

The Socio-Cultural Struggles And Identity Quest Of Women In America: An Analysis Of Lynn Austin's *All She Ever Wanted*

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Abstract

Literature has made an unmatched contribution to the preservation and formation of society. Literary fictions are depictions of reality and societal reflections. This work is about the problems that exist between society and family. The main characters in this story attempt to realize their daydream, but their lives are marred by loss, failure, and discontent owing to poverty. In this work, Lynn Austin's characters are dealing with their loss of identity as immigrants. Lynn Austin's novel *All She Ever Wanted* depicts contemporary Euro-American culture and serves as a sociological mirror. She illustrates the bourgeoisie's dominance over workers by demonstrating that riches, name, and reputation are directed by the superiority complex, but poverty, misery, and failure are guided by the inferiority complex.

The story is about the protagonists' failures throughout their lives. Kathleen is the protagonist and serves as a role model for the other characters. She tells the entire tale and shows the postwar Euro-American socio-economic and socio-political landscape. Lynn Austin powerfully depicts the social environment in which the bourgeoisie imposes hegemony over the proletariat through the use of social machinery, gradually ruling over them. Rich individuals in the United States mistreat low-income people who are chasing the American ideal of becoming richer, wealthier, healthier, more successful, and higher in society. Regardless, every character falls victim to the bourgeoisie's dominance and exploitation. In this study, Fiona is abused by Arthur, a rich banker who married her for the sole purpose of pleasure. Fiona's womanhood is diminished as a result of his fictitious marriage. Her aspirations to be wealthier, fuller, and better fade away with the death of her egotistical husband Arthur. All of the characters that chase after the unreal and rely on fate are in the same boat as Fiona.

Keywords: Socio-Cultural Quest, Women, America, Lynn Austin

The focus of this article is on four generations of women in one household. Each despised her mother and decided to be the polar opposite of her. The passage of time masked the truth that they were all most identical, especially in their determination to sever all links with their families. Kathleen, the third person in the pattern, notices that her relationship with her adolescent daughter, Joelle, is moving in the same direction. She investigates their background and discovers the pattern, providing her with the understanding and information she needs to put an end to it.

Kathleen's lack of interest in learning what happened to her brothers and sister bothered me - it felt like abandonment. She simply decided she was greater than them and flew away! Her family was incredibly gracious in welcoming her back into the fold after the way she had treated them. Nonetheless, it serves as a reminder that we're all in need of grace and forgiveness at times, and for much less. This was a narrative that drew me in and didn't let go till the end. You must maintain your focus, though, because the story jumps back and forth between the present and the past, allowing you to better comprehend the main character and the reasons why her grandmother, Fiona, her mother, Eleanor, and she had difficulties. It is not a happy-go-lucky romance tale, but rather a well-told account of the lives of three generations of women and the struggles they faced.

"I came from a terrible background," she said.

"No one in my family was a Christian, and I am.

That created a lot of tension. We have nothing in common with each other. I chose to walk away—and

I've stayed away." (24)

Kathleen Seymour's connection with her adolescent daughter, Joelle, is strained. Kathleen is concerned that Joelle, like several generations of Kathleen's family's women, will leave home and never return. Will Kathleen and Joelle be able to mend their friendship by learning about each other's stories? Kathleen is a private person who avoids discussing her history. However, a fight with her daughter and an invitation from her estranged sister compel her to reveal her past. She tells her daughter about growing up in great poverty, with a father who was a robber and a mother who was chronically unhappy and unwell, as she and her daughter journey to the New York village where she grew up. Kathleen vowed to herself that she would never return to the places or people who had brought her so much suffering. Returning to her hometown, however, provides her with the opportunity to uncover the truth about Eleanor, her formerly lively mother, and Fiona, her grandmother whom she hardly knew.

Women with Reference to Socio – Cultural Aspects according to Lynn Austin

In this story, Austin is able to demonstrate the discrimination between two opposite poles in the same society, in which the capitalist mocks the communist through differing viewpoints on every social component, while the communist participates in capitalist-organized social institutions. For communists, life in a capitalist society is difficult. Everything is expensive under a capitalist economy, and communists could not afford to live there. Capitalists employ them in factories and industries by paying cheap wages in order to increase profits from output. In a capitalist society, nothing is beneficial for living freely, according to Uncle Leonard and anyone else is a communist.

“I’ll get you the money,” she said quietly. I scrambled to my feet and pulled the mangled papers out of her hands.

“How? Are you going to steal it, like Daddy? Well, don’t bother!

I’m leaving home and never coming back!” (95)

Kathleen ran away from her home 35 years ago, fleeing poverty and humiliation. An offer to return to her homeland is first discarded. Following a major argument with her daughter and a failure to connect with her, Kathleen's husband advises that she and her daughter, Joelle, go on a road trip to get to know each other. So begins the narrative; first, Kathleen will have time to tell Joelle about herself and her tragic past. Others will then begin to weave Kathleen's mother's tale, followed by Kathleen's grandmother's story.

