

Chapter I

Introduction

Willa Cather and her Fictional World

Willa Cather (1873-1947) was born near Winchester, Virginia. When she was ten, her family moved from the peace of Virginia to the wild prairies of Nebraska. She was graduated from the university of Nebraska at twenty-one, and did newspaper work as an editor of a magazine and teaching in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for the next few years. She published a book of verse in 1903 and over the years wrote twelve novels, four volumes of short stories, and two volumes of essays. She was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1923.

Cather turned towards the cult of feminist novelist as her family lineage. Her grandfather, William Cather had married with Caroline Smith. Her maternal family lineage is also equally important to identify Cather as a feminist novelist as she was born at her maternal house and affectionately cared by her maternal grandfather, Ruhama. He had dominated her grandmother. It developed feminist characteristics which proved to be fruitful for her future novels. Apart from this, Cather was also much impressed from her grandmother's viciousness and suppression. Such legacy of her feminist grandmother had direct impact on sensitive child. Cather's developing mind has been explored for her novels. Cather's novels are written in her different circumstances and different moods, but the main theme of the novels is to pour out her female experiences to portray the true picture of women's life. When viewed in her novels, we get Cather intending to curtail men's excessive power with a view to make women powerful and happy.

Willa Cather has raised voice against male supremacy and attempted to place women in the position of men. She has written many novels and stories not for pleasure. Her writings attempt to place women in independent and autonomous existence. Most of the novels written by her have women protagonists with autonomous power or with the struggle to keep

themselves alive in society. So, *My Antonia* (1918), *The Slave Girl* (1940), *O Pioneers!* (1913) etc. are written not only for entertainment but also with a holy aim to reform society. Her novels stand for the female heroes to attack society for not allowing males' autonomous roles in society. The true picture of female experiences and portrayal can be seen in her novel. She wants to improve the condition of women in society. So, she portrays true pictures of women characters as if they were real and lively. The veil of traditional norms is stripped off in her novels. Social realities are mirrored in her novel. To establish female selfhood in autonomy, her characters and their attitudes fight against patriarchal norms and values. Women characters are out of the temptation created by males. In short, her female characters reject the showy love and care of male for their freedom, selfhood, independent existence and identity. Her passion is for heroic individuals. She prefers the women characters to be hardworking, determining toward their autonomy. Thus, she puts them all as women heroes to emancipate women from the male dominated ideology and society.

Cather has written women centered novels with the internal known materials and familiar autonomous women protagonists defending against male suppression. Her writing career began when she was a university student. She began her career as a journal writer and also wrote reviews of some important plays and musical events when she became a dramatic critic for Nebraska. She also worked as the managing editor of "Hesperian", the university journal. After her graduation from the University of Nebraska, she wanted to be writer of her living. To solve her economic problem, she wanted a full time job, but she could not get it immediately. Then, she continuously wrote for the journals and worked for Sarah Harris's *Courier* (1895) and *Overland Monthly* (1895) in Lincoln. In 1896, she moved to Pittsburgh as an editor for "The Home Monthly" and became a very popular journalist. She worked as an editor for *The Sombrero* (1894), *The Cosmopolitan* (1896), *The Leader* (1897), *The Library* (1900) and *Saturday Evening Post* (1902).

Cather has written many novels on the theme of feminist concerns. In 1903, her first book *April Twilights* a collection of poems was published and two years later, *The Troll Gardner*, a collection of stories appeared in prints. The most fruitful event of Cather's journalistic life was her meeting to Sarah. Orne Jewett, a most popular storyteller, suggested her to leave out her journalism and write novels finding free time and quiet place to perfect her writings. Following Jewett's advice, she registered her career and extended her pen to write novels. After the publication of her novel, *Alexander's Bridge* in 1912, she devoted her full time to writing and over the years completed eleven more novels including *O Pioneers!* (1913), *Death Comes For The Archbishop* (1927), *A Lost Lady* (1923), *The Enchanted Bluff* (1996), *My Mortal Enemy* (1920), *Sapphire And The Slave Girl* (1940), *My Antonia* (1918), *The Song Of The Lark* (1915). Cather's other novels *A Lost Lady* (1923), *My Mortal Enemy* (1920) and *Sapphire And The Slave Girl* (1940) are remarkable for her feminist concerns.

Cather believes in the balance of power between men and women in her novels. She wishes that neither men nor women should be given extreme power to exercise. Her most popular novel, *O Pioneers!* is written with the new theme of the new frontier land and new life style of the new heroine, Alexander Bergson. The materials and characters of this novel are taken from the novelists' familiar frontier land and her familiar women of the Pioneer community. Alexander Bergson, the heroine of *O Pioneers!* is free from romance, comedic world and any kind of suppression. Her heroine struggles against male supremacy for her right to the land and social justice to the woman.

Her next novel, *My Antonia* which is also ranked as the finest novel, also deals with the symbol of pains and struggles carried by female protagonist. *Antonia*, the protagonist is the symbol of all miserable pioneer women of the frontier. Her life is full of hardships and struggles in Black Hawk. She faces her father's suicide, gets ill-treatment from her brother,

Ambrosche; and works as a hired girl for wolf-like landowners. She encounters with various wrong males who rob her virginity. Eventually, she succeeds to change her fortune.

Similarly, another novel, *A Lost Lady*, also deals with female issue. Marian Forrester, the protagonist is depicted bold and unyielding towards male supremacy. She disrupts all ideological constructions of the patriarchy. Another novel, *The Professor's House* (1925) is her another autobiographical novel to express her anti-materialistic feelings. Annoyed by the materialistic spirit of her contemporary age, she aspires for the idealism of the past. Another novel, *My Enemy* (1920) is written with the power seeking, amorous heroine, Myra Hewshawe. This novel is a short novel concerned with a selfish and strong willed woman who brings about her own downfall.

Willa Cather is an exceptional novelist who has witnessed her power to keep herself aloof from the influence of her contemporary male dominated society. She has clearly given her views on art, love, marriage, sex, culture and religion through her novels. She has acted as a forerunner of the modern day feminist by depicting the worldwide domination, corruption of males over women through her novels. In her actual life, she saw nothing except corruption, domination, exploitation of male over women. She found the wives suppressed by their husbands, hired girls dominated by their landlords and sisters exploited by their brothers in her community. Such conditions of society aroused her bitter feelings against such males and led her to write novels with the episodes of the oppressed women. Through her novels, she wants to bring forth and actual position of the male dominated women to her general readers and makes them aware of such villains.

Cather is the first writer who has understood the real feelings of society towards female and expressed her without any hesitation. About her feelings towards women and their hard life, Joan Acocella says: "There is a certain kind of women- powerful, self-involved,

convinced of her own rightness and determined that her own view should prevail who undermines my own sense of self more profoundly than the most patriarchal male” (59).

Cather has also included the hardship of life, domination, sufferings and difficulties of women which give impetus to arouse the consciousness of females. Some critics have explored her artistic aspects. They have viewed that she has made appropriate use of all literary tools, such as symbols, metaphors, similes, alliteration, allegory and the like very carefully to bring out the desired effects in her novels. Brown and Crone praise Cather’s writing style and say:

Willa Cather’s art . . . her style . . . intangible as style is. There is ample evidence that hers can be termed fine artistic, beautiful and even classical. It is economical, controlled and disciplined, refined and fastidious, clear and sharp . . . Her style is never an end in itself, but always a fitting implement. (152)

Her novel is primarily a matter of selection and simplification of the materials to bring out the desired effects in the realm of her characters and situation. To her aim, she is more aware of the characterization and action of the novel than its plot. As a matter of fact, she is an expert in managing the situation and presenting the characters of her novels. She has elaborated the point of view, techniques and the tales of the women’s life problems narrated by the narrators in some of her novels.

