

Tribhuvan University

Critique of Masculinity in Ivan Turgenev's *Home of the Gentry*

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By

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Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Yagya pathak has completed his thesis entitled “Critique of Masculinity in Ivan Turgenev’s *Home of the Gentry*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from November, 2017 to June, 2018 and completed it successfully. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for the final viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis, entitled “Critique of Masculinity in Ivan Turgenev’s *Home of the Gentry*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Yagya pathak has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

Turgenev's *Home of Gentry* foregrounds the failures of the protagonist, Lavretsky, in his interpersonal relationship with several women. Born and brought up in the higher social class, Lavretsky is, by nature, arrogant and intolerant of anything which harms his ego and pride. Seeing a beautiful ballet dancer, Pavlovna, Lavretsky falls in love with her and marries her. On the charge of Pavlovna's alleged affair, Lavretsky abandons her. Unconsciously, he hankers after Pavlovna but harbors hatred against her. Leaving Pavlovna in Paris, he returns to Moscow. In Moscow he falls in love with Lisa. His romance with Lisa develops smoothly. But disaster occurs in his relation. When he knows that Lisa has a friend named Panshin, he discontinues his courtship. Arrogant, intolerant and disdainful of femininity, Lavretsky is trained and taught to treat women as objects of possession. His masculinity is an outcome and effect of patriarchal society.

Russian society at the end of the late 19th century was strongly hierarchical. Tsarist political structures, religious and social values, rules governing land ownership and Russia's legal code all reinforced the nation's social hierarchy, defining position and status and restricting social mobility. Russia's social structure was often depicted and lampooned in visual propaganda. In these depictions, Russian society is shown as a feudal pyramid, the upper classes propped up by the labour of the working masses that are usually kept in check with work, religion and the threat of violence. The poor peasantry and the industrial working-class made up more than four-fifths of the population; while Russia's educated and professional middle classes were tiny. The use of the theory of masculinity yields plenty of shortcomings and limitations of Lavretsky in Turgenev's *Home of Gentry*.

Introduction

Critique of Masculinity in Ivan Turgenev's *Home of the Gentry*

This research probes into the issue of masculinity in Ivan Turgenev's *Home of the Gentry* (1859). The protagonist Fyodor Ivanych Lavretsky is disdainful of femininity. He assumes that man is all in all in society. From his grandfather and father he has learnt the fact that women are volatile, mercurial and temperamental creatures who need to be subdued under strict surveillance. He falls in love with a woman named Pavlovna who possessed a remarkable degree of artistic sensibility. He marries her. After a few years of his marriage, he detects her extramarital affair with Ernest, a French man of Paris. Without delving deep into the matter of his wife's post-marital affair, he abandons her. He boasts that he can get numerous women like Pavlovna.

At the slightest evidence of her alleged affair, he is extremely provoked. Sometimes, he contemplates on the idea of tearing Pavlovna's body into pieces. He separates himself from the tie of marriage with her and stays in Italy. In Italy he is haunted by the memory of Pavlovna. The reminiscence of Pavlovna does not leave him free. However boastful he is of the sufficiency and independence of his existence, he gets enervated and exhausted psychologically. The outward projection of his masculinity appears to be fragile and vulnerable. Though Pavlovna has requested him not to be rash and belligerent in the case of her alleged affair, he ruptured the marriage and vacationed in Italy leaving her alone in Paris. Lavretsky's belligerent and aggressive manhood arises from his biased presumption that women are adjunct; they need to be possessed via surveillance or dire form of coercion.

Lavretsky's masculinity is hostile and antagonistic to the idea of extending even a minimal sense of freedom, mobility and self-esteem. After leaving Pavlovna, he returns to Moscow and pays a courtship to a girl Lisa. Lisa also makes up her mind

to marry Lavretsky. By the time their courtship reaches climax, mishap occurs. Lavretsky gets exceedingly jealous of Lisa's friend Pansin. Lavretsky makes an issue out of Lisa's friendship with Panshin. Their courtship crashes. As a result, Lisa returns to monastery and Lavretsky languishes into a psychologically crippled and emasculated man.

Turgenev is the leading novelist and playwright of Russia. He has written copiously several plays and novels. Most of his plays and novels represent the transitional society of Russia. As a writer he is torn between sentimental idealism and realism. His short novels *Torrents of Spring* and *The Triumph of Love* are two memorable works. *Torrents of Spring* deals with the prospect of human misery in the wake of hazards of nature. Similarly, *The Triumph of Love* celebrates the immortality of love despite the limitations and shortcomings of human desires and passions. In addition, *Fathers and Sons*, a noted work of Turgenev, probes into the issue of generational conflict.

Turgenev is the leading Russian novelist who represents the troubled society of his time. Turgenev blends his private experiences with the social issues. Characters in most of his novels come from the upper class elites to the working class people. Despite the variety of subjects and topics of his works, Turgenev has not forgotten to take resort to the style of simplicity. Since idealism and realism both coexist in his novels, it would not be possible to dismiss the complex tapestry of his works as the incompressible riddle. Maurice Baring, the leading critic of Turgenev, makes the following view:

Turgeneve did for Russian literature what Byron did for English literature; he led the genius of Russia on a pilgrimage throughout all Europe. And in Europe his work reaped a glorious harvest of praise.

