

Tribhuvan University

Subversion of Gender Roles in Brooks' *Martyn Pig*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University,
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in English

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February 2016

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Letter of Recommendation

Dilu Rai has completed this thesis entitled "Subversion of Gender Roles in Brooks' *Martyn Pig*" under my supervision. She carried out this research from November, 2015 to February, 2016. I hereby recommend this thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled "Subversion of Gender Roles in Brooks' *Martyn Pig*"
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Acknowledgements

I am very thankful to my revered teacher and thesis supervisor Mr. Jiva Nath Lamsal, Lecturer of the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, for his comment and guidance for the completion of this thesis dissertation.

I am also indebted to my respected teacher and the Head of the Central Department of English, Pro. Dr. Amma Raj Joshi for his approval to commence this thesis.

Thanks also go to my father Bishnu Prasad Rai and my mother Damber Kumari Rai for their eternal shrine love, inspiration and moral support to carry out this thesis. My loving and ever inspiring brothers Dines Rai and Umesh Rai are subject to my love and thanks for being conducive during my research.

February 2016

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Abstract

This research tries to prove the theme of subversion of traditional gender roles in the novel *Martyn Pig* by Kevin Brooks represented by female protagonist Alexandra Freeman. It moves around female protagonist Alexandra Freeman who has an enormous dream to be the world's best actress. Alexandra Freeman rejects the traditional stereotypical masculine concept to look at female who brings reconsideration in the concept of their roles in the family and in the work place. She keeps multiple relationships and frequently visits her boyfriends' house alone in the night time. She meets her boyfriends' family members and later on becomes actress on her own. She does not get married throughout her life even though there is always pressure on her to get married from her family. In order to explore this issue, this novel has been analyzed from the perspective the subversion of gender roles which delineates how female protagonist Alexandra Freeman rejects the traditional gender role in the family and in the society.

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I. Kevin Brooks and Gender Issues in *Martyn Pig*

This research entitled "Subversion of Gender Roles in Brooks' *Martyn Pig*" explores the theme of the subversion of gender roles in *Martyn Pig*, a novel by Kevin Brooks focusing on the central female character, Alexandra Freeman. Gender role is defined as the behavior and attitudes expected of male and female members in a society. A gender role is a set of behavioral norms associated particularly with males or females in a given social group or system, often including the division of labor between men and women and the attendant complex of child-rearing and socialization processes leading youth toward maturing to perpetuate the same pattern.

Brooks' novel *Martyn Pig* deals with the issue of the subversion of gender roles. It centers the story of a young girl Alexandra Freeman who is assertive enough. She has an enormous inclination towards developing career in the discipline of acting in the days to come. In other words, Alexandra Freeman wants to center her career in acting being a famous actress. She dismantles the preoccupied dogmatic social norms and values, convention and practices existing in the society by denouncing her expected gender roles in the very society. She becomes an actress in the repressed culture and keeps multiple relationships with various boys remaining unmarried throughout her life even though there is a continuous pressure from her family members and relatives to get married and deliver children accomplishing her feminine gender roles. Furthermore, Alexandra Freeman frequently visits her neighbors' houses in night time who does not feel uneasiness in doing so. She takes a necessary initiative to resolve the problem of her neighbor Martyn Pig's whom she deceives by transferring his inheritance into her account to manage money for achieving her dream of being a celebrity heroine by making her another boyfriend Dean West as a medium. She earns much money and rears her family, like males do, who makes Dean

West die in a motorcycle accident after utilizing him for the sake of achieving her vested interest and personal benefit.

Alexandra Freeman flees to America after committing multiple crimes and begins to visit different countries in the quest of her career in acting and eventually achieves expected success. In this regard, Alexandra Freeman proves herself as an assertive girl who becomes able to falsify the existing concept of female and their prescribed gender roles like females should remain within the four walls of a house serving and nurturing family and children. She falsifies the existing concept of gender roles of female as a house wife, altruist, modest, submissive who is subject to getting married and begetting children only. But the problem arises when the traditional society and the family of Alexandra Freeman tries to confine her into the four walls of a house accompanying her feminine gender roles by undermining her dream, ambition and aspiration. In other words, the society and her family wants Alexandra Freeman be subservient to their will and expatiation with regard to her gender roles. In this regard, the current research tends to prove the hypothesis that tries to prove how the female protagonist of the novel *Martyn Pig* Alexandra Freeman refutes the traditional stereotypical masculine concept to look at females who brings reconsideration in the concept of their roles in the family and in the work place. By creating a woman character such as Alexandra Freeman this novel proposes a critique of traditional gender division between masculine and feminine.

The novel *Martyn Pig* written by the novelist Kevin Brooks depicts the refutation and subversion of masculine ideals and its prescribed gender roles by female protagonist Alexandra Freeman. Originally, this novel was published in English language in 2002, but later it was published in many other languages as well. From the first publication of this book, it has been a matter of huge discussion among

the various novel critics and readers throughout the world. Some critics seem to be interested in its style of artistic presentation whereas some of them seem to have concern over its dexterity of language use. Some critics point out this novel's glue of plot construction whereas some of them argue on the central female character Alexandra Freeman's quick and rational decision taking power. It indicates that different critics have given their views regarding this novel *Martyn Pig*. But what seems uniformity in these critics' opinions is that this novel is a great matter of discussion which deserves the quality of artistic novel. From the time of the publication of this novel by the publisher The Chicken House in 2002 to the present date, many critics have supplied their opinion regarding this novel. However, this research encompasses only some of the relevant as well as cite worthy opinions and views of the novel critics.

Regarding this novel, Andrew Richardson argues, "Kevin Brooks' project of this novel is to present the play of destiny that governs the life and affairs of the female protagonist Alexandra Freeman and others" (11). He continues, "Brooks wants nothing to do with female character, but fate" (13). For him, the project of Kevin Brooks in the novel is to present the inevitable role of fate. He argues that Kevin Brooks does not want to present what Alexandra Freeman does and how she succeeds in acting career rather Brooks' interest is to show how Freeman is destined to succeed. Robert Swank argues that this novel is full of secrets and lies. The secrets and lies become darker and crazier in the novel. Here, he argues, "With his father dead, Martyn has a choice. Tell the police what happened and be suspected of murder. Or get rid of the body and get on with the rest of his life. One story leads to another. Secrets and lies become darker and crazier. And Martyn is faced with twists and turns that leave him reeling. Life is never easy. But death is even harder" (11). Robert

Swank claims that Martyn Pig has choice regarding his father's death. He has a choice either to tell about what happens and be the subject of suspicion for the murder of his father or get rid of the dead body. One story paves the way for another in connection. For Robert Swank, Martyn is subjected to face the twists and turns that leave him reeling. It becomes clear that life is never easy. But death is ever more complicated matter.

