

**Tribhuvan University**

**Questioning Masculinity in Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady***

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## **Abstract**

Will Cather's *A Lost Lady* questions the traditional notion of masculinity juxtaposing the decline of masculine and rise of feminine power. Cather has expertly presented the weakness of male characters and success of female. All the male characters can not affirm the traditional notion of masculine gender roles. Such as Captain Daniel Forrester is economically poor and physically handicapped suffering from fractured leg and economically bankruptcy. There is crisis in his masculinity due to his physical and economic weakness. Niel suffers emotionally when he is in love with Marian Forrester. His emotional nature questions the traditional notion of masculinity. Frank Ellinger, another male character is opportunist who loves Nell Emerland, Mrs. Forrester and marries Constance Ogden. Marian Forrester, the major female character, fights for freedom and identity. She represents the female masculinity possessing masculine characteristics: strength, determination, boldness and courage. These evidences assist us to prove the traditional notion of masculinity which is in questioned.

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## I. Introduction

One of the most distinguished novelists of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century America, Willa Cather was born in Virginia in 1873 as the first child of Charles and Mary Cather. Willa Cather finished her schooling from Red Cloud High School and graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1895. She came to the literary attention when her stories for writing class got published. Beginning with the *Alexander's Bridge*, Cather devoted herself to writing. *O Pioneers!* (1913), *My Antonia* (1918), *A Lost Lady* (1923), *One of Ours* (1922), *The Professor's House* (1925) are the most important works of Willa Cather.

Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady* published in 1923 presents the decline of masculine power and rise of feminine. This novel is set in U.S.A. It centers on the three people, Mr. Daniel Forrester, Marian Forrester and Niel Herbert. But there are other characters, Ivy Peters, Frank Ellinger and Judge Pommeroy. Captain Daniel Forrester, a road builder marries with a girl who is twenty five years younger than him. He is proud of his beautiful wife. The novel opens at a time when he has been physically destroyed by a fall from a horse. Daniel Forrester invests money in a saving bank which turns into bankruptcy. He is presented in a weaker form in this novel. Marian Forrester is the central female character of this novel. She is second wife of Captain Daniel Forrester. Marian is presented as the strong and bold lady. She is kind and helpful. She does not want to stay within the four walls of a house. She engages with many males: Niel, Ivy and Frank. Niel Herbert is a teenage boy economically supported by his uncle Judge Pommeroy. His father sends him there to study law but Niel is interested in architect. Niel is attracted by Marian Forrester who wastes most of his time in her house. Later he goes Massachusset Institute of Technology for further education. Frank Ellinger, a forty year old bachelor appears in

the middle part of the novel. He loves to Nell Emerland, Marian Forrester and later gets marriage with Constance Ogden. Ellinger is an opportunist male character. Similarly Ivy Peters is a lawyer who gets attracted by Marian Forrester. Ivy knocks down a woodpecker and slits her eyes before releasing her.

A masculinity study is a new brand of gender studies developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (1960s) in the academic discourse. Generally a masculinity study is understood as the study of men though it talks about women also. The second wave feminism of 1960s played the vital role in the development of masculinity studies that attempted to include women in the gender-neutral universal human standard in which men and women are the same. The term 'gender' helped the scholars to approach masculinity as a social role like femininity. Masculinity study describes masculinity as an achieved status which includes toughness, power, strength, independence, self sufficiency, stoicism, sexuality and aggressiveness. Though they are commonly associated with men, women can be masculine too. The study of masculinity is closely related with the men's movement combining the men's groups having different perspectives. Some men groups supported feminism and accepted feminist analysis of social practice and gender experiences and they worked to minimize their own involvement in the oppression of women. Other men's groups developed out of men frustration who saw as anti male prejudice in the society. Anyway the traditional concept of masculinity that only men are strong, courageous, stoic, active, independent, self sufficient and bold is in crisis because the contemporary women have become increasingly assertive and successful. They have masculine characteristics.

Masculinity studies aims to prove the changeable nature of masculinity which is socially constructed, not natural attribute. This recent studies questions the traditional concept of masculinity.

Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady* has elicited many criticisms since its publication. Many critics have interpreted this text in different ways from the beginning to the recent time. Diane Cousineau interprets this text from the psychoanalytical perspective. He says that *A Lost Lady* seems to have its origin in the structure of the family romance described by Freud. Freud describes child's common practice of imaginatively replacing his own parents with others of a higher social standing. When the child becomes aware of the implications of sexual difference, he accepts his maternal origin as unalterable but continues to exalt the father. He becomes fascinated with the mother's sexuality and indulges in erotic fantasies of her secret infidelity which reflect his own repressed desire for her. Cousineau in *A Lost Lady* remarks, "Niel's desire to take on the Forrester as substitute parents, his fascination with Mrs. Forrester as a sexual creature and the shift in his allegiance to Mr. Forrester when he learns of her infidelity are all strangely akin to the plot that Freud construct for us" (307).

Interpreting the text through the veil of family romance, Diane Cousineau intends to determine Niel's ambivalence towards Mrs. Forrester and his lack of development as a character.

Another critic Dickstein Morris describes this novel as a memory novel. He writes:

Like *My Antonia*, *A Lost Lady* is a memory novel: by focusing on what the Forrester's once meant to Niel, it conveys Cather's darkening sense of how the west has changed since she group. The settlers of O

Pioneers: and *My Antonia* was homesteaders taming the land and making it fruitful by sweat and labor. But Daniel Forrester represents another kind of pioneer, the adventurer and entrepreneur; he and his powerful friends belong to the railroad aristocracy of the road-making West. (23)

For Morris, this novel deals with the pioneer period. Daniel Forrester represents the pioneer, the adventurer who belongs to the rail road aristocracy of the road making west.

The next critic Susan J. Rosowski interprets this novel as an elegy for the pioneer past. For Rosowski this novel depicts the sunset of the pioneer values and morals. The noble pioneer values of the west were declined as Marian Forrester represents. He says, "According to the standard reading, the subject of *A Lost Lady* is Marian Forrester, and the theme concerns her betrayal of the noble pioneer values of the West. Mrs. Forrester's decline parallels the West's decline; the novel becomes an elegy for the pioneer past, narrowly linked to a specific time and place (51).

These lines illustrate that the theme of this novel which is related with the pioneer values. Marian Forrester is the major character who does not follow the pioneer values, she engages with many males to break the traditional rules and regulations. So Marian's decline parallels the West's decline. This novel mourns for the pioneer past of the West.

Similarly another important critic John Hollander points out the character of the protagonist Marian Forrester. He writes, "Mrs. Forrester is from 'lost' if we take title to denote a lady bewildered, a lady who has lost and her way or her condition. It is Niel Herbert, to whom she and her state of ladyship are lost and he who is forlorn, while she ends her life in wealth and only faintly clouded dignity" (172).



From these lines we can understand that Marian Forrester has lost her way, condition because she loves many persons, fights for freedom and identity. Niel Herbert is the male of patriarchal society to whom she and her state of ladyship are lost. Niel feels that Marian is only running after property.

For A. Elizabeth Elz, this novel depicts the protagonist's struggle against the confines of her society. Elz compares this novel with Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* which also deals with the struggle of the protagonist. Elz claims:

*A Lost Lady* explore how women are kept in cages- albeit gilded – and what obstacles the protagonist, Edna Pontellier and Marian Forrester, encounter when they attempt to escape. Edna is associated with several birds over the course of the novel [ . . .]. Marian is coupled primarily with one bird, the blinded female woodpecker. (14)

This extract explores that both the novels *The Awakening* and *A Lost Lady* deal with the similar theme of the protagonists' struggle. They explore how the women are kept in cages and what obstacles the protagonists face when they attempt to escape. Edna Pontellier of *The Awakening* and Marian Forrester of *A Lost Lady* both are associated with bird. The bird symbolizes the entrapment of the protagonists' experience.

Another important critic Hermione Lee bitterly attacks on Marian and directly focuses on the lusty character of the protagonist, Marian. He addresses:

She manipulates her own image in order to manipulate others [ . . .] she is the enchanting lady Forrester, to Ivy Peters. She is a woman with bucket and rolled – up sleeves, good for few laughs. In her domestic life with her husband, glimpsed in a few, touchingly matter of scenes, she is another person again patient and practical. (206-207)

Lee describes negative points of Marian Forrester. Marian is the enchanting lady for Ivy Peters. She is good only for a few laughs. In her domestic life also, she is very less happy.