Flaubert was astounded by him, George Sand looked up to him as to a master, and Taine spoke of his work as being the finest artistic production since Sophocles. In Turgenev's work, Europe not only discovered Turgenev, but it discovered Russia, the simplicity and the naturalness of the Russian character; and this came as a revelation. (34)

Turgenev's contribution to Russian literature is extraordinary. It is through his works that Russia gets infected by the modernizing influence of Western Europe. Due to his incomparable contribution, he is some of the well-known authors of modern day world. Since Turgenev brings Russian literature from the narrow coterie to the open modernist world of western world and cannot be dismissed.

Arianna Vailas brings into light how Turgenev has succeeded in importing European ideals into Russian society via his writing. The imported ideals which Turgenev projects in *Home of the Gentry* contain some of traces of cynicism too. Vailas makes as "On one level, *Home of the Gentry* deals with the idea of a young generation of Russians who have become enamored with European ideas which leave them uprooted from Russia. But, on a more intimate level, it examines the idea of happiness and whether or not man (or woman) is destined to ever find contentment" (12). The novel puts forth the belief in God within a religious framework ruled by rigid adherence to moral pathway. Such a belief ultimately enslaves rather than frees an individual. Poignant, bleak and sad, the novel is not an uplifting story.

Yet it conveys a few maxims which can lead human life that is shipwrecked. Turgenev's philosophy seems to be one of cynicism when it comes to marriage his characters are either faithless or motivated to marry for financial gain. It is out of his cynical understanding of life that abstract philosophy comes. Certain reflection on the

private side of his life enables readers to ponder seriously on the limitations of his philosophy.

Turgenev is an unflinching advocate of human nature. His utterance about human nature is proverbial. He is without either false pride or false shame. His themes were oftenest those of the French novelist. William Dean Howells makes the following remark about Turgenev and his literary tact and nuance:

The novel opens in the small Russian town and introduces the reader to Marya Dmitrievna Kalitin a widow who is raising her daughters alone. Her elderly aunt, Marfa Timofeyevna Pestov, also resides in the house and is a striking contrast to Marya Dmitrievna. In the first pages, the reader learns that a distant relative by the name of Lavretsky has returned to Russia. (26)

The marriage has gone by the wayside. Shocked and startled at the jolt of betrayal, Lavretsky has vowed to return to the land. Not long after his return, Lavretsky's head is turned by Marya Dmitrievna's eldest daughter Liza. Turgenev reveals the depths of his characters' motivations, drawing detailed sketches of their thoughts, backgrounds and philosophical musings. Marya Dmitrievna is more emotional than kind-hearted and is a woman of wealth and comfort. Her relationship with Lavretsky remains sound and morally chaste. Out of sheer compassion, she inculcates genuine sense of concern for him.

Thomas Eekman also studies the shorter prose and fictions of Turgenev. He maintains that Turgenev's stock theme in the stories and the novels is love. He argues that the man is the most basic and consistent theme in *Home of the Gentry*. He discloses the following remarks about *Home of the Gentry*:

In the nineteenth century, scholarship on Turgenev centered on his six novels and the storm of controversy surrounding them in Russia, whereas elsewhere they were considered illuminating representations of Russia's sociopolitical scene. *Home of the Gentry* appears to be the work that has distinct value in the history of Russian literature. In the twentieth century, scholars began to concentrate more and more on Turgenev's shorter fiction. (17)

Stories and novels of Turgenev have been unjustly overshadowed by the novels.

Home of the Gentry concentrates on the autobiographical and historical elements in the shorter works, as well as their pessimism and fatalism. Apart from these issues, there are plenty of other problematic which are not extensively probed by Turgenev in *Home of the Gentry*. The startling fact is that the issue of increasing degradation of elites is seldom brought into light. Turgenev's fictions consist of the sketches which disclose plenty of things concerning.

Liza Knapp comments regularly on the writings of Ivan Turgenev. She does not wholeheartedly agree with the widespread view that Turgenev's works are autobiographical. She examines some of the memorable works of Turgenev and concludes the following remarks:

Turgenev's writing is not transparently autobiographical; he did not use details of his life in an obvious fashion. Nevertheless, his writing is informed by his life in a deep and indirect way. A recurrent theme is unfulfilled or failed love. One of Turgenev's early novellas was called *Home of the Gentry*. (17)

Structural aspects of Turgenev's novels including *Home of the Gentry* lack chronological consistency. His plots often hang on anticipation without

consummation. It is there that lays the weakness of Turgenev. Turgenev's writing is also imbued with a liberal compassion. He extends sympathy for serfs, for complexity in family life, for unorthodox love, for failure. Turgenev's fiction is associated with variations on this superfluous type. In this type a hero fails not simply at love, but in other arenas as well. Thus it is fair to say that these themes are indirectly related to Turgenev's life experiences.

Although all these critics and reviewers examined this novel from different points of view and then arrived at several findings and conclusions, none of them notices the issue critique of masculinity in Turgenev's *Home of the Gentry*. Due to Lavretsky's own foibles and Pavlovna's betrayal, he is unable to act to get his desire fulfilled. As a consequence, he is confined in his inner emotional throbbing. So his desire is displaced leading to the inception of psychic turmoil. By using the theory of masculinity, the researcher probes into this topic.

