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Representation of Victorian Women in Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*

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Letter of Recommendation

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Representation of Victorian Women in Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Shubhadra Bhattarai has been approved by the undersigned member of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research explores a female's search for identity in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*. The protagonist of the novel, Sylvia, has a strong desire to be successful woman and to get freedom from societal values and norm which directly affects to the women only. The research excels the issues of female of Victorian society where female's responsibilities were only domestic working. The novel is the representative of the patriarchy and patriarchal society creates the utmost obstacle for the female. Sylvia is fed up and tied with society which does not let her make self-decision and create own identity. Sylvia represents the ideology of female and tries to redraw the boundary of patriarchy which existed in patriarchal society. On the basis of Feminist theory this present thesis proves the women issues of Victorian society.

I. Elizabeth Gaskell's Gender Perspective towards Characters

This present research focuses on female's quest for identity resisting the marginalized position of them in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* with the view of revealing female protagonist's role. The novel portrays the realistic picture of women and their subordinated experience and suffering in the patriarchal society. So far as the female characters in this novel are concerned, the writer glorifies particularly the female characters, who search for their identity struggling in patriarchal society. Sylvia, protagonist of the novel, struggles against patriarchal norms and values. She endures several tortures perpetrated by males in her society. *Sylvia's Lovers* portrays the realistic picture of women and their subordinated experience and suffering in the patriarchal society. So far as female characters in this text are concerned, the writer glorifies females who search for their identity struggling in patriarchal society. From the very beginning of human civilization women have been considered as inferior and second class citizens. They have been assigned subordinate and peripheral position in the society. It is believed that women are made to fulfill man's purpose. They are expected to serve men physically, sexually and mentally. They have always been dominated, violated and subjugated to male supremacist ideology of the male dominated society, which restricts women to go in the open air. It binds women inside the home. They are restricted from enjoying and joining different professions. Whenever they try to break the boundary tags, they are graded as Satan or witch or 'other'.

This research paper excels such issues which are included in the Gaskell's novel *Sylvia's Lovers*. It portrays the realistic pictures of women and their subordinated experience and suffering in the patriarchal society. So far as the female characters in this text are concerned, the writer glorifies particularly the female characters, which

search for their identity struggling in patriarchal society. It is to delve the undying social and gender issue of women about their status in the society. The domination and exploitation of patriarchal society upon female is the key issue of the research as well as it explores the identity crisis of female characters in the novel.

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell is one of the most beloved and critically acclaimed novelists of Victorian literature. She was the daughter of a Unitarian minister, William Stevenson who died in 1820. Mrs Gaskell is often considered as one-novel writer because of the immense success of *Cranford*, a delicate picture of life in a village." *Cranford*" is drawn from Knutsford in Cheshire, where Mrs. Gaskell was brought up by an aunt, Hannah Lamb. The family background out of which Gaskell helped form her attitudes toward womanly potential. Gaskell's aunt served not only as an excellent mother-substitute but also as an important role model, showing Gaskell that a woman could live an independent and satisfying life. Gaskell grew up in a household of females, a household for all practical purposes headed by a competent single mother. Exposed early to female authority, she saw in her aunt an able, self-sufficient woman, who was capable of managing a wide range of tasks. Gaskell left behind a rich literary legacy, including six novels, several short stories and non-fictional pieces, as well as the first biography of Charlotte Bronte. Her novels are beloved for their vivid characters and arresting portrayals of Victorian life. Gaskell was a vibrant new voice to the genre of industrial fiction. Her work helped reanimate Victorian society into aiding humanitarian causes.

Sylvia's Lovers, which is discussed in all chapter, is Gaskell's only full-length historical novel, published in 1863. In the novel, the representations of food and drink provide a nostalgic glimpse to the past and to sharing food and drink which articulate not only a sense of community but also subtle gradations of inner

hierarchies. *Sylvia's Lovers* is set in the last decade of the eighteenth-century in a Yorkshire town of Monkshaven where the main sources of income are farming and the whaling industry. The narrative is shadowed by the Napoleonic Wars and the impressments of sailors into military service both of which influence the main turns of the plot in the novel.

Different critics have analysed the novel from the multiple perspectives which preserve the universal importance of the novel regarding the nature of protagonist and her life. Sylvia Robson, the product of patriarchal society, lives happily with her parents on a farm, and is passionately loved by her cousin Philp. She however meets and falls in love with Charlie Kinraid, a sailor on a whaling vessel, she believes that Kinraid is killed and gets married to Phillip. However, she finds later that she is betrayed when Sylvia knows that Kinraid is alive and gets married to another woman. Then she realizes that she has become the victim of the two lovers. She fixes her goal on it and knows her position in her patriarchal society.

There are some critics who have reviewed this piece of genre in the context of feminist perspective. Shirely Foster comments the novel as the story of three of their persons: a woman and two men. The woman is caught in the love of two men during the war in the eighteenth century in England. According to him:

One of their victims is a whaling harpooner named Charley Kinraid, whose charm and vivacity have captured the heart of Sylvia Robson, But Sylvia's devoted cousin, Philip Hepburn, hopes to marry her himself and , in order to win her, deliberately withholds crucial information with divesting consequences. The introduction discusses the novel's historical and geographical authenticity as well as its innovative treatment of gender

and human relationship includes a new chronology, updated further reading, notes and appendices. (1)

Thus, Foster says that the novel deals with the treatment of gender and human relationships in which Sylvia is victim.

Similarly, Paula John comments that Gaskell goes into the heart of characters. She simply portrays the characters who struggle for happiness. In his own words:

I love the way this author looks into the hearts of her characters. There are no villains, just people who struggle to find happiness. Sometimes in the process, they might injure others but it is rarely malicious. Some of her characters are truly saintly in their efforts to do the right thing. You go away feeling as if you know every character better than you know yourself, Elizabeth Gaskell has amazing human insight. (2)

He reacts that the characters are depicted so nicely that the readers know the characters more than themselves after reading the novel. Gaskell has entered the human heart through her characters.

However, Lucinda Elliot says that it is about the emotional intensity among the characters during the French Revolution. He says:

This story is set in the whaling community of Whitby during the French Revolutionary Wars, long before conservation become an issue. It involves the emotional tensions between Sylvia , the ex-seaman smuggler turned farmer's daughter and her two admirers , her unexciting, devoted Cousin Philip Hemburn and the dashing, handsome Specksioneer Charley Kinraid. (4)

He says that the lovers are devoted ones who show their pure love towards Sylvia.

Despite the contrary opinion of the critics about the novel, the researcher intends to prove that gender role plays crucial role in the society. Traditional gender roles put women in the lower level than the males.

Sylvia's Lovers is nevertheless also a story about love and deceit; Sylvia Robson falls in love with Charlie Kinraid, a whaler, who is captured by the press-gang, an incident which is witnessed by Philip Hepburn, Sylvia's cousin, who is in love with Sylvia himself. Philip withholds the truth of his rival's fate and lets it be believed that he is drowned. After Sylvia's father Daniel Robson is sentenced to death for instigating a riot against the press-gang, Philip's emotional and financial support to his aunt and cousin gradually wins Sylvia over and she consents to marry him, mostly out of gratitude. When Charlie Kinraid returns to claim Sylvia, Philip's deceit is revealed and Sylvia renounces her marriage with Philip. Philip decides to leave Monkshaven, enlists in the navy under a false name, and ends up in the siege of Acre where he saves Charlie's life. After being injured in an explosion, Philip returns to England and finally to Monkshaven where he decides to live incognito and in poverty rather than make himself known and claim back his former life.