I can’t stand the way you and Daddy and

all my friends’ parents live—it’s like

you’re not really living at all!

You’re just making money and spending it—and

not even enjoying it. (99)

As a result, incorrect assumptions and daydreams are never successful, and they lead to people's failure. Life should not be better, wealthier, or more fulfilling if one does not work hard. High ambition is also the antithesis of human accomplishment, since it breeds imagination in the mind and leads to failure in the long run. As a result, this story convincingly illustrates the reality of the American dream's failure. They are confronted with the issues of disconnection, despair, unhappiness, and agony that each character goes through. They're perpetually in a bind from which they can't seem to break free. Kathleen Seymour's connection with her adolescent daughter, Joelle, is strained. Kathleen is concerned that Joelle, like previous generations of Kathleen's family's women, would leave home and never return.

“The sky’s the limit!” He grinned.

“I want what everybody wants: a new

house, a new car—the American Dream.” (160)

The current research in Lynn Austin's *All She Ever Wanted* illustrates the failure of the American dream as a result of the global economic crisis, recession, people's ambitious mentality, and misuse of the term "American dream." In the current tale, immigrants pursue the American dream in order to reap the benefits of it, but because to their high ambition, they fall short of their goals and become victims. Fiona, the main character, is from Ireland, as is her father Rory. He treats her as a commodity, forcing her to speak with and consult with the affluent individuals he encounters at towns' party halls, tea cafes, and shopping malls, among other places. Rory hopes to acquire the value of the American dream without having to work hard by utilizing his daughter Fiona. As a result, he sinks himself and Fiona's life into the docks. Fiona is used by the affluent in America, the country where she and her father, Rory, had hoped to make a lot of money and become wealthy. Rory also intends to bring his entire family from Ireland, including his wife and other eight daughters. Despite this, his pledge to his wife is broken, and his family disintegrates.

“Are we really going to America, Dad?”

Fiona’s sister asked. “Aye, that we are, my girl.

Your sister Fiona and I will go first, then

send for the lot of you. Mark my words, we’re going to

live in a blooming mansion someday.” (184)

Innocuous Fiona complies with her father's desires, but the fact that she is burying herself makes her a scapegoat. Fiona marries Arthur, a wealthy United States banker, from among the wealthy men. Arthur rents her a New York apartment, although he is already married. Arthur deceives her when he assures Fiona that he would divorce his prior wife and formally marry her; however, he does not follow through. Fiona and Arthur have been living in a leased apartment and have two children, Eleanor and Leonard, but Arthur refuses to reveal his true name to her.

The qualities of the American dream and hegemony are investigated in this research. A story of family conflict, secrets, and forgiveness is told by Lynn Austin. Lynn Austin illustrates the impact of American society, as well as the American ideal, as well as female crisis and reconciliation. Kathleen, her mother, Eleanor, and her grandmother, Fiona, are three generations of women in this novel. Each lady left home to begin a new life and escape her family's history. He argues in this excerpt that capitalists impose their hegemony through state institutions such as organized religion, the law, trade unions, the political system, art and literature, the educational system, and others. Style Austin's characteristics include pacing, clarity, organization, narrative techniques, and so on. All of the institutions through which we are socialized are part of these ideological state machineries. People increasingly arise against the governing system as they become aware

of the ruling class's dominance over all aspects of society. During the conflict, the proletariats strive to break down the hegemonic apparatuses in general. War is the act of launching a frontal attack against a weaker opponent.

She began to study the wealthy ladies who patronized the hat shop:

How they dressed, how they walked and talked and wore their hair.

Compared to them, Fiona looked like a frumpy immigrant.

If she ever wanted to rise out of the slum, she would have to do

more than wear stolen clothes; she would have to look

and act like an American. (202)

Fiona's decadence is a metaphor of the American dream's failure. Her decadence was brought on by fate and disastrous circumstances, which did not favor her, and she became a victim throughout her life. Fiona is a gorgeous young immigrant from Ireland who was brought to the United States by her father Rory. For those who want life, liberty, name, fame, future, property, and the pursuit of happiness, the United States is a dream place. As a result, Rory travels to the United States of America with his daughter, Fiona. Rory thinks that by exploiting his daughter Fiona, he would be able to amass a large sum of money and become wealthy. Because she is a beautiful young girl, many American affluent men may be drawn to her, and she will marry a wealthy guy. As a result, whenever Rory sees a wealthy man, he pushes her to speak with him, whether on the road or in American towns.

Fiona's daily allowances from Arthur are insignificant; human beings require social identity in order to function in society. Fiona inquires about Arthur's identity, but he claims to have postponed his so-called divorce from his former wife, but he never does. Days pass, situations get increasingly difficult, and the global economic situation deteriorates. Arthur's investment bank will go bankrupt as a result of the global economic crisis that has engulfed the planet. Due to the economic downturn, he has invested his property in the common public. They couldn't able to pay back the loan. Arthur commits himself as a result of his bank's insolvency, wreaking havoc on Fiona's life. She loses her identity after Arthur commits suicide. With two children, she is forced to suffer greatly in a greedy world.