Nevertheless, some other critics have viewed that she has faced financial and social inconveniences and encountered several catastrophic events of her own life. However, it had no effects on bold Cather. Domma Pastourmatzi in her essay “Willa Cather And the Masculine Cult” writes about Cather’s compulsion to adopt Masculine Cult:

While Willa Cather exploits the cultural definition of manhood in order to delineate the identity of the lady-killer, she questions the viability of the

masculine paradigm by exposing the dangers of the traditional heterosexual love hunt. Cather may have not been a militant feminist but her imagination was undoubtedly gendered. (2)

Cather has presented revolutionary views. She always takes the favour of her helpers and treats tired girls very sympathetically. Fearlessness is one of the possession of the feminists women occupied by the novelists herself and her women characters. About the novelist's fearless nature, Edith Lewis says: "She was naturally a very fearless person, fearless in matters of thought, of social convention; people never intimidated her; and she was extremely self possessed in the presence of the physical danger". (XIV)

Cather is awarded as a feminist because of her treatment of female characters in her concerns. Her revolt against the Victorian men of their monopoly to the women's world, her endeavour to provide social dignity to the pioneer women of the firm and her sympathetic treatment of the female characters are the indications of her feminist concerns. She has fought for the miserable women in many ways. Her revolutionary ideas on 'Cross-culture', her socialistic approach to the under privileged women and her emphasis on women's independence and freedom resemble with the modern day feminists' outlook on women. What undoubtedly ranks Cather as the most sincere novelists of the women is her selection of the women protagonists from both of the worlds- the good women of the common birth and the women of lost characters from the upper class- for her novels. She has shown her strong support to the male dominated women of the pioneer communities.

Another critic Dorothy Van Ghent in her essay, "Willa Cather" has passed her fascinating criticism on the writer. She writes:

It is customary to speak of Willa Cather as an 'elegist' of the American Pioneer tradition. "Elegy" suggests celebration and lament for a lost and irrecoverable past; but the boldest and most beautiful of Willa Cather's fictions are

characterized by a sense of the past not as an irrecoverable quality of events, wasted in history, but as persistent human truth repossessed-salvaged, redeemed- by virtue of memory and art. (71)

Dorothy again writes about her artistic creativity and her primitive cult in the same essay. She says, “Her art is a singular one. The prose style is suave, candid, transparent, a style shaped and sophisticated in the great European tradition; her teachers were Homer and Virgil Tolstoy and Flaubert. But the creative vision that is peculiarly hers is deeply primitive, psychologically archaic in an exact sense”. (324)

A Lost Lady (1923), one of her novels, has the theme of female search for selfhood autonomy i.e. freedom to act and make decisions without being controlled by males. It deals with search for the female selfhood. Marian Forrester is the protagonist of this novel who always fights for freedom, female rights and her selfhood as a whole for female selfhood. She is the strong desired lady for sexual freedom, and is also younger than her husband is. Marian disobeys her husband even in her parlour when her younger lovers come and keep physical relationship. She never accepts male domination and rejects the patriarchal rules and regulations. Moreover, she crosses the boundaries of such norms which limit the women inside the kitchen.

Cather has attacked the male bias and displayed the urgency and excitement of a religious, social, economical and cultural freedom and equality. She has dismantled one after another stereotypes attached to feminist that subverted the gender roles. The female protagonist is bold and unyielding to the patriarchal norms and values. She has disobeyed the walls of marginality erected by males. She has proved that women can survive, control their destinies and live their freely.

The novel, *A Lost Lady* concerns with a lady of uncommon loveliness and graces who lends an aura of sophistication to a frontier and explores the hidden passions and desires.

Cather portrays the life of Marian Forrester as modern woman. Marian, the chief character of this novel thinks marriage and society as an obstacle for her freedom. So, she does not want to be controlled by males made rules. Cather illustrates this obstacle by a woodpecker. Here, woodpecker that is engaged, symbolizes Marian Forrester. She encounters when she attempts to escape from the trap. She dares to against the existing social norms and values and patriarchal system in American society. She struggles to penetrate the future, she comes to despise her home. Having no desire to be the true woman, she completely disregards her duties as wife and mother. She abhors the confinement of the house she has no place to flee other than to the Marsh because she does not have the economic resources to resume her previous life, with or without money, she finds it difficult to escape the from home, the cage for women in her life.

Cather has presented the contemporary male dominated society of Victorian period. She has clearly viewed on art, love marriage, sex, culture and religion. Furthermore, she has raised voice against male supremacy and endeavored to place women in the position of men of earlier twentieth century American society in Nebraska. She has brought domination, corruption and exploitation of the males over women through her novels. She has found in society the wives suppression by their husband, hired girls dominated by their landlords, and sisters exploited by their brothers in her community. Such conditions of her society aroused her bitter feelings against such males' activities and led her to write novels about the suppressed women.

Cather's writing is especially on the basis of gender discrimination, economic crisis, and traditional belief, social and cultural disorder in her feminists' concern. She has challenged male for their exploitation and domination over women and assaulted on orthodox patriarchs for focusing their politics of power to suppress women in society. The domination

of men over women and their discriminating attitudes to them stimulated her to protest against it through her writings.

Cather has brought the desired effects the realm of her characters and situation. She is more aware of the characterization and action of the novel than its plot. She has written her novels in different circumstances and different pictures of women's life. She has also included the hardships of life, struggle, domination, suppression and difficulties of women characters. She has advocated and written female-centered writing. She has taken most of female characters and revolted against the Victorian males for their monopoly in the women world. Her endeavor to provide social dignity to the pioneer women of the firm and her sympathetic treatment of the female characters are the indicators of her feminist's concern. Such circumstances, problems and atmosphere have made her feminist writer and influenced her to be a feminist.

Chapter II

Gender Role in Cather's Fiction

2.1 Gender: The Politics of discrimination

Gender issue and feminism are interrelated. Feminism cannot get its completeness apart from gender issue. Feminist critics hold gender as their primary matter for discussion. It is obvious that gender is primarily a social construct where certain roles are assigned to each gender. All feminist writers always try to oppose the cultural construction of gender and the role that culture offers a woman. 'Patriarchy' always exploits the woman on the basis of the gender role. Patriarchy is thus, by definition, sexist which promotes the belief that a woman is innately inferior to men. This belief is the inborn inferiority of woman called biological essentialism because it is based on biological differences between the sexes that are considered as a part of our essence of men and women. In fact, many feminists celebrate these differences but they do not agree that such differences of physical size, shape, and the body, chemistry make man naturally superior to woman for courageous or better leaders. Feminism, therefore, distinguishes between the word 'sex' which refers to our biological as female or male and the word 'gender' which refers to our cultural programming as feminine or masculine, which categories are created by society rather than by nature.

Talking about the traditional gender role that is imposed on woman, an American feminist critic, Lois Tyson says:

A woman who has internalized those norms and values of patriarchy, which can be defined in short, in any culture that privileges men by promoting traditional gender roles cast men as rational strong protective and decisive and cast woman as emotional, weak nurturing and submissive. These gender roles have been used very

successfully to justify such inequalities which still occur today as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision positions. (83-84)

Tyson clearly says that gender is the construction of the culture. It promotes men as strong, and woman as weak in every aspect of their lives.