Begun in 1859, *Sylvia's Lovers* was finished during the Lancashire Cotton Famine of 1862-3, caused by the American Civil War which stopped the importation of cotton and the operation of the mills.³¹ Yet the representations of hunger and famine that the novel provides are more to do with lack of love rather than food, apart from the ending which introduces famine caused by the war with France and a failed crop as well as —the corn laws (SL 435) which were used to protect the British corn trade from cheap imports; importing foreign corn was allowed only when the price of domestic corn would reach a certain level. It is only in the juxtaposition of private and public that the novel approaches any social problems. The government actions

are seen as oppression by most of the characters. The discrepancies behind the seemingly homogeneous Monkshaven community, comprised of farmers, whalers and middleclass shopkeepers, are revealed in the scenes of communal consumption of food and drink while the consumption of alcohol stresses not only the gender division as regards to it but also the temporal differences between the time of the narration and the time of the narrative.

A feminist is a person whose beliefs and behaviours are based on feminism. Feminist theory, which emerged from these feminist movements, aims to understand the nature of gender inequality by examining women's social roles and lived experience. It has developed theories in a variety of disciplines in order to respond to issues such as the social construction of sex and gender. Some of the earlier forms of feminism have been criticized for taking into account only white, middle-class, educated perspectives. This led to the creation of ethnically-specific or multiculturalists forms of feminism. Mason Humm is the representative radical feminist whose views have profoundly changed the direction of the literary feminism:

Feminist campaigns have changed societies, particularly in the West, by achieving women's suffrage, gender neutrality in English, equal pay for women, reproductive rights for women and the right to enter into contracts and own property. Feminists have worked to protect women and girls from domestic violence, sexual harassment, and sexual assault. (113)

The literary theory feminism mainly focused on women's issues, but because feminism seeks gender equality, some feminists argue that men's liberation is a necessary part of feminism, and that men are also harmed by sexism and gender roles. What Dianne Belle says is that feminism has arisen as the liberation movement about women who have been forced to live under the grinding mill of many

chauvinistic and patriarchal practices. Depending on historical moment, culture and country; feminists around the world have had different causes and goals. Feminism has different sorts of contradictory varieties and diversities. Radical considers the male-controlled capitalist hierarchy as the defining feature of women's oppression and the total uprooting and reconstruction of society as necessary. Conservative feminism is conservative relative to the society in which it resides.

Helene Cixous's "*Le Rire de la Meduse*" was published in 1975. Translated as "*The Laugh of the Medusa*", this famous poststructuralist French feminist text seeks to bring women to writing through a reconnection to their bodies, creating the potentiality for large scale societal change. Cixous writes of women "She must write herself, because this is the invention of a *new insurgent* writing which, when the moment of her liberation has come, will allow her to carry out the indispensable ruptures and transformations in her history" (880). A poetic and philosophical text, its politics should not be overlooked. Not only poststructuralist feminist theory, philosophy or prose, it is also a strategic and instructive political activism. "*The Laugh of the Medusa*" "can be read as more than an elaborate philosopheme, indeed as rhetoric, as a treatise that seeks to provide women with the means by which they may, through language, actively and strategically intervene in the public sphere" (89). Cixous suggests that women write as women and that in so doing the world will change.

Patriarchy is what the feminists seek to demolish and dismantle. It does not easily allow women to explore and cultivate individual freedom. Regarding to the rigidity of patriarchy KramaraeCheris has made the following statement in his famous work *Patriarchy and the Feminist Problem*:

Patriarchy is a social system in which the role of the male as the primary authority figure is central to social organization, and where fathers hold authority over women, children, and property. It implies the institutions of male rule and privilege, and is dependent on female subordination. Most forms of feminism characterize patriarchy as an unjust social system that is oppressive to women.

Thus, this present theory began with the immediate need to end women's oppression. The word feminism was not used until the end of the nineteenth century though the emergences of recognizably feminist ideologies were there before the nineteenth century as well. Anyway, it is a political theory and practice to free all the social bondage of patriarchy. Simone de Beauvoir produced perhaps the greatest classic of post-world war II feminism. Her work *The Second Sex* was attacked by those who felt her account of woman's lives was heavily based on her personal experience and her middle class values. Existential feminists say that females are free to choose to come out of void, but paternalism regards women as 'other'. Simone de Beauvoir argues that male is considered as 'self' and 'subject' but female is considered as 'other' and 'object'. Male is considered as 'subject' who is assumed to represent humanity in general. It is social construction that is based on male domination, which treats the women as commodities. Similarly, Beauvoir says that paternalism regards women as mystery. Males claim that woman is mysterious and enigmatic but she views those males are as equally mysterious as female. Mystery is nothing but the failure of proper communication. Simone de Beauvoir, then talks about myth that is created by patriarchal ideology regarding woman. Nature of patriarchy is egocentric that creates negative images about women generalizing their individual experiences, Paternalism regards women as 'other'. They treat women as weaker sex or second sex. The female is always 'other' and 'second sex', it is a denial of selfhood or

subjectivity of a females. So, as an 'other' she is supposed to devote herself to make to empower the self of a male. This other is dependent, secondary and margin. For patriarchy the female as 'other' is necessary only to serve the self of a male, to identify the male. Patriarchal notion expects women to be 'other' and 'object'.

Beauvoir argues that male is considered as 'self' and subject but female is treated as 'other' and 'object'. Male is considered as subject who is assumed to represent humanity in general.

An important figure in the rise of modern feminism was Simone De Beauvoir who wrote well known book *The Second Sex* in 1949. In this book she reads the whole human history which has done injustice to women because women have been relegated to secondary position to man. A mark of otherness is one's instability to shape one's depiction of women in biology, psychoanalysis and literature. Opposing the statement in the Old Testament women is created out on man's rib. Beauvoir says:

One is not born, but rather becomes a woman. No biological, psychological or economic fate determines the figure that the human female presents on society. It is the civilization as a whole that produces this creature, intermediate between male and eunuch which describes as feminine (301).

Paternalism regards woman as other and man as one. This mystical otherness of women has nothing to do with nature. This otherness is cultural construct. A female becomes woman after her birth. There is nothing womanish in her. It is male discourse that defines woman giving the patriarchal identities. Women have always been thought of and treated as an object which regards woman as a second, inferior and weaker sex.

The birth of theories like deconstruction, post-structuralism played vital role to blur the hierarchy between primary and secondary, male and female, center and margin, masculine and feminine etc. The discourse of patriarchy concentrates on the gender identity and gender problems. The patriarchal society is always male centred and it excludes women from many religion and political activities and so on.

In patriarchal society, the tradition of making man feel superior and woman reducing herself almost becoming an instrument of man's pleasures. In patriarchal society women is defined as a negative but man as positive, a man is right being but it is woman who is wrong. In patriarchal society myth is created about women in different sectors like religion, philosophy, science, literature etc. The nature of patriarchy is egocentric which creates myth about woman and these myths are just created to rule and subordinate women. Male defines themselves as transcendent, active, clever, independent, subject, right side etc. whereas they define female as passive, weak, dependent, object, mysterious, dark side like commodities. Generally such myths are created to dominate the women.