Similarly Ann W. Fisher – Wirth interprets *A Lost Lady* as great study of carnal guilt and carnal beauty. He writes:

*A Lost Lady* is great study of carnal guilt and carnal beauty begins with literal fall. Ivy Peters, the novel's psychopath, has blinded a female woodpecker. Trying to catch it to put it out of its misery, twelve – year old. Niel Herbert falls from a tree, breaks his arm, and is rescued by the enchanting Marian Forrester, a mother/muse figure with whom he soon falls more or less in love. (38)

From this extract we can understand that *A Lost Lady* deals with bodily guilt and bodily beauty. Ivy Peters represents to bodily guilt and Marian Forrester with whom Niel falls in love represents to carnal beauty.

Considering the narrative pattern critic Nancy Morrow states "Through Niel's suspension of moral judgment and because of the novel's concern not with morality but with art, *A Lost Lady* dissociates itself from the traditional concern of the narrative pattern that it assumes" (299). It means this novel is concerned with art rather than with morality.

In this way, the novel has been interpreted from various perspectives. Still the issue of masculinity is prominent in the novel. This research aims to explore the traditional concept of masculinity and how it has been questioned in course of time. Being a feminist writer, Willa Cather tries to blur the traditional notion of masculinity and its trend to superiorize the male. The novelist not only presents the male characters in their weaker form but also empowers the female character. The role of

male characters like Captain Daniel Forrester, Niel Herbert, Ivy Peters, and Frank Ellinger has been changed from the traditional role of males. Daniel Forrester belongs to the hegemonic masculinity. He marries with a girl who is twenty five years younger than him. He does not want to give her freedom. Though she is naturally beautiful he wants her to wear ornaments. He does not call by her name. He calls, 'Maidy' which means he dislikes her free identity. But he is failure to use his masculinity because he is weak physically as well as economically. He falls from the horse and becomes handicapped breaking his leg and economically his bank has been turned into bankruptcy. His physical and economic weakness bring crisis in his masculinity. Niel Herbert, a teenage boy who can not affirm his masculinity. Being a young boy he hesitates to entertain with the young girl of his age. Niel is unable to face the natural obstacle. He can not cross the creek and returns back. He falls from a tree while helping to an injured bird and breaks his arm. Niel is emotionally victim. He loves Marian Forrester who engages with other males. He becomes envious with them. Niel's emotional character questions the traditional notion of masculinity.

Frank Ellinger is a forty years male character changes his lover one after another. He likes Nell Emerland, Marian Forrester, and marries with Constance Ogden. His masculinity belongs to the hegemonic type of masculinity because he makes women puppets of his hand. His is an opportunist character that brings crisis in the traditional concept of masculinity.

Similarly Ivy Peters is nicknamed as Poison Ivy, fails in love affair with Marian Forrester. He is unable to expose his power in appropriate place. Black Tom and Judge Pommeroy belong to the working class masculinity. They are devoted for the sake of the other people. Judge is the private lawyer of Captain Forrester who fails to continue his job of lawyer due to his traditional thought. Black Tom is servant who

cooks food, cleans the house for others. He is given domestic role which itself questions the traditional notion of masculinity.

In this novel, Marian Forrester is presented as major female character who represents women empowerment. She does not confine herself to the domestic role. She marries with Daniel Forrester but she develops relation with other males: Niel, Ivy, Frank beyond the traditional gender norms. She possesses masculine characteristics. She is bold, helpful and determined lady. She has ability to face natural as well as other obstacles and tackles problems easily. Marian helps Niel to recover his wound. Even after her husband's death, she does not appear weak and helpless. Presenting women in the rising role and men in their weak form, Cather tries to question the traditional concept of masculinity. There is the decline of masculine power and rise of feminine power. It proves that masculinity is socially constructed. It can be changed when there is change in power and context.

This thesis has been divided into four chapters. The first one is an introduction, which introduces the main thesis topic, background of masculinity, introduction of writer and includes literary review. The second chapter provides theoretical basis for the analysis of text. It primarily consists of discussion on the definition of masculinity, relation between gender and masculinity and different forms of masculinity and the third chapter analyses the text in the detail on the basis of the theoretical modality developed in the preceding chapter. It proves the hypothesis by bringing some evidences from the text. The last chapter is the conclusion that summarizes the arguments and ideas presented in the textual analysis.

## **II. Theoretical Modalities**

Gender Studies is the field of interdisciplinary enquiry which analyses the whole phenomenon of gender. It is closely tied to women's studies and also gay, lesbian and men's studies. Sometimes the gender study is related to the studies of class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and location. The term 'gender' in gender studies is used to refer to the social and cultural construction of masculinities and femininities. Therefore masculinity can be described as the part/sub-field of gender studies.

### **Origin and Meaning of the Masculinity**

As a new brand of gender studies, masculinity studies developed since 1960s in the academic discourse. Generally it is understood as the study of men though it talks about women also. Before 1960s the concept of masculinity used to be taken as privileged over the femininity. It was dominant from the ancient times. In the ancient time, masculinity ruled in the name of gods and heroes; in the medieval period, it ruled as Christian and Chivalric and even in the present time it has been playing dominant role in the different forms. Till the present time, most of the societies are patriarchal (ruled by the Father). They are male centered and controlled in which women are subordinated by men in all cultural domains: familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic. Men are considered as rational, strong, protective and decisive whereas women are taken as emotional, submissive, weak, passive and nurturing. Men have historically enjoyed more than their share of power, resources and cultural authority. Referring to the dominant nature of masculinity Simone de Beauvoir states, "A man never begins by presenting himself as an individual of a certain sex; it goes without saying that he is a Man" (1). Similarly M. H. Abrams considering the discourse of female marginalization says, "women themselves are

taught in the process of being socialized, to internalize the reigning patriarchal ideology” (89).

But in the present time, (after the 1960) borders have been redrawn, new methodologies have emerged and many of the old disciplines have been rethought and reconstituted which brought crisis in the traditional notion of masculinity. The present scholars are trying to prove the traditional concept of masculinity as false belief. They have sought to denaturalize de Beauvoir’s observation that “it goes without saying that he is a man" by demonstrating that masculinities are historically constructed, mutable and contingent. In this way, the traditional concept of masculinity is being in the question because it is not natural and fixed rather it is changeable and the product of power and society of the time. The second wave feminism of 1960s played the vital role in the development of masculinity studies. This brought a shift from ‘women’ to ‘gender’ as primary object of the study. The study of the term ‘gender’ enabled the scholars to approach masculinity as a social role like that femininity. The second wave feminists attempted to include women in the gender- neutral universal, human standard in which men and women are ‘the same’. Moreover, the emergence of theories like post -structuralism, psychoanalysis and deconstruction played the vital role to blur the hierarchy between male and female, masculine and feminine, primary and secondary. They questioned the whole western metaphysics which was based on the structural binary opposition. In order to clarify about these theories in *The Masculinity Studies Reader* Adams and Savran state:

Deconstruction and related variants of post Structuralist theory questioned the stability and universality of all identity categories, positing the self as a mutable and fragmented effect of subjectivity.

Influenced by post structuralist theory feminists come to see gender as

historically contingent construction, invariably constituted in and by its performance. (4)

Similarly with the beginning of women's studies as an academic discipline in 1980s more and more men started to interrogate their own relationship to feminism. The 'woman' of women studies was open to radical interrogation as unified subject spilt into multiple and conflicting interests. Though Michael Kimmel in his *Manhood in America* praised women studies, as he felt alienated from its intellectual accomplishment. He says, "American men have no history of themselves as men" (qtd. in Lingard 281) which means the gender of American men has been incidental to other historical concerns. It is foregrounded and problematized with significance for existing gender relations. The 1987 collection of essays, *Men in Feminism*, pointedly set out to consider what men could contribute to academic feminism. Masculinity studies is closely related with the men's movement which is relatively recent formation combining men's groups with the number of different perspectives and agendas in relation to gender relations and gender identities. Some men groups supported feminism and accepted feminist analysis of social practices and gender experiences and they worked to minimize their own involvement in the oppression of women. Other men's groups developed out of men frustration with what they saw as anti male prejudice in the society. The child care issue after divorce and the unlimited right to the women in the case of divorce led them to be frustrated which paved the way for men's movement. The early men's movement was a response to feminism began in 1960s and heightened by the emergence of gay liberation movement. Most of the men in the first-wave men's movement were straight and influenced by the anti homophobic project of gay men. The first wave of the men's movement dedicated to the personal and institutional change. The writing of the Joseph Pleck, Marc Fasteau

and Jack Sawyer contributed to the first wave of the men's movement who criticized patriarchal structures and analyzed oppressive masculinities from very different perspective. On the other hand, the second wave men's movement called the myth poetic men's movement that arose during the 1980s works as a backlash against feminism. The men of this movement attempted to recuperate their own innate, masculine power. In such a way men's movement illustrated the changing and socially constructed character of masculinity.

