and failure, and their moral, amoral actions assesses in American social concern and with the single connecting thread of Mrs. High Tower, to add for betterment of the community and the American society on the whole. Here, shattering American dream of modernism tried to be protected through Miss Reba.

Keywords: Faulkner, Gender Study, American Home And Society, Gail VS Reba, American Sociological Factors.

Introduction: Two genders on American social concern are active in the name of Gail Hightower, a minister of the Presbyterian Church, an authority in religion, and Miss Reba Rivers, a Memphis Brothel Keeper of lower strata, respectively; and that, too, in so called patriarchal system of the American society, in William Faulkner's (1897-1962) fiction **LIGHT IN AUGUST** (1932). With the mentioning of their work and status, an emergent combo of +ve and -ve effects, imprints on the mind of the readers, as that used to be produced on their socially concerned sectors, respectively, in the novel itself. Surely, they were expected to reciprocate and to be symbolic of their names as provided by Faulkner yet we find both genders are confronting; though putting efforts in American social system, in their specified roles, to eradicate atrocities, yet success is fate driven by their actions and not totally a matter of chance.

As far as patriarchal factor works in Yoknapatawpha, a fictional mythical land by Faulkner for his major fiction, Miss Reba has not shown any less authority, as her gender is concerned, rather responsive to the factors, forces and human sufferings more intensely in comparison to Reverend Gail Hightower in **Light in August**. His gender is not supporting him to develop 'Christian Faith' as Dilsey in **The Sound and Fury** (1926) owned; neither he could think like Addie's 'belief' in **As I Lay Dying** (1930) of her resurrection by her son, Jewel—from a Priest, Reverend Whitfield, whence his own wife needed solace, nor he could maintain 'belief' like Nancy Mannigoe in **Sanctuary** (1931) and **Requiem for a Nun** (1951) after the suicide of his wife, Mrs. Gail Hightower, in the brothel of Miss Reba. Two genders, in the article, are juxtaposed as face to face with each others philosophy on social issues, strangely their concerns and ways, are too different towards the same aim yet of the multiplying importance that they seem in **Light in August** as restructuring sociologically a reasonable world and order. They were supposed to be emphatic to their good and bad factors, respectively, as pertaining to their names, roles and duties but Miss Reba as brothel owner, contrarily, attained name if not fame by being performing her Christian duties well for the cohesiveness in her family. She has shown, an aware person to the problems of men-women, and to their day today sufferings and traumas. Her capacity to resolve such problems with affinity is remarkable.

Miss Reba's continuous presence, as a sensible brothel keeper in Faulkner's many novels of Yoknapatawpha saga and in **Light in August** also, makes her prominent in her role for keeping a consistent compassionate view, as her gender used to melt towards her girls, and the same love was offered to Mrs. Gail Hightower at her house in contrast to the suspicious atmosphere of Mr. Hightower's 'Home and Church'. His name Hightower proved symbolic to his nature and sermons whence his high ideal values failed to understand his sick, depressed wife, and her psychic disorder, once had been sweet and regular visitor of his Church at Jefferson; thence, she sent to asylum, and ultimately, reached to Miss Reba's house in her extreme disordered phase. Ministers' high reputation Faulkner put to stake in the proceeding of the novel, as after viewing Mrs. Hightower's dilemma community stopped visiting his Church; gradually his personal private life become public; and his public concerned reached to zero. In comparison to Miss Reba, a lowest strata female character, Hightower lost his social and communal reputation, and concern all the more down, ineffective and up to a non-interaction point. He denied his supremacy automatically, both as a man and as a Presbyterian member; he became failure in keeping the Faulkner's concept of 'home' as patriarchy was concerned. Panthea Reid Broughton blamed him, for taking the sweet girl, his wife, as granted, "little more than an abstract shape embodying the things he wants from her"¹. Between Church and brothel she became touchstone for Minister. So, Hightower represented only loss of authority on both fronts; according to Cleanth Brooks "Faulkner was not versed in theology", ² "but he believed in God... had some problems with accepting Christianity,"³; in broader term, the American community rejected Hightower because of his untrue, nonrealistic dealing to life in terms of Christianity, whereas, approved Miss Reba as she had deep and practical social concern through her sympathetic, caring nature towards her home, 'brothel'. In her negative woman role, Miss Reba excels Hightower in her real dealing and dwelling in American social system. There, Congregations' appraisal comments established a mark difference of two authorities for public. The point of importance was favoring Miss Reba's special womanhood against the city life that code had not even possessed secondary position in American society, but attained a better name in American patriarchal pattern than Reverend Hightower; the person turned to Ex-minister. Vickery discovered Miss Reba "a perfectly respectable madam" of her whorehouse.⁴