Likewise, this novel *Martyn Pig* consists of a few twists and surprise for the critic Mike Steven. He argues that Alexandra Freeman is the most interesting of all characters. He informs that this novel kept him interested long enough to finish this novel. He notes:

Well, it kept my interest long enough to finish it, I guess that's something. It had a few twists and surprises here and there, not the least of which was Alex, the most interesting of the characters. If she hadn't been studying acting, her turnaround would not have been believable, but she was and good at it. I can understand Martyn's total lack of moral character -- look who he had as a model. The rest of the characters are pretty flat, which is only slightly acceptable because Martyn is telling the story and he is completely self-absorbed, even with his view of Alex. The only way we see anything else of her character is through his descriptions of her actions. He likes her and pays more attention to what she does and how. (36)

Here, Steven asserts that he understands Martyn Pig's total lack of moral character. The rest of the characters are pretty flat which is slightly acceptable because Martyn is telling the story. He is completely self-absorbed character, even with his view of Alexandra Freeman and pays more attention to what she does and how.

This is a very good novel for another critic Jamison Frost. For Frost, this novel is about a boy who has a bad life at home, yet he still finds joy in his life in the company of his dream girl falling in love with her. Jamison Frost notes:

This is a very good book. It's about a boy who has a bad life at home, yet still finds joy in his life by finding a girl and falling in love with her. His home life is miserable because his father is an old drunk, who has different stages. He can be rude, completely oblivious, and even violent. He hits Martyn and doesn't even care about him or how he is feeling. An accident happens when his father tries to hit him, and protecting himself, Martyn hit him back. He later found out that he had hit his father so hard that he had accidentally killed him. His father lays on the floor knocked out cold for days, while Martyn thinks of a way to dispose of him. This book shows that when you try to hurt someone, you'll end up hurting yourself in the long run. Treat others the way that you would want to be treated. (100)

Frost asserts that this book carries a moral lesson that runs as 'when we try to hurt someone, we will end up hurting ourselves in the long run. We should treat others the way that we want to be treated'. Regarding this novel, Chris Browning in the similar tune argues as:

Martin pig is a very interesting book filled with suspense; it kept me at the edge of my seat, flipping pages to read what he does next. This book truly keeps the reader waiting for more. Martin wakes up to find cigarette butts and beer cans on the floor, his father never has time for him and constantly threatens him with foul and harsh language. I

enjoyed this book because it kept me thinking what I would do in a situation like his, if I were in his shoes. (108)

Browning opines that this book has quality to keep the reader waiting for more things. Browning shows the unsound relationship existing between Martyn and his father. However, Browning enjoys reading this book because it kept him thinking what he would do in the similar situation like that of Martyn. Peter Choi feels enjoyed to read this novel for fun. It captivates the readers because its writer novelist Kelvin Brooks had written this novel not easy. He argues as:

This book was enjoyable to read for fun. It never really has any fun or happy parts, however, the way Kevin Brooks wrote this book makes it not only easy, but very captivating to read. Different chapters and parts of the book easily flow together and the book is only a mere 300-400 pages. There really wasn't anything I truly disliked about this book. Maybe it could've been better if it was a tad longer. That way, readers can let the emotions/experiences of the character truly sink in. I would recommend his book to other people. It's really a type of book for anyone to read. I believe that this book has something everyone would like in some way. (30)

Peter Choi explains that different chapters and parts of the book easily follow chronologically together. He dislikes this novel for its few pages and he thinks that it could have been better if it was a tad longer. It is Peter Choi who believes that this novel has something everyone would like in some way. The readers can let their emotions and experiences of the characters truly sink.

Likewise, John Freeman's criticism is associated with the technical aspects of the novel *Martyn Pig*. He argues that the settings of the novel are great. It mostly

consists of miserable as well as grim settings. The novelist uses a good choice of weather and setting to create a moody atmosphere that represents Martyn Pig's grim life is the remark Freeman does regarding this novel as:

The settings are great. Mostly miserable and grim, the writer uses a good choice of weather and settings to create a moody atmosphere that represents Martyn's grim life. Everything creates a moody atmosphere, to what the inside of his living room looks like to how cloudy it is outside. Martyn is a character who's constantly daydreaming and gazing out of the window, so you'll notice that the weather tends to fit in with his mood too. (84)

Freeman claims that Martyn Pig is a character who is constantly dreaming and gazing out of window. So one can notice that the weather tends to fit in with Martyn Pig's mood. He argues that everything creates a moody atmosphere. For Cathleen Ash this novel is a very simple novel from the perspective of plot. He remarks as, "The overall plot is actually very simple. He has to cover up his father's death. But the writer makes such a simple plot so much more and it actually gets very deep. All of the emotions are real, the characters are realistic and the plot is believable. This really is an enjoyable story" (110). Ash says that Martyn has to cover up his father's death. But the novelist makes such a simple plot so much more that actually gets very deep. The characters of the novel are realistic and the novel's plot is believable. It is an enjoyable story of critic Cathleen Ash.

Like another critic Sarah Delbene asserts that she loves this book. For her, the title and the cover of the book did not appeal her for the first time. But she decides to read the back part of the book and she knew that this book interests her. She opines:

I loved this book. The title and cover didn't appeal to me at first, but for some reason I decided to read the back of the book and I knew it would be a book that interested me. It's basically about a boy who accidentally kills his father. Martyn is unusual and has an unusual life. I was able to finish this book quite quickly because I was so into it. The ending definitely took me by surprise and I love when that happens. I would recommend it. (45)

The above lines of criticism by Delbene suggest that this book is about a boy who accidentally kills his father. The male character Martyn is an unusual character who has an unusual life. The ending of the novel definitely arrests her with the feeling of surprise. She says that she loves surprising ending. She recommends this book for reader to read. Similarly, another critic Julie Gumkowski remarks this book as a boring in its beginning part. For her, the middle part of the novel is slightly more exciting. But along with the fall of the middle part of the novel, it becomes predictable. She states:

To me this book started off boring, got slightly more exciting towards the middle, but then began to get predictable. I feel like because I've read two other books by Kevin Brooks that I know his writing style and to me it was very predictable. If you're looking for a better book written by him, I would suggest reading Candy. That book will always be one of my favorites. To me, Martyn Pig was average mainly because the ending was too predictable. (12)

The above inbox citation suggests that Gumkowski feels she likes this novel because she has already read two other books written by Kelvin Brooks. She remarks that she already knows the writing style of the novelist Kelvin Brooks. To her, this novel is

predictable. For her this novel is an average standard novel. It is because, for her, the ending is too predictable.