David Throop divides the contemporary men's movement in the United States into five distinct strands whereas Michael Flood locates four strands in the book *Gender Studies Terms and Debates*, Throop notes of the Christian strand that is generally anti- feminist, favours the traditional type of gender role. The people of this group believe that masculinity is characterized by authority and central. This notion makes narrower to the definition of masculinity because male don't seem powerful and rational in all situation as Christians believe. The other strands that Flood and Throop list is the anti-sexist or the feminist male movement. Men in such group shared feminist perspective and they do not see men as innately violent but as having been conditioned to be the violent to their society. Michael Flood traces two distinct groups within the anti- sexist men's group: one is related to the radical feminism and other to the liberal feminism. To support this point Anne Cranny- Francis Wendy Waring, Pom Stavropoulos and Joan Kirkby in *Gender Studies Terms and Debates* state:

Flood also traces two distinct groups within the anti sexist men's group one of which he relates for radical feminism and the other to liberal feminism. The former focus on the 'organization of masculinity and men's live as privileged over women's and as violent and aggressive',



while the latter give greater emphasis to the ways in which both men and women are constricted by the gender roles and some say that men like women are oppressed. (80)

The other strand of men's movement listed by Flood is men's liberation which is thought as male analogue of liberal feminism. For men's liberationists, conventional gender roles are destructive of men, rendering men's lives alienating, unhealthy and impoverished. Both Michael Flood and David Throop list another strand of men's movement called mythopoeia men's movement which is concerned with men's liberation from restrictive social rules through the medium of myth and spirituality. The focus of this group is on the inner life and spirituality including conventional male roles. The people of such group found pride in feminine quality like of goddess and changed the image of masculinity.

The final strand of the men's movement nominated by both writers is Men Right Movement including the father right group. The father right groups have specific interest in the right of man during divorce and custody hearing. This group was formed as the result of the court bias towards awarding women with special right. These groups are often viewed as the backlash against feminism because of their anti feminist perspectives. This movement has contributed to the debate about the gender roles. They have realized dual behavior in the TV, film, newspaper, they are expected to present as strong, powerful person actually they feel powerlessness and the grief because even the powerful men have become victims by the bias provision of law system. In this regard, the men's movements illustrate the concept of masculinity, which does not match totally with traditional concept of masculinity.

Masculinity can be defined as behaviors, languages and practices which exist in specific cultural and organizational locations. Though they are commonly

associated with the men, women can be masculine too. Masculinity is an achieved status which includes toughness, aggressiveness, stoicism and sexuality. It is difficult to give the fixed definition of masculinity because definitions of masculinity are diverse and ever changing. Problems in the definition arise because it usually refers to a set of characteristics that are favoured over others resulted in the relation of inequality and oppression. Masculinity can be understood in relation between men and women, men and other men, even women and other women. Masculinity can be discussed as collective gender identity, one that is fluid and socially constructed, rather than a natural attribute. The contemporary masculinity is seen to be in crisis because contemporary women have become increasingly assertive and successful. They are triumphing in all roles. Men have become anxious and confused about their roles in the society. The contemporary feminist theories see the problem in the concept of masculinity. They read male as the patriarchist, misogynistic and violent and they try to deconstruct the traditional history, politics and theory to construct the new one with the justice in the gender. To show the conflict in the traditional concept of masculinity Helen Hacker talks about the male homosexuality which works as evidence that all is not well with men. In her notable paper *New Burdens of Masculinity* she states:

The flight from masculinity evident in the male homosexuality may be in part of reflection of role conflicts. If it is true that heterosexual functioning is an important component of masculine role in its social as well as sexual aspects, then homosexuality may be viewed as one index of the burdens of masculinity. (qtd. in Adams104)

From this extract, we can understand that modern men have possessed the homosexual trait so that they can not perpetuate the traditional masculine

behaviors/roles. The desire for homosexual relationship has challenged the traditional concept of heterosexuality as natural. Therefore it brings the conflict within masculinity. Modern men feel the burden of masculinity. Alienation at work, bureaucracy in politics and war and the commercialization of sexuality all undermine masculinity. Therefore, there is the contradiction between hegemonic male and real condition of men's live. Similarly Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in the essay " The Beast in the closet: James and the writing of Homosexual Panic" points out, "I argue that James Barrie to whom Lawrence reacted with such volatility and finality with such [...] speaking with such homosexual panic" (157). It means homosexual desire brings the crisis in the masculine roles.

Generally the traditional masculinity contains the values of strength, power, stoicism, action, control, independence, self sufficiency, male mateship and work. Alone men were associated with the masculinity with the metaphor of reason, control and distance. They were factories owners, bureaucrats and managers. Control over the other people and control over themselves distance from the other people and distance from themselves were the major features. The epoch of the modernity also gave men the role of providing the wages of survival and women the domestic duty of child rearing and housekeeping. Therefore it created gulf between the feminine coded private world and the masculine coded public. Men were referred by the phrase 'control freaks'. But in the present time these traditional values of the masculinity may no longer serve men well because men are facing the problems due to the incompatibility between the ascendant notion of masculinity and that which is required to like happily in the contemporary social world. In the contemporary social world, men have become failures in many aspects of lives. They can not follow the

traditional values of masculinity all in all. They can be described as ‘sad men’ instead of happy men. Referring to the problematic masculinity Warren Farrell says:

Men are the disposable gender; they die in war and from suicide more often than women and are also the most common victims of violence, over work and mental illness. Of course men also commit over 90 percent of convicted acts of violence and comprise over 90 percent of the inmates of jails. Men are also more likely to be obese; to be diagnosed with mental disorder at child; to be HIV positive; to have an accident; and to be victim of suicide. (qtd. in Barker 304)

From this extract, we can understand that the contemporary men are facing lots of problems. They are not successful in all areas. Therefore there are very few happy men. They participate in the war and lose their lives. They suffer from mental illness and overwork. Similarly the German writer Ernst Jungler links the concept of masculinity to the context of war. He describes his own experiences in his book *The Storm of Steel* that how he escaped from the capture of enemy in the war. It means all men can not always show the masculine traits. They are afraid with the enemies in the war. When he was appointed in the hospital he was treated by women, therefore he confesses, "I was always irritated by the presence of women every time that the fate of battle threw me in the bed of hospital ward into the vague atmosphere of warmth" (qtd. in Glover 56). This extract makes it clear that the misogynist male also turns to be positive. When he gets lively environment, he comes to praise female figure. Female also can have the masculine traits.

R.W. Connell connects the concept of masculinity with violence. He says:

We can not understand the connection of masculinity and violence at a personal level without understanding that it is also a global connection.

European/American masculinities were deeply implicated in the world-wide violence through which European /American culture became dominant. (245)

It means that we can not understand the relation of masculinity with violence at a personal level. To understand it clearly, we should look it in the global connection for example European /American culture became dominant due to world wide violence. Connell has divided four developments particularly important for making of those configurations of social practice that can be called as masculinity. The first development was the cultural change that produced new understanding of sexuality and the person hood in metropolitan Europe. Similarly, the second development was the creation of overseas empires by the Atlantic seaboard states, Portugal and Spain, than the Netherlands, France and England. Empire was gender enterprise from the starting. Initially the outcome of the segregated men's occupation of soldiering and sea trading when the European women went to the colonies. In addition few monarchs the imperial states created rule the new empires were entirely staffed by men and develop a statecraft based on the force supplied by the organized bodies of man. The third development was the growth of the cities that were the centre of commercial capitalism notably. Antwerp London and Amestordam are creating a new salting for everyday life. The last development was the onset of large scale of European civil war.

Gentry masculinity was closely integrated with the state. The gentry provided local administration and staffed the military apartments. The gentry provided navy officers and often recruited the rank and file themselves. In this sense, the masculinity of the gentry was empathic and violence. Gentry masculinity involved domestic authority over women though the women were actively involved in making and

maintaining the network of alliances that tied the gentry together. To clarify the gentry masculinity as emphatic and violent, R.W. Connell further elaborates:

Gentry masculinity involved a much more brutal relationship with the agricultural workforce, still the bulk of the population. The social boundary here was marked by the code of honor, which was not applied outside the gentry. Control was exerted by evictions, imprisonment, the lash, transportation and hangings. Applying this violent discipline was not a specialized profession. (249)

Men were once the implicit centre of political discourse, social organization and intellectual enquiry. They were the universal subjects of truth whose achievements, failures and even bodies were historical and biological markers of human endeavor and nature. But in the present time they have become the subject to specific attention and problematization by researchers, governments and corporations. Feminist political, personal and scholarly work in particular has been crucial in asserting the centrality of women to social, scientific and intellectual life and calling on men to become objects of study as gendered subjects rather than universal models. In this way, male varies according to time and space so that masculinity can be understood as a cultural construct or the social practice.