Feminism is a necessary movement to divert the view of society which gives woman subordination position. Women from the beginning of human civilization are being treated with ambivalence and misogyny. Women have to live in the discriminatory male made culture on the basis of sex, race, age, class etc. Such culture is the main boundary of their experience. Jane Freedman says, “Distinction between the biological sex and social creation of the eternal feminine is a precursor between sex and gender that is common in much feminist theory” (14). The concept of patriarchy or sexism is the major ideological value which all feminists’ criticisms share as their motto. All feminists agree that the entire culture phenomena are dominated by a patriarchal value. Patriarchy plays a role not only in political system but also in literary and philosophical systems. There is a hierarchy made between male and female where male is the standard and female is subordinate. The woman is made to be subjugated by male. The males are centered and females are marginalized in patriarchal society.

Simone de Beauvoir in her famous work, *The Second Sex (1949)* says, “One is not born but rather becomes, a woman . . . it is civilization as whole that produces this creature . . . which is described as feminine” (89). Gender of course, does not have any relation with human anatomy but is completely a social construct. Therefore, all feminists are concerned with destroying the patriarchal ideology. In the literary text, women are always assigned secondary roles. They are ordinary, unimportant and marginal. Feminism criticizes the one-sided evaluation of the literature. Thus, the most feminist theorists agree in rejecting the view

that gendered traits are essential aspects of being a biological male or female and treat gender differences socially constructed mode of organizing society and culture. This generation according to the gender, cannot give women equality and dignity. It shares subjects and subject matters, methods of reasoning and epistemology that differ from those traditional ones. Traditional philosophies include in themselves in the masculinity idea of man as self or normative and woman as other or deviant feminist critics apply these ideas to the text to challenge the basic masculinity assumption behind them. In other words, they challenge the weight of western tradition. Mary Ellman's works *Thinking About Women* (1968) shows the presentation of women. Ellman protests the opponent of the 'Phallic criticism'. Maleness in literature is associated with rigid, closed definite style of male writing. She characterizes women's literary success as, "escape from the categories of womanhood" writers are taken as writers who lack manliness in art. Texts written by females are thought to be ended, passive and indefinite, Ellman thinks that all male writers neither write in males' war nor do all women writers in female style. Neither male writers nor female writers are strong enough or weak enough in writing style. So, all are equal in writing.

The gender theory is the most developed form of feminism, in the late 1980's and tries to study sexual difference and its impact upon men and women. To provide authority to women's writings, French feminists project writing of the body in the eighties. This gender theory is based on the genital and libidinal differences from men. Gender theory emphasizes that every writing either by women or men, could be gendered or widely believes that male also could be feminist writers. The gender theory opposes these feminists who believe that only women's writings can be feminists' writings. Feminist criticism, as an analyst of gender, opens the textual field in discourse. Gender theory, unlike traditional feminism brings men as theorists, critics and scholars into feminists' criticism from margin to the center into literary analysis. Cora Kaplan has given emphasis on Phallus and explained: "The phallus as a

signifier has a central, crucial position in language for if language embodies the patriarchal law of the culture; its basic meanings refer to the recurring process by which sexual difference and subjectivity are required” (256).

The main focus of French feminist is to show that women are self sufficient in themselves. Their effort is to help the women to be free from the patriarchal boundary. Feminists write for freedom, autonomy and selfhood of the women. Women must be regarded as important human beings. Accepting such realities, some male writers began to write giving the autonomous power to women characters in their literary writing. Women protagonists have individuality in their text. Consciousness and awareness that make female as equal human being is somehow the contribution of feminist movements. Feminists view that only a feminist struggle will particularly change the relation between man and woman that concerns issues such as sexuality, violence, gender discrimination, emancipation and equality for women.

2.2. The Discourse of feminism

The word ‘feminism’ has political level’s indicating support for the aims of the women’s movement emerged in the late 1960s. It’s a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism. Feminism is a belief in the principal that women should have the same rights and opportunities (legal, political, social, economic and religious etc.) as man. “Feminist literary criticism continues in our time to be closely interrelated with the moment by political feminist for legal freedom and equality” (M. H. Abrahams 334).

Feminism indicates the feminist social movement which tries to find equal rights, status and power for women. It is also based on the belief to provide the equal economic, political and social freedom as men. This movement is sometimes called the women’s

liberation or women's right movement. In other words, feminism is the movement for recognition of the claims of women for rights and equality possessed by men. In terms of education, culture, religion body and society, women are to be weakened. On the contrary, males are considered to be strong in every aspect of human life. On the basis of the deeply rooted gender conception, men dominated women and women are taken to be inferior to men. Thus, the main mission of the feminist has become to change or revolt against such misconception and the gender construction. The female writers have written for the liberation of the females from the domination of patriarchy as well as to establish women's position in society.

Feminism is the search for the female anatomy which seeks to achieve to greater freedom for women to work and remain economically and psychologically independent of men. Feminists go against prevailing norms of society which try to treat women as an object of sexual desire and seeks to broaden both women's self-awareness and their opportunities to the point of equality with men. Even though it is difficult to define feminist theory, it was thought that feminism could be divided into liberal, radical and revolutionary phases in the early feminist theorizing i.e. into those who argued for equality as men, those who celebrated women supposed difference from men and those who wished to deconstruct the system of gender difference. However feminist criticism is not a unified subject. It covers media, literature and civilization as well. Mark Hawkins views feminism as multidisciplinary field of knowledge and says:

Feminist critical theory has always been an interdisciplinary subject; for those who are primarily engaged in literary criticism, it has always been necessary to look beyond the boundaries of purely textual analysis in order to explore both the factors that contribute to the discriminatory treatment of women and those factors that enable women to resist and counter domination. (264)

There does not seem to be harmonious relation between men and women. Women are dominated by patriarchal ideology. They become silent because of this ideology. Thus, feminists try to break the silence of women. Maria Mies says, “Feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal man-woman relationship and who want to change it” (6). Mies talks in favour of women autonomy, her autonomy is the feminist effort to maintain and recreate the innermost subjective human essence in women. The feminists claim to ‘autonomy’ means a rejection of all tendencies which underestimate the women’s question and the women’s movement. So, now feminists are in search of a situation where there is no center, no hierarchy, no official and unified ideology and no formal leadership. As they say, there should be dynamism, diversity, as well as the truly humanistic environment.

In an intellectual approach feminism seeks to understand how current relations between women and men are constructed. This project involves several interrelated activities. It should be described as the condition of women’s lives, now and in the past women’s lives and achievement need to be put in the picture. Feminists have paid attention to the difference between women and men. The sense of difference has been felt by the female because of increasing self-awareness among women, changes in their relations with men, and desires to extend their social roles. Thus, the changes in consciousness led them to search their selfhood and identity. Toril Moi defines feminists as, “The word feminist or feminism are political levels indicating support for the aims of the new women’s movement” (135). Moi thinks feminist focus as a political movement trying to break the patriarchal boundary and hierarchy between men and women. Likewise, defining about feminism Philip Goetz’s *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* views this movement as a movement of social, economic, and political equality, Britannica says, “The belief, largely originating in the west, in the social, economic and political equality of the sexes, represented worldwide by various

institutions committed to activity on behalf of women's rights and interest"(1768). Another critic, Chernow Barbara's *The Columbia Encyclopedia* views the feminism in similar way as a political movement for equality of women with men. About the movement it says:

Movement for the political, social, and educational equality of women with men: the movement has occurred mainly in Great Britain, and the United States. It had its roots in the humanism of the 18th century and in the industrial revolution. Women had been regarded as inferior to men physically and intellectually. Both law and theology had ordered their subjection. Women could not possess property in their own names, engage in business or control the disposal of their children or even of their own persons. (934)

Chernow Barbara suggests that this movement is the consequence of women in the every aspect of their lives. Barbara talks of women inferiority and their sufferings in the 18th century and in the industrial revolution. M. H. Abrams, a prominent critic, in the same way, has given his view. He says, "Feminist literary criticism continues in our time to be closely inter-related with the movement by political feminists for social, economic and cultural freedom and equality" (234). Abram views feminism as women's fight for freedom and equality. It is the search for equality in social, political, cultural and educational aspects. In short, feminism is the search for autonomous existence of women. Feminist criticism has tried not only the recognition of women's writing but also a radical rethinking of the concept of literary writing. Domination, suppression and inequality in every field for women cannot be continued for long as the conscious feminist criticism continuously goes on. Since, feminist criticism is international in its resources, feminist critics cross the national boundaries. They collectively demand to change the attitude of looking at women as inferior people and request to rethink the concept of literary studies.