Inner psychic turmoil, jolt of Pavlovna's betrayal and increasing impotence put Lavretsky in the state of dilemma and sexual degradation. The major thrust of this research is to examine how Lavretsky's erotic desire is shaped and determined by the existing social conditions. At the same time this research tries to find out how the inability to fulfill desire puts him in the state of inner mental conflict. The subsequent effects of all these factors would be no less than the painful effects. This study is strictly confined to the analysis of how Lavretsky's erotic desires are displaced and how he subsequently becomes impotent and incapable of bringing his life to the proper destination. The inability and psycho-sexual retardation of Lavretsky are the prime area of this research. The protagonist's endeavor to track his life partner down and mete out justice to the traitorous girl are the pivotal point of this research.

In Turgenev's novel, *Home of Gentry*, the masculinity of the protagonist named Lavrestsky is portrayed a fragile entity. The protagonist claims that he is sufficient and capable of surviving on his own. A man belonging to gentry, he feels superior to those who are beneath him in terms of class and social standing. In addition, he is a man exposed to western European ideals. He takes Russian culture low and condescending in comparison to the European culture which he had assimilated and internalized during his decade long stay in different countries of Europe. Worst of all, he holds a condescending attitude towards women in general. He takes mischievous pride in his bodily shape and form. He wants to define his manhood in isolation from femininity. Any display of feminine quality and characteristic is anathema to him. His parents had also condescending attitude towards Russian culture and social life though they too are citizens of Russia.

This research explores the extent to which heroic masculinity can become aggressive and fragile. Masculinity is incomplete without femininity. It exists in relation to the other. It exists due to reciprocal condition of relationship. Hence, it has no exclusive prerogative to assert its supremacy.

Lavretsky's father holds low and condescending attitude in his relation with woman. His father takes his mother as just an adjunct and appendage of his existence. His father boasts self-sufficiency and integrity of his manhood. The same sort of legacy produces effects in Lavretsky. The following lines cited from *Home of Gentry* illustrate how Lavretsky's masculinity is constructed:

Lavretsky certainly did not look like the victim of fate. His rosy-cheeked typical Russian face, with its large white brow, rather thick nose, and wide straight lips seemed breathing with the wild health of the steppes, with vigorous primeval energy. He was splendidly well-

built, and his fair curly hair stood up on his head like a boy's. It was only in his blue eyes, with their overhanging brows and somewhat fixed look that one could trace an expression, not exactly of melancholy, nor exactly of weariness, and his voice had almost too measured a cadence. (26)

There are elements of arrogance and haughtiness in the character of Lavretsky. Because he has had the exposure and access to the life style, culture and viewpoint of Europeans, he considers himself far more superior to his relatives and brethren who are confined to the typical bucolic life of Moscow. In addition, he comes from gentry; he feels exceedingly proud and superior to those who are beneath him in terms of social standing and sound financial. This kind of haughtiness is found in his attitude towards women also. He is under the influence that women are just fragile and emotionally vulnerable creature that needs good taming and domestic surveillance. His superior sense of belongingness, exposure to European ideals and the gender prejudice are all responsible for construction of his masculinity. The sort of masculinity which Lavretsky embodies is questionable.

The researcher makes use of the concepts from masculinity studies to probe the projected issue in *Home of Gentry* by Turgenev. Traditional avenues for men to gain honor are that of providing adequately for their families and exercising leadership. Connell has labeled the traditional male roles and privileges "hegemonic masculinity"(78). This term implies that men are expected to be dominant whereas women are discouraged from adopting aggressive nature and are expected to be subordinate. According to Connell:

Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice, which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem

of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. The military, top levels of businesses and government agencies provide leading examples of this facet of masculinity within society. (37)

Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity is often seen in adult males. In addition, it is also seen clearly among young children in schools as well. This concept invokes a leading way of doing gender relations that implements the gender order status quo. It ensures the integrity of gender status quo by raising the general status of masculine qualities over feminine qualities. It is an expectation of what a real man should act and look like. But in reality, no one can successfully achieve hegemony. The idea of hegemonic masculinity in the context of young boys is used to re-create gender order.

Lavretsky falls in love with a Russian lady in Moscow. She is Varvara Pavlovna who had had the artistic bent of mind. She is imbued with delicate sensibility. Though she calmly rebuffed his proposal, he remained hopeful that she will accept him in time to come. Owing to his persistent efforts to woo her, she finally accepts him and both of them go to Paris to celebrate honeymoon. As their honeymoon period ends, both of them decide to stay in Paris. Both of them begin to choose professions which suit their skill and interest. Pavlovana sets up an art salon and pursues her occupation. Lavretsky works in a private organization. Their married life continues smoothly. All of a sudden, their marriage faces a deadlock.

The moment he comes to know that she is having a post-marital affair; he instantly decides to discontinue marital relation with Pavlovana. He should have exerted a great deal of prudence. He acts as though he bears the exclusive privilege and right to break the tie of marriage. Heedless of the sufferings which accrue to him following his one-sided decision to break his marriage with Pavlovna, he quits her and

returns to Moscow. This sort of rash, intemperate and arrogant attitude of Lavretsky reveal serious shortcoming of Lavretsky's masculinity. One day in Pavlovna's art studio, Lavretsky finds a letter in which a man named Ernest expressed his feelings for her. The letter runs as follows:

Sweet angel Betsy I waited in vain for you at the corner of the boulevard; come to our little room at half-past one tomorrow. Your stout good-natured husband is usually buried in his books at that time; we will sing once more the song of your poet that you taught me: Old husband, cruel husband, A thousand kisses on your little hands and feet. I await you. (41)

In this letter, Ernest frankly expressed his love for Pavlovna. He had invited her to his room. He is grossly outspoken in expressing his love for her. In the same letter, he makes a mockery of her husband as a bookworm who is too callous to treat her. Lavretsky takes this letter of Ernest as the evidence of his wife's disloyalty. He does not try to know if she has also responded to Ernest's letter positively or not. It is not the fault of Pavlovna if her client expressed his love for her. It is not important who loves her and who hate her. The main question is if she has crossed the boundary of marriage and engaged in extramarital affair.