In *The Second Sex* Beauvoir raises the voice against man-woman dichotomy as the male ideology makes woman the second sex. Women are made inferior which is just artificially made. She further says that women are not born, but made. The human culture has given supremacy to the sex that haunts and kills, and not the one that gives birth, to masters to nature and not to the natural functions. Women are mystic that they are vast, something reserved and they undergo these processes, but Beauvoir condemns these myths saying that they are natural process and male made myths are false. She further says males too are mysterious. She claims:

The myth of a woman is a luxury which an appeal only if man escapes from urgent demands of his needs, the more relationship are concretely live the less they are

idealized . . . but along with luxury there is utility, their dreams were irresistibly guarded by interest. Surely most myths had roots in the spontaneous attitude of man towards his own existence and toward the world around him. But going beyond experience towards the transcendent idea was deliberately used by patriarchal society for purpose of self-justification, through the myths this society imposed its laws and customs upon individuals in a picturesque, effective manner if it is under a mythical form that group imperative is indoctrinated into each conscience. (999)

Beauvoir criticizes the male-made myths about women that myth is just mirage which is not reacted with reality at all. She further criticizes the cultural identification of women as merely negative objective or 'other' to man. The notion of otherness of 'she' affects in the social ideology. Thus, Beauvoir suggests the feminists to break the patriarchal norms and values and established females' ideology which is necessary for women's self-identity and autonomy.

The first chapter is the general introduction of this research paper. It clearly states the problem and hypothesis of this research paper with some critical views. The second chapter will be the textual analysis with different topics in which the application of theory to the text will support the hypothesis of this research paper including some important feminist theorists in relation to gender and society. The third chapter will be the concluding part which again restates the important ideas of this research paper in brief.

II. Representation of Women in Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*

This research centres on the social and gender issue of women and about their status in the society in Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*, a story of mysterious young women named Sylvia who is a Victorian woman faced several domestic works in house. Sylvia is compelled to yield to the dictation of another lover. It is a mark of the affirmation of her love for individual autonomy. But her consciousness of freedom is not totally free from the patriarchal constraints. Before marriage woman is brought up by her father and later by husband. So she is known by her father before marriage and by husband after marriage. Her identity is constructed by the society but she has not her own identity. By escaping from husband's house, Katie's subverting the patriarchal standards tries to create her own identity as a powerful woman. The domination and exploitation of patriarchal society upon female is the key issue of the research as well as it explores the identity crisis of female characters in the novel *Sylvia's Lovers*.

The proposed research work aims to study how the patriarchal domination, exploitation, suppression, oppression and subjugation in the contemporary American society and struggle against patriarchal norms and values. It also aims to explore the effect of marginalization of women and their resistance against male domination for their existence and freedom. From the very beginning of human civilization women have been considered as inferior and second class citizens. They have been assigned subordinate and peripheral position in the society. It is believed that women are made to fulfill man's purpose. They are expected to serve men physically, sexually and mentally. They have always dominated, violated and subjugated to male supremacist ideology of the male dominated society, which restricts women to go in the open air. It binds women inside the home. They are restricted from enjoying and joining different professions.

Woman is brought up before marriage by her father and later by husband. So she is known by her father before marriage and by husband after marriage. Her identity is constructed by the society but she has not her own identity. After getting tortures and spending her childhood in her father's house, the main character Sylvia is exploited in her husband's house. But she escapes her abusive husband and who is working to rebuild her life. Sylvia is compelled to work at home in domestic activities. Gaskell's novel *Sylvia's Lovers* deals with women's issue. In this novel Gaskell shows the situation of women in patriarchal society. Gaskell's fiction mostly portrays the physical and psychological violence in relation between men and women. This novel portrays the realistic pictures of women and their subordinate experiences and sufferings in patriarchal society. She raises the issue of marginalization regarding "search for female identity". The protagonist of the novel Sylvia has no agency in her family so she decides to create her own identity as a powerful woman.

In Gaskell's novel *Sylvia's Lovers*, the protagonist of the novel Sylvia is the representative of all females trying to quest for identity under the oppression of male dominated society. Male dominated society has always treated woman as an inferior one who has to obey her father, brother and husband. She has to remain docile and submissive and serve them. Females are limited within household work not allowed to public place. They are exploited by the traditional social taboo and there is always power relationship between male and female in which the females are sometimes idealized but most of the time oppressed and exploited. Male dominated society has always repressed feelings, desires, and dreams of the females. Females grow up in a society where female's identity is marginalized, where women are considered to rear child, serve family and remain away from the outside affairs like working for earning money, getting education, understanding social circumstances and decision making.

If these suppressed women get chance to empower themselves they can resist to oppression in anyway. They can either through direct revolt, indifference or through silence to create their identity. Jenny Uglow writes:

The protagonist Sylvia is associated with proud through the whole novel. She is of a strong character, she plays great roles in solving so many problems and like Gaskell herself likes herself likes helping the poor and providing them with shelter and moral help. This shown through her help and support for the Phillip and mainly for Kinaraid. (13)

Sylvia's Lovers focuses on the condition of female character and their situation in the patriarchal society of Victorian setting in England and their search for identity struggling in patriarchal society. In such a society a woman suffers a lot and is treated as nonhuman-being. Even-though, this study also shows the reaction and they resist for their existence

The feminist scholars have defined patriarchy as the rule of father over daughter, husband over wife, the rule of older man over younger, the rule of mother-in-law. Women's position in patriarchal society is not allowed to speak as they like. They have no right to criticize their family member's views. They are not permitted to go in public place and take part in any political affair. Neither they are allowed to make their decision by themselves. They have to obey their mother-in-law in the household work and fulfil their husband's desires. It is said that in patriarchal society women's happiness and welfare lies in marriage. A woman needs man to be protected from any kind of evils. It is considered that educating daughters mean a waste of money and waste of her youth for her family. Marriage is stressed over education

The status of women during the Victorian Era was viewed as an illustration of the striking inconsistency between England's national power and wealth and its

atrocious social conditions. Though, the era was symbolized by the reign of the British monarch Queen Victoria, women witnessed so many difficulties owing to the vision of the ideal women shared by nearly everyone in the society. The legal rights of married women were similar to those of children. They could neither vote, nor possess property. They were also seen as pure and clean. Because of this view, their bodies were seen as temples that should be neither decorated with makeup nor used for pleasurable things such as sex. The role of women was limited to rearing children and having a tendency of the house. They could not hold a job unless it was that of a teacher nor were they permitted to have their own checking or savings accounts.

Marion Shaw writes:

Gaskell's female protagonist is portrayed as another because Milton people. This difference lets her criticize the others, and John Thornton is the first who receives her prejudices. She categorizes him among the tradesmen she looks down upon. The Gaskell's character is different from other who are more dependent comparing to the modest girls. 22)

Gaskell's novel is considered by many critics as a proof for the harsh reality of England during the Victorian era. This is what attracts the attention of Sylvia and Philip. Kinraid regards it as a realistic picture of life in England in the mid Nineteenth century. Gaskell presents a humanitarian manufacturer who is willing to learn from his workers by establishing good relations with them after a long process of oppression. Though the new labour laws aimed to improve the conditions of workers and to weaken the power of the employers the power of the poor was still restricted. In novel, we find that the labourer is othered by the male.

This thesis also deals to sheds light on Gaskell's depiction of the status of women during the Victorian epoch. We will try to examine Gaskell's views as regards the

issue of women's othering in an era when all the moralities tried to remain women speechless. Women were exploited and dominated by men. Either as mothers, sisters or housewives, they were under the rule of the males. More than this, women were also othered by other women due to some sociological and economic reasons. But this othering may be also related to psychological factors like hate. This hate is as a result of an interior feeling of strangeness toward other. The notion of Otherness interacts with so many words. Otherness means strangeness, difference, marginal and even feministic. Our aim is to show how women are positioned in a State of Otherness, Why are they othered, and who othered them? In order to realize our objective, we try to confront Julia Kristeva's views about otherness which are already mentioned in the methods and material part to the characters of the novel to draw a picture about the position of the domestic othering in Gaskell's *Silvia's Lovers* from the psychological and existential perspective.