The above critics analyze this novel from multiple perspectives. Some of them point out unhealthy relationship between Martyn and his father whereas other critics peel the issues of surprise and suspense. Likewise, some critics comment on the issue of the problem faced by character of the novel Martyn Pig because of his father's death. Furthermore, what seems is these critics view this novel positively as well as negatively. Though different critics have critiqued this novel from multiple perspectives, the issue of the subversion of gender role is not highlighted yet. Thus, this research wants to fill such critical gap. Moreover, my sole effort in this research explicitly remains to prove that Alexandra Freeman represents the subversive spirit of gender roles prevalent in the society, how Freeman refutes the traditional stereotypical masculine ideals who brings reconsideration in the concept of women's role in the family and in the work place. By creating a woman character such as Alexandra Freeman this novel proposes a critique of traditional gender division between masculine and feminine.

Gender role is associated with the behaviors and attitudes expected of male and female members of a society by that society. Gender roles vary. Different cultures impose different expectations upon the men and women who live in that culture. The changes in gender roles affect the home, the workplace, and the school, and they affect all. A gender role is a theoretical construct in the social sciences and humanities that refers to a set of social and behavioral norms that, within a specific culture, are widely considered to be socially appropriate for individuals of a specific sex. Socially accepted gender roles differ widely between different cultures. Proponents of gender role theory assert that observed gender differences in behavior and personality

characteristics are, at least in part, socially constructed, and therefore, the product of socialization experiences; this contrasts with other models of gender that assert that gender differences are "essential" to biological sex. Gender differences exist in almost all societies. With differences in the norms adopted, this suggests that gender differences are, at least partly, influenced by culture.

Gender roles can influence all kinds of behaviors, such as choice of clothing, choice of work and personal relationship. According to Jude Browne, "Gender roles should be regarded as a social system whereby social discriminations are made between individuals based on their identified biological sex" (10). He further argues, "Social conditioning does contribute to traditional gender roles" (97). Likewise, for Sarah Earle and Gayle Letherby, "Gender role is generally accepted as referring to the socially and culturally ascribed characteristics attributed to women and men" (16).

Gender role is a focus of analysis in the social sciences and humanities. A person's gender role comprises several elements that can be expressed through clothing, behavior, occupation, personal relationships, and other factors. These elements are not fixed and have changed through time (for example, women's trousers). Gender roles traditionally were often divided into distinct feminine and masculine gender roles, until especially the twentieth century when these roles diversified into many different acceptable male or female roles in modernized countries throughout the world. Thus, in many modern societies one's biological gender no longer determines the functions that an individual can perform, allowing greater freedom and opportunity for all people to achieve their individual potential and offer their talents and abilities to society for the benefit of all. For Shiratarrant, "Gender roles were the product of particular cultural conventions and not indications

of a universal ideal or dichotomous temperament of feminine selflessness and masculine competitiveness" (98).

Gender roles refer to the set of attitudes and behaviors socially expected from the members of a particular gender identity. Gender roles are socially constructed which are often politicized and manipulated, which then result in the oppression of people. In the modern West, this essential requirement has been changed to a heterosexual desire, resulting in the Western concepts of 'homosexual' and 'heterosexual,' instead of the usual gender identities for males. Researchers recognize that the concrete behavior of individuals is a consequence of both socially enforced rules and values, and individual disposition, whether genetic, unconscious, or conscious. Some researchers emphasize the objective social system and others emphasize subjective orientations and dispositions. Creativity may cause the rules and values to change over time. Cultures and societies are dynamic and ever-changing, but there has been extensive debate as to how, and how fast, they may change. Such debates are especially contentious when they involve the gender/sex system, as people have widely differing views about how much gender depends on biological sex.

Gender roles do have also another implication associated with gender. It does also have close association with gender and its characteristics. It is also associated with how one looks and behaves. In this regard, it does have relation with masculinity and femininity as well. It means it is related to masculinity inherent in female. Hence, it is associated with female masculinity as well. Regarding female masculinity, Judith Halberstam argues, "Female masculinity is about women who feel themselves to be more masculine than feminine" (Halberstam xi). In *Female Masculinity*, she further argues that "given my premise in this book, namely, that female masculinity is a specific gender with its own cultural history rather than simply a derivative of male

masculinity" (77). In this sense, female masculinity is a specific gender with its own cultural history rather than a derivative of male masculinity in which women embody qualities that are usually associated with maleness, such as strength, authority, and independence.

Gender role is a set of expectations held by society about the ways in which men and women are supposed to behave based on their gender. It is an expression of gender role; the image projected by a person that identifies their maleness or femaleness. In this regard, masculinity is one category of gender whereas femininity refers to the culturally approved categorization with the secondary position.

Traditionally the concept of masculinity is related to maleness. Being male means to be provided with the privileged attributes like active, strong, rational, instrumental, sacrificial, brave, combative, and ambitious and their roles, actions and deeds are supposed to be strong to that of their nature. Likewise, the traditional notion of female and their roles are supposed to be passive, emotional, cowardice, receptive, nurturing, altruist and so on in the house and society. Regarding the nature and role of masculine gender critic Chris Baker in his book *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* claims:

Traditionally masculinity has encompassed the values of strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self sufficiency, male camaraderie, mate ship, and work, amongst others. Devalued were relationships, verbal ability, domestic life, tenderness, communication, women and children. (302)

What Baker argues is traditionally masculinity includes the values and qualities like strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self sufficiency, work and others. The roles and images in the society have been perceived accordingly. For him the role of female consists of child rearing and performing domestic works.