Subordinate masculinity is the cultural authority of heterosexual men and subordination of homosexual men. Homosexuality is viewed as the polar opposite of what masculinity entitles a man to be. Therefore, it is associated with femininity and is economically, politically, and culturally attacked. Heterosexual men may view gay men in the same light that they view women. There is an innate need for dominance. This leads to the subordination of gay men because they see as having a failed hegemonic masculinity. Masculinity is complicit with the politics of patriarchy. About

this complicity of masculinity with patriarchy, David S. Cohen makes the following remarks:

Complicit masculinity is the categorization of men who connect with hegemony but do not fully represent hegemonic masculinity. A great many men who draw the patriarchal dividend also respect their wives and mothers. They are never violent towards women. They do their accustomed share of the housework, bring home the family wage, and can easily convince themselves that feminists must be bra-burning extremists. (47)

Marginalized masculinity is the authorization of the hegemonic masculinity. Men who fall into this category benefit less from the hegemonic ideal because of traits other than their gender behavior. Race relations may also become integral part of the dynamic between masculinities. In a white-supremacist context, black masculinities play symbolic roles for white gender construction. Men that fall into this category do not receive the same benefits and privileges as those who are seen as purely hegemonic. In other words, the hegemonic masculinity among whites maintains the oppression against the masculinity among blacks.

Without trying to know how far Pavlovna has responded to the likings of Ernest's letter, he decides to abandon Pavlovna on the spur of the moment. This sort of thinking of Lavretsky discloses how intemperate, over-reactive and insensitive he is. No matter how boastful he might be of his developed and europeanized personality, he is still callow and immature in understanding the delicacy and compulsion of his wife. His wife is a dance by profession. She has to face different kinds of people. Some clients can express their likings for her. That is not a big and problematical deal. The main issue is how she takes it and how she handles the

romantic overtures of her male clients who are obsessively crazy for her. But Lavretsky's sporadic decision to abandon her exposes the limitations and shortcomings of his manhood. The following lines exemplify how aggressive and frenetic he gets as soon as he reads the letter containing the love of Ernest for his wife:

Lavretsky did not at once understand what he had read; he read it a second time, and his head began to swim, the ground began to sway under his feet like the deck of a ship in a rolling sea. He began to cry out and gasp and weep all at the same instant. He was utterly overwhelmed. He had so blindly believed in his wife; the possibility of deception, of treason, had never presented itself to his mind. This Ernest, his wife's lover, was a fair-haired pretty boy of three-and-twenty, with a little turned-up nose and refined little moustaches, almost the most insignificant of all her acquaintances. (42)

The above cited extract dramatizes the reactions and outburst of Lavretsky's anger and irritation. He is frantically restless. He feels that his wife has stabbed a dagger to his heart. He assumes that he has put unwavering faith in his wife. Her affair is the result of his unflinching faith in his wife. He feels increasingly stunned and staggered. A man, who used to think that Russians untouched and unrefined by European ideals are brute and philistine, has now reacted like a brute,. Typical patriarchal mentality of Lavretsky is expressed in the above cited extract. He thinks that women are just the appendages or adjuncts. His condescending attitude towards women gets contradicted by his own reactions towards his wife's alleged affair with Ernest. He feels so shaken, void, empty, betrayed, and embittered that he could not help feeling reeled and stunned by the revelation of Pavlovna's alleged affair.

Lavretsky still stood, crushing the fatal note in his hands. He hovered about him. His heart was numb with anguish. He seemed to be falling, falling—and a bottomless abyss was opening at his feet.

The fear of job loss or being unable to successfully provide for one's family is present Carl Bulbeck argues that "Job loss can be emasculating, rendering men depressed, overwhelmed by feelings of worthlessness. As societies and cultures change, the emasculating effects of poverty and economic and social change can erode men's traditional roles as providers and limit the availability of alternative (127)". Men may consequently seek affirmation of their masculinity in other ways.

In spite of the male socialization process, however, caution must be exercised in depicting women as being essentially peaceful and men as essentially violent. These depictions reinforce patriarchal models of masculinity and femininity. It also negates patterns of dominance and violence practiced by women. All societies and cultures have a variety of masculine norms and behaviors that are positive and nonviolent. It is important to identify and promote the many positive values and norms. These norms are also a part of masculinities around the world. Men are as capable as women of being caring human beings.