Even though, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* published in England in 1792, has been called the manifesto of modern feminism. Feminist critical theory can be said to begin in the 1960s and 1970s with the works that questioned the representation of female characters on the male-authored texts and also questioned the exclusion of the women writers from the canvass. Kate Millet sees power as an inevitable matter to change society. In Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* (1969), she was expressed the fact that power is exercised in society by subjugating women. She is the opinion that women should be granted power to develop their status and career. Millet says, "Patriarchy dominates and treats the female as an inferior male. Power is exercised directly or indirectly in the evil and domestic life, to constrain women"(137). In the large canvas of literary works, women are merely presented as sexual objects. Their role is to please the males and they are also subservient to those of the central male protagonists. Power relation seems to have been maintained through violence and domination. Women began to understand the tendency of patriarchy that had its origin not in the real of public politics but only in males control over the female bodies, their sexuality and their generative capacities.

Elaine Showalter, an American feminist published an influential work of feminist criticism, towards the feminist politics. Showalter surveys the literature written by the famous female writers of the 18th and 19th century. She argues for the separate canon building of the females' literary texts. She classifies those women writers differently because of their different social experiences from men. Women are also different in term of nature, race and nation.

After the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, there appeared Virginia Woolf as one of the major feminist writers of the 20th century. Woolf, in her *A Room of One's Own* (1929) focuses the fact that a woman must have money and a room to realize her creativity. She directly opposes the patriarchal society that has

hindered or prevented women from realizing their creative possibilities. Woolf's remark is taken as the first blow on patriarchal structure. She thinks about the plight of women writers. She imagines a society where men and women could enjoy their freedom equally. She is the first critic to include the socio economic dimensions as an inevitable part of female writing. She says, "She must have shut herself up in room in the country to write and been torn a sunder by bitterness and scruples perhaps, though her husband was of the kindest and their married life perfection" (119).

The Second Sex (1949) reveals the pathetic conditions of women's history for the first time and gives human society new revolutionary directions to think about women and society. When the book was written after for many years Beauvior believed the transformation of society to be the most target project on the ground that it would bring women's full emancipation. She further says that women are not born but made. She illustrates that women are not weak in any aspect and are not inferior to men, either. But male dominant society hinders their capacities and freedom. The human culture has given supremacy that hunts and kills and not to the one that gives birth to master of nature and not to the natural functions. The essay *The Second Sex* is an overall account of women and tax given to women. M.H. Abrahams notes: "A wide ranging critic of the cultural identification of women of as merely the negative object or 'other' to man as the defining and dominating 'subject' who is assumed to represent humanity in general; the book dealt also with 'The Great Collective Myths' of women in the works of many males writers" (234).

Females are supposed to be mysterious being and there are so many things which cannot be understood about the females. Males never understand those mysterious but Beauvior condemns their myths saying that menstruation, childbirth and so forth are natural process and male made myths are faults. Beauvior says that males also have their naturalness which are never understood by females such as males' sexual desire. She claims:

The myth of the woman is a luxury which can appear only if man escapes from urgent demands of his needs. The more relationships are concretely lived, the less they are idealized . . . but along with luxury there is utility; their dreams were resistibly guided by interest. Surely, most the myths had roots in the spontaneous attitudes of man towards his own existence and towards 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 law and customs upon individual in a picturesque, effective manner, it's under mythical form that group imperative is indoctrinated into each conscience. (999)

Beauvoir condemns the male-made myths about women and says that this myth is just a mirage which is not related with reality. If one looks at them closely, they disappear from the existence. Beauvoir also criticizes the cultural identification of women as merely negative object or 'Other' to man. The notion of otherness of 'she' affects the social ideology. Thus, Beauvoir requests the feminists to break the patriarchal norms and values and establish females' distinct ideology which is necessary for women's selfhood and autonomy.

The feminist ambition to maintain and create this innermost subjective human essence in women are expressed and preserved in the concept of autonomy. Everyone is free to fulfill her or his desires and needs that individual freedom is identifiable with the choice of self-activity and subjectivity of the person. Maria Mies focuses her views on autonomy and says:

Autonomy means the preservation of human essence in women . . . it is also a concept of struggle which was developed to demonstrate that the women wanted to separate from mixed male dominated organizations and from their autonomous organizations, with their own analysis, programs and methods. (40-41)

Writing for self is for visual portrait and signification. All the makers of possession and the appropriation of the written object emerge from the tension inscribed with the 'I' self is the representative of 'I'. Women are in search of 'I' or subjectivity. Simone de Beauvoir says, "In sexuality and maternity woman as subject can claim autonomy, but to be a 'true woman' she must accept herself as the other" (1000).

There seems to be many concepts about selfhood and autonomy in the feminist movements. Nevertheless, the most common concept among feminists is 'individual woman', or 'the right to individual choice'. Women in the patriarchy fought for their individuality. Women have united for their selfhood which was taken as the essential things for women's development. If the person is independent, he can live well. Feminists think that woman is a biological person or subject. This is the main feature of women which characterizes the feminist writing in Louis Marin's view, "Writing of the self gives rise to a theoretical and methodological occasion allowing us to grasp with greater rigor and procession the manner in which these two sets of signifier function" (199).

The individualistic sense of uniqueness and self-consciousness, which people do not share to some extent, is widespread. Self is inseparable from the network of kinship relation and social boundaries. The people from every culture and nation use the pronoun 'I'. Every person has feelings of selfhood and need their own identity and autonomy. Selfhood is an essence which can be signified through signs of beliefs, attitudes and lifestyles. Selfhood is deemed to be both personal and social. It is concerned with the sameness and difference with personal and the social forms of representation. We take selfhood to be expressed through forms of representation which are recognized by ourselves and by others. It is not a collection of characteristics that we belong to: it is something which is abstract: just we can feel. Selfhood is a struggle to preserve and continue the possession and autonomy.

The abovementioned feminist approaches are useful for us to find out the main causes of how the protagonist of Willa Cather's novel *A Lost Lady* depicts the boldness and unyielding attitudes. The protagonist in this novel is in search for selfhood and autonomy by challenging the deeply rooted patriarchal norms and values, social disorders and gender discriminations. The feminist discourse has provided chances to understand the text. Many critics have analyzed the novel as one of the best pieces of literature on the feminist's issues. It has depicted the females' problems, their search for their identity, their fight for their existence, and their struggle for their freedom, selfhood and independence. Marian, the protagonist, tries to escape from the male-made limitations. Marian feels as if she were trapped in the cage as a parrot whose wings have been brutally trimmed and who loses its freedom. Her marriage and kitchen are like the cage which here stands for her setbacks for exercising her rights. She faces economic crisis, social disorders, family problems and gets mentally and physically victimized. She makes several attempts to desert her home and husband forever for her freedom. However, her attempts to leave her family go in vain due to her severe poverty and her husband's limitations. Finally, after the death of her husband, Marian gets remarried with a rich man. She fulfills her sexual desires and lives a modern life. Here, Cather tries to show that women can survive, reach their destiny. Therefore, her female protagonist dares to disrupt the social norms and values of the patriarchal system of American society. She struggles to establish her rights and freedom in her society and also explore the hidden passions and desires.