As Eagly suggests, gender roles are closely linked with gender stereotypes. Stereotypes are "overgeneralized beliefs about people based on their membership in one of many social categories" (Anselmi and Law 1998, 195). Gender stereotypes vary on four dimensions: traits, role behaviors, physical characteristics, and occupations (Deaux and Lewis 1983). For example, whereas men are more likely to be perceived as aggressive and competitive, women are more likely to be viewed as passive and cooperative. Traditionally, men have been viewed as financial providers, whereas women have been viewed as caretakers. Physical characteristics and occupations have also been considered consistent or inconsistent with masculine or feminine roles.

Gender roles and stereotypes affect men and women in other ways. Specifically, men and women may be judged by how well they conform to traditional stereotypes. In his theory of masculine gender role strain, Joespech Pleck (1976) asserted that boys and men are pressured to fulfill a standard of masculinity. Boys and men, for example, who do not fulfill the standard often suffer from low self-worth (Pleck; Sonnenstein; and Ku1993). Other lifelong consequences befall men who experience traumatic socialization practices such as rites of passage that entail violence. Even men who successfully fulfill the standard of masculinity suffer psychologically or emotionally from rigid constraints on acceptable parenting roles for men (Pleck; Sonnonstein; and Ku 1993).

Gender roles are "socially and culturally defined prescriptions and beliefs about the behavior and emotions of men and women" (Anselmi and Law 1998, p. 195). Many theorists believe that perceived gender roles form the bases for the development of gender identity. A gender role is the place you hold in a family, relationship or society as a whole because you are male or female. Typically, your

gender role is action-oriented and focused on whether you work outside the home or play a nurturing role within the family.

Gender role is the pattern of masculine or feminine behavior of an individual which is defined by a particular culture. It is largely determined by a child's upbringing. Gender role is the way of behavior, personality traits and attitudes defining the role of masculinity and femininity in a certain culture. It is in this context, regarding the issues related to the construction of masculine and feminine roles, Kamala Bhasin in her book *Exploring Masculinity* argues:

In most societies, masculinity and femininity are mirror images of each other; if men are supposed to order, women have to take orders; if men are allowed to be hot-tempered, women have to be patient and so on. Even though there are masculinities, masculinity normally means having qualities like strength, assertiveness, fearlessness, independence, authoritarianism and ambition. (33)

Here, Bhasin argues that females are supposed to be seen in the roles of passive receiver of orders. They are supposed to be patient while men are supposed to order women. They are allowed to be hot-tempered. Strength, assertiveness, fearlessness, independence, authoritarianism, ambition and so on are the attributes which identify males.

For Judith Helberstam, "Traditionally the roles of males have been viewed as financial provider whereas females' roles have been viewed as care takers. Physical characteristics and occupations have also been considered consistent or inconsistent with masculine or feminine roles" (99). For her the roles of females have not considered as a financial provider. It is because these roles are the subject matters to be performed by males only. Society does not long to see males taking care of

children and domestic affairs. It is in this context, the citation of the critic Robert Nye's article *Locating Masculinity* (2005) is relevant which asserts:

Between the male body and cultural ideals of gender lies a zone in which men enact masculinity in rituals, speech and gesture. This is a crucially important and under researched part of gender studies. It encompasses the historically male-segregated setting of the workplace, the gym, the school, the military training ground, the monastery, the close, and drinking venues, where masculinity has been transmitted from older to young men by force of personal example and the appropriation of techniques. (150)

For Nye the role of males consists of gym hall, military training ground, drinking venues and so on. It means these kinds of places are suggestive of the males working zone.

For Judith Butler gender roles are social construction. In her book *Gender Trouble* she argues, "Genders can be neither true nor false, neither real nor apparent, neither original nor derived. As credible bearers of those attributes, however, genders can also be rendered thoroughly and radically incredible (180)". She further argues, "Gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex. The unity of the subject is thus already potentially contested by the distinction that permits of gender as a multiple interpretation of sex (10)".

Historically, a man's gender role was the breadwinner, earning money to support the family through outside work. A woman's gender role was to care for the family and household, providing support for the man. In the last few decades, however, the question, "What is a gender role?" has become harder to answer, as

gender roles grow increasingly closer together. More breadwinner wives are providing the majority or all of the household income. And more stay-at-home dads give an example of a male being able to nurture and raise children.

Gender roles are the general characteristics and behaviors between different sexes in a society. The male might be more commonly known to work while the woman stays at home. Gender roles are the social and behavioral norms that are generally considered appropriate by a particular society for either a man or a woman in a social or interpersonal relationship. A gender role is a set of behavioral norms associated particularly with males or females in a given social group or system, often including the division of labor between men and women and the attendant complex of child-rearing and socialization processes leading youth toward maturing to perpetuate the same pattern. Gender-based roles coincident with sex-based roles have been the norm in many traditional societies, with the specific components and workings of the gender/sex system of role division varying markedly from society to society. Gender role is a focus of analysis in the social sciences and humanities.

A person's gender role comprises of several elements that can be expressed through clothing, behavior, occupation, personal relationships, and other factors. Gender roles traditionally were often divided into distinct feminine and masculine gender roles, until especially the twentieth century when these roles diversified into many different acceptable male or female roles in modernized countries throughout the world. Thus, in many modern societies one's biological gender no longer determines the functions that an individual can perform, allowing greater freedom and opportunity for all people to achieve their individual potential and offer their talents and abilities to society for the benefit of all.

This thesis is divided into three parts. They are introduction, textual analysis

and conclusion. The first introductory part of this thesis consists of introduction to the thesis, hypothesis, literature review, theoretical tools and an outline to the overall dissertation. Likewise, the second part of thesis consists of the textual analysis which analyzes the novel with the help of theoretical tools, line citation form the novel and reviews of different critics. And the final part of thesis is the conclusion which summarizes the ideas and findings of the whole thesis concisely.

II. Subversion of Gender Roles in Brooks' *Martyn Pig*

Brooks' *Martyn Pig* novel moves around the female protagonist, Alexandra Freeman who refutes the traditional stereotypical feminine gender roles. Freeman subverts social expectation that females are irrational, submissive, receptive, cowardice. Through her is assertive, proactive and bold behavior, she leads the family and society to a reconsideration of women's role in the family and work place resulting into equal practice that promote equal opportunity for both male and female. She has an enormous dream to be the world's best actress. She keeps multiple relationships and frequently visits her boyfriends' house alone in the night time. She meets her boyfriends' family members and later on becomes actress on her own. She does not get married throughout her life even though there is sequel pressure to get married from her family. In order to explore this issue, this novel will be analyzed from gender perspective which delineates how female protagonist Alexandra Freeman refutes the traditional gender role.