### **Gender and Masculinity**

Gender is an umbrella term typically it refers to the social process of dividing up people and social practices along the lines of sexed identities. The system of gender divides humans into two categories male and female and it privileges the male over the female generally in the western societies. The way of dividing up people is very old which we can trace back in the ancient Greek period. Greek philosopher Asistotle in his *Economics* states, "Men were stronger, women weaker; men

courageous, women cautious; men the outdoor type, women domestic; men educate children; women nurture them” (qtd. in Anne 2). It means the traditional concept of gender is based on the binary position. The traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective and decisive whereas women as emotional, weak, nurturing and submissive. These roles are used to justify the male monopoly of positions of economic, political and social power and to exclude female from educational, economic, political and social power and access.

Hence the traditional gender roles are established as ideology of patriarchy that promotes the beliefs that women are innately inferior to men. But this patriarchal ideology is questioned by feminist who do not deny the ideological difference rather celebrate but they do not agree that such differences as physical size, shape and body chemistry make men naturally superior to women. In other words they agree that women are not born feminine and men are not born masculine rather these gender categories are constructed by society which is called the social constructionism. Supporting this very view of gender as construct, Beauvoir states, “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman [. . .] it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature [. . .]. Which is described as feminine” (Abrams 89).

The British socialist Antony Giddens defines, “‘Sex’ as biological or anatomical difference between men and women where as gender concerns the psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females” (158). From this statement we can understand that sex is dependent on biology which is unchangeable whereas gender is socially constructed which has psychological connection. It can be changed from society to society. Similarly for Barbara Risman gender is social structure because social structure brings gender to the same analytic plane as politics and economic. Barbara argues:

As long women and men see themselves as different kinds of people then women will be unlikely to compare their life option to those men. There in lies the power of gender. In a world where sexual anatomy is used to dichotomize human being to type difference itself diffuses both claims to and exceptions for gender equality. (432)

From this extract, it can be understood that until and unless men and women see themselves as different kinds of people, gender power govern to the women. Women can not compare their life option with that of men. The structural perspective on gender is accurate only if we realize that gender itself is a structure deeply embedded in society. After the emergence of theories like post structuralism and deconstruction, there is radical change in the notion of gender. Bringing together post structuralism and psychoanalysis the influential feminist philosopher Judith Butler argued that gender was not an essence but a performance” (qtd. in Adams 4). It means gender is not outcome of essence but of performance. It is arbitrary and constructed. Gender is not the voluntary aspect of identity rather it is setoff mandatory practices imposed from birth and repeated again and again in doomed efforts to get it right. The performance of the gender is about the power in society. Butler further says, "the effect of the gender is produced through the stylization of the body and, hence must be understood as the mundane way in which bodily gestures, movement styles of various kinds constitute the illusion of an abiding gendered self" (179).

It means that gender is instituted through acts; it is a constructed identity a performance accomplished which the mundane social audience, including the actors themselves, comes to believe and to perform in the mode of life. The abiding gendered self can be shown to be structured by repeated acts. The gender attributes



are performative which effectively constitute the identity they are said to express or reveal.

Masculinity as a gender category exists only in the context of whole structure of the gender relation. The historical aspect of the gender shows non-static character of masculinity refuting biologically based conception of it. Masculinity is not biologically fixed or monolithic rather it is linked to socialist concern regarding the class structures. Gender and masculinity are relational. To understand the gendered power, we must move beyond men and women or identity categories characterized as dichotomous. We can not study one gender in isolation from the other gender categories. Regarding this issue Connell argues, "Femininity and masculinity are not essence; they are way of living certain relationships. It follows that static typologies of sexual character have to be replaced by histories, analysis of the joint production of sets of psychological forms" (Connell 179). It means since femininity and masculinity co-exist in the same person, they should be seen not as a polar opposite but as a separate dimension. Carole Pateman in the essay, "The Fraternal Social Contract" argues that a modern, liberal, civil society is produced when a paternal form of patriarchy is transformed into a fraternal one. He exposes that the patriarchal political theory had in common with the ancient tradition that took the family as a general for social order and made claims about the emergence of political society from family. It was systematized in apposition to the social contract theories that were developing at the same time and challenging the patriarchalists' most fundamental assumption. Illustrating the conflict between the patriarchalists and the contract theorists Pateman further claims:

The patriarchalists claimed that kings and fathers ruled in exactly the same way that family and polity were homologous; that sons were born

naturally subject to their fathers; and that political authority and obedience and a hierarchy of inequality were natural. The contract theorists rejected all these claims; they argue that paternal and political rules were distinct; that family and polity were two different and separate forms of the association; that sons were born free and equal and political subjects were civil equals. (121)

It is true that in this particular conflict, the patriarchlists were defeated. The contract theories were an essential part of the transformation of the traditional order and the world of father which involved a change from traditional (paternal) form of the patriarchy to a new modern (fraternal) form: patriarchal civil society King in the capitalistic society turned into the liberal representative government and traditional family turned into liberal family.

Michal Foucault ground breaking 1976 volume, *The History of Sexuality* challenged the universalizing claims of psychoanalysis and biology arguing that the distinction between normative and dissident sexuality was culturally constructed and historically contingent. Sexual perversion was not a universal constant, but a category produced by the sciences of sexuality that arose in the 19th century as an aspect of broader regimes of social control. *History of Sexuality* provides scholars in the humanities with the alternative to the psychoanalytic study of eroticism, one that has been particularly important to *lesbian/gay* queer studies. Foucault shares the sociological skepticism about psychoanalysis and fascination with historical discontinuities. But particularly in his later works, he becomes distrustful of any and all totalizing systems especially the economic determinism and invocation of science. It was Foucault who was responsible for historicizing sexuality and says, “Homosexual is not a universal type but an invention of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a new “species” whose

“sexuality” was believed to be at the root of all its action because it was their insidious and indefinitely active principle. (qtd in Adams 13) . “That is why eroticism is not an essential quality of self but a set of practices and desires formed through the subject’s interaction with family and society. For Foucault sexuality is the joint operation of knowledge and power in discourse. He shows that prior understanding of sexuality has depended heavily on what he calls “repressive hypothesis.” Repressive hypothesis says that our entire culture represses sexual desires by ignoring sex or by silencing sex through various discourses that conceal sexuality. According to repressive hypothesis the history of sexuality could only be that of the negative relation between power and sex. He proves that "sexuality is not a simply the natural expression of some inner drive or desire as Freud assumed rather, the discourse of sexuality concern the operation of power in human relationship as much as they govern the production of personal identity” (qtd. in Butler 435). By stressing this, Foucault begins to dismantle the notion that sexuality is transparent fact of the life.

### **The Multidimensional Nature of Masculinity**

Masculinity is not a unitary concept or homogeneous category though the traditional concept opposes this belief. It is fluid and socially constructed rather than a natural attribute. Within any society multiple masculinities exist, reflecting factors like race, class age, sexuality, ethnicity etc. Therefore it is more useful to speak in terms of masculinities rather than essentialist masculinity. Referring to the multidimensional nature of masculinity, Martin Mills and Bob Lingard say, “True masculinity is quality which only mentions its value when it is not practiced by all men” (283). It means non-heterosexual masculinities are also practiced by female and others marginalized groups. There are different form of masculinity such as black

masculinity, gay masculinity, working class masculinity, hegemonic masculinity and female masculinity. These are the product of so many complex and shifting variables.

Hegemonic masculinity refers to the complex type of masculinity which includes not only qualities such as strength and rationality but also whiteness and heterosexuality. It is traditional type of masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is centrally connected with the institutionalization of men's dominance over women as well as subordinated /marginalized masculinities. It is highly valued when it is performed by a particular type of raced/ethnicized /sexualized male body. Connell's account of multiple masculinities is most strongly associated with the term 'hegemonic' masculinity who illustrates its tenets as "heterosexuality, homophobic and misogyny" (qtd. in Beasley 229). The term hegemonic masculinity does not include all men and masculine female. So masculinity developed in many forms as working class masculinity, gay masculinity and female masculinity. The narrowness of the hegemonic masculinity proves the constructedness of the term masculinity that brings the problem in the traditional concept of the masculinity. The development of the gay masculinity gives way to questioning views of the masculinity as a pre-destined biology. It highlights the failure to achieve hegemonic masculinity and draw attention to the non natural, non inevitable status of masculinity. To illustrate about the gay masculinity Chris Beasley in *Gender and Sexuality* gives the example of Don Dunstan and Bob Brown, two remarkably successful Australian politicians who demonstrate the way in which publicly visible and successful gay men challenge the assumed connections between proper manhood and heterosexuality.