Chapter III

3.1. Subversion of Gender Role in *A Lost Lady*

Subversion of Gender role can be defined as it is the way of changing the beliefs and attitudes of a political, religious, social, economic, etc. system. It indirectly tries to destroy the authority of political, religious, economical and social norms and values. Cather has also tried to destroy the patriarchal system and establish the females' rights, freedom and the position as males. Men dominated and exploited women in the Victorian period. Women were not only marginalized but they were also suppressed and culturally in that era. It was inevitable to break such system and ideology to emancipate women from corrupted society. They were deprived from equal rights and freedom in male made society in that time. They were kept inside the kitchen. Men were self-centered and powerful so women could not go against men.

After long time, women have practiced to go against the patriarchal system but only few women could succeed to rid of male-made rules of such society. Willa Cather was such a strong feminist writer who has broken the chains of male-made rules in her novel *A Lost Lady*. She has presented a female protagonist, who is in the quest of freedom, equal rights from her husband and society. She has also brought the chart of characters and their role models and their reaction differently against the men; she has shown how the females are also able to do what males can do. She has talked about the depravity of opportunities, social, political, religious, economical freedom and equal rights in society. Marian, the protagonist of the novel *A Lost Lady* struggles for her identity, peace, prosperity, freedom and emancipation. In this novel, Marian does not agree with the patriarchal system which is the main obstacle for autonomous selfhood women. She audaciously faces different problems such as racial, social, religious, economical and political problems. She readies herself to

work under any restrictions and circumstances. She disobeys her husband and the rules and regulations of society. She never tries to accept all the male-made rules and regulations. She mainly aims to establish women's selfhood and autonomy as men have. The discrimination between men and women makes her go against. She thinks of equality to respect and enjoy the human rights.

Cather has brought many modes and issues: political, religious, social, economical, cultural norms and values. She has also presented the desires, freedom, rights and behaviours through her characters. Most of the characters generally show female centered attitudes. Among them Marian, the protagonist, shows female centered attitudes. She goes against the so-called men society to fulfill her sexual desire and other basic needs. Even though she has her husband, she keeps changing her lovers and having sexual relationships with them. She also succeeds in fulfilling her all desires from her parlour. She proves her selfhood, freedom and autonomy by running such a parlour in society. Cather presents the protagonist who disrupts the male-made rules and regulations of society. She deconstructs the role model of female as male and establishes her rights and freedom by crossing the boundaries so that males get shocked to get such a bold and unyielding woman. Likewise, she has changed the way of traditional beliefs and rules of males.

3.2. Subversion of Sublimity and Vulnerability

Cather presents the main issues and modes: male domination, exploitation, social disorder, cultural and sex discrimination in her concern. Her characterizations and settings make clear how the protagonist makes a distinction from the other female characters and establishes women selfhood and autonomy in the patriarchal society. Marian, the protagonist, struggles for love, marriage, sex and culture to be a frontier woman. She does not care social norms and values. She starts to change the system from her husband and home and later from

society. In the Victorian period, men dominated women and kept them in the kitchen as house servants. So, it was inevitable to break such system and ideology to emancipate women from the corrupted society. Women were powerless and dominated culturally and economically. Women were exploited mentally and physically too. In this novel, when the captain goes to Kansas City for his business purpose, Neil, another lover comes through the window and Mary looks him coming in her parlour. Marian takes him in her parlour and says, “Mary, will you bring the brandy from the sideboard? George telephones Dr. Dennison to come over at once. Now you other boys run out on the front porch and wait quietly. There are too many of you in here“(13).

In the absence of her husband, she gets a chance to talk and enjoy with young other lovers Ivy, Neil. She takes her lover, Neil and goes through the dining room, the back parlour, to her own bedroom. She disobeys the rules of marriage and social and cultural norms and values. Even though, she knows that social restriction but she dares to do so. She asks her cook, Mary to bring some alcohol, brandy from the sideboard because she plans to enjoy with her lover. She shows the cause of the telephone call from George and Dr. Dennison again comes at her parlour. She goes in her bedroom and kneels down in front of Neil. Putting brandy between his white lips with a teaspoon Neil opens his eyes and sees, “Big half darkened room, full of heavy, old fashioned walnut furniture. He was lying on a white bed with ruffled pillow shams and Mrs. Forrester was kneeling besides bathing his forehead with cologne. Bohemian Mary stood behind her, with a basin of water”(13).

Marina helps him to set his arm; it is broken before he comes in her house. Neil finds himself in the darkened room and he feels easy and calm because she helps him before doctor comes. Mary also stands their backside with a basin of water. Marian kneels down and serves good service, bathing his forehead with light perfume.

When Dr. Dennison comes in her house, Neil is also sitting with them. Doctor asks about her, Mary and Neil says in a dominating way, “A poor relation, a spinster from Kentucky, kept house for them, and Neil thought she was probably the worst housekeeper in the world”(14). Mary is an unmarried woman who comes from Kentucky as a cook in Marian’s home. She faces much rude and immoral behaviours from males and their society. Her identity is like a slave even she is kept there as a bad housekeeper only therefore males attitudes and behaviour are completely different.

Cather brings social disorder, women suppression physically and mentally. She advocates female role in society and bad attitudes and behaviour of males, how females were exploited culturally, socially and politically in the patriarchal society in Victorian period but it is changed, women can do as men and she changes the traditional rules and regulations through her novel. She characterizes the females’ characters that are vulnerable and weak role in the male made society. The positions and power are marginalized. Marian, the protagonist who represents the frontier woman but her profession, prostitution is bad impact in her society. Though she is exploited in the patriarchal society, she has led the females’ freedom and rights even she is in low class position like a blinded wood peck bird. Ivy Peters is another lover of Marian who is strong immoral in society. He presents his power in front of his friend and Marian (them). He says carelessly.

All right, Miss Female, intending upon a project of his won. He took from his pocket a little red leather box, and when he opened it the boys saw that it contained curious little instruments; tiny sharp knife blades, hooks, curved needles, a saw, a blow-pipe and scissors. Some of these, I got with taxidermy outfit from the youth’s companion and some I made myself. (11)

Ivy Peter's attitude toward Marian is bad and he always shows his power and presents his behaviour rough and strong. He behaves with Marian as lively as a cricket. It allegorizes a cricket ball, how much they want to play with it, they can play. His getup and habit are very strange and terrible. He addresses dominating way Miss female and opens his leather box which always carries with him. He has a lot of instruments like tiny sharp knife blades, hooks, curved needle, a saw, a blowpipe and scissors. These are for hunting and killing birds. However, Marian is as a blinded woodpecker. Ivy announces, "She's as lively as cricket" (11). He behaves with Marian unbelievable behaviour. She is as a lively cricket. He dominates her and tries to kill and hurt her badly. He wants to show, "He held the woodpecker's head in a vice made of his thumb and forefinger, enclosing its panting body with his palm. Quick as a flash, as if it were practiced trick, with one of those tiny blades he slit both eyes that glared in the bird's stupid little head, and instantly released it" (14).