Alexandra Freeman is a bold and assertive girl who wants to live her life full of dignity and freedom. She does not like to be confined within the narrow periphery of a house. She does not practice her expected gender roles expected by her family in her house in particular and in the society in general. Alexandra Freeman does dismantle the so-called prescribed gender roles because she is attributed with assertive nature. Her gender roles subversive spirit seems prevalent in her unusual dream to be an actress. She wants to be an actress at any cost and earn much money for the better running of her family. In other words, Alexandra Freeman wants to be an actress to manage the necessary provision for the sustenance of her family by earning much money on her own in the days to come. By doing this, she thinks, she can subvert her expected gender roles. It is because the normative society expects male to earn money

to run family whereas the very society wants to see females remain within the periphery of a house nurturing and rearing the family and children. Furthermore, Alexandra Freeman also wants to show the family and the society that female can be safe inside the house and outside the workplace by waging her career in acting.

Gender roles do have also implication associated with gender. It does also have close association with gender and its characteristics. It is also associated with how one looks and behaves. In this regard, it does have relation with masculinity and femininity as well. It means it is related to masculinity inherent in female. Hence, it is associated with female masculinity as well. Regarding female masculinity, Judith Halberstam argues, "Female masculinity is about women who feel themselves to be more masculine than feminine" (Halberstam xi). In *Female Masculinity*, she further argues that "given my premise in this book, namely, that female masculinity is a specific gender with its own cultural history rather than simply a derivative of male masculinity" (77). In this sense, female masculinity is a specific gender with its own cultural history rather than a derivative of male masculinity in which women embody qualities that are usually associated with maleness, such as strength, authority, and independence.

Alexandra Freeman is an assertive and proactive in nature who does not let behind to disobey her traditional gender roles. She does have an enormous ambition to be an actress. She wants to be a famous actress and earn money with the sense of due name and fame. Alexandra Freeman is an active girl who visits her boyfriend's house almost in the evening time. She does not feel uneasy going to her boyfriend house in the night time. The following lines from the novel *Martyn Pig* justifies this fact as:

I gave up on the book and just lay there on the bed, staring blindly at

the ceiling. I thought about Alex. I was looking forward to seeing her later that evening. She came round most evenings. Sometimes I'd go over to her place, but mostly she came to mine. We didn't do anything, just sat around talking. I remember the very first time she came round, about a week after we'd first met, I didn't know what to think. I was in a right state. Why was she coming? What did she want? Did she fancy me? What should I do? I was a quivering wreck. She didn't even seem too bothered about Dad. (26)

In the above lines, we see the nature of Alexandra Freeman who visits her boyfriend's house almost in the evening. We come to know it from the narration of the narrator of the novel Martyn Pig, her boyfriend. The narrator Martyn Pig asserts that Alexandra Freeman comes to his house most often and they remain busy talking to each other. Martyn Pig remembers his meeting with Alexandra Freeman when she came about one week after they met. He thinks that he is in the right state. What this implication suggests is that Alexandra Freeman is an assertive and proactive girl who does not feel uneasy to visit the house of male at any time with no due cause. She ruptures her traditional gender roles by going and visiting the house almost occupied by males. It is because Martyn Pig lives with his widower father. Alexandra Freeman subverts her traditional gender roles because the traditional society wants to see female being confined within the four walls of a house. In other words, the traditional and normative society longs to see female remaining within the periphery of a house. But Alexandra Freeman does not like to be confined within the four walls of a house who wills to upside down the existing dogmatic social norms and convention associated with the roles of females. With this view, Alexandra Freeman visits her boyfriend house at any time she likes. Alexandra Freeman is a girl having bold nature and guts.

She is a girl having the attributes of males who keeps multiple affairs with various boys. She pretends to love everyone of them, but she loves none of them in reality. It means Alexandra Freeman takes the advantage of the affairs with various boys because she wants to fulfill her vested interest. She has another boyfriend named Dean West. Alexandra Freeman pretends to love him from the core of her heart, but she loves him only to make him as a medium to for the sake of her goal achievement. The following lines represent the reality Alexandra Freeman having multiple relationships with various boys including Dean West as:

Now, after Alexandra Freeman had left on the bus, I trudged across the road feeling even worse than I'd felt before. The OK feeling from the bus shelter had evaporated. Glum. That's how I felt. I felt glum. Glum as a whatever. Something glum. I always felt bad when she was seeing Dean. Dean was her boyfriend. Dean West. He was eighteen, he worked in the Gadget Shop in town- computers, sound systems, electronic stuff. He was an idiot. Ponytail, long fingernails, bad skin. His face was all the same color- lips, cheeks, eyes, nose- all rotten and white. He rode a motorbike and liked to think he was some kind of biker, but he wasn't. He just a pale white idiot. (21)

In the above lines we see Alexandra Freeman having boyfriend named Dean West. The narrator of this novel Martyn Pig unveils this fact. Martyn Pig narrates that Dean West is the man of eighteen year who works in a gadget shop in the town. For Martyn Pig Dean West is an idiot with long finger nails and bad skin. Dean West rides motorbike and likes to think he is some kind of biker actually he is not. He is a just pale white idiot for the narrator Martyn Pig. From these above lines, we come to know that Alexandra Freeman has multiple affairs with multiple boys. She keeps

multiple affairs only to falsify the prevalent thought regarding female that they should be fidel to their partners. In other words, the traditional society wants to see female being true to her partner without having extra affairs. But Alexandra Freeman gets engaged in multiple relationship with the view to falsify the traditional thought associated with females and their expected gender roles. Like male, Alexandra Freeman changes her boyfriend her boyfriend only to show the society that females are not receptive and coward.