Similarly the concept of female masculinity also proves the multidimensional nature of masculinity which came in the centre after the liberation of women with the deconstructive concept of Foucault upon sexuality. Masculinity is merely

identification. It is not tied to a sex body and apparently escapes the biological.

Therefore someone who is biologically female can act as men. Talking about female masculinity in “An Introduction to Female Masculinity: Masculinity without Men”

Judith Halberstam says:

I claim that far from being an imitation of maleness, female masculinity actually affords as a glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity. In other words, female masculinities are framed as the rejected scraps of dominant masculinity in order that male masculinity may appear to be the real thing. But what we understand as heroic masculinity has been produced and across both male and female body. (355)

From this extract it can be understood that female masculinity is a specific subordinate masculinity. It is not just an imitation of maleness because it gives us a glimpse of how masculinity is constructed as masculinity. Female masculinity is a powerful style, not social dominance which escapes the association between male masculinity and dominance. Female masculinity can make crucial interventions within gender studies, cultural studies and mainstream discussions of gender in general.

In this way, masculinity has been multidimensional or multiform which itself brings crisis in the traditional notion of masculinity. Masculinity has occurred the vast scope because of the newly developed theories and methodologies. This research especially focused on the traditional concept of masculinity and how it has been deconstructed and shifted up to the present time. Among the multi forms of masculinity the hegemonic masculinity in degenerated form, female masculinity, working class masculinity will be specified. It will focus on the individual characters,

the failure of male characters and success of female characters will be explored. For this task related materials available in different sources will be used. Regular consultancies with the teacher will be taken into greater consideration. Application of the tool in the text will be the primary motto in this thesis.

### III. Textual Analysis

The novel *A Lost Lady* by Willa Cather presents the male characters in their weaker form and female characters in dominant role where the decline of masculine power and rise of feminine power goes side by side gradually. By juxtaposing the gradual decline of masculine power and rise of feminine, this novel questions the traditional notion of masculinity which is an indication of ideology of masculinity in crisis.

Captain Daniel Forester, a railroad contractor marries with a girl who is twenty five years younger than him. His masculinity is hegemonic masculinity because he wants to exercise the patriarchal norms by getting married with a very younger girl. But Forester proves himself as an unsuccessful male figure in his economic and physical activities. Economically he is poor because his invested bank is in loss and physically he is handicapped due to the fall from the horse. Niel Herbert, a teenage boy also can not fit with the traditional concept of masculinity. Niel falls from the tree when he tries to save a bird, he gets afraid to cross the creek. It is an example of failure of traditional type of masculinity. He wants to lead his life with Marian Forester but he can not convince to her, becomes unsuccessful. Frank Ellinger, another male character tries to exercise patriarchy engaging with many women but he is scolded, hatred and treated very badly by them. Frank proves himself as an opportunist male changing women one after another. His opportunist character proves the decline of masculine power. Similarly Ivy Peters, a lawyer exposes his power on a helpless bird and fails in love affair with Marian Forester.

On the other hand there is rise of the feminine power. Marian Forester is the major female character who does not want to follow the then patriarchal norms and values. She dares to break the traditional norms of marriage and sexuality maintaining

relation with many males. Marian Forrester becomes an example of masculine female because she has the masculine characteristics: boldness, courage and determination. Marian challenges the traditional concept of masculinity.

In the beginning of the novel, there is the description of Daniel Forrester's house as pleasant one which is situated in Burlington, Sweet Water. People who travel through the house find it more pleasanter as Cather mentions:

When the Burlington men were traveling back and forth on business not very urgent, they found it agreeable to drop off the express and spend a night in a pleasant house where their importance was delicately recognized: and no house was pleasanter than that of Captain Daniel Forrester at Sweet Water. (3)

The description of Captain's house as pleasanter and comfortable clarifies the economic success of Captain Forrester who fits for the traditional concept of masculinity. In the beginning, Daniel Forrester becomes an example of hegemonic masculinity trying to exercise his masculine power. He marries a very younger girl and tries to impose patriarchy. His language is itself dominating. He does not call his wife by her name. It means he is not interested in her freedom: "Maidy I must go to the men" (26). The word 'Maidy' stands for the dominating nature of Captain Forrester. But gradually he fails in his activities and his masculine power also declines. Captain's career as a road builder finishes, when he falls with his horse. Physically he becomes handicapped who walks with a cane. He can not do anything alone. Mrs. Forrester does everything for him such as:

Mrs. Forrester went to help the Captain divest himself of his frock coat, and put it away for him. Ever since he was hurt he had to be propped high on pillows at night and he slept in a narrow iron bed in



the alcove which has formerly been his wife's dressing room. While he was undressing he breathed heavily and sighed, as if he were very tired. (31)

This extract illustrates the physical weakness of Mr. Forrester who was once a strong road builder. His power, courage, strength all fail when he becomes physically handicapped. His physical weakness is also illustrated as he utters, "Mrs. Forrester shaved me for a while. She did it very nicely. But I did not like to have her do it" (60). His physical weakness indicates decline of his masculine power.

Mr. Forrester suffers from stroke when he gets the information that his bank turned into bankruptcy. He goes there in Denver with Judge Pommeroy to find out how it happened. He finds the information true. Then he returns home as a poor man. He finds no sources of income. He tells all these things to his wife. Mentally he is too shocked. He can not control and suffers from stroke as described in text:

Mrs. Forrester returned and went to waken her husband for lunch, when she opened the door into her room. They heard stertorous breathing and she called to them to come quickly. The captain was stretched upon his iron bed in the antechamber and Mrs. Forrester was struggling to lift his head. (52)

Daniel Forrester becomes poor economically too. In the beginning he is counted as the owner of pleasanter and comfortable house. His name is put in the list of rich people. He invests a great deal of money in a bank for the future expenditure. He gets good gain from it. But the things turn opposite to him. The bank in which he is largely interested fails in Denver as the novelist cites:

Early in June, when the Captain's roses were just coming on, his pleasant labors were interrupted. One morning, an alarming telegram

reached him. He cut it open with his garden shears, came into the house and asked his wife to telephone for Judge Pommeroy. A saving bank one in which he was largely interested, had failed in Denver. That evening the Captain and his lawyer went west on the express. The Judge when he was giving Niel final instructions about the office business, told him he was afraid the captain was bound to lose a great deal of money. (45)

This extract points out the shocking news that Captain's bank in Denver turns into bankruptcy. Then, Captain Forrester and Judge Pommeroy go to Denver to find out how it failed. They return home bare hand. Mr. Forrester introduces the subject to his wife slowly unfolding his handkerchief and wiping his forehead and neck around his low collar. He says to his wife that "Maidy, I've come home a poor man it took about everything there was to square up. You'll have this place, unencumbered and my pension; that will be about all. The livestock will bring in something" (49). It means Captain Forrester becomes totally helpless after the bank has been declared as bankruptcy. He fails economically. He thinks his pension and livestock will remain as the source of income. He is unable to fulfil his wife's desires. This inability symbolizes Forrester's declining masculine power. It proves that masculinity is the product of society which can not remain the same. The failure of Captain Forrester is the failure of traditional type of masculinity.

Captain Forrester is the character who dies before the end of the story. He can not fight with his helpless condition. His masculinity does not work in critical situation. He works for the happiness of his wife but he can not fulfil her economic as well as physical desires. His role in the novel proves the failure of traditional masculinity. Once Captain Forrester is respected by all. His name is remembered by

the directors, the general managers, vice presidents, superintendents, departmental assistants and their relatives. But when he falls from the horse and becomes handicapped, no one remembers him. Even his wife does not take seriously to his sickness, weakness. Captain Forrester gradually becomes weak. His masculine power also decreases. He suffers from stroke time and again. Once he is saved from it. But next time it happens to him which closes all days of his life. His death is not considered seriously at all. Even Marian Forrester faces it very easily. He is ignored by his closest friends who do not come in his funeral. Doctor Denison and Judge Pommeroy are only two of his intimates to attend in his funeral. The very matter is cited by the novelists:

Flowers and telegrams come from east and west, but it happened that none of the Captain's closest friends could come to his funeral. Mr. Dalzell was in California, the president of the Burlington railroad was traveling in Europe. The others were far away or in uncertain health, Doctor Dennison and Judge Pommeroy were the only two of his intimates among the pallbearers. (81)

Niel Herbert, a twelve years young boy has the major role in this novel. His father is economically failure person who can not bring up to his son. Neil is guided by his uncle Judge Pommeroy to study law but he interests in architecture. Niel becomes emotional and he is defeated in physical activities. He can not fit in the traditional concept of masculinity. He is kind hearted boy, can not see the misery of a bird and tries to let it free from its misery. While trying it he himself falls down as the novelist writes:

Neil tore his trousers and scratched his bare legs smartly before he got to the first fork. After recovering breath, he wound his way up toward

the woodpecker's hole, which was inconveniently high. He was almost there his companions below thought him quite safe, when he suddenly lost his balance, turned somersault in the air and bumped down on the grass at their feet. There he lay without moving. (12)

These lines deconstruct the traditional notion of masculinity as males are strong, powerful and successful in every activity. Neil loses all his strength at that critical time. Despite his hegemonic masculinity he can not save the bird, he becomes wounded. Similarly Niel is unable to cross the creek which is situated on the way to Forrester's house. He goes up to the creek, can not cross and returns back as Cather mentions:

After super Niel put on his rubber coat and started for the Forrester.