He shows his activities by doing practice. It is as a practice to do so. When he cuts the eyes then the woodpecker will be blind and it cannot escape from his enclosing palm because the woodpecker is weak. After slitting its eyes, the woodpecker helplessly rises in the air and strikes a darted tree trunk from the right to left. It flies blindly up and down, backward and forward among the tangle of branches. It flies only with making its feathers, falling and recovering itself. Here, the woodpecker symbolizes as a helpless and a blinded lady, Marian who gets victim among the boys who are very moral less and cruel. There is no mercy for them. The woodpecker is weak and powerless and it is only a bird, it cannot get out from their trap or his hand because his strong and they have a big mass of young boys who hunt the birds and enjoy doing such works.

After few years, the captain and Marian go for a winter holiday. By chance, Neil also meets them in Judge Pommeroy's house. Pommeroy is the lawyer of them. One winter afternoon, he invites them for dinner in Christmas. Everybody enjoys there and celebrates it

greatly. Neil gets chance to meet with Marian. She is strange at all, as woman like her among common people. She is not even Denver, but also she is so elegant woman everywhere. Neil sits and watches them as they come down to dinner, with fashionable women from the East on their way to Californian. Neil sits in Brown Palace Hotel and watches:

How strange that she should be here at all, a woman like her among people!
Not even in Denver had he ever seen another woman so elegant. He had sat in the dining room of the Brown Palace Hotel and watched them as they came down to dinner, -fashionable women from the East on their way to California. But he had never found on so attractive and distinguished as Marian Forrester. Compare with her, other women were heavy and dull; even the pretty ones seemed lifeless, they had not that something in their glance that made one's blood tingle. And never elsewhere had he heard anything like her inviting, musical laugh that was like the distant measures of dance music, heard through opening and shutting doors (22).

Neil watches them and compares with Marian. He finds her good and simple but other women are ugly and dull everything is beautiful but they seem lifeless. He observes that women's behaviour is musical laugh, dance. He thinks that women are from the East in her party. He finds that women are not serious and they are busy only in the party. The party is good, all people enjoy. Celebrating this party, the captain asks, "Mrs. Forrester, what part of the turkey shall I give you this evening?" (26). He does not want his formulae or his manners. Immediately Neil and Judge Pommeroy remark, "His repose was like that a mountain. When he laid his fleshy, thick fingered hand upon a frantic horse, a hysterical woman, an Irish workman out for blood, he brought them peace; something they could not resist" (26). They talk about women and their behaviours. They say that women are not courageous even in drinking wine as men. They cannot also control their emotions like a frantic horse. They are

just as an Irish workman. They say that women are only hysterical women and they could not prove the calm and peace. Neil remarks that they are wild bloodthirsty workers. He observes and describes those managerial skills in terms of the captain devotion of the workers. It is his secret management. Males are strong and they touch the women with fleshy, thick-fingered hand upon a frantic horse, a hysterical woman. It interprets rudely the females' desires and passions. Women cannot keep peace us. Without our help, they cannot fulfill their sexual desires so he manages as distracted creatures and a worker.

In this way, Marian faces indefinite problems in her home and community. She has to survive in any cost but she does not have other economic source so she selects to run hotel or parlour but society is against her profession. She gets the trap from her profession due to lack of economic sources. She does not care her community and social norms and values as well as patriarchal restriction. Gentlemen associate and take entertainment with her feelings. She is exploited emotionally and physically because of her poverty. She wants to escape from such economic problem and she searches to fulfill her sexual satisfaction and passion by changing lovers. Neil likes her and she also loves him but in the course of time, she changes her new lover Frank Ellinger. She disobeys her husband and old lovers.

One day; Neil goes to meet her in her house through the dining room. As he bends to place and hears sound of talking "A woman's soft laughter, impatient, indulgent teasing eager, then another laugh, very different, a man's. And it was fat and lazy, ended in something like a yawn" (47). He believes that she deceives him. From that day, he looks upon female character is as "Lilies that fester smell for worse than weeds" (47). He feels very bad however he thinks about her and he finds that the beautiful flowers, lilies are turned and inside her character is bad. It symbolizes her profession and love. He feels that the lilies turn into weeds and its smell is as fester. It is metaphorically finished in his relation. The beautiful flowers, lilies and her love and freshness have finished and it is as bad smelling weed not

beautiful flower. Whatever he thinks and expects from her love, he does not get true love. Therefore, he loses his trust by this scene and says: “Grace, variety, the lovely voice, the sparkle of fun and fancy in those dark eyes; all this was nothing. It was not a moral scruple she had outraged, but an aesthetic ideal. Beautiful women, whose beauty meant more than it said . . . was their brilliancy always fed by something coarse and concealed? Was that their secret?” (48)

Neil, her old lover and well wisher is doubtful and feels uneasy because he has long relationship with her but she deceives him. In short time, he suspects her manner and behaviours whatever, he thinks about her and her beauty but he knows that women are beautiful outwardly and they have an aesthetical ideal and such deceiving beauty is not forever. He is shocked by her behaviour; it is the event that makes him angry which she has done that is immoral and wrong. Her brilliancy of hiding such activities from her husband, the something coarse and concealed that Neil locates within Marian’s desires represents the essential corruption of Ivy’s generation, just as her sexuality betrays the aesthetic ideal that legitimizes class distinctions. It means that it is wrong or unfair because she is married but she dares to do the profession.

Cather produces her heroine, Marian’s abnormality by persistently linking her with the figure of the prostitute. The image of prostitution somehow, it is good for economic development of her life but prostitution is rhetorically and symbolically linked to Marian. Cather also brings another female character, Nell Emerald, a handsome and unusual woman who also conducts a house properly licensed by the Denver police. Fran Ellinger is new one lover of Marian who associates with Nell. References to prostitution includes; “Frank Ellinger’s notorious association with Nell Emerald, a handsome and rather unusual woman who conducted a house properly licensed by the Denver police” (40). The Forrester’s maid, Bohemian Mary, who, according to Marian, makes it worthwhile to pay her a visit” (63). And

finally, Marian advises Neil to take a chorus girl out to supper. This profession is only for the development of their individual project or business but another side; it is improper and unacceptable in society. Marian clearly draws upon, “When she offers Neil financial support to help his love life” (10).

Marian gets chance to make her relation with Neil because she always wants to be rich and financial support from him. She makes good relation with him, “It was as captain Forrester’s wife that she most interested Neil, and it was in her relation to he husband that her comprehension of a man like the rail road builder, her loyalty to him, stamped her more than anything else” (43). She is married and her husband is also with her even though she disobeys and keeps relation with Neil as her husband for some financial support. She breaks the couple relation and his role for her life. She enjoys with him, she sighs and takes his arm, “My dear boy, your shoulders are not broad enough” (43). She makes strong and good relationship with Neil and she deceives her husband. She is not satisfied sexually and economically from the captain’s property.

Cather defines her heroine, Marian’s sexuality, is the main cause for the prostitution which carries many cultural, social, economic and class position problems that is an implicit articulation of class position, she characterizes of prostitutes as lower class, a point of common knowledge, widely accepted in early twentieth Century America. Some sexologists view “Who assign prostitutes the status of abnormal or unhealthy class difference becomes a function of psychological adjustment, since now lower class women practice prostitution may be categorized as mentally unbalanced” (12). A maid, a madam, an Arab or Egyptian slave girls, and a chorus girl: all of these women violate the prescriptions against extra marital sexuality; all are typically assumed to be lower class. Here, Cather views that sexuality are mutually constituted categories so that class position informs sexuality just as sexuality plays

a role in determining class position, then the novel's persistent linkage of the two must surely pull Marian into its web of associations.