Gender role is a set of expectations held by society about the ways in which men and women are supposed to behave based on their gender. It is an expression of gender role; the image projected by a person that identifies their maleness or femaleness. In this regard, masculinity is one category of gender whereas femininity refers to the culturally approved categorization with the secondary position. Traditionally the concept of masculinity is related to maleness. Being male means to be provided with the privileged attributes like active, strong, rational, instrumental, sacrificial, brave, combative, and ambitious and their roles, actions and deeds are supposed to be strong to that of their nature. Likewise, the traditional notion of female and their roles are supposed to be passive, emotional, cowardice, receptive, nurturing, altruist and so on in the house and society. Regarding the nature and role of masculine gender critic Chris Baker in his book *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* claims:

Traditionally masculinity has encompassed the values of strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self sufficiency, male camaraderie, mate ship, and work, amongst others. Devalued were relationships, verbal ability, domestic life, tenderness, communication, women and children. (302)

What Baker argues is traditionally masculinity includes the values and qualities like strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self sufficiency, work and others. The roles and images in the society have been perceived accordingly. For him the role of female consists of child rearing and performing domestic works. But Alexandra Freeman has an ambition to be an actress. She wants to be actress at any cost whatever the society says and reckons about her. Alexandra Freeman wants to be an actress because she thinks that being actress is a venue through which she can advance her career. It is because Alexandra Freeman wants to be independent on her own earning. It means by being an actress, Alexandra Freeman wants to sustain on her own and her prime objective of becoming an actress is to dismantle the prevalent dogmatic thought existing in the society related to the roles of female. She wants to wage her career in acting because it is the profession related to glamour. Glamour is the domain cherished by everyone. Alexandra Freeman wants to make her career in acting because thorough acting she to supply the message to the society that no female of modern age remains within the four walls of the house. Rather she wants to show to the society that female can succeed as male do. The following lines from the novel suggest Alexandra Freeman's longing for being an actress:

It was such an alien concept-being proud of some one- I couldn't help but be impressed. But what impressed me most about Alexandra Freeman was her ambition. She had an ambition. She knew what she wanted to do, she wanted to be something. And she was good, too. A good actress, I mean. Tell me what you want to be and I'll it, she said me once. 'Anything,' she said. 'A situation, an emotion, a person...anything.' She flapped her arms in an elaborately dramatic gesture and put on an actory voice, 'I will act for you.' (28)

In the above lines, we can notice the ambition of Alexandra Freeman to be an actress. The narrator of this novel Martyn Pig asserts that Alexandra Freeman wants to a good actress which is an alien concept for Martyn Pig. Martyn Pig seems to be a representative of traditional thought because for him being an actress is an alien concept but it impresses him most about Alexandra Freeman who consists of an ambition to be an actress. For Martyn Pig Alexandra Freeman knows what she wants to do and what she wants to be. It means that Alexandra Freeman is determined what she wants to be in the future. She knows that society does not want to see her waging career in acting being an actress but she wants to summit the zenith of success being a good actress. Alexandra Freeman by being an actress wants to falsify the prevalent concept regarding female pre-occupied by the dogmatic society that female can travel to the different parts of the world in the process of releasing films. In other words, Alexandra Freeman wages her career in acting to dismantle the traditional notion of the society to look female and their roles in the society by being a successful actress to be an exemplary figure with the view to supply the message to the society that no female of present age can be confined within the four walls of the house. Rather they have their own choice of life to prove themselves to be a person of full entity as males are in the society.

Gender role is a set of expectations held by society about the ways in which men and women are supposed to behave based on their gender. It is an expression of gender role; the image projected by a person that identifies their maleness or femaleness. In this regard, masculinity is one category of gender whereas femininity refers to the culturally approved categorization with the secondary position. Traditionally the concept of masculinity is related to maleness. Being male means to be provided with the privileged attributes like active, strong, rational, instrumental,

sacrificial, brave, combative, and ambitious and their roles, actions and deeds are supposed to be strong to that of their nature. Likewise, the traditional notion of female and their roles are supposed to be passive, emotional, cowardice, receptive, nurturing, altruist and so on in the house and society. But Alexandra Freeman grabs the property of Martyn Pig in order to arrange money for her to go to America to try her luck in acting. For this purpose, she makes her boy friend Dean West as a medium. She hatches the net of concoction to deceive Martyn Pig by making Dean West as a weapon. She befools Martyn Pig by informing him that his father William Pig's untie Elieen Pig has sent him thirty thousand rupees in his account shortly after William Pig's death. Alexandra Freeman asks Martyn Pig to give her the bank card and cheque. The following lines suggest this fact:

You'd think of something. She smiled, then stood up. I have to go to the bathroom. Give me the cash card and I'll put it back in the bureau. I passed her the card. She picked up the paper with the forged signature on. You don't want to believe this lying around, do you? I'll flush it. 'Thanks Alex,' I said. 'For everything.' She looked at me and laughed.

This extract unfolds the forgery Martyn does and Alexandra Freeman's net of conspiracy to deceive him. Alexandra Freeman takes the bank card of Martyn Pig and succeeds to grasp his money to manage the cost of fleeing America for achieving the dream of being a notable actress. Actually, Martyn Pig handovers the cheques to Alexandra Freeman to withdraw money from bank. From this point onwards, Alexandra Freeman deceives Martyn Pig. What this deed done by Alexandra Freeman suggests is that Alexandra Freeman does these deeds only to achieve her dream fulfillment.

Alexandra Freeman kills Dean West in an accident after fulfilling her coveted

interest. Apparently, Alexandra Freeman makes Dean West as a medium to transfer Martyn Pig's property in her name. She prepares a false tape recorder about the death of William Pig which is supposed to reveal the truth of William Pig's tragic death. In this regard, Alexandra Freeman commits crime one after another only in the name of achieving her dream. The following lines suggest this fact of tape scandal occurred in Martyn Pig's house planned by Alexandra Freeman in association with Dean West to ruin Martyn Pig:

'What about this?' he said.'

What about it?' He paused, looking puzzled.

He tried again. 'No money, no tape.' I carried on smiling. 'Do you understand, Pig? No money, no tape. If I don't get the money, this-' he tapped the tape, 'this goes to the police.' (160)

The above lines suggest the bargaining between Dean West and Martyn Pig. They come into an interaction regarding the presumed sum of money instigated in the minds of these two characters Dean West and Martyn Pig planned by Alexandra Freeman.