When he reached the first creek, he found that the foot-bridge had been washed out from the far bank and lay obliquely in the stream, battered at by the yellow current which might at any movement carry it away.

One couldn't cross the ford without a horse. He looked irresolutely across the submerged bottom lands. The house was dark, no lights in the parlors windows. The rain was beginning to fall again. Perhaps she had rather be alone tonight. He would go over tomorrow. (71)

Here, Niel is unable to face natural problems. He gets afraid with the creek, rain and returns from the way of Marian Forrester's house. Inability to face natural barriers indicates the crisis in the concept of masculinity.

Neil is not confident in his activities. Once he is asked by Marian Forrester to entertain Miss Constance Ogden, he hesitates. He is not habituated in such activity. Being a young boy he could do it easily but he thinks himself weak. Niel deals with

Constance Ogden hardly. Cather explains this matter by the conversation between Niel and Marian Forrester:

I'm counting on you to help me entertain Constance Ogden. Can you take her off my hands day after tomorrow, came over in the afternoon your duties as a lawyer aren't very orders yet? She smiled teasingly, "What can I do with a miss of nineteen? One who goes to college? I've no learned conversation for her."

"Surely I have-not!" Niel exclaimed " oh, but you've a boy! Perhaps you can interest her in lighter things. She's considered pretty." (19)

From this extract, we can understand that Niel is not confident to entertain with Constance Ogden, he agrees it for the happiness of Marian Forrester. These lines show the failure of Niel. Being a young boy, he could entertain a girl easily but he gets afraid. He is confused whether he can entertain with her or not. The confusion of Niel indicates the failure of the traditional type of masculinity.

Niel who once had been content with a bachelor's life and had made up his mind that he would never live in a place that was under the control of women, finds himself becoming attached to the comforts of a well conducted house. It means he loves Marian Forrester, wife of Daniel Forrester. He is happy with the contact of Mrs. Forrester. Niel believes that where Mrs. Forrester is, dullness is impossible. He becomes envious with the people who want to be near of Marian Forrester. Oneday when Niel finds Frank Ellinger's name on the hotel register, he is annoyed thinking that Frank is dining with Mrs. Forrester. Niel wants Mrs. Forrester would love him only but Marian have relation with many males. She takes occasion of the Captain's absence and enjoys with other young boys. Niel wants to surprise Marian Forrester by giving a bouquet of roses. He goes to Marian's house with the roses. As he bends to

place the flowers on the sill, he hears from within a woman's soft laughter. It is impatient and teasing noise. Then he hears the next laugh. It was of man, very different than previous. Here Niel knows the true nature of Marian Forrester. He becomes unhappy as well as angry. We can understand his feeling and activities after the incident from these lines:

Niel found himself at the foot of the hill on the wooden bridge his face hot his temples beating, his eyes blind with anger. In his hand he still carried the prickly bunch of wild roses. He threw then over the wire fence into a mud- hole the cattle had trampled under the bank of the creek. He did not know whether he had left the house by the driveway or had come down through the shrubbery. In that instant between stooping to the window sill and rising, he had lost one of the most beautiful things in his life. Before the dew dried, the morning had been wrecked for him; and all subsequent mornings, he told himself bitterly. This day saw the end of that admiration and loyalty that had been like a bloom on his existence. He could never recapture it. It was gone, like the morning freshness of flowers. (47)

From this extract, it can be understood that Niel deeply loves Mrs. Forrester and wants to impose patriarchal norms to her. When he knows Mrs. Forrester and Ellinger were laughing inside the room, his dream of getting Marian and enjoying patriarchy collapses. He can not control himself, blinds himself with anger and throws the bunch of wild roses. He knows the true nature of Mrs. Forrester. He feels that he loses one of the most beautiful things in his life. Grace, lovely voice, the sparkle of fun and fancy of Marian all these are nothing for him. Here Niel is defeated in love affair with Mrs. Forrester. His failure is the sign of questioning the traditional type of

masculinity. Though he wants to exercise his masculine power over Mrs. Forrester, she engages with other males to break the bond of marriage and sexuality.

Niel is emotionally victim. Though Mrs. Forrester engages with Frank Ellinger and other males like Ivy Peters, he still loves her. Mrs. Forrester knows the news of Ellinger's marriage with Constance Ogden and becomes wild. Her blue lip, the black shadows under her eyes, makes her look as if some poison is at work in her body. Her mind is struggling with something. She becomes very angry with Frank, she wants to talk with him in telephone. At that time, Niel tries his best to control her. Mrs. Forrester tries to receive the phone but Niel snatches it thinking that she will be uncontrollable. He does not like to see her anxiety. Niel consoles, "Try to be calm, Mrs. Forrester. When I get Ellinger I will let you talk to him-and central will hear every word you say, remember" (73). It means that Niel asks Marian to be calm because her wildness, anger does not work at all.

He is envious with the other person's contact with Mrs. Forrester. He wants to keep her under his control. But Marian Forrester likes freedom. Ivy Peters, who does not call Mrs. Forrester by her name, treats to her friendly. But Niel does not like it. He asks Marian Forrester not to allow other to treat like that. Niel asks, "Why do you allow him to speak to you like that Mrs. Forrester? If you'll let me, I'll give him beating and teach him how to speak to you" (68). This statement illustrates that Niel is devoted in love affair with Marian Forrester. He is ready to beat whoever tries to be near of her. He becomes emotional, jealous and angry when Ivy Peters does not behave Mrs. Forrester formally. He wants that Marian Forrester would be respected by all people but Ivy deals with her very frankly which irritates to Niel. If Niel can be courageous bold person, he could react with Ivy. Niel asks for permission with

Marian Forrester. His emotional nature, lack of courage proves the failure of the traditional nature of masculinity.

Niel gives up everything for the sake of Marian Forrester. He does not go to Massachusetts Institute of Technology for education and takes care of Marian Forrester's husband. After the death of Mr. Forrester, Marian changes her lawyer Niel's uncle Judge Pommeroy to Ivy Peters. This event shocks Niel because Marian ignores his desire and provides proper post for Ivy. Niel decides to return for his further education, he goes to Marian's house once again to bid her good-bye. There he sees very irritable and sad scene that Ivy is putting his arms around her and touching her breasts that shocks him. So he leaves without bidding her good-bye. He goes away with weary contempt for her in his heart. This act can be understood better from the text:

It happened like this had scarcely the dignity of an episode. It was nothing and yet it was everything. Going over to see her one summer evening, he stopped a moment by the dining room window to look at the honeysuckle. The dining room door was open into the kitchen, and there Mrs. Forrester stood at a table, making pastry. Ivy Peters came in at the kitchen door, walked up behind her, and unconcernedly put both arms around her, his hands meeting over her breasts. She did not move, did not look up, but went on rolling out pastry. (96)

Having such scene Niel goes down the hill for the last time who never goes up the poplar bordered road again. He realizes that once he had given her a year of his life which she threw it away. Niel helps to die Mr. Forrester peacefully. After his death Marian makes her house so different from any other where old friends like Judge Pommeroy were betrayed and cast off. After knowing the true nature of



Marian, Niel does not express his hatred to her. He always searches a helpful female like Marian. He takes all her activities positively as the novelist indicates, "He has known pretty woman and clever ones since then but never one like her, as she was in her best days. Her eyes when they laughed for moment into one's own seemed to promise a wild delight that he has not found in life" (96).

Marian recurs in the mind of Niel even after her departure. Niel can not accept the information of her death too because she always will be in his mind. Oneday in Chicago hotel, Niel meets his old friend Ed Elliot who informs him about Mrs. Forrester that she leaves Sweet Water for Buenos Aires with English man, Henry Collins. Then Niel feels destined to hear once again of his long lost lady. Niel becomes unhappy thinking that he loses the important thing from his life. He can not success in love act, masculine power declines gradually and establishes him as failure one.