Leonard and Eleanor were the only family she had in the world. And if Arthur ever abandoned them, they would be as destitute as Mam and the girls had been. He'd been promising to marry Fiona for years, and she'd never doubted him, believing that they would be a family someday. But Fiona had finally understood the truth after Eleanor had been born. Rory had been right; Arthur would never marry her. And if she continued to pressure him, he might get angry and leave. She would lose everything she had.

"We've made a mess of things, Fiona," her father had once told her. "A

blooming mess of things." Yes, Fiona thought. Yes, we have. (250)

Loss of an identity Fiona fled New York because she couldn't afford to pay her rent, which she shared with her two children. As a result, she relocates to Deer Falls, where she meets with Mr. Messina, a wealthy American businessman. Mr. Messina assists her in obtaining a business and an apartment, but he has a personal interest in playing and enjoying himself with the helpless widow, Fiona. She establishes a hat company with Mr. Messina's aid, but owing to the global economic recession and crisis, the business goes bankrupt. No one comes to her shop to purchase the hats; if someone does, he or she notices the tags and leaves without purchasing.

During this period, Mr. Messina purchases nine dislikes for a member of his family in Philadelphia in order to encourage her not to quit the firm, where all of his intentions are to spend time with her in selfish places. At the same time, Leonard is aware of his family's background and his mother's illicit relationship with Mr. Messina. Fiona is made aware of Leonard several times, but she refuses to speak to him, preferring to speak to the ladies who are like her hapless widow, who are without husbands and guardians. Fiona must engage in these sorts of activities in order to thrive. As a result, Eleanor and Leonard both abandoned Fiona in Deer Falls. She is now alone and powerless, and she must suffer and exist in a pitiful state in society. Even at the moment of her death, no one from her family was present, and her remains were buried in an ashcan.

The plot unfolds slowly, with parts falling into place as time goes on. The switching points of view when a character is meant to be narrating their narrative leaves you wondering if they truly told it the way the author presented it or if they told it more like how people communicate. As a result, the dialogue might come across as unrealistic at times. However, the characters and the lessons they learn are relevant, and the locales and circumstances are wonderfully portrayed, making it simple to become absorbed in the plot. A heartbreaking and heartwarming narrative about the difficulties of women through generations, riddled with sadness and secrets, and ultimately rescue through honesty and love.

After much consideration, this article concludes that the story's fascinating nature stems from the fact that it is recounted backwards in time rather than chronologically. That's enough to give the scene a sense of depth and intrigue. We already know the outcomes of each woman's decisions; all we need to know now is how they got there. Through the recollections of others, we are led back to the pasts of Kathleen's mother, Eleanor, and grandmother, Fiona, through Kathleen's own terrible history. As intriguing as time travel stories, delving into the lives of multiple individuals at various times might be. The enormous bombshell takes a surprising turn.

The article examines the socio-cultural quest of women in America through the lens of Lynn Austin's novel "All She Ever Wanted". The novel portrays contemporary Euro-American culture and serves as a sociological mirror, reflecting the problems that exist between society and family. The story revolves around the struggles and failures of the main characters in their pursuit of the American dream. The protagonist, Kathleen, narrates the story, depicting the postwar socio-economic and socio-political landscape of Euro-American society. Austin powerfully illustrates how the bourgeoisie impose hegemony over the proletariat through social institutions, ruling over them gradually. The article focuses on four generations of women in one household, each despising her mother and vowing to be the opposite, yet ending up remarkably similar, especially in their determination to sever family ties. Kathleen's strained relationship with her teenage daughter, Joelle, prompts her to investigate their family history, uncovering a pattern that provides her with the understanding to break the cycle.

The article deals deeper into the stories of Kathleen's grandmother, Fiona, an Irish immigrant, and her mother, Eleanor. Fiona's father, Rory, brings her to America with the hope of exploiting her beauty to gain wealth and status, effectively treating her as a commodity. Fiona ends up marrying Arthur, a wealthy banker, but their relationship is built on deception, and Arthur refuses to legitimize their union, leaving Fiona and their children in poverty after his suicide. Fiona's decadence is portrayed as a metaphor for the failure of the American dream, as she becomes a victim of fate and disastrous circumstances. The article examines how the characters' ambitious mentality and misuse of the term "American dream" lead to their downfall, as they fall prey to the bourgeoisie's dominance and exploitation. The article also explores the role of ideological state apparatuses, such as organized religion, law, trade unions, and the education system, in maintaining the ruling class's hegemony over society. As people become aware of this dominance, they arise against the governing system, leading to a conflict between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie.

In conclusion, the article posits that the novel's fascinating nature stems from its non-chronological narration, which adds depth and intrigue to the story. The bombshell revelation about the characters' pasts takes a surprising turn, making the novel a heartbreaking and heartwarming tale about the difficulties faced by women across generations, riddled with sadness, secrets, and ultimately, redemption through honesty and love.

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