The active and combative nature of Alexandra Freeman becomes referential with the regard to her bold attempt to disobey the will and expectation of her parents. Actually, Alexandra Freeman is only one daughter of her family. Her mother Shirley Tucker wants to be her a lawyer. Shirley Tucker wants to make Alexandra Freeman a lawyer because she thinks that being lawyer is regarded as a respectable profession and it is the profession which owes a good earning for the Shirley Tucker, the mother of Alexandra Freeman. Alexandra Freeman ruptures the traditional gender roles and notion related to females who are expected to be submissive, receptive and altruist. The following lines form the novel the exhibit the fact of Alexandra Freeman's bold

and assertive nature:

Alex told me all about herself, where she was from, what she thought about her career in acting, what she wanted. 'I'm going to be an actress, too' she told me. 'Mum was dead against it at first, she kept on telling me I ought to be a lawyer or something. "That's where the money is, Alex, there is no such thing as a poor lawyer, you know." But once she realized I was serious about acting she changed her mind, and now she really helps me. She can do anything: voices, the way people walk, their posture, anything. She is brilliant. I thought of asking: if she's so good, how she come she can't get a job? But I didn't. (28)

In the above lines, we can see the declaration of Alexandra Freeman who longs to be an actress against the will and expectation of her mother Shirley Tucker. Actually, Alexandra Freeman's mother Shirley Tucker wants to make her a lawyer because for her being a lawyer is associated with having name and fame with a due presence of money as well. But when Shirley Tucker comes to know that Alexandra Freeman has been serious about acting, she changes her mind and begins to help Alexandra Freeman really. What this implication suggests is that Alexandra Freeman is a girl attributed with bold and assertive nature who brings a reconsideration in the role of female working inside the house and outside the work place. It means to say that Alexandra Freeman gets upper hand over the will and expectation of her mother Shirley Tucker. It symbolically suggests the victory of Alexandra Freeman over the conception of the society because Alexandra Freeman becomes able to persuade her mother Shirley Tucker about what she wants to be. On the one hand, Shirley Tucker represents the dogmatic thought that female should not involved into the fragile profession of acting which risks the prestige of the female and her family. But on the

other hand, Alexandra Freeman represents the modern thought who wants to prove her assertivity by becoming an actress. In this regard, the victory of the will and ambition of Alexandra Freeman over the will and expectation of her family members symbolically indicate the victory of the subversive spirit of Alexandra Freeman over the dogmatic thought of the traditional society to look at female and their roles expected by the society in the very society.

For James Shiratarrant, "Gender roles were the product of particular cultural conventions and not indications of a universal ideal or dichotomous temperament of feminine selflessness and masculine competitiveness" (98). Gender roles can influence all kinds of behaviors, such as choice of clothing, choice of work and personal relationship. Alexandra Freeman is a girl having a combative nature. She combats and rebels if her family and society undermines her entity. It means Alexandra Freeman does not remain subservient as the expected her to be. In other words, the normative society wants to see females in the roles of submissive and modest who wants to upside down the social norms and convention to look at females. In this regard, she combats with the problems that come on the way to her life. It means that Alexandra Freeman is assertive girl who commences to help other in their need. She helps Martyn Pig when he is caught in a problem. The cause of Martyn Pig's tussle with his father William Pig emerges because of his habit of causing a trouble to Martyn Pig. When William Pig gets intoxicated, he begins to bit his son Martyn Pig. Like in previous day, one day William Pig begins to bit Martyn Pig in his drunkard state. Martyn Pig, in defense, shoves his father which causes William Pig to smack his head into the fireplace wall resulting into his death later on. In this regard, Martyn Pig is caught into a trouble. He could not solve his problem on his own. He narrates each and every thing to Alexandra Freeman. It shows that

Martyn is cowardice whereas Alexandra Freeman is bold in nature. Martyn cannot report the police authority about the death of his father. The following lines show the docile and fear nature of Martyn Pig as he narrates:

'Alex?

"What?

"I've got a problem,' I said

'You're not pregnant are you?' she joked.

'It's Dad. He is dead. And I told her what happened.

'Martyn you have to tell somebody about it. You can't just sit here and not do anything. You have to call the police.'

'I can't.

"Why not?

"It's too late. They will know.

"Who?

"The police. They'll know he died over an hour ago. They can tell.

They'll want to know why I didn't ring straight away. (42)

These lines suggest the fear and lack of confidence of Martyn Pig. Alexandra Freeman asks him to tell about the reality to the police but Martyn Pig cannot do it. What he thinks is that if he reveals the reality about his father's death, police arrest him. So he thinks that he should not tell it to the police. He sees the solution in not reporting to police. But on contrary, Alexandra Freeman is a bold who acts as a male full of rationality to solve the others' problems as well. Alexandra Freeman becomes assertive with the view to show her guts to the society that females can be as competent as males are. In this regard, Alexandra Freeman works as a male who subverts her gender roles to solve the problem of Martyn Pig.

For Halberstam the power of men lies in owning the property. Regarding this fact, Halberstam claims, "Masculinity represents the power of inheritance" (2). In this context, Alexandra Freeman can be called a masculine hero who dreams of becoming a successful actress of Hollywood industry after grabbing the property of Martyn Pig. It is because she knows that power of men lies in inheritance. In this regard, Freeman makes her boyfriend Dean West as a means to grab Martyn Pig's inheritance. Alexandra Freeman gives a false hope to her boyfriend Dean West that they will travel to the different places enjoying a happy life together if Dean West helps her to get the sum of three thousand dollar from Martyn Pig. Furthermore, Alexandra Freeman gives false information to Martyn Pig that their plan and conversation regarding the burial of the dead body of William Pig has been secretly recorded by Dean West. She informs that Martyn Pig is sure to be arrested by police authority for his crime. Eventually she also informs that if he gives three thousand dollar sum to Dean West, he will hand over the recorded tape to Martyn Pig which will ensure that the police authority will not arrest him. It is because the police authority does not know about the secret.

Alexandra Freeman flees to America after getting the possession over Martyn Pig's property. She commits crime to arrange money to flee to America. She decides to deceive Martyn Pig by transferring his money into her account leaving him empty handedness. Likewise, Alexandra Freeman kills her boy friend Dean West in an accident causing his death after taking his help. She does keep multiple relationship with boys including Dean West to fulfill her interest. In other words, Alexandra Freeman keeps relation with the person she can use in her interest. Her multiple relationships can be seen in the following lines:

'Alex?'

Mmm?

"How do you feel?"

'She glanced across at me.

'About what?'"

About Dean.

'Her lips tightened and she turned her attention back to the road.

'I don't want to talk about it.