This research shows the relationships between gender and agency in the works of Victorian author Elizabeth Gaskell. Gaskell's position within discussions of nineteenth-century feminisms has long been a subject of debate, and her celebration of and focus on femininity, women's lives, and the domestic sphere of nineteenth-century womanhood is inevitably crucial in critical analyses of her work. This research that Gaskell's take on gender is a more sophisticated one than has been recognised. In her fictional depictions of the agency and power of women and men, as well as in commentary from her correspondence and her biography of her friend and contemporary woman author Gaskell conceives of the traditionally feminine sphere of influence as more conducive to action than the masculine realm, where notions of authority and responsibility paradoxically place limits on individual ability and agency. These ideas are further complicated in Gaskell's work by an awareness

of the constructed or unfixed nature of gender, a conscious recognition of gender roles as not essentially tied to sex difference but rather as fluid, mutable, and primarily utilitarian. This research situates Gaskell's position contextually, with reference to contemporary nineteenth-century discussions of the roles and expectations of men and women. It is organised in terms of the thematic focus of her novels, with chapters on industry and class relations, fallen women, religion and marriage, and home and family. Within this framework this research suggest a progression in the complexity of Gaskell's thinking both chronologically and in the shift of focus from topics that are cantered in masculine spheres of power, such as the economic, political, and religious, to those that are firmly ensconced in the feminine domestic realm of the personal home and local community.

Gender roles were conventionally defined and circumscribed during the Victorian period, and though there is plenty of evidence that the lived experiences of men and women transcended and contradicted, in addition to conforming to and perpetuating these roles, stereotypical images and behaviours of femininity and masculinity pervaded the culture of the period. While this study seeks to complicate understandings of Victorian gender roles, as have most studies of gender in the period, in order to do so some familiarity with the ideals of masculinity and femininity is an essential beginning point. One of the keys to considering expectations of femininity and masculinity is to recognise how different they were in everything from outward appearance, physical, emotional, and intellectual capacity, talents, aspirations, and desires, to the sphere of life in which a person participated. Men were supposed to be rugged, strong, rational rather than emotional, abstract and critical thinkers, ambitious, and part of the public spheres of industry, economy, and politics. Women were expected to be delicate, gentle, caring and emotional, selfless

and devoted to the wellbeing of others, and part of the personal sphere of domestic comfort, moral influence, and social management.

Gaskell's fiction presents a similarly complex portrait of women and men and the relationships between them. Recognizing that men are in a position of much more official authority and power than women could claim, Gaskell does not accept it as given that women are thus less fulfilled, valuable, or useful. In fact, consistently within Gaskell's writing, the power that men are supposed to have actually creates limits to the good that they can do, while women are able to act both within the traditionally feminine domestic sphere and, when necessary, in traditionally masculine public realms. Her fiction is concerned with how individual men and women can act and accomplish their goals and desires, sometimes because of and sometimes in spite of, ideologies, authorities and institutions that lay claims to power. Through examining the depictions of gender, power, and agency in Gaskell's fiction. This research approach is contextual, locating Gaskell's ideas about masculinity and femininity within contemporary debates and anxieties and suggesting that her particular take on the matter complicates accepted notions of Victorian feminist thinking. Thus, it tracks Gaskell's conceptions of gender through her depictions and negotiations of femininity specifically. However, since for Gaskell the feminine is defined by its contrasting and symbiotic relationship to the masculine, explorations of the roles and expectations of men are also an integral part of the discussion. Gaskell's own lack of differentiation in terms of limits – men and women both face trials and oppressions of equal but different kinds – make this more broadly a gender analysis involving a balance between the differences accorded by gender

Kristeva's *Women's Time* is one of the most important essays on feminism. Unlike the earliest feminist generations who fight for equal rights with men, the right of vote and

the right to own one's boy, Kristeva's interest is on sexual difference. That is to say, Kristeva's feminism involves to highlight and to appreciate women's uniqueness instead of emphasizing their similarity with men. Though her belief in difference is not welcomed, she is very clear about distinguishing herself from the other feminist groups that relate logics only to males:

Certain feminists, in France particularly, say that whatever is in language is of the order of strict designation of understanding, of logic and it is male. Ultimately, theory or science is phallic, is male. On the other hand that which is feminine in language is whatever has to do with the imprecise, with the whisper, with impulses, perhaps with primary processes with rhetoric – in other words, speaking roughly, the domain of literary expression, the of the tacit the vague to which one would escape from the too tight tailoring of the linguistic sign and of logic (92).

Kristeva's feminism aims to fill in the gaps of the two earliest generations. Most of all, it aims to avoid romanticizing women. The task of the third generation is to attend to the singularity of each woman: the focus will combine the sexual with the symbolic in order to discover first the specificity of each woman. Then Kristeva thinks that the third generation takes seriously women's desires to enter the male world in a linear time, that the third generation takes seriously women's desires to enter the male world in a linear time that is to have children and careers i. e. producers of species and culture at the same time. Kristeva's discussion of the third generation of feminism is less about the gains that could be for women and more for the gains that could be for human beings. Instead of accusing men as only oppressors of women, she argues that all people are guilty and equally capable of bringing about a new ethical vision

Gaskell's female protagonist is not a romantic heroine, but she is a rebellious woman who carries the songs of others and brave behaviour gives her an individual and specific character comparing to the suffering their female characters. Silvia struggle is also less about women's gains and more about the poor workers's rights though the two witness the same oppression. In addition, instead of accusing John Thornton as an oppressor, she explains to him that the workers are guilty and if they are given an opportunity, they may rise themselves socially and convinces him to treat them in a more humane way.

The social construct of masculinity is seen by feminism as problematic because it associates males with aggression and competition, and reinforces patriarchal and unequal gender relations. The patriarchal concept of masculinity is also seen as harmful to men by narrowing their life choices, limiting their sexuality, and blocking full emotional connections with women and other men. Some feminists are engaged with men's issues activism, such as bringing attention to male rape and spousal battery and addressing negative social expectations for men.

Sylvia's Lovers, its obscurity is usually accounted for by its having moved away from the social-problem material on which her reputation mainly depends. Lansbury sees *Sylvia's Lovers* as "a necessary preface to *Marry Barton* and *Northand South*," since the "penal laws" of the Napoleonic period, which "made revolt seem an Englishman's natural right and duty" (160), set the tone for industrial conflict forty years on. Gaskell's historical fiction examines the effects of a defunct state policy, impressment or the enforced enlistment of men in the Royal Navy, during the period 1796- 1800. The first half of the novel chronicles the infliction of this brutal policy on the inhabitants of the whaling port of Monkshaven and, in particular, on one local family. Daniel Robson, a farmer, smuggler, and former sailor, lives with his wife,

Bell, and daughter, Sylvia, on the outskirts of the town at Haytersbank Farm. Sylvia Robson, having come into young womanhood, must choose between two suitors: the handsome, fearless, and mercurial harpooner or “specksioneer” Charley Kinraid, or her awkwardly dotting, the industrious, pious, and somewhat smug shopkeeper, Philip Hepburn. Kinraid’s exploits and caprices dominate the beginning of the novel; it is only when the sailor is secretly captured by a press-gang lurking in the neighbourhood that the plot seemingly abandons the political implications of the impressment issue to focus on the unhappy marriage of Sylvia to Philip, who capitalizes on his rival’s removal and secures his cousin’s half-hearted consent to wed. Thus the book sustains two separate narrative movements linked only by the figure of Hepburn, who conceals the fate of Kinraid and attempts to take his place with the disconsolate heroine.