Frank Ellinger, a bachelor of forty appears in the middle part of the novel. He is an opportunist male figure. First of all he loves Nell Emerland, his love affair with Emerland is not described in detail in the text. Mrs. Forrester is the second loved lady by Frank. In the absence of her husband, Frank spends time with her. Once they both decide to go for cutting Cedar boughs for Christmas. Frank's emotional love is described in the text such as:

They walked slowly, wholly absorbed by what they were saying to each other. When they came up to the sleigh, the man spread the robes on the seat and put his hands under Mrs. Forrester's arms to lift her in. But he did not lift her; he stood for long while holding her crushed up against his breast, her face hidden in his black overcoat. (36)

This extract clarifies that Frank falls in love with Marian Forrester. He leaves Nell Emerland and shifts his love to Marian. It means he is selfish, opportunist and immoral person. For sometime he pretends that he loves to Marian. But later he weds Constance Ogden. Referring to the marriage with Constance Ogden the novelist writes, "He had found something very disconcerting in the Denver paper, Frank Ellinger's picture on the society page, along with Constance Ogden's. They have been married yesterday at Colorado Springs, and were stopping at the Antlers" (71).

Frank Ellinger changes his wife and love very easily. He is described as an immoral person in the text. Though, Nell Emerland loves to him she does not respect him as she says, "she had no respect for a man who would go driving with a prostitute in broad day light" (26). Due to his immoral character, Frank Ellinger is unsuccessful in love affair. When Marian knows that Frank gets married with Constance, she scolds him very badly for his immorality. Though he leaves her, she does not feel so sorry and utters the word of anger and says, "I don't want you to come here I never want to see you again while I live and I forbid you to come and look at me, when I am dead" (75). Frank fails in his life. He is an example of a failure male. His immorality, selfishness and opportunist character bring crisis in his masculinity.

Ivy Peters another male character is a lawyer who is nicknamed as Poison Ivy. He is proud and feels superior than other boy as he calls, "hullo, kids. What are you doing here?" (9). Ivy Peters being a teenager pronounces other as kids. It means he wants to show his superiority over others. Ivy perpetrates violence over helpless woodpecker who slits both of its eyes and instantly releases it as described by the novelist, "Quick as a flash, as if it were a practiced trick, with one of those tiny blades he slit both the eyes that glared in the bird's stupid little head and instantly released it" (11). Here Ivy Peters shows bravery, courage, power over an innocent, helpless bird.

If we generalize the traditional concept of masculine body, his act becomes ridiculous and trifle. Here comes a question, Are all the men honest, intellectual and rational? And are they use their knowledge in proper place? Certainly no, Ivy's masculinity can not fit with the traditional type of masculinity. He tries to affirm his masculine power committing violence over a small bird which is very mean and trifle. Ivy Peters falls in the love affair with Marian Forrester. From the beginning, he is attracted by Marian and he compares himself with her, "she can not say anything to me. I am just as good as she is" (9).

Ivy wants to stay with Marian Forrester and enjoys patriarchy. His intention to be stayed with Mrs. Forrester can be understood from these lines:

Ivy cursed himself, but he had to go. There was something final about her imperious:- high- and –mighty, he called it He had intended to sit down in the biggest leather chair and cross his legs and make himself at home; but he found himself on the front porch, put out by that delicately modulated voice as effectually as if he had been kicked out by the brawniest tough in town. (13)

This extract clearly points out that Ivy Peters' desire to be with Marian Forrester and exercise his masculinity but Marian does not care to him. She asks him to stay out side. The act of putting out from the house symbolizes that Marian Forrester does not want to be under his patriarchy so that Ivy fails to expose his masculine power.

Ivy Peters comes time and again in Mrs. Forrester's house and enjoys the cocktail party with her. He talks with her very frankly, neither has he called her name nor he respects to her because he feels superior to her. After the death of Mr. Forrester Ivy Peters is emotional in his romantic affair with Marian as the novelist mentions,"

Ivy Peters came at the kitchen door indicated by door, walked up behind her and unconcernedly put both arms around her, his hands meeting over her breast" (96).

These lines show that Ivy is extremely involved with Marian Forrester. In the final part of the novel though Mrs. Forrester changes her lawyer Judge Pommeroy to Ivy, she can not surrender herself to him. She neglects his love to her because she wants to search her free identity. Marian gets marriage with an English man ignoring his love as written in the text, " She was married again to a rich cranky old English man: Henry Collins was his name" (97). Ivy's desire to get Marian Forrester and enjoy patriarchy is unfulfilled. This failure of Ivy Peters also questions the myth of the strong, intellectual, successful and less emotive men.

Judge Pommeroy and Black Tom are also the male characters of this novel whose masculinity belong to the working class masculinity. Judge Pommeroy is the private lawyer of Forrester family. He does each and every thing in the Forrester's house. He helps to Mr. Forrester when he is sick. When Captain Forester's bank turns into bankruptcy, Judge goes with Captain Forrester to find how it happens. He returns and informs all the things to Marian Forrester. Judge Pommeroy feels proud of his acquaintance with the Captain Forrester who was very famous person. When Captain Forrester suffers from a stroke, he telephones Dr Dennison for his treatment. It is Judge and Dr. Dennison who present in Captain's funeral. In such way, Judge works and devotes his whole life to Forrester's family. But after Captain's death, Marian Forrester changes the lawyer from him to Ivy Peters. She remarks, "Your uncle is terribly involved. He has been so careless that he's not much better off than we are. Money is very important thing. Realize that in the beginning; face it and don't be ridiculous in the end, like so many of us" (63).

He does each and everything for them, but at last he is not respected by Marian Forrester who changes her lawyer to Ivy Peters. He dies without any achievement. His failure too questions the traditional concept of masculinity. Similarly Black Tom also can not fit in the traditional concept of masculinity. By color he is Negro and by profession he is servant. Black Tom is the faithful servant of Judge Pommeroy. From his name itself it can be understood that he is not respected by others. Being a young strong boy, he can not use his masculine power in suitable acts. Black Tom makes food, serves the guests and does whatever Judge asks him to do. He serves to the Forrester's family also. His role can be understood clearly from these lines as the novelist depicts, " Just Before midnight Black Tom opened the door and announced that the egg-nog was ready" (30). His masculinity is meaningless because he is given the domestic role in the house of the Judge.

In case of female characters they are presented in the masculine role. There is the rise of feminine power. The female characters are strong, bold, courageous and active. Marian Forrester is the major female character who fights for freedom and identity. She is the second wife of Captain Daniel Forrester who is twenty five years younger than her husband. Marian Forrester does not want to follow the patriarchal norms and values. She has relations with many males beyond the traditional norms, rules and regulations. Marian Forrester challenges the then patriarchal society by welcoming the male visitors who used to come to her home as Cather cites, " She was always there just outside the front door to welcome their visitors...if she happened to be in the kitchen, helping her Bohemian cook, she comes out in her apron, waving a buttery iron spoon or shook cherry stained fingers at the new arrival" (5).

In the patriarchal society, women are not supposed to talk about sex. They have to stay within the four walls of the house. But Marian wants to make relation with

the boys of her own age. She fights for free identity. She is courageous lady who does not break herself even after her husband's death. Marian is a helpful woman who helps to everyone. When boys hesitate to consult with her for picnic, she herself goes and asks to them. She helps them providing a picnic spot as well providing cookies for their meal. When Niel falls from the tree, he is taken to Mrs. Forrester's house where she provides first aid and calls Dr. Dennison. Mrs. Forrester puts him in a comfortable place where Niel feels happy as the novelist says, "The little boy was thinking that he would probably never be in nice place again" (14).

Marian Forrester does not want to be tied in patriarchy. She wants to change the traditional rules and regulations of marriage and sexuality. Marian's husband is much older than her, he becomes unable to fulfil her desires due to his physical and economic weakness. So, she enjoys with other males. Marian spends her time with a teenage boy Niel Herbert. She calls him many times in her house. When Niel comes in her house with wounded leg, she shouts, "Yes dear, I am afraid it's broken" (13). The relationship can be clearly understood by their conversation also:

"Perhaps I do seem old to you, Niel quite old enough for tea and a cap."

"You seem always the same to me, Mrs. Forrester."

"Yes? And how is that? "

"Lovely, Just lovely". (20)

Marian shows her love to Niel from beginning to the end. In the beginning she expresses her love by saying he is good boy, a studious boy. She helps him to recover wound. And at the end of the novel she remembers asking with Ed Elliot about him. Referring this thing the novelist writes," She asked about everybody and said if you ever meet Niel Herbert give him my love and tells him I often think of him. She said

again, Tell him thing have turned out well for me, Mr. Collins is kindly of husbands" (98). These lines show that even after living with Henry, Marian is haunted by Niel's love.