"I only want to know how you feel about Dean.

"How do you think I feel?"

You must have liked him before, though. Otherwise you wouldn't have gone out with him.

"I might. You're too young,' she snapped. 'You wouldn't understand.'

(133)

The above lines suggest the nature of Alexandra Freeman who does have multiple relationships. She partly accepts that she might feel about Dean West. But she has not problem regarding multiple relations. In other words, she does not feel uneasy having many partners.

On the other hand, Alexandra Freeman persuades Dean West to grab the sum of the three thousand dollar from Martyn Pig which will ensure their romance. It is because Alexandra Freeman knows that power of male lies in property. In this context, Yvonne Tasker in his book *Sepectular Bodies*, argues, "Power and potency are constitutive discourse of masculinity" (94). The following dialogue suggests the masculine traits and thoughts of Alexandra Freeman who is in quest of power at any cost by grabbing the property of Martyn Pig with the help of Dean West:

'I want the money,' he repeated. 'The thirty thousand.'

'I haven't got it,' I said.

He curled his lip. 'Listen, Pig, it's simple. You give me the money, I give you the tape. If you don't give me the money, I give the tape to the police. Understand?' (68)

The above dialogue talks about the concern of money. Every character seems to be revolving around that very sum of money. Martyn Pig does not want to leave his clutch over the presumed amount of money whereas Dean West as well as Alexandra Freeman do not lag behind.

Sarah Earle and Gayle Letherby argue, "Gender role is generally accepted as referring to the socially and culturally ascribed characteristics attributed to women and men" (16). A gender role is a set of behavioral norms associated particularly with males or females in a given social group or system, often including the division of labor between men and women and the attendant complex of child-rearing and socialization processes leading youth toward maturing to perpetuate the same pattern. Gender-based roles coincident with sex-based roles have been the norm in many traditional societies, with the specific components and workings of the gender/sex system of role division varying markedly from society to society. Alexandra Freeman goes to America after she arranges money from using her boyfriend to achieve her coveted interest and self leaving her mother back in her home. She begins to play a role in advertisement last week. She begins to play a role in advertisement because she thinks that it is her starting phase of her career. It also represents Alexandra Freeman's success to achieve her dream of becoming an actress. It also represents her success to rupture her traditional gender roles. In this regard, she becomes successful to cope with the problem of the perspective of the dogmatic society to look at female and its role in the society in the real sense. The following lines show this fact as:

Anyway, here I am in the USA and I've finally made it as an actress. I got first role last week. It's only an advert, but at least it's a start. It's for deodorant. I have to walk up and down the beach in a bikini looking cool. What do you think of that? I'll be on television. I've got auditions lined up for proper parts, too-films, theatre, musicals. Proper acting.

(220)

The above given lines suggest the success of Alexandra Freeman who becomes able to achieve her dream of becoming an actress. It also suggests that Alexandra Freeman is actress now. She is achieving her desired ambition in USA. She informs that she has got a debut through an advertisement last week. Its target is to concern for deodorant. She is of the view that she will be on television. She has auditions for other films, theater, musicals and others. What these facts indicate is that she is climbing the summit of success now which she wants from her birth.

In this way, the novel *Martyn Pig* by British novelist Kevin Brooks is about the subversion of traditional gender roles. It centers the central female character Alexandra Freeman's vision of life who wants to live her life with dignity, independence, prosperity and self-satisfaction. Furthermore, Alexandra Freeman wants to lead the society and its dogmatic concept to a zone of reconsideration to look at females and their gender roles. In other words, Alexandra Freeman wants to dismantled the traditional gender roles prescribed for women. She subverts her traditional gender roles by refuting her parents' advice of getting married and begetting children accomplishing her feminine gender roles. Alexandra Freeman also subverts the traditional gender roles by waging her career in art especially becoming an actress. Furthermore, she keeps multiple affairs with various boys whom she uses to achieve her vested interests. She indulges into love making without having a sense

of uneasiness. She makes her boyfriends trapped into the situation of perils and hardship to fulfill her coveted self.

III. Triumph of Alex in *Martyn Pig*

With the detailed discussion of novel *Martin Pig* by Kevin Brooks from the perspective of the subversion of traditional gender roles, the research comes to conclude that the rupture of traditional stereotypical gender binary is the thematic gist of the novel. This research concludes that protagonist of the novel Alexandra Freeman subverts the traditional stereotypical masculine concept to look at females who brings reconsideration in the concept of their roles in the family and in the work place. By creating a woman character such as Alexandra Freeman this novel proposes a critique of traditional gender division between masculine and feminine.

This novel centers the story of a young girl Alexandra Freeman who is assertive enough. She has an enormous inclination towards developing career in the discipline of acting in the days to come. In other words, Alexandra Freeman wants to center her career in acting being a famous actress. She dismantles the preoccupied dogmatic social norms and values, convention and practices existing in the society by denouncing her expected gender roles in the very society. She becomes an actress in the repressed culture and keeps multiple relationships with various boys remaining unmarried throughout her life even though there is a continuous pressure from her family members and relatives to get married and deliver children accomplishing her feminine gender roles. Furthermore, Alexandra Freeman frequently visits her neighbors' houses in night time who does not feel uneasiness in doing so. She takes a necessary initiative to resolve the problem of her neighbor Martyn Pig's whom she deceives by transferring his inheritance into her account to manage money for achieving her dream of being a celebrity heroine by making her another boyfriend Dean West as a medium. She earns much money and rears her family, like males do, who makes Dean West die in a motorcycle accident after utilizing him for the sake of

achieving her vested interest and personal benefit. Finally, Alexandra Freeman flees to America after committing multiple crimes and begins to visit different countries in the quest of her career in acting and eventually achieves expected success.

In this way, the current research has proven how the female protagonist of the novel *Martyn Pig* Alexandra Freeman refutes the traditional stereotypical masculine concept to look at females who brings reconsideration in the concept of their roles in the family and in the work place. By creating a woman character such as Alexandra Freeman this novel proposes a critique of traditional gender division between masculine and feminine. Furthermore, Alexandra Freeman proves herself as an assertive girl who becomes able to falsify the existing concept of female and their prescribed gender roles like females should remain within the four walls of a house serving and nurturing family and children. She falsifies the existing concept of gender roles of female as a house wife, altruist, modest, submissive who is subject to getting married and begetting children only.

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