In another part of research is revolving around marriage consequently proceeds from assumptions stated in the impressments view. Sylvia’s domestic unhappiness reflects dissatisfaction with family law in Gaskell’s society, a concern that found expression in the movement of early feminists to win the rhetoric of liberalism and make its language their own property, even as they struggled to gain legal recognition for themselves as property holders. In this story the impressment and fraudulent marriage both function to deny the contractual rights and self-determining status of individuals taken against their will into custody by the state or an unscrupulous spouse. *Sylvia’s Lovers* vividly depicts the insurgency of the individual only to contain his or her rebellion within the fictional structures of the text. The dialectic of this doubleplot yields an increasingly internalized subjection, moving from physical discipline to half-willing consent to an oath of self-denial; this movement toward more intensive subjectivity can be constituted only through negation of the self, an

act that was seemingly understood by Gaskell as an explicit renunciation of proprietary interest.

Sylvia's father dies because he refuses to give in to the authority of the law is what forces this change in Sylvia, which is challenged by her coming to recognize Philip's hypocrisy but then reaffirmed by what she perceives as Charley's betrayal. Believing in men, when those men face challenges that they cannot overcome, is what causes Sylvia's downfall, but in the end men are still all she has to depend on. This dependence is clearly delineated upon economic lines. Bell is the first to articulate the problem, before it has really amounted to one. As much as her marriage to Philip is a mercenary one, and as much as she genuinely likes Charley, Sylvia's planned marriage to him is not free from a hint of economic dealing as well. The engagement is kept secret from Bell as she expects Sylvia to marry someone more financially sound, and Charley lays out to Sylvia the details of the money he intends to make and save, because "yo'r parents may look for something better for yo', my pretty" (182), making explicit the equation of Sylvia's sexuality and monetary value. That Sylvia is a chattel even in her romance with Charley is brought home by Daniel's reaction to her news: "he turned and struck his broad horny palm into Kinraid's with the air of concluding a bargain. He wound up with a chuckle, as the thought struck him that this great piece of business, of disposing of their only child, had been concluded while his wife was away" (184). As this is taking place, Sylvia is too embarrassed to come back downstairs, so the men are left to celebrate the bargain on their own. That the up-till-now fully self-determined and active Sylvia is temporarily paralyzed by her own consent to marry Charley and her father's knowing of it indicates the discomfort in the situation, in spite of Sylvia's genuine desire to be with Charley.

The ominous undertone reminding the reader that Sylvia is a sexual object, bought and sold, continues in the disturbing scene where she explains her desperation to Kester while Philip whistles for her to come to him from across the field: “she heard a soft, low whistle, and... there was her lover and affianced husband, leaning on the gate and gazing into the field with passionate eyes, devouring the fair face and figure of her, his future wife” (298). Lansbury very appropriately deems this image “the obscene assertion of Hepburn’s authority and Sylvia’s resigned revulsion” (97). In neither of her romances does Sylvia have real agency; the difference with Charley is that she is happy with the bargain because her own attraction and desire are involved. When she learns that Charley has married someone else, after he has discovered that she is married to Philip and is the mother of his child, and will not run away with Charley, her faith in men and what they stand for receives its final blow. Sylvia brings up to Hester Hester’s own stymied love for Philip, and when Alice tries to quiet her by saying “thou’rt speaking like a silly child,” Sylvia replies, “No. I’m speaking like a woman; like a woman as finds out she’s been cheated by men as she trusted, and as has no help for it” (402). Being betrayed by the men they necessarily depend on here appears as a prerequisite of womanhood. Sylvia’s forgiveness of Philip in the end grows out of her feeling of being betrayed by Charley, which she decides confirms Philip’s suspicions and justifies his interference. Philip is all she has left to put her faith in, however, and she does, asking for his forgiveness. While she is invested in different men, Sylvia has no option but to put her faith in masculine authority. The ways in which both men fail her underlines the failure of a system of belief which limits the spiritual and economic agency of womankind.

With her oath to no longer act as Philip’s wife, and to never forgive him for ruining her life, Sylvia brings about a time of respite where she, her daughter, Alice,

and Hester live happily under their own agency, outside of the dictates of male authority. The ending which brings Philip's return and Sylvia's regret of that oath, however, undermines the sense of self-sufficiency achieved. Philip's spiritual evolution is not matched in Sylvia's, which only teaches her that the men that she relies on are culpable and fallible, but her only option is to love them and have faith in them anyway. In making the oath that drives Philip from the house, Sylvia also rejects Charley, deciding for herself that she and her daughter Bella will be independent. Importantly, the vow that she takes is for the sake of her spirituality, which she sees is dependent on her sexuality: "I'll make my vow now, lest I lose mysel' again. I'll never forgive yon man, nor live with him as his wife again.... He's spoilt my life... but neither yo' nor him shall spoil my soul" (348). This is Sylvia at her most determined, and at her most overtly religious, as she recognizes that to continue being Philip's wife is hypocritical and as sinful as becoming Charley's lover. In her passionately angry state, she refuses both positions and rejects her role as chattel for the sake of her soul. Sylvia takes control of her body in order to get control of her soul, as she realises that she cannot depend on Philip's sense of what is right and wrong. She continues to defy the traditionally feminine role when, after her mother's death, she insists on going to the funeral¹² and "No one could do more than remonstrate; no one had sufficient authority to interfere with her" (363). With no mother, and especially no husband, Sylvia is liberated to act as she sees fit. Sylvia's financial independence is a little more complicated, but things have changed since the Fosters first decided to give their shop to their male clerks, and since Hester has defied expectations and married neither of the clerks, her "interest in the shop was by this time acknowledged... she had a right to be considered as a kind of partner" (377).

Sylvia's services are needed to "be a gentle and tender companion to Alice Rose when her own daughter would necessarily be engaged in the shop" (377). This plan is conceived of by the Fosters, and Sylvia is still using Philip's money from his shares in the shop for her own and her child's maintenance, but in caring for Alice she is also making an essential contribution to her new immediate family and, by freeing Hester to work, to the shop that her income depends upon. Her occupation and business returns Sylvia to something like the happiness she felt on her father's farm, in contrast with "the enforced idleness of a lady's life" (Lansbury 97) that she had been experiencing as Philip's wife. Schor finds "Sylvia in a world composed entirely of women and feminised men, a world in which she and her daughter find a peace that is missing from the rest of the novel" (171), which finally allows her to evolve on her own terms to come temporarily to a place similar to the one Philip finally achieves. Along with her new independence and resolve to give her daughter all the love she has so that she "shall never need a father's" (376), Sylvia benefits from Alice's principled religion, as well as her lessons in reading, and from Hester's shining example of goodness and patience, both qualities that Philip wished to teach her but was unable to.