Marian Forrester has relation with Frank Ellinger, a forty years old bachelor. They go to bring Christmas tree and share their desires. Marian becomes emotional as the novelist says, "When he got in beside her she slipped her hand through his arm and settled softly against him, "Drive slowly" she murmured as if she were talking in her sleep. It does not matter if we are late for dinner nothing matter" (36).

These lines criticize the patriarchal society in which women are not supposed to spend night with other men. Marian is ready to spend night with Frank Ellinger. She is fearless and bold lady. Marian Forrester is a masculine character who has masculine characteristics. When Marian knows Franks got married with Constance Ogden, she scolds him in telephone though it is no matter for her. She is strong hearted and courageous. She expresses her outrage and scandalous feelings at him in such a way:

Is that you, Frank? This is Marian I won't keep you a moment. You were asleep so early? That's not like you. You've reformed already have not you? That's what marriage does, they say. No, I wasn't altogether surprised. You might have taken me into your confidence, though haven't I deserved it? (74)

Marian wants to say all things to Frank who is immoral. He changes women one after another like non-living thing. He has ruined the lives of many women. So, Marian makes conscious to him for the further activities.

Similarly Marian engages with Ivy Peters to alter the traditional rules and regulations. Ivy Peters is a lawyer who comes in Marian's house and enjoys whisky

with her. Their relation is clearly understood as the novelist remarks, "Mrs. Forrester's name is everywhere coupled with Ivy Peters" (96). Marian Forrester makes to Ivy Peters as her lawyer. When Niel tries to beware her telling people's comment about Ivy's being there in her life so much she does not care about these comments. She has no problem about their gossip and she responses:

But I can't bother about their talk. They have always talked about me, always will. Mr. Peters is my lawyer and my tenant; I have to see him and I'm certainly not going to his office. I can't sit in the house alone every evening and night. If you come to see me any oftener than you do that would make talk. You are still younger than Ivy and better looking! Did that never occur to you? (86)

Marian wants to change society and establish her free identity. So she does not care about comments of the people. After all Marian sells all her property and goes in California and chooses an English man as her husband. Marian does not follow the rules of marriage and sexuality rooted in the patriarchal society. Marian Forrester is a masculine female who shows the masculine characteristics such as brevity, activeness, protectiveness and decisiveness, boldness and determination. Marian proves the statement that the biological women can act as male. Her role in the text proves the rising feminine power. Connell in his work *Gender and Power* states that femininity and masculinity are not essence; they are ways of living certain relationships. It means since femininity and masculinity co-exist in same person, they should be seen not as a polar opposite but as a separate dimension. Here Marian Forrester has masculinity and femininity both. She takes care of her husband properly when he is sick. But she does not want to be in patriarchal boundary for her free identity.



Marian Forrester is a courageous lady who decides to climb up the mountain with her friend, Fred Harney. One should have courage to climb and it is Marian who climbs the mountain confidently. The act of mountain climbing symbolizes the climbing from the rules and regulations of the male dominated society. In the process of climbing mountain they fall down from the mountain and Fred dies immediately but Marian catches the pine tree that stops from falling. In the lines of novelist:

One afternoon she had persuaded young Fred Harney an intrepid mountain climber to take her down the face of Eagle Cliff. They were almost down and were creeping over a projecting ledge, when the rope broke, and they dropped to the bottom, Harney fell on the rocks and was killed instantly. The girl was caught in a pine tree, which arrested her fall. (93)

This extract clarifies that Marian chooses to climb mountain to show the courage of women who too can play such dangerous game. Harney can not catch anything and dies instantly after the fall. His masculinity does not work in the critical time whereas Marian shows her courage catching the pine tree for a long time and saves her life. It is also her masculine quality.

Marian Forrester is a determined lady. She does not lose her power after her husband's death. It is her determination to change the society's rules and regulations. She knows she has own life which can not be finished along with her husband. So after returning from the cemetery, Mrs. Forrester insists upon making tea for Judge Pommeroy and Niel as she insists, "I would like it myself and it is better to be doing something. Wait for me in the parlor. And, Niel move the things back as we always have them" (82).

These lines point out that Marian Forrester keeps her works as usual even after her husband's death. She believes doing something is better than staying idle. Marian shows the masculine qualities to change the life by living it autonomously.

Marian Forrester takes great decision to change her husband's private lawyer after his death. Judge Pommeroy was a lawyer who helped Forrester's family in all problems. But Marian decides to change thinking that he will not do any new work for the establishment of modern society. The novelist mentions, "Ivy Peters is my lawyer and my tenant; I have to see him, and I'm certainly not going to his office" (86).

After her husband's death, Marian Forrester can not spend her life alone. She changes her husband's lawyer, sells her all properties to Ivy Peters, goes to California and marries an English man called Henry Collins as the novelist cites, "Oh, yes she was married again to a rich, cranky old English man; Henry Collins was his name" (97). Marian does not lose her strength even when she is refused by all people of Sweet Water. She is unhappy with the corrupted society and people who are unchangeable for their traditional thinking. Marian marries in California to prove that every woman has a full right to live her life in a way males do after the death of their wives. She challenges the society by wedding with English man.

Marian Forrester dies in Collin's well care. Her death shocks Niel and his friends like Ed Elliot. The death of Marian is indicated in the text such as.

No, she died about three years ago. I know that for certain. After she left Sweet Water wherever she was, she always sent a cheque to the Grand Army post every year to have flowers put on Captain Forrester's grave for Decoration Day. Three years ago the Post got a letter from the old English man, with a draft for the future care of Captain

Forrester's grave: in memory of my late wife, Marian Forrester Collins.

(98)

In this way, Marian dies establishing identity which is the identity of woman who dares to alter the patriarchal rules and regulations. Marian is a woman who does something beyond the traditional norms and values of her society to show the rising feminine power. Though she suffers from many troubles and problems she succeeds in her life to live freely. She is the only one female character to prove the example of masculine females as Judith Halberstam in his essay "*An Introduction to Female Masculinity. Masculinity without Men*" claims that heroic masculinity has been produced by and across both male and female bodies. In this text, Marian Forrester proves herself as the heroic masculine female because she is strong, courageous, bold, determined, active and protective.

#### IV. Conclusion

The novel *A Lost Lady* by Willa Cather questions the traditional type of masculinity. Masculinity is changing because the characters can not affirm the traditional concept in proper way. There is the juxtaposition of decline of masculine and rise of feminine power. It means the male characters are not strong, courageous, bold, and active whereas the female character exposes those characteristics. Multi forms of masculinity are also the major issue in this novel. Different characters belong to the different type of masculinities such as female masculinity, hegemonic masculinity and working class masculinity.

Captain Daniel Forrester belongs to the hegemonic masculinity who wants to exercise patriarchy over Marian Forrester. But his masculinity is questioned due to his economic and physical weakness.

Niel Herbert, a teenage boy is emotionally victim and physically weak. He falls from a tree and breaks his arm. Niel loves Marian Forrester all in all but Marian is interested in others males. Niel is envy with the others' contact with Marian Forrester. He breaks the myth of the male that all males are not emotional. He also proves an example of failure male. Frank Ellinger, a forty year male is unsuccessful in love affair with Marian Forrester. He is an opportunist character who loves Nell Emerland, Marian Forrester and at last marries with Constance Ogden. His masculinity is hegemonic type of masculinity because he ruins the lives of many women but his masculinity is questioned due to his opportunist character. Similarly the masculinity of Black Tom and Judge Pommeroy is working class masculinity who work for others. Judge Pommeroy is a private lawyer and Tom is servant. He is given domestic role which itself brings the crisis in the traditional concept of masculinity. Ivy Peters is presented as an unsuccessful male lover with Marian Forrester.

On other hand, Marian Forrester is presented in masculine role. She has relations with many males. She does not fear with the society. Marian Forrester does not follow the traditional rules and regulations of marriage and sexuality. She represents the female masculinity. Marian exposes courage, boldness, activeness and determination. Her masculine role also questions the traditional concept of masculinity.

The most important thing explored in the current research is that the traditional male superiority is questioned in the novel through the weakness of the male characters. Conventionally the males were supposed to be superior, intellectual, rational, strong, and courageous but this novel questions this concept because the characters presented in the novel are weak, failure in their role. This makes it is clear that masculinity is not natural rather it is social, cultural construct. It can be changed along with the change in power and context. Masculinity is a discourse like femininity. Masculinity is not unitary concept rather it is plural. These plural masculinities also question the traditional concept as singular and fixed. In the present novel, the characters can not affirm their masculinity which deconstructs the traditional myth of masculinity as strong, brave and superior.

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