As soon as he knows that Pavlovna's in love with Ernest, he happens to be overpowered and overwhelmed by unrestrained zeal to tear her apart. This kind of murderous instinct wells up in his heart. He allows such an instinct to well up in his heart before finding out correct facts regarding Pavlovna's alleged affair with Ernest. Varvara Pavlovna in her hat and shawl was returning in haste from her walk. Lavretsky trembled all over and rushed away; he felt that at 'that instant he was capable of tearing her to pieces, beating her to death, as a peasant might do, strangling her with his own hands. Varvara Pavlovna in her amazement tried to stop him; he

could only whisper, ‘Betsy,’—and ran out of the house” (42). Lavretsky embodies aggressive masculinity. He is totally unable to allow even a smattering of freedom to his wife. He is not rational enough to probe the matter and dig out the truth prior to jumping to a fatal conclusion. The manhood and masculinity he embodies are problematical. His masculinity hardly contributes to the self-esteem, individual freedom and professional nuance of his wife.

The integration of masculinity into the study of development is equally important. Social changes in the broader level reconfigure and reshape the arena in which traditional masculinities are articulated. It transforms the shape of domestic and public patriarchies. Massive social change disrupts and reconfigures traditional, neocolonial, political and cultural arrangements. In so doing, currents of changing gender relations in broader level transform local articulations of both domestic and public patriarchy. According to Roberta Johnson:

Local small craft producers, small farmers, and independent peasants traditionally stake their notions of masculinity in ownership of land and economic autonomy in their work. These are increasingly transferred upwards in the class hierarchy and outwards to transnational corporations. Proletarianization also leads to massive labor migrations – typically migrations of male workers - that leave their homes and populate migrant enclaves, squatter camps, and labor camps. (89)

Aggressive and conquering attitudes give rise to hegemonic and local masculinities. Roberta maintains that development and underdevelopment were not simply stages through which all countries pass. There was no single continuum along which individual nations might be positioned.

Lavretsky's pride of being a man is crushed by the realization that Pavlovna is having an extramarital affair. This letter, which he found, can be a one-sided expression of love of Ernest. It is not wholly confirmed by concrete fact and evidence. But Lavretsky believes that she has cheated him. The jolt and laceration brought forth by her alleged affair weaken him painfully. He gets exhausted and enervated mentally. Physically he is too enfeebled. Bitterness wells up in him. A man who used to take robust pride and prejudice in his manhood and class background should not have felt so degraded, exhausted and frustrated. The miserable predicament of Lavretsky mirrors how fragile and vulnerable his masculinity is. The following lines throw light on the embedded fragility and vulnerability of Lavretsky's manhood and masculinity:

he did not understand what had happened to him, why he found himself alone, with his limbs stiff, with a taste of bitterness in his mouth, with a load on his heart, in an empty unfamiliar room; he did not understand what had impelled her, his Varya, to give herself to this Frenchman, and how, knowing herself unfaithful, she could go on being just as calm, just as affectionate, as confidential with him as before! 'I cannot understand it!' his parched lips whispered. Who can guarantee now that even in Petersburg'? And he did not finish the question, and yawned again, shivering and shaking all over. (42)

The feeling that his wife has betrayed him compels him to ponder upon his present plight. He explores various causes which had driven her to undertake extramarital adventure. He contemplates upon the pros and cons of Pavlovna's extramarital hunt. He could not help getting puzzled as he begins to reflect on his destiny of being cuckolded by Ernest. His throat gets sore; his limbs turn stiff. His head gets brimful

of countless numbers of questions. He explores the answers of various questions which arise in his mind. He gets physically emaciated. Mentally, he is exhausted. The flame of frustration and the lamentation of choosing Pavlovna tortures him in an incredible way. Prior to Pavlovna's betrayal, he is guided by the illusion that he is sufficient and capable in himself.

He could scarcely stand upright. His whole body was worn out. And he did not even feel fatigue, though fatigue began to do its work. He sat and gazed and comprehended nothing. No outer force is able to cause a huge damage to his manhood. Before the disastrous termination of his marriage, he is under the illusions that his manhood is indestructible. Now at the collapse of his marital tie, he is so enervated and exhausted that he could not have the chance to bring his shipwrecked life to the safe destination.

Masculinity affects everyone. Both men and women can benefit from or be oppressed by the expectations of masculinity. They created the idea of masculine stress. They found three mechanisms of masculinity that accompany masculine gender role often result in emotional stress. They include the emphasis on prevailing in situations requiring body and fitness. The need to feel adequate concerning sexual matters and financial status drives them. Cohen further elaborates dynamics of masculinity:

Because of social norms and pressures associated with masculinity, Men with spinal cord injuries have to adapt their self-identity to the losses associated with the feelings of decreased physical and sexual prowess with lowered self-esteem and a loss of male identity. Feelings of guilt and overall loss of control are also experienced. Masculinity is something that some fear is becoming increasingly challenged with the

emergence of women's rights and the development of the role of women in society. (57)

Research by Martin and Gnoth found that feminine men preferred feminine models in private, but stated a preference for the traditional masculine models. Feminine men endorsed traditional masculine models. The authors suggested this result reflected the social pressure on men to endorse traditional masculine norms. Research also suggests that men feel social pressure to endorse traditional masculine male models in advertising.

At the charge of adultery, Pavlovna reacts calmly. She is not as rash, irritating, intimidating and aggressive as her husband is. She attempts to handle the matter in a cool and tolerant manner. She sends him a letter requesting him not to take any bitter and tragic decision. At this instruction and request, Lavretsky expresses happiness. But he could not revive the same degree of trust and faith in her which he had had in the beginning. He does not know what to do. Outwardly, Lavretsky seems to be vigorous, virile, independent and rational. But inwardly he appears to be superfluous. He is, in reality, a superfluous man. He should have heeded his wife's prudential suggestions. But he wants to follow his own track of thought. Instead of exercising a liberal attitude and handling the case of alleged adultery of his wife in a tactful and cool way, he simply vanishes to Italy.

