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**IDENTITY CRISIS AND STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION OF WOMEN IN ANNIE LOUISA WALKER'S  
WOMEN'S RIGHTS**

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The stage of psychosocial development in which identity crisis may occur is called the Identity Cohesion. During this stage, adolescents are faced with physical growth, sexual maturity, and integrating ideas of themselves and about what others think of them. Sometimes individuals face obstacles that may prevent the development of a strong identity. This sort of unresolved crisis leaves individuals struggling to "find themselves". They often seem to have no idea who or what they are, where they belong or where they want to go. They may withdraw from normal life, not taking action or acting as they usually would at work, in their marriage or be unable to make defining choices about the future.

Annie Louisa walker (1836 - 1907) a British born Canadian novelist, children's playwright and poet published her poetry widely in newspapers on both sides of the border before collecting them in *Leaves from the Backwoods* in 1861-62. She with her sisters operated a school for ladies and returned to England to work for her cousin, Margaret Oliphant, a well-known novelist, and edited her Autobiography and Letters under her married name, Mrs Harry Coghill. She collected her poetic output in Oak and Maple: English and Canadian Verses.

The main theme of the poem *Women's Rights* is that it praises the noble qualities of the women. The speaker is a woman fighting for her rights as a woman and enjoys the fact that she gets treated equally as woman. She writes for the women community in particular who are mainly under the command of their husband. Even though the tone is happy and joyful at the beginning of the poem it turns to anger is at the end as they are in need of getting equal rights. The poet wanted the community to see how women can also be as strong as men to have the same rights as them.

In the very first stanza, the poet addresses that society that should allow women to pursue kind of their life that they value and not to convince them to think it as women's duties. This sense of duty is not a burden but instead it cherishes and calls it as "women's mission" that comes directly from their heart (Walker3). She also speaks about the women who live within the domestic sphere by saying it as the quiet and secluded place. Instead of facing the noisy arguments and battles, she considers her home as the peaceful place to live. It doesn't mean that it is an act of escapism or sleepiness in hateful dreams and spending the time in useless thoughts but rather she decorates her house with love and skill. Just as the sun fades away the darkness, women help the men to forget the dangers and inhospitality as soon as he enters the house. In the fourth stanza, the poet compares women with hedgerows that they do not have any pride. They just grow next to the rural countryside and store up the water from the rainfall those showers down on them. They do not waste this water, but give it back to the earth in the form of the scent they give off all day. Women in the same way takes what little is given to them and gives away the pleasantness to their family. The poet says that women should not crave for public audience as men do rather they should remain out of sight, doing their household chores without expecting or desiring any prizes for the same. She says women are happy with their

quiet little lives. They should also believe that it is their special advantage that they are allowed to simply spread happiness to the world (family) around them. Louisa Walker says that women do not like the outsiders to know where they are buried. They should be content to live like that, and to die without anyone other than their family knowing where their graves are. In other words, women should expect no place in history.

The theme of individual and society can be looked upon in many different manners. There is the concept of people separating themselves from society in order to become individuals and express their individuality. There is the concept of individuality and the consequences its expression may have. The situation exists in which individuality is limited by society. Each of these ways of looking at the theme of individuals and society is something that has affected women since the beginning of recorded time. Throughout history, women have been suppressed and undermined by those who claim superiority over them based solely on a difference in chromosomes, not a difference in intelligence, talent, or ability.

The poet uses a lot of symbolism to emphasize how women are treated as servants imprisoned in a limited sphere called house. 'Ere the day declining' is used in this poem by comparing women to hedgerows as they make their fragrance to yield (Walker15) . She likes to remain unobserved and unnoticed.

This poem reflects the Victorian society where men were expected to lead a public life while women on the other hand were usually expected to live in a home bound by taking care of their family and to do all the household chores. Moreover women were not given equal rights as men in political activities and they were not given right to vote, sue or to have a property of their own. So women in the society were entirely shut out of the public sphere during the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The poetess advocates that women should be allowed to pursue their ideals and goals. She also tells about us the noble qualities of women. According to her the world cannot rob them of their rights to cherish that vision. Even though women are given rights in various public sectors, women are dominated by male society in the house and lose her individuality and identity. She even strives to attain her full freedom to that as equal to male community.

#### **Works Cited**

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