Marian suffers badly from economic problem. She is a pioneer woman and represents the females' rights and autonomous. She has many boy friends as well as the captain also has old friends but they face economic problems and social reactions, are bad after the captain's another stroke, a sudden serious illness. She feels helpless. Townspeople Mrs. Beasley and Molly Tucker come at her home and go in the house like ants. They find, "The kitchen was inconvenient, the sink was smelly. The carpets were worn, the curtains faded, the clumsy, old fashioned furniture they would not have had for a gift and the upstairs bed rooms were full of dust and cobwebs"(77). Marian is helpless and her condition is bad. Her economic condition is very bad so her kitchen and bedroom are also dull and old-fashioned furniture.

Marian desires to escape from her home, she lives at the Forrester's summerhouse and it turns year round residence after the financial crisis. When Neil makes his way to the house after a blizzard, Marian confides in him, "I can't stand this house a moment longer" (63). While she abhors the confinement of the house, she has no money and place to flee other than to the marsh because she does not have the economic resources to resume her previous life. But Marian wears expensive jewels. The captain looks down the table between the candles at Marian in the party:

She smiled and nodded, and her beautiful earrings swung beside her pale cheeks. She was wearing her diamonds tonight, and a black velvet gown. Her husband had archaic ideas about jewels; a man bought them for his wife in acknowledgement of things he could not gracefully utter. They must be costly; they must show that he was able to buy them, and that she was worthy to wear them (27).

After the captain's death, the previous life of Marian has changed. Neil observes that all those years, he thinks, it is Marian's who makes the house so different from other. But since the captain's death, her old friends betray her. Nobody helps her because they behave with her as common woman. She faces domination of society as widowhood. Her transformation from lady to common woman is precipitated by her widowhood, almost as if her husband's presence guaranteed her respectability by keeping her desires safely in check. The captain's death and Marian's subsequent promiscuity prove that it is the captain all along who knows how to keep people in their place, insisting that his wife wear costly jewels to demonstrate that he is able to buy them and she is worthy to wear them and drinking whiskey and gin. She suffers different problems after her husband's death. She expects help and guidance from boy friends. She asks some advice to her boy friend, Ivy. When she goes to ask about Sweet Water land, then Neil stares and misguides her. She ought to have advice from Daniel's friends. Marian needs their suggestion to survive and protect but Ivy has taken benefit from her physical and emotional. Not only from her poverty but also he makes a plan to take her Sweet Water land. On the one side, he is a tenant in her house before her husband's death. People and lovers have deceived her. She thinks to change herself into a new lady. She has changed when Neil has realized that:

It was Mrs. Forrester herself who had changed. Since her husband's death she seemed to have become another woman. For years Neil and his uncle, the Dalzell's and all her friends, had thought of the captain as a drag upon his wife; a care that drained her and dimmed her and kept her from being all that she might be. But without him, she was like a ship without ballast, driven hither and thither by every wind. She was flightily and per verse. She seemed to have lost her faculty of discrimination; her power of easily and graciously keeping everyone in his proper place (86).

Marian encounters the social norms and values and gets different experiences. She realizes that her own friends are not good in her circumstances. Whatever her lovers think, she changes herself as bold and courageous lady who dares to fight for her rights. She says that she hates them growing up like savages, when all they need her, is a civilized house to come and give some hints to them. She also tolerates their behaviour even some town people see her negatively, as prostitutes. She realizes, "I know, she tossed her head. Her eyes glittered, but there was no mirth in them. It was more like hysterical defiance. I know; they call me the Merry Widow I rather like it" (88). She keeps her head up in front of them who are addressed her or ill-treated. She has lost her happiness. In her life, she feels uneasy and serious at all. She refuses what people think her as a weak and helpless woman but she does not care their reaction in her life.

After the death of the captain, Denver bank visits her home and claims the money entrusted to him before his death. They come without information. She is bold and behaves badly:

Mrs. Forrester had treated him very badly; she had given him no warning. One day Ivy Peters had come into the office with written order from her, requesting that accounting, and all funds and securities, be turned over to him. Since then she had never spoken of the matter to the judge or to Neil, save in that conversation about the sale of the property. (88)

Due to her financial problem, she wants to sell her property. After long struggle in her life, she comes to culminate and decides to paint her house to get good price for sale. She asks Neil and requests him for dealing and she talks:

I mean to, just as soon as I can sell this place. It is all I have, and if I leave it to tenants it will run down, and I cannot sell it to advantage. That is why Ivy is

here so much, he is trying to make the place presentable; pulling down the old barn that had come an eyesore, putting new boards in the porch floor where the old ones had rotted. Next summer, I am going to paint the house. Unless I keep the place up, I can never get my price for it. (87)

Marian decides and changes herself in the male made rules. She can control and can do any works as men so she wants to be free from the social and cultural norms and values. For her better and bright future, she has to do and disrupts the images of the feminism. In terms of changeability, she wants to change her home which others have not made as her house. She brings a plan to colour her home for good and attractive price and she has to sell for her survival not for advantage. Ivy is a tenant who has been living there after the death her husband and growing good crops from her land. She talks with Neil for dealing of the land, “What are you asking for it now, Marian?” She asks, “Twenty thousand dollars” (87). She is ready to sell her property to solve her economic problem so she wants to take help with Neil for dealing of her house she makes new and bright by painting in next summer. She struggles continuously from different ways. She has to solve and show to society, how brave and run her life better than previous life. Finally, she decides herself to change as a submissive woman. She dreams a lot and takes more time to be sure and real dream. Now, she is free from her trap. She can determine herself however she wants to do. She can do and decide and live as men. She thinks that it is changed everything:

It was what he most held against Marian that she was not willing to immolate herself, like the widow of all these great men, and die with pioneer period, to which she belonged; that she preferred life on any terms. In the end, Neil went away without bidding her good-bye. He went away with weary contempt for her in his heart. (95)

Marian has got experiences and attitudes towards the widow. She bears some mental torture from different people who are savage. She reacts with them as uncommon woman who is ready to response her duty and protects herself. She challenges that she wants to be like widow and her widowhood is good life because she is free and thinks and she has got her destiny. For what she has been struggling for long time even she has passed her younger life in shortage of money which compels her to be a famous prostitute in the Denver place. She trusts Neil and keeps relation as her husband but he moves away from her life without saying goodbye. She calls them honey suckle. They say themselves gentle and great men but how selfish they are. They see and get only chance and opportunity from window at her bad situation. Her friends and the captain's friends betray them. Among them, Neil comes down the hill for the last time and he looks her future bright:

All those years he had thought it was Marian's who made the house so different from any other. But ever since the captain's death it was a house where old friends, like his uncle, were betrayed and cast off, where common fellows behaved after their kind and knew a common woman when they saw her. (96)

She is sadly broken by betraying their old friends. She wants to make different her house which is not any other. She dreams to make different after her husband's death but it turns and breaks because of her husband's death. The common fellows get back and they do not want to help her. They think that she is a common woman but she promises that she can change her life better. She gets news, "Mrs. Forrester's name is everywhere coupled with Ivy Peters. She does not look happy, and fear her health is falling, but she has put herself in such position that her husband's friends cannot help her" (96).

People insult her. They think her negatively. She has given her land to Ivy for farming. He has good relation with her. Once, he comes at her house and he looks the door of the kitchen open. "Ivy Peters came at the kitchen door, walked up behind her, and unconcernedly put both arms around her, his hands meeting over her breast. She did not move, did not look up, but went on rolling out party" (96).