The apparently conventional gender and religious message of this ending is further problematized, however, by the brief but interesting episode that follows, which sets the reader up to question everything that has come before it, but most specifically the immediately preceding scene of Philip's death. While critics who take the religious message of the novel at face value, like Pollard or Wright, for example, ignore the final ending paragraphs entirely, others have more to say. Schor notes both that "the end of the novel forces on us a selfconsciousness, if not a scepticism, about storytelling, and the story we have read" (177), and that the

questions asked about a woman by a woman, regarding the details of an old tale about a good man abandoned by his wife, suggest “Gaskell ... may be asking.. Where are the stories of women, the stories they must learn to tell (for) themselves” (180). To move beyond the moralizing of the death scene to this questioning of how the story is remembered by “popular feeling and ignorance of the real facts” (454) moves the focus away from spiritual consequences to popular ones, and then to fictional ones. Sylvia’s ultimate devotion to finding her way to heaven, to be back with Philip and make up for her earthly neglect of him does not matter because people do not remember it anyway. Thus *Sylvia’s Lovers* really ends with the pointlessness of Sylvia’s lesson learned. Her fate and destiny are set for her, unlike Philip’s, not by God but by the pressures and expectations of society. The critical consensus that *Sylvia’s Lovers* is a gloomy and depressing story is perhaps unavoidable because of the dissatisfying ending and the realisation that when Philip finds spiritual comfort, Sylvia loses the earthly comfort that she had gained. Gaskell’s tale seems to attempt to present a relatively straightforward moral in the cases of both Philip and Sylvia, in that proper devotion to God above all else is the true route to fulfilment. How to interpret and interact with authority, both earthly and divine, becomes a problem for both man and woman, however. Gaskell is able to solve the problem quite neatly in Philip’s case, by having him eventually learn to truly love God rather than to idolize Sylvia. Having Sylvia instead learn to truly love her husband is much less effective, since the reader has been conditioned by the story to see Sylvia as a victim of the circumstance of her gender and the failures of the men around her, and to celebrate her as a self-determined agent whose happiness is rooted in the beauty of life and the here and now. The story is wrapped up quickly after Philip dies, for, just as the obedient wife Sylvia is no longer interesting to her husband who longs for the relief

of experiencing her true nature again, there is no interest in showing the Sylvia who is devoted to loving him in death, and the reader is instead left with the impressions of the female visitor who learns the tale.

While Gaskell may have intended to say no more about faith and religion than that it must not be taken lightly or hypocritically, through her keen focus on the economic situation that leads to Sylvia's sacrifice of her agency, and how economic dependence leads her into social and spiritual dependence on the husband she never wished to marry in the first place, she ends up revealing a consciousness of the potential tragedy of any religious faith, Unitarianism included, that restricts devotion to God or translates devotion to God to devotion to husband. Even if gender roles are only earthly, and in heaven souls are genderless and equal, the social limits upon faith based on sex evident in Sylvia's Lovers mean that Sylvia's road to redemption is harder than Philip's, because it is only because of his faults that she needs to take it at all. The disappointing ending is the only way that Sylvia can go to heaven, but it is so unfulfilling that the final storyteller coda is necessary to excuse it to an extent. At the end Gaskell seems to step back and say this is what society demands of womankind – all that can be done is to tell the story. When masculine agency is curtailed, as it is by the press gang, Daniel's hanging, and Philip's lie, the consequences are effected upon women. In Sylvia's Lovers religious authority is made problematic by misinterpretation and selfish use, but most significantly by the need for it to apply equally to both genders. Agency is proved to be an essential part of proper religious belief and practice, but married women are limited in that they cannot be both agents and obedient wives. In Sylvia's Lovers, Gaskell is at her most pessimistic about the dangers of social expectations and limits of gender roles, and

even heaven seems barely to make up for the unfair trials that women like Sylvia suffer on earth.

Throughout these three works, Gaskell maintains an interest in the intersection of gender and religious practice, and in the gap between personal agency as a means to spiritual fulfilment and the gendered expectations of the earthly world. Together, the works display Gaskell's concern with the idea of freedom under the authority of God and the different rules of different religions, and with how both genders struggle with agency when it comes to matters of faith. Her tendency is naturally to push for Unitarian-style rationalism and tolerance, but conflicts still arise in that even within that system there are limits on the spiritual agency that women can have. In "Libbie Marsh's Three Eras" she suggests that single women can find both an earthly and a religious or holy purpose in choosing to act for the comfort of others. Religious imagery that suggests biblical themes but also diverges from the specifics of them shows that interpretation is subjective, and that it is the motivation behind actions that is truly important. The story also implies that it is because Libbie will never have a husband that she is free to make the moral choices that she does and find fulfilment through hard work instead. In Sylvia's Lovers Gaskell uses Phillip's story to show the necessity of religious responsibility and the importance of claiming agency in one's spiritual and moral life. Philip learns that feelings and actions are what matters, not talk or appearances. Sylvia's story, on the other hand, reveals the pessimistic irony that even women who are naturally inclined toward such agency are limited by the men they depend on because of social and economic realities. Sylvia's Lovers is conflicted by a desire to present true religious feeling as a means to peace and happiness, as it is in "Libbie Marsh," and a recognition that the Christian Biblical ideal of the division of moral and spiritual authority between the sexes prevents

women from acting on such true religious feeling as they might have. In “Lois the Witch,” Gaskell is freer, because there is a distinct distance between her own religion and the extreme Puritanism that her characters practice, to condemn the religious belief system as perpetrator of bad actions and unfair treatment and punishments. “Lois” takes religious responsibility to the extreme, and suggests that the personal interpretation of divine authority can be dangerous as well, especially when sexual desire is involved.

In this story, Gaskell argues for the importance of both authoritative standards and rationality in religious belief, in order to limit the power of the individual – power that Gaskell shows can be harmful in the hands of men and women whose only means of agency is to prey on this false belief. Lois has to die rather than marry her cousin, in order to maintain her pure and principled relationship with God instead of becoming complicit in his hypocritical one. “Lois” crystallises the problem that Gaskell approaches in *Sylvia’s Lovers*, the difficulty of female spiritual agency when material needs, human desires, and social expectations interfere.

The male in the patriarchal society control the conceptual area and determine the social values. Because of the stereotypes that prevailed in society, females are not allowed to express their views on any given subject. They are submissive towards the society. Satisfaction of females is not important for the patriarchal society. So, they have no choice without being submissive towards the society. In the novel, Elizabeth Gaskell through the protagonist Sylvia has become successful to show that how her formulated silence and her physical appearance reveals her strong sense of disagreement and her intentions. She has bitter findings about social experiences that are instances of gender discrimination based on stereotypes. Society always gives secondary role to women therefore, they are behind men. Females never get equal

rights, opportunities and social freedom, engaged in their family and society. For her, these are only creations and constructions, not the natural qualities of women. She takes her simplicity and innocence as her strength by maintaining her silence which reveals her strong spirit of resistance towards the patriarchal society. KramaraeCheris writes:

It is not so much the specific kinds of work men and women do they have always varied from time to time and place to place – but the simple fact that the sexes do different kinds of work, whatever it is, which is in and of itself important. The division of labour by sex means that the work group becomes also a sex group. The very nature of maleness and femaleness becomes embedded in the sexual division of labour. One's sex and one's work are part of one another. One's work defines one's gender. (3)

We're not even supposed to know that Sylvin is her lover until halfway through the movie. Seriously-- around the midpoint we finally learn that Kevin isn't an ordinary detective on the hunt for a fugitive, but the lover Philip has escaped from. Director LasseHallstrom treats this like it's supposed to be some huge reveal, but it's hard to imagine anyone walking into this kind of romance who doesn't already know that. Instead of getting into Sylvia's head the way the book does, engaging with his twisted logic and fits of rage.

In the novel, Sylvia has included the female sufferings and their consciousness for their equality due to the imposed stereotypes on them. This present thesis aims to explore the protagonist Sylvia's consciousness for her identity beyond her father. She resists against the society by formulating her silence. More than her vocal sense of opposition, it is her silence that reveals her strong sense of disagreement towards the

ideology of society. The most silent and the more strong spirit of resistance she has evoke. It is a journey of Philip and her transformation from the traditional woman to a more progressive woman.

