

STRUGGLE AND MARITAL RELATIONSHIP IN THE NOVEL OF *MAIN STREET* BY SINCLAIR LEWIS

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Abstract

Sinclair Lewis is a predominant American novelist and short story writer. Mostly Lewis described as a controversial writer. Even some of the newspaper made a cover story about the controversy of his work during the 1920s. Lewis in this novel repeatedly used conflicts and struggles between the characters. Particularly readers get the attention to his techniques in the novel, these techniques focused on expository than on the dramatic. First Lewis tells then he shows, he introduces the character directly and repeatedly. The novel starts a detailed summary storyline then repeatedly represents the conflicts in the marital relationship and the elements of Lewis's techniques of characterization and sympathy direction. The first chapter of the novel pattern setting of *Main Street* and the second chapter meeting of Kennicott and Carol; her first day in Gopher Prairie. Dr.Kennicott helps Carol temporarily and weakly. He represents both the best and worst of *Main Street*. He is a good doctor never cheat on his patients. He loved Carol and really quite patient to her in every situation. His worse side in *Main Street* persists but it depends on the novel progress. Carol's serious marital love affair with Erick Volborg, a tailor's assistant and five years younger than her. There was the lead in the novel after Carol affair with Erick. When Kennicott ends the romance between Carol and Erick, Erick abruptly leaves Gopher Prairie by the train.

Keywords: American novelist, newspaper, characterization, sympathy, etc

Sinclair Lewis is a predominant American novelist and short story writer. Mostly Lewis described as a controversial writer. Even some of the newspaper made a cover story about the controversy of his work during the 1920s. He published the novel *Main Street* on October 23, 1920. Significantly he wrote six novels before *Main Street* but this novel marked as a turning point in his career. John T Flanagan in a review mentioned *Main Street* as "It is obvious that none of these novels quite explain Lewis sudden blossoming forth." (3) Lewis in early had always written lot through all the pre- Main Street years. He was constantly writing non-fiction pieces, travel, general reminiscences, and criticism. *Main Street* was translated into more than ten languages and sold over million copies. Cable wrote about *Main Street* "the smash hit of contemporary literature." (3)

Lewis in this novel repeatedly used conflicts and struggles between the characters. Particularly readers get the attention to his techniques in the novel, these techniques focused on expository than on the dramatic. First Lewis tells then he shows, he introduces the character directly and repeatedly. Lewis linked all the characters solidly with the theme of struggle and disillusionment. He depicted all the character by describing their profession, specifically where they live and what they wear. So throughout the novel, he made the characterization very successful.

In the novel author depicts the narrow- mindedness and conformity of small-town Gopher Prairie a small town in America during the 1920s. Carol Milford and Dr. Will Kennicott the protagonist of *Main Street*. The main conflict of the novel begins from Carol with her husband Kennicott. Her desire to change Gopher Prairie, this becomes a struggle which brought into an atmosphere of hostility. Most American felt that Lewis showed only "ugliness of American small town and the stultifying dullness of the lives of people who inhabit it." (2) Since many people written about *Main Street* fairness and accuracy in depicting America in general and Gopher Prairie in the 1912 to 1920 time period.

The novel starts a detailed summary storyline then repeatedly represents the conflicts in the marital relationship and the elements of Lewis's techniques of characterization and sympathy direction. The first chapter of the novel pattern setting of *Main Street* and the second chapter meeting of Kennicott and Carol; her first day in Gopher Prairie. Remaining chapters of the novel illustrate further elements, sympathy, conflicts, merits and defects of the marital relationship. In *Main Street*, the significance of Carol dreams of going to all the romantic places in locals that are often far from Gopher Prairie. These places will have already been made familiar to the reader through her daydreams. The conflicts continued in the third chapter of the novel. Lewis portrays his character and theme from the early, primarily through direct illustration.

Lewis maintained outcome of the battle and struggle between the small town and Carol, in developing many twists and turns of plot. The character in the novel is moving one place to another place and motoring all over. Kennicott sometimes leaves Gopher Prairie and spends weeks in Minneapolis. Other side Carol spends some time in Washington DC. Almost all these places are near to Gopher Prairie. When Kennicott and Carol married in 1912, he wants to change Carol town. Then they started the journey to Gopher prairie after the wedding. Even on the train, Carol showed her "distressed" by the view and about the train passengers. Her approach is not dissipated by her first sight of Gopher Prairie from the train. She tried to love everything around her but obviously, it becomes out of her element.

But in a short, while Carol life was pleasant with her husband. Even she likes to have the baby but later decides against it." never recalled her first impression of the main street, never had precisely the same despair at its ugliness...she appreciated the homely ease of village life ."(P62-63)Carol sometimes happily accompanies her husband into the fetching countryside when he goes for hunting.

"hunting was his symbol of happiness ...porridge for breakfast...his symbol of morality...the furnace shrine of the Gopher Prairie home."(P 68-73)Much of the time in Gopher Prairie Carol was gratified. However, she was restless, her marriage becomes disappointing. By the way, Carol gets to know Vida Sherwin (a school teacher) and Guy Pollock, the wee-read bachelor, cosmopolite, people in Gopher Prairie calls him as a village virus. Carol gradually changed her enthusiasm with her "perfect married life" and then she tries to become part of the town. Vida Sherwin tried to help to improve the town but Carol finds some influence from Vida. Again Carol internal monologue centers on Gopher Prairie. She turns to her husband once again for comfort but she disports many doubts about their relationship. She often feels "was it all a horrible mistake, my marrying him."(P106)Carol can't be satisfied with her small town life, her inner thoughts shows her daydreams but the thoughts not about her husband, it's all about Guy Pollock, who she wishes would come calling. Carol dissatisfaction with her husband and with the small town Gopher Prairie leads to start a quarrel. She shows interest in desire. But she tries to rally the women to help her on a campaign of rebuilding and beautification in the town.

Dr.Kennicott helps Carol temporarily and weakly. He represents both the best and worst of *Main Street*. He is a good doctor never cheat on his patients. He loved Carol and really quite patient to her in every situation. His worse side in *Main Street* persists but it depends on the novel progress. Carol's serious marital love affair with Erick Volborg, a tailor's assistant and five years younger than her. There was the lead in the novel after Carol affair with Erick. When Kennicott ends the romance between Carol and Erick, Erick abruptly leaves Gopher Prairie by the train. Though Carol tries to feel comfortable in the small town when that fails, she is restless. Her marriage is disappointing, and both she and her husband come close to

having affairs, Carol more so than her husband. Her situation deteriorates to such an extent that she feels the need to escape.

Carol leaves to Washington DC alone and spent two years over time, as well she enjoyed all the cultural opportunity in the city but at the end, she decides to show her interest to her husband. Lewis made the reader to understand the distance between husband and wife is still wide.

Lewis used his humor frequently and exhibited his superiority to the subject but to contempt characters and conflict to lead the storyline and to stress his theme. As well most significant characteristics of *Main Street* are its unity changelessness, comports which slowly grid Carol down, bring her to her knees and pummel her. So the small town is an antagonist to Carol. The theme such as ugliness, anti-intellectualism, and dullness are to be found in *Main Street*. Throughout the novel, Lewis makes it clear that is the accumulated weight of *Main Street* that accounts for its changing force, which makes it sinister. Considering the varieties of situations, the novel concludes with Carol return to Gopher Prairie from Washington.

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