In his monologue he asks a question to himself why he has come to Italy. There are plenty of evidences in the text that Lavretsky does not have full sense of control and command over his life. He acts on the spur of moment. His masculinity is superfluous. He is far detached from reality. He claims to have understood reality better than anybody else. But the truth is that he is out and out a superfluous idealist who is confined in the narrow sphere of his vanity, pride and arrogance. He takes

delightful sense of success in giving vent to his ire and aggression rather than handling the delicate case reasonably. The following lines exhibit how committed he is to the emerging reality, which if dismissed inadvertently, brings ruinous effect in his life:

Lavretsky wrote to his wife that he needed no answer but he waited, he thirsted for a reply, for an explanation of this incredible, inconceivable thing. Varvara Pavlovna wrote him the same day a long letter in French. It put the finishing touch; his last doubts vanished,—and he began to feel ashamed that he had still had any doubt left. Varvara Pavlovna did not attempt to defend herself; her only desire was to see him, she besought him not to condemn her irrevocably. (43)

The masculinity represented by Lavretsky lacks tolerant sense and reasonable way of addressing the actual challenges of life. He lacks utterly the possibility of coming to reality which reveals grim aspects of life. He does not have the idea of heeding others' suggestions, however fruitful and logical they might be. That is why, he vanishes into Italy despite his wife's suggestion against this kind of rash decision.

Due to his own patriarchal arrogance and prejudices, he happens to fall victims to unprecedented situations. The letter was cold and constrained, though here and there traces of tears were visible. He did not know himself why he fixed upon Italy; he did not really care where he went—so long as it was not home. Any manhood which does not acknowledge the fact that the relationship between man and woman is reciprocal is likely to face crisis and catastrophe. This condition is perfectly applicable in the life of Lavretsky.

John Beynon examined the discourse surrounding the notion of masculinity in crisis. He found that masculinity and men are often confused. Beynon reveals some of the interesting ideas about the issue in the following ways:

They are conflated so that it remains unclear whether masculinity, men, or both are supposed to be in crisis. He further argues that the alleged crisis is not a recent phenomenon. He points out several periods of masculine crisis throughout history. Many of which predate the women's movement and postindustrial societies. He suggests that masculinity is always changing and redefined. (87)

Gender roles limit what both males and females can do. In effect, these sex roles enslave us, forcing us to be what others want us to be. Gendered norms and behaviors are taught and learned rather than being natural or genetic. While mass culture likes to assume that there is a fixed, true masculinity. In fact, each societal construct of masculinity varies over time and according to culture, age and position within society. All men, though, while unique individuals, share one thing in common gender privilege.

Lavretsky falls prey to a conflicting situation. Outwardly he produces the impression that he does not have anything to do with his wife. He goes on to demonstrate the impression his wife is still dependent upon him. Wherever he goes he tells his friends and colleagues that man is man and he needs no sentimental balm of woman. Those who uphold a chauvinistic cult and convention are happy with him. But the reality is drastically different. The so-called superiority of Lavretsky does not have essence and accuracy. Inwardly he feels lonely and estranged after he abandons his wife. He, inwardly, pines for her love. Simultaneously he is torn between love and hatred towards Pavlovna. It shows how integrated, independent and strong his

manhood and masculinity is. The following lines serve as a typical instance of Lavretsky's pathetic inner plight and smart expression of outward arrogance:

Lavretsky ceased to follow her movements; but he could not quickly gain mastery over himself. Sometimes he was overcome by such a longing for his wife that he would have given up everything, he thought, even, perhaps could have forgiven her, only to hear her caressing voice again, to feel again her hand in his. Time, however, did not pass in vain. He was not born to be a victim; his healthy nature reasserted its rights. (43)

On isolation in Italy, Lavretsky is embittered by the sweet feelings of passing a few years of happy marital life with Pavlovna. The reflection on past makes him pine for Pavlovna's love. Acknowledgement of the bitter reality of betrayal in marriage makes him condemn her. He is unknowingly and unconsciously happens to get trapped in this inner psychic conflict. Much became clear to him; even the blow that had fallen on him no longer seemed to him to have been quite unforeseen; he understood his wife,—we can only fully understand those who are near to us, when we are separated from them. The prolongation of his inner psychic conflict pushes him towards wretchedness and misery. He could take up his interests, “could work again, though with nothing like his former zeal; skepticism, half-formed already by the experiences of his life, and by his education, took complete possession of his heart. He wanted to become indifferent to everything”(43).

This socialization can lead boys and men to feeling justified in subordinating women and girls. Of note, however, is the central, but certainly not exclusive role that women play in this socialization process—as mothers and teachers. The privileging of boys begins early with differential child-rearing strategies and parental expectations,

which are usually reinforced by the more-present mother. Women, therefore, also contribute to the perpetuation of male behavior and males' sense of superiority.