She is alone and exploited physically by her husband's friend and young boys. Ivy Peters is a tenant and helps her that is the way for him. That help lends him near with her and exploits her sexually. People come to know the news which is bad for her widowhood. People say that she is wife of Ivy Peters because he lives in her house. It is bad effect in her life. She feels badly shattered by getting false news from Neil. She decides herself to sell the Forrester place to Ivy Peters who has already brought a wife from Wyoming to live there. She again decides to go West (California), "It was years before Neil could think of her without Chagrin. But eventually, after she had drifted out of his ken, when he did not know if Denial Forrester's widow were living or dead, Daniel Forrester's wife returned to him, a bright, impersonal memory"(96). She goes to California and she meets a rich businessman, Henry Collins. He is rich, cranky old Englishman. After his uncle's death, he goes to Chicago hotel, he meets a broad shouldered man and introduces with him. Neil has already heard of his long lost lady. He keeps his curiosity with that man. They have talked for a long time and decided to take dinner in same table.

One evening, he is outside of the hotel, just a car comes and drives up to the entrance where the guests enter. Neil does not pay attention but among them is one lady laughed and he has recognized:

I paid no attention until one of the ladies laughed. I recognized her buy her laugh that had not change a particle. She was all done up in furs, with a scarf

over her head, I saw her eyes, and then I was sure. I stepped up and spoke to her. She seemed glad to see me, made me go into the hotel, and talked to me until her husband came to drag her away to the dinner. Oh, yes, she was married again to a rich, cranky old English man. (97)

At the beginning, Neil does not care the women in the hotel but one of them has laughed then he recognizes her. He knows her way of laughing, get up her style and scarf over her head. He finds that she does not change a bit. He sees her eyes and he ensures that she is Marian. He steps up and speaks with her. She seems fully satisfied woman who is very glad to visit him and she asks him to go into the hotel for talk until her husband comes to drag her away for the dinner. She says that she gets remarriage with a rich man. She also says that they live on a big stock ranch and come down in their car for this banquet, a large impressive meal where a large number of people, usually for a special occasion. She says that her husband is quite a character who has married twice before her. Neil observes her, “She seemed pretty well gone to pieces before she left Sweet Water” (98). She is quite attractive now. She gets good and proper place and rights place. She is rich and her husband is a businessman travelling different country.

At the end, Cather elects *A Lost Lady* with the affirmation that women can survive, control their destinies and live freely and happily. Although Marian is content to fly or to change from one man to the next in search of the life whatever she wants to do. First, she has no one depending upon her freedom and rights thus, she focuses to the situations in which she finds herself in order to reclaim the life. She chooses to struggle to maintain value within a framework of changing society. Marian has no husband, she is in possession of her own body and mind and when she enters alliances that require her to submit to the authority of men but her decision to do so is her own. She does not seek societal approval for her independence, which she defines as economic stability. She whirls in a particular direction until she finds a

safe position from which she reestablishes herself. Marian is bold unyielding female protagonist who disrupts the images of feminism and deconstructs the role model that helps to subvert the vulnerability of female. She dares to go against the males' domination and exploitation; and wants to get rid of the trap. These things show that Marian Forrester has established her aim and dream to be freed and rich woman in the mind of people who have deceived her. People take her strong decision, and independent woman. People remember her and for her boldness.

Thus, it can be said that she is a bold, determined and courageous female protagonist. She struggles for freedom and equal rights. Cather makes her aim of liberating women from the male's clutches and; of subverting the gender role. She has witnessed her power to keep herself aloof from the influence of her contemporary male dominated society. She has clearly given her views on art, love marriage, sex, culture and religion through her novels. She has also acted as a forerunner of the modern day feminist by depicting the worldwide domination, corruption of males over women through her novels.

Chapter IV

Conclusion: A Jolt to Patriarchy

In a patriarchal society, a woman's position is deplorable and she has to either accept the suppression or go against creating her autonomous existence, identity and role model in society. The question of selfhood becomes a serious subject of concern only when they are independent and liberal in society with respect to their male counterparts. However, such independence and freedom for women rarely occur in a patriarchal society and as a result women suffer from not being recognized their own identity. On the very contextual ground, Marian Forrester, struggles and escapes from the trap. The protagonist is conscious, bold, courageous, unyielding and determined towards her goal or her dream.

Cather prefers Marian a bold and strong protagonist who goes against the definitions of woman in society. Cather wants to show that women are also capable for struggle. They can do any work as men. Marian Forrester never gives up and forgets her mission and profession as she knows that one day she will enjoy autonomous existence in her life. In order to make her mission successful, she has to face so many problems and obstacles in the patriarchal society. Patriarchy does not want to see a woman living as human being like a man. Male made rule does not want females to enjoy their basic human rights too. So, Cather's heroine, Marian, has to reject the place and powerless position given by males and people one after another betray her and exploit physically and emotionally when she feels as obstacle in her mission, she rejects her husband who has no sexual power and money. The captain, Judge, Pommeroy lawyer, and Dalzell, the President of Colorado represent the tuff of rigid patriarchy. So, Marian is against the patriarchy and patriarchal rules and regulations. She does not care her cultural and social norms and values because she has to search freedom and equal rights as men and she wants to be independent woman in economic as men.

Willa Cather, as a feminist writer, advocates for the equal rights of women in every aspect in their lives. Cather also goes against the concept of gender as it tries to keep women in the rules assigned to women long ago. As a consequence, Cather's protagonist, Marian is bold, strong, and unyielding. She does not fear her husband's rule and social obstacles and she show that a woman is equally capable and strong as man in any field. She has compelled by economic problem to be a prostitute and run her profession in front of her husband.

The chorus of girls and slave girls are associated with Marian's profession. The protagonist, Marian, is trying to be economically good and independent with her profession, imperious courtesy. She wants to go for picnic, party and to take wine gin like men. She also goes for dancing with boys, disobeying her husband. She has kept sexual intercourse with different people and young boys to improve her economic condition because her husband is retired, older than she is, and sick physically. Therefore, she chooses her profession. Her prostitution is quite famous for gentlemen who are from far places to visit her parlour. In addition, the other minor women characters like Mary, Mrs. Beasley and Nell Emerald are also associated with their business respectively.

A Lost Lady presents Marian who disrupts the images of feminism and deconstructs the role model. She helps to subvert the gender role that is woman heroism. Marian seems to struggle on her own. In this novel, Nell Emerald is another character who is a beautiful and unusual woman. She conducts a sweetheart's prostitution. Mary, a Bohemian Cook, associates and runs her business as Marian. In the Black Hawk town of Nebraska, these women lead a kind of movement that everyone gets surprised and shocked.

Marian denounces living with her elder husband who is poor and unable to work as well as having no economic resources except her parlour. Finally, she is free after her husband's death and decides herself to marry with a rich cranky English businessman, Henry

Collins with whom she realizes her position and selfhood and autonomy. She is glad and asks Neil for trip. It is all because of her life-long struggle and experience in her previous life in the Forrester palace. She now enjoys as a rich and changed woman in new house. She also gets prosperous family after leaving Sweet Water. Neil gets surprised to see her with rich and new husband and does not believe and position but also Sweet Water people suddenly gets shocked by sending a cheque to have flowers and future care of the captain's grave.

Cather has explicitly depicted the bitter experiences of women such as, sexual exploitation and domination, gender discrimination and suppression etc. in the male dominated society through her characters especially the protagonist. Marian, the protagonist has experienced miserable life and realized that she gets exploited economically, physically, emotionally and culturally. She has also realized that she has been taken as an object to be subjugated by the males. Therefore, she disobeys the males' rules and regulations and tries to live freely without any restrictions. Furthermore, she seeks for young suitors to fulfill her sexual desire and to cope with her economic crisis though she has her elder husband. She practices adultery to satisfy her insatiable appetite for sex. So, she undermines the social norms and values of patriarchal society.

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