The woman compelled to follow the path shown by the father, lover, and community in the name of male reputation or norms and values. The religion divides the male and female totally contradictorily. Women are denied by men they make religion in their own framework. Women are denied by religion, culture and society too. All the female characters are treated as inferior or weaker sex. Especially the protagonist of the novel Philip is dominated by her father and treated as demeaningly. She has no agency in her family. In a male dominated society women are constantly subjected to gender discrimination and differentiated as secondary object

If we view the world's history, each page of history can be seen as created by males. Each and every role played by male. West or East both are fond of making women's the second citizen. The woman compelled to follow the path shown by the father, husband, and community in the name of male reputation or norms and values. The religion divides the male and female totally contradictorily. Women are denied by men they make religion in their own framework. Women are denied by religion, culture and society too. All the female characters are treated as others, inferior or weaker sex. Especially the protagonist of the novel Sylvia is dominated by her father and treated as inferior or weaker sex. She has no agency in her family. In male dominated society women are constantly subjected to gender discrimination and differentialized as secondary object. Pleck Joseph writes:

It seems as if Sylvia doesn't have many friends because she has just moved to Southport. Additionally, since she is trying to hide from her lover, Sylvia is also keeping a low profile, which inhibits her from making many friends. This changes,

however, when Kinraid moves into the cottage next door to Sylvia. For the first time since she got married, Sylvia finds a true friendship with Jo. They talk, share bottles of wine, give each other advice and help each other. In the end, however, it turns out that Jo wasn't real, but either an illusion or the spirit of Carly. (3)

When Sylvia arrives in a small town, community raises questions about her past. But this community never claims to abusive husband who always dinks alcohol and beating her. *Sylvia's Lovers* is a story about a twenty seven-year-old woman named Sylvia, who is victimized form patriarchal family and society and she moves to Southport, She is shown to be an introvert who keeps to herself all the times and does not have any social life. She starts working at a restaurant and rents a cottage. It is revealed that Sylvia visits a general store regularly in order to buy groceries and other items of daily use. The store is owned by a man named Philip who is a widower and the father of two children, a boy named Josh and a girl named Kristen. Alex is attracted to Sylvia, who starts to get attached with Kristen. When Josh is involved in a *poolside accident*, Sylvia and Kinaraid get an opportunity to come close to one another and learn more about each other. The children feel comfortable with Sylvia. Phillip and Sylvia find out that they have feelings for one another.

The major thrust of this research is to show how patriarchal ideology percolates beneath the surface of feminist arrogance. Identity is not only the product of conscious forces and rational choices of human beings. It is the manifestation of unknown, unconscious and irresistible forces. This sort of concept proves Spark's alleged affiliation with the ideology of radical feminism. The researcher limits his research in the analysis of the compromising existence of Chantal, the major protagonist. Her troubled relation with her lover and husband is viewed in the light of self's inability to approximate and approach the other.

Gaskell's novels of contemporary or near contemporary life are committed to an optimistic assessment of how an individual's action can affect social developments. Gaskell's assessment of her own daughters, as expressed by Irene Wiltshire, "proved to ... what extent their lives matched the high ideals of Gaskell herself, often expressed through her fictional female characters – women who tend to be strong minded and capable of spiritual and emotional growth". *North and South* especially, assigns a crucial importance to the heroine's role as mediator in the class war. In *Sylvia's Lovers* she adopts the more pessimistic view of human agency typical of the nineteenth century historical novel pioneered by Scott, whose heroes are typically caught up in large historical events on which they can have little or no impact. Gaskell was not alone in attempting to measure her own achievement against Scott's - nearly every major Victorian novelist felt duty-bound to try his or her strength against the monolithic example of his invention. Ian Duncan analyzed the tremendous impact of Scott's historical narrative on the Victorian imagination. The modern individual undergoes a chastening development, as does the nation-state in the *Waverley* novels remarks, this process of formation inevitably creates a conflict or dialectical contest between the protagonist's private interests and the good of the nation. Victorians dwelled upon the rift created by narrative privileging of the individual subject in opposition to the nation-state; Scott's work resonated with their own anxieties about the rights and duties of middleclass as opposed to working-class Britons, or men as opposed to women. Formy, John

If Scott powerfully reinvented romance, as the narrative of individual lives in a collective experience of history, as Duncan has proposed, then Scott's inheritors - and Gaskell more than any other - identified gender as a means

of sorting, classifying, and evaluating the significance of individual lives within that collective and increasingly nationalistic experience.(2)

Sylvia's Lovers is not framed as a purely private story but deals explicitly with the interaction of public and private events. In particular, like *Northand South*, it investigates the relation between aggression on a public scale and ideologies of masculinity as manifested in courtship and the family. Where *Sylvia's Lovers* differs from the earlier novels is in giving a historical dimension to these questions; it is charged with a sense of the historical relativity of values, manners, even psychological processes (68), and this too applies at both public and private levels. Just as the Napoleonic Wars lie behind and structure the industrial world of the 1840s, so an earlier version of masculinity underlies Victorian gender relations. *Sylvia's Lovers* deals with "a primitive set of country-folk, who recognize the wild passion in life, as it exists untamed by the trammels of reason and self-restraint" (386). *Mary Barton* and *Northand South* assume the basic goodness of human nature, which allowed Gaskell to see aggression as a perversion, a "fall", and to distinguish the "human" qualities of nurturance and reason from "bestial" violence. In *Sylvia's Lovers*, however, aggression is seen as characteristic of a "primitive" stage of humanity, where the "passion" of love easily passes into the "passion" for revenge.

Sylvia's sexuality, however, is not dead but repressed, and Philip's unconscious desire evokes the figure of Kinraid, who is its visible sign: "all this time Philip was troubled by a dream... a convention of Kinraid's living presence somewhere near him in the darkness" (343). When Sylvia speaks of her own dream of Kinraid, however, he finds it intolerable, "what kind of a woman are yo' to go dreaming of another man...when yo're a wedded wife?" (345). before long Philip is jealous of anyone who receives her love-Hester (349), the baby (356) and even "the

inanimate ocean” (360). Sylvia, meanwhile, “was glad occasionally to escape from the comfortable imprisonment of her “parlour” into “solitude and open air, and the sight and sound of the mother-like sea” (350). Both ‘sea’ and “mother” are ambiguous terms in *Sylvia’s Lovers*, her mother’s surveillance, perpetuated by Philip, denies to Sylvia both Kinraid and sexual maturity, but her mother’s impulse to succor the needy (484), manifested in Sylvia’s effort to save the sinking ship, brings back Kinraid and a crisis of adult autonomy. Like the mother, the sea is the site both of love and death, both of Kinraid’s spurning pledge and of his disappearance and Philip’s denial, and provokes in Sylvia a complication involving physical and ideological ‘death’: Kinraid” was dead; he must be dead; for was she not Philip’s wife?” recalling what Philip said about her dream, she shuddered “as if cold steel had been plunged into her warm, living body” (360) and when she sees Kinraid again, “her heart leaps up and fell again dead within her, as if she had been shot” (377). Sylvia’s “death” takes the feminine form of silence. After Philip’s “coldsleel” speech “she lay down, motionless and silent” (354-5), “her lips compressed (353). “Nothing stirred her from her fortress of reserve” (356), but though “she said no word”, she “constantly rebelled in thought and deed” (359). Quiet as a Quaker (362), her stillness is the result of “unnatural restraint” (363). Eventually, feeling that she “cannot stay in house to be choked up with [her] tears”(368), she runs out into a storm and like Ruth, is “quieted by this tempest of the elements” (369). As in Chapter 3, her emotion is shaped by communal feeling, and as part of a crowd.