As boys grow up, they often have priority access to higher education, especially if the family can afford to send only one child to school or college. They generally receive better jobs, or the same jobs at better pay. As adults, men are taught to define themselves by their career success. About the close proximity between career consciousness and masculinity, Lorrain Bersani says:

Men and boys are, in most cultures, socialized to be competitive, aggressive, and dominant. Political and economic power are valued and rewarded. Other men view physically and financially powerful men as desirable by women and enviable. Men are also, at times, socialized to be sexually promiscuous, even sexually irresponsible.

Amongst themselves, men often brag about their sexual prowess—long a means of establishing status between men. (117)

Men are urged to excel. They are supposed to grow up to be powerful and not to show weakness. They are preferred, valued, and encouraged more and prepared better for forthcoming challenges. The role of stud has often been coveted and valued in many societies, by both men and women. Men are socialized into their gender roles and pressured to follow rules about how a man should think, feel, and act. In recent times, sport has come to be a leading definer of masculinity in mass culture. Moreover, the institutional organization of sport reinforces definite social relations.

Four years passed by, and he felt himself strong enough to return to his country, to meet his own people. Yet such a choice is coverage on the wretchedness and deception. The hidden content of this sort of deception and wretchedness is noticeable in the following citation:

Then his thoughts came to a stop at Lisa. 'There,' he thought, 'is a new creature, only just entering on life. A nice girl, what will become of her? She is good-looking too. A pale, fresh face, mouth and eyes so serious, and an honest innocent expression, it is a pity she seems a little enthusiastic. A good figure, and she moves so lightly, and a soft voice. I like the way she stops suddenly, listens attentively, without a smile, then grows thoughtful and shakes back her hair. I fancy, too, that Panshin is not good enough for her. (47)

At last, Lavretsky feels hoodwinked by his wife and decides to take recourse to Moscow. Paris looms as a threat to the integrity of his existence. He eschews any contact with French man. Back in Moscow, he resumes his normal life. He meets his old friends, villagers and relatives in the suburbs of Moscow. One day he met Marya, an old woman who is invalid due to chronic sickness. She has a daughter named Lisa who is religious exceedingly. Lisa is beautiful beyond description. She will go along the same road as all the rest.

Men believe that they have little reason to relinquish their authority or share their position. Men believe gender equality means losing some of their advantage. It is seen as a win-lose situation. It is a finite pie being more equally divided with a resulting smaller piece for them. They rarely see how they suffer as a consequence of their privileged status nor do they see benefits for themselves in a more equitable world. Boys and men do, however, suffer as a result of current male gender roles and gender inequality. Men and boys are under considerable pressure to stick to their gender roles and norms of masculinity, which make it difficult to be different. Robert Bly traces the close causal connection between socialization and masculinity. Bly makes the following observation about the close connection between these two things:

The male socialization process and social expectations can thus lead to personal insecurities conferred by a failure to make the masculine grade. Even the threat of such failure is enough to generate emotional tension and internal conflict expressed through fear, isolation, anger, self-punishment, self-hatred, and aggression in many men. (71)

Subsequent feelings of rejection and failure can lead to an unhealthy self-image and result in anti-social behaviors. Additionally, with so much of the masculine role defined by economic success in lieu of other traits, changing roles and “the loss of breadwinner status can have very damaging effects on the male ego”(87). Large numbers of youth are now growing up without any expectation of stable employment. These marginalized, disaffected youth are resorting to violence, vandalism, terrorism, and drugs. They turn to addiction to lash out or cope with this loss of male role status. Even the more developed world is impact by these economic changes. Young males’ self-doubts about their masculine credentials negatively influence their self-esteem. They may feel that they do not live up to the societal construct of masculine.

More than her beauty it is her piety and commitment to religious task that brightens her personality and social standing. Marya is eager to hand over the hand of her daughter Lisa to Lavretsky. Lavretsky is also seeking a girl who could enable him to avoid the lingering hangover of Pavlovna. So he gives a nodding gesture to Marya’s willingness to get her daughter married to Lavretsky. But Lisa says that she is committed to her religious purpose rather than the purpose of choosing a man, marrying him and then breeding his a few kids. Marya’s willingness and Lavrestky’s passion face the challenge posed by devout Lisa. Lisa serves as a test of Lavretsky’s masculinity. The following lines throw light on this side of their relationship:

Lavretsky went on thinking, 'let me be sobered by the sameness of life here, let me be soothed and made ready, so that I may learn to do my duty without haste.' And again he fell to listening to the silence, expecting nothing—and at the same time constantly expecting something; the silence enfolded him on all sides, the sun moved calmly in the peaceful blue sky, and the clouds sailed calmly across it; they seemed to know why and whither they were sailing. There is the seething, the bustle, the clash of life; life here slipped by noiseless.

(50)

Such a garrulous and arrogant man like Lavretsky changes into a morose. He enjoys reflecting on his past life. Since the inception of his romantic overture with Lisa, he should have acted in a more virile and vigorous way. Marya creates favorable situation in which the romantic bond between Lisa and Lavretsky changes into the permanent relation of husband and wife. But it is Lavretsky who is incapacitated by his own reflective bent of mind. Instead of being bold and audacious in taking risk and responsibility, he simply languishes into chimerical thoughts. Consciously, Lavretsky tends to forsake the memory of passing some years with Pavlovna. But unconsciously he is still engrossed in the thought of Pavlovna. The thought of Pavlovna never abandons him, no matter where he goes and whom he develops affair with. The powerlessness of his selfhood as well as manhood is clearly manifested in his inability to establish and continue his romantic relation with Lisa. Lavretsky could not tear himself from the contemplation of this life as it passed and glided by; sorrow for the past was melting in his soul like snow in spring.