If we do the case study of Miss Reba's life and her superior behavior, we find her as humane and dutiful, full of pride for her work and house. Besides, in her personal life she has been a loving and loyal person; though rough in talking, yet praised by Robert W. Kirk as "a young woman... with a kind, hard and handsome face."⁵ Undoubtedly, she is kind and loving on one hand, and bold, courageous and considerate on the other to attend her customers. Faulkner's male characters like Jason, Horace, Joe, Popeye, Red, Boon, Lucius have been shown her customers. She treats her customers, male or female equally. In fact, being an embodiment of all positive virtues she takes the social responsibility of the life of sufferers. Many girls like Miss Lorraine, Miss Minnie, Miss Thelma, Miss Everbee, Miss Vera, Miss Ruby got 'home' at Miss Reba's brothel, learnt skills and support, and got settled. The support system of her brothel was practically well coded, incredible than the traditional Church preaching of Reverend Gail Hightower. Cleanth Brooks emphasized the same idea that "Faulkner insisted on man's responsibility for his action"⁶. She was considered a wise woman with better and shrewd understanding of human beings to resolve social issues. She was shown sensitive to her own feelings against the insensitivity of Mr. reverend Hightower. Despite her fallen profession, she was contrasted against city women, for giving proper love and due attention to Mr. Binford, her lover; Miss Reba's man was equally responsive to her every requirement. After two years of his death she visit to his cemetery in his love: "we was like two doves."(p. 249. **Light in August**). In a way she understands the importance of home in American social system so trying to provide all the comfort of home in her brothel. Resolving all types of social issues, surpassing reputed life, religion performing her duty honestly.

Acceptance and rejection by American community and social order is reactionary process against their juxtaposed actions and dealings in their roles. Reaction of American community was as hard as deflection of action by the two characters—moral or amoral. The American society put them to test and then very strong noticeable reactions started generating. The society started commenting; both men and women were critical to Gail Hightower that he failed to maintain the grace and order of the Church. Mrs. Hightower was also suspected as being unfaithful. Later no blame and charge was quoted against Miss Reba or her brothel in concern to the suicide of Mrs. Gail Hightower, rather husband was under questions and suspicion. True as Isaac McCaslin asserted in his conversation in **Go Down, Moses** "God had seen in individual Cases..."⁷. In this way, American social system put a check on the Minister and, ultimately, rejected his authority absolutely. By the end of the novel, the idea of Joe Christmas lynching become touchstone of Ex-ministers' action there he was expected by the grandmother of Christmas, Mrs. Hines, to say an alibi to save Joe Christmas, an orphan then discovered a Mulatto. Miscegenation used to be considered social crime. First minister denied later got ready while Miss Reba's simple, Non-Christian philosophy helped her to understand the plight of Temple and of Mrs. Hightower. Reba was clear as being human, that cultured society is man-dominated society where being human was secondary state.

Here, it is important to defy that Faulkner had been a misogynist and supportive of American patriarchal system unreasonably. In fact, projection of real and ideal was his trait as a pioneer of the fictional world of 20th Century America. Faulkner treated his Women characters dispassionately. Behind the line of action, a fine thread runs in his Yoknapatawpha fictional world that represents Sartor-ism, a basic goodness, prevails in the traditions of American social system. 'A belief' of William Faulkner with that he could project a social milieu that survives due to single virtuous sustainability, and furthering that he could belief in 'endurance and prevailing of life in future'; his reference of 'tomorrow, tomorrow and tomorrow', is surely, a culminated belief and super hope in degrading patterns of the present American loss, during

wars and shattered economy; the emersion of a full bright sky of future acceptance, optimistic vision, a 'home', any home, as an ultimate basic unit to a fruitful culmination of American communal pattern highlights an innocent dream. A positivity; a scope; true the modern world generally shown all the more depriving yet 'hope'--a never ending process William Faulkner's fiction highlights; the best hope of a grandmother was an alibi.... by the person of repute at one point of time, in the novel. Here, American social order, in other way, threatens authorities those do not work in accordance to their code assigned to them; according to Dr. Indira Mishra's recent study on treatment in Tihar in Delhi, a social scientist in India, that "there is need for restructuring the outdated penal system". Congregations were Faulkner's setups of communal needs and checks on individuals or systems, as chorus sort of pattern in dramatic art, fully authorized to comment and put their objective point of view in the favor of a better society in his mythical Yoknapatawpha. Faulkner's fiction has not much focused on the law and order situations, surely a weak dealing point except in Requiem For A Nun, instead of his fiction concentrated on families, community, social, religious downfalls in the modern society in comparison to traditional free and innocent pattern of living. The projection of American dream or the shattering of that has been major concern of Faulkner. Reba is related to the dream as she dreams of emancipation of her girls: "a sanctuary on the earth for the individual man: a condition in which he could be free not only of the old established closed-cooperation hierarchies of arbitrary power which had oppressed him as a mass, but free of that mass..."⁴¹. So, unlike Hightower, Miss Reba Rivers flows for the liberty of her girls, their emancipation and stamps on the dream of American society especially for deprived women sufferers. She is an American revolution like the flow of Rivers in Yoknapatawpha.

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