Feminists believe that the family is patriarchal, dominated by men and it exploits and oppresses women. The family supports and reproduces inequalities between men and women. Women are oppressed because they are socialized to be dependent on men and remain in second place. They reject the new rights view of the

separate roles, and also reject the 'march of progress' view in that society has not changed and it is still unequal. Feminists believe that marriage remains patriarchal and that men benefit from wives. Feminists reject the idea of 'one best' family type, they welcome freedom and diversity. In patriarchal society, the tradition of making man feel superior and woman reducing herself almost becoming an instrument of man's pleasures. In patriarchal society woman is defined as a negative but man as positive, a man is right being but it is woman who is wrong. In patriarchal society myth is created about women in different sectors like religion, philosophy, science, literature etc. The nature of patriarchy is egocentric which creates myth about woman and these myths are just created to rule and subordinate women. Male defines themselves as transcendent, active, clever, independent, subject, right side etc. whereas they define female as passive, weak, dependent, object, mysterious, dark side like commodities. Generally such myths are created to dominate women

Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers* uses the first person narrative point of view to tell her story. Gaskell's novel allows her young white protagonist, Sylvia, to narrate her Bildungsroman, highlights the gross racial atrocities present in Sylvia's culture and the unlikely friendship she finds with a minority mentor. Sylvia's rendering of the story also emphasizes the personal pain and loss she experiences. What creates the magic in Sylvia's narration is another of Gaskell's stylistic devices: Sylvia's ability to vacillate from poetic and humorous language to compelling, dramatic language while wearing the hats of orphan, fugitive, social commendation, historian, and smitten teen. *Sylvia's Lover* avoids using highly different black dialects to illustrate Sylvia's story although dialectal differences do exist. And finally, Gaskell uses the motif of place to usher in emotional and spiritual renewal for her protagonist Sylvia and other characters such as Philip. These stylistic devices first person narrative point of view,

language varieties, dialect and the motif of place-contextualize the social awareness and psychological development Sylvia gains through her journey.

Sylvia is the most apt to reveal the range of emotion in her complicated story because she is the person experiencing its first-hand. Though August proves to be a great story-teller about Sylvia's mother her narratives lack the vulnerability Sylvia reveals as she relates her own story. Sylvia invites sympathy, describing herself as so physically reprehensible that "clumps of whispering girls" would "get quiet when she passed" them at school, sending her into adolescent self-mediation (9). Readers trust this narrator who honestly describes her insecurities. The first person point of view allows readers to see how Sylvia processes the physically and psychological affronts to her innocence, particularly male's verbal abuse and her mother's abandonment. With no mother and an abusive father, Sylvia experiences an emotional isolation that farther perpetuates her need for the surrogate mothers she finds in Philip and Kinraid. As a narrator, Sylvia tells her story with such emotional vulnerability that even the June softens towards her and apologies for her behaviour.

Sylvia's narration also dramatizes more clearly the racial discrimination replete with society depicted in the novel. Sylvia has been raised to view black people as inferior despite her friendship with Rosaleen, but she is literally horrified at sylvia bloody beating by three local racists and the ensuing unjust charges of assault, theft and disturbing the peace. Sylvia is equally disturbed by Zach's arrest and May's suicide and also troubled by subtler forms of racism like one and Augusts under employment.

One thing Sylvia doesn't anticipate is acknowledge her own racial intolerance. Gaskell uses Sylvia, who seems not only tolerant but also protective of kinaraid, as narrator to uncover the subtle, but clear racism she retains once she arrives at the pink

house. When Sylvia overhears June complaining to August about housing Sylvia because she is white, Sylvia is shocked to realize that June may not want her there because of her skin colour. Sylvia did not realize that it was possible to reject people for being white, and her response to this discrimination was righteous indignation. Gaskell reveals this subtle roams that resides deep within many whites at the line through Sylvia's narrative voice.

Sylvia's versatility in switching from poetic language to emotive language and from philosophical contemplation to coy lies is another of Gaskell's stylistic accomplishments. In the very first paragraph in poetic language, Sylvia describes the bees flying for the feeling of the wind, seeing the bees is moving that it "splits her heart down it's seem" (1). Sylvia's poetic language often describes moments of heightened emotion that paint Sylvia as an old soul. The most entertaining language of Sylvia's her sense of humour, found over and over throughout the novel.

Elizabeth Gaskell in her first novel *Sylvia's Lovers* from the perspective of the feminism, contends that the writer plays exploit the women's problem as the consequence of the patriarchy which in turn is used to dismantle the same patriarchal values and norms. It basically focuses on female character Sylvia who is prevented from creating her own identity. She has a strong desire to a powerful woman as writer but patriarchy always restricted her creativity. Sylvia's father, husband and societal rules can be seen as the representative of patriarchy as he is portrayed as aoppressive, violent and superior to the women around him. Patriarchal society always takes female as object whereas male as subject. Basically in this novel females are victimized by domestic violence but they resist against such violence. At the same time this study explores woman's strong desire to creating her own identity through her action and desire and getting emancipation. It also shows that

consciousness in women to liberate themselves from the male created notion which subjugates women character like Sylvia through the silence or verbal attack or going against conventional. This research finalizes that to break the walls and a bond of patriarchy is not an easy task: it proves that female can also do what male can do and create other potentiality as male do. Patriarchal society always takes female as object whereas male as subject. Basically in this novel females are victimized by domestic violence but they resist against such violence. At the same time this study explores the woman's strong desire to creating her own identity through her action and desire and getting emancipation.

Thus, this research focuses on the struggle for emancipation through Gaskell's novel *Sylvia's Lovers*. It explores issues of critical situation of women in society in the name of female. They are abused by father, husband and culture in every sectors of society. Woman is brought up before marriage by her father and later by husband. So she is known by her father before marriage and by husband after marriage. Her identity is constructed by the society.

III. Gaskell's Voice for Victorian Women in Gaskell's *Sylvia's Lovers*

The research, after the complete study and analysis of Elizabeth Gaskell in her first novel *Sylvia's Lovers* from the perspective of the feminism, contends that the writer exploit the women's problem as the consequence of the patriarchy which in turn is used to dismantle the same patriarchal values and norms. It basically focuses on

female character Sylvia who is prevented from creating her own identity. She has a strong desire to a powerful woman as writer but patriarchy always restricted her creativity. Sylvia's lover Philip can be seen as the representative of patriarchy as he is portrayed as an oppressive, violent and superior to the women around him.

In Gaskell's novel *Sylvia's Lovers*, the protagonist of the novel Sylvia is the representative of all females trying to quest for identity under the oppression of male dominated society. Male dominated society has always treated woman as an inferior one who has to obey her father, brother and husband. She has to remain docile and submissive and serve them. Females are limited within household work not allowed to public place. They are exploited by the traditional social taboo and there is always power relationship between male and female in which the females are sometimes idealized but most of the time oppressed and exploited. Male dominated society has always repressed feelings, desires, and dreams of the females. Females grow up in a society where female's identity is marginalized, where women are considered to rear child, serve family and remain away from the outside affairs like working for earning money, getting education, understanding social circumstances and decision making. If these suppressed women get chance to empower themselves they can resist to oppression in anyway. They can either through direct revolt, indifference or through silence to create their identity.

Thus, this study concludes that to break the walls and bonds of patriarchy is not an easy task: it proves that female can also do what male can do and create other potentiality as male do. Patriarchal society always takes female as object whereas male as subject. Basically in this novel females are victimized by domestic violence but they resist against such violence. At the same time this study explores the woman's strong desire to creating her own identity through her action and desire and

getting emancipation. It also shows that consciousness in women to liberate themselves from the male created notion which subjugates women character like Sylvia through the silence or verbal attack or going against conventional norms of society.

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