Women are not the innocent pawns in this game, however. They are all in the quagmire of strange gender interaction, and women lack masculinity refers to. They

can sense that same lack in men, leading to a frustration that is nobody's fault but will not correct itself without conscious effort. The destructive friction between men and women-our failure to attain a mature communion-may underlie the various global political and socio-economic crises. Within the politically charged atmosphere, it would be troublesome to dwell upon the issue of masculinity and its underlying socio-economic dynamics. Martin Cavendish postulates the following contention:

Some have asked why males even need masculinity. Why not transcend the whole thing and throw off the chains of gender roles?

The researcher also heard it said that the ideal situation may be to live in a genderless society, and that using the terms masculinity and femininity only enhances the sexism that already exists. (171)

Masculine characteristics can be defined in the context of just what makes a good adult human. It seems that the traditional dualism of masculine and feminine is more pressing. The discord between the sexes cannot easily be brushed aside. They remove the unconscious control the media has on our cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity. However, it is nice to think about a time in the future when men and women are secure enough in their psyches. They can interact in a solely human way.

Experiences teach Lavretsky plenty of things that are pragmatically significant in anyone's life. When he sees Lisa's innocence and charm, he adopts different types of strategies to woo and win her. She acts sentimentally and soberly as per the requirement of his budding romance. The following lines illustrate how much caring, anxious and sentimentally awkward he has become in bringing his romantic progress to the appropriate destination. The following lines cast light on how situation has compelled Lavretsky to inculcate feminine qualities in him:

O my child!' cried Lavretsky suddenly, and his voice was shaking, 'don't cheat yourself with sophistries, don't call weakness the cry of your heart, which is not ready to give itself without love. Do not take on yourself such a fearful responsibility to this man, whom you don't love, though you are ready to belong to him.' 'I'm obeying, I take nothing on myself,' Lisa was murmuring. 'Obey your heart; only that will tell you the truth,' Lavretsky interrupted her. (70)

The above cited extract illuminates the possibility that the growing acquaintance of Lavretsky with Lisa will result in their marriage. Lavretsky's sentimental indulgence and Lisa's affectionate concern put them on the same footing. They take delight in having delightful conversation. They are so close to each other that they forget their difference and dissimilarity. Though there is apparent disparity and difference between them, the possibility of getting united in the deep bond of marriage increase by leaps and bounds. Experience and prudence do not deprive you of the best.

In each and every taste and activity of Lavretsky's father and grandfather, the flavor of swaggering patriarchal attitude can be felt clearly. The richest and most distinguished of all the Lavretskys was Fedor Ivanitch's great-grandfather, Andrei. He is a man cruel and daring, cunning and able. Even to this day stories still linger of his tyranny; his savage temper, his reckless munificence, and his insatiable avarice haunt Lavretsky.

The core finding of this research is that the protagonist, Lavretsky, embodies that brand of masculinity which hardly acknowledges the reciprocal relationship between man and woman. In Turgenev's *Home of Gentry*, the protagonist seldom demonstrates sensible disposition. The prudential way of having a good and harmonious rapport with woman is by handling the troubled gender relation in an

understandable way. Pavlovna is an artist who owns a studio and teaches dance to the interested clients. It is customary for her to meet different types of clients in the course of running her profession. Her husband Lavretsky fails to realize Pavlovna's professional pressures and compulsions.

One day he finds a letter in her studio. In that letter, Ernest has expressed his love for Pavlovna and mocked Lavretsky as a callous and dull husband. Without inquiring much into the matter of Pavlovna's alleged affair, Lavretsky breaks the marital tie with his wife. His manner of handling his wife's alleged affair reveals plenty of shortcomings and limitations of his masculinity. Lavretsky is that sort of man who is prone to take decision on the spur of moment. He is heedlessly rash in taking even crucial decisions in his life. Despite his wife's suggestion to remain cool and decide reasonably, he instantly decides to abandon her.

Lavretsky is a typical male pig chauvinist. He produces the impression that he solely bears the responsibility to divorce Pavlovna without knowing her view. In his marital relation he is sovereign and he can take any kind of decision. But that kind of masculine arrogance of Lavretsky is pretentious. Inwardly, he is fragile and vulnerable. After divorce, he does not know what to do. He is, in one way tempted to return to Moscow. But the idea of returning to Moscow is not inviting to him.

But out of whim and impulse he simply moves towards Italy. Following the disintegration of his marriage with Pavlovna, he is not able to act and think rationally. He himself does not know why he has come to Italy. From Italy he continues to receive information about Pavlovna. If he formally forsakes her due to her alleged extramarital affair, he should not have shown interest in knowing where she is and whom she is having relationship. In Italy, he does his best to forget Pavlovna. But the pleasing memories of passing romantic years with Pavlovna dog his life. He pretends

that nothing has happened to her despite the disintegration of his marriage. He boasts that he can get any woman like Pavlovna. But he inwardly hankers after the charm, elegance and beauty of Pavlovna. He is inwardly guilty of taking a rash decision to break his marriage with her. But he cannot say to her that he still loves her and wants to get reconciled with her. Arrogance and haughty nature make him not to compromise and acknowledge his flaw and frailty. He is torn between temptation and guilt.

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