

## I. INTRODUCTION

Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady* provokes quest for women's independent identity in the newly built American Frontier society but, because of the adverse impact of the male dominated society, the women's struggle often remains as an unfulfilled dream. The major protagonist of the novel, Marian Forrester is fighting for her freedom and identity. As she is a female representative of Victorian American society seeking liberty, it reflects women's quest for independent identity in the Victorian era. She dislikes the differences between male and female created by social norms and values. In the Victorian era, females were taken as puppets; they did not enjoy the freedom as much as male enjoyed. But Marian Forrester challenged these concepts by keeping sexual relations with many males.

The protagonist has not hidden her desire and instinct; she is a brave lady character. Due to her desire, she engages with many males like Frank Ellinger and Ivy Pitters.

Patriarchy is the main ideology of the male dominated society, which restricts women to go in the open air. It binds women inside the home. They are restricted from enjoying and joining different professions. Whenever they try to break the boundary tags, they are graded as 'second class' and as the 'other'. In the Victorian age, females were bound by many rules and regulations. These rules and regulations give female one place where females used to live as a puppet. They were decorated themselves by ornaments and heavy dress. They did not participate in any occasion on their own wishes. But some females were against those hegemonic concepts. And they fought against those conservative rules and regulations. Marian Forrester fights against the Victorian hegemonic society. She does not accept bangles gifted by her husband. It shows rejection of traditional pattern of rules and regulations. In that era,

females struggled very much to make self identity. But they had difficulties making self identity in newly built American society.

From the beginning of human civilization, women are dominated and ill treated according to the deep rooted patriarchal rules and regulations. Society has been formed by the male oriented notion which has kept women in the inferior position. Social norms and values, behaviors and all other aspects of the society are controlled and guided by the male authority. Men use their so-called superiority to dominate social, political, cultural, economic and religious aspects. In such society, power passes from male to male not to female, such as father to son. Daughters are not given any roles and women are not given any opportunities to uplift them. Rather they are forced to accept the male ideologies.

The reality and holiness can not be obstructed or rejected for long. Thus, it is in the twentieth century that some conscious women began a literary movement which is well known as feminist literary movement. The main issue of this movement is to protest, the so-called patriarchal norms and values made against women's welfare. Willa Cather, a Victorian female novelist, became able to establish female identity and autonomy through literary writing. She is one of the most distinguished novelists of the early twentieth century America who has raised voice against male supremacy and endeavored to place women in the position of men. She is known for her advocacy of women's right and their higher social dignity .She challenges men for their exploitation and domination over women and assaults on orthodox patriarchs for using their politics of power to suppress women in the society. She claims that a married woman is not a husband's puppet but his equal partner to drive the family. She revolted against the corrupt Victorian males for their power seeking nature and condemns them for their snobbishness and misogyny. She wants to strengthen women

providing them the autonomous role of the 'heroes' in her novels. So, her novels are not the medium to entertain her readers but also the means to reform the society. In short, her novels reflect the idea of 'art for life's sake' and this art she has substituted to the study of women, particularly with a focus on the difficult life of the new American women. She heard about her great grand - mother Boak. It developed her feminist characteristics, which proved to be very fruitful to her future novels. *My Mortal Enemy* (1926), *Sapphira And The Slave Girl* (1940), and *Lucy Gayheart* (1935) are with the female protagonist, Myra Hanshawe, Sapphira Calbert and Lucy Gayheart respectively. They challenge males to establish their identity.

In most of the novels written by Willa Cather, women have heroic character with autonomous power to strengthen female in the society. So, her novels are not written only to entertain her readers but also to reform the society. Aristotalian concept is, the heroic figure is only male, not female. But Cather challenged this concept, and showed heroic figure in Marian Forrester, who is the main character. The male dominated Victorian society gave great hegemonial ideology of female. The power oriented male created many tags and boundaries for female. But, her novels portray the female heroes to attack the society which neglects female for their supremacy. Marian Forrester represents as an activist woman to create her self identity. She challenges all male supremacy. By enjoying party and drinking wine, she shows the power of female character. In the Victorian era, drinking wine and enjoying in the party is not suitable for female. Female can only enjoy in the party with husband, not independently. But the brave woman, Marian neglects all ideologies. The most remarkable feature that places Cather and the line of most genius feminist novelist is that she has created most autonomous 'women heroes' in her novels giving higher priority to the women. Social realities are mirrored in Cather's

novel because Marian is fighting in the society to establish her self identity and autonomous, she wins, but the male oriented society spread many tricks in front of her. Marian always fights against patriarchal norms and values to establish her selfhood and autonomy. Marian is out of the temptation created by males. In short she rejects the showy love and care of males for their freedom, selfhood, existence and identity. She knows, males have taken the relationship with many females to show their supremacy of power. Due to the supremacy of power, Marian also wants to create her power in the society. So she takes the sexual relation with many males according to the negligence of the Victorian male dominated society. Her passion is for heroic individuals.

It is in the twentieth century that some conscious women began a literary movement which is well known as feminist literary movement. The main issue of this movement is to strike the so-called patriarchal norms and values made against women's welfare. For it Adams mentions, ". . . feminism has recovered and revered the writings of many women excluded from the so called literary canon and raised many voices against the canon's sexual (and racial) exclusiveness" (7). Feminism is one of the many humanitarian voices related to social justice movement. It is not always gentle and calm but appears sometimes in the form of violent struggles and revolts. The main focus of this movement is to free women from the patriarchal ideologies and to free them from cultural restraints which restrict women's identity within a narrow boundary. This movement strongly disregards the cultural definition of women. This cultural definition limits women's identity and existence within the male dominated world. Its role is to break the male hegemony.

In a nutshell, the main aim of the feminists is to establish women's original status and self-identity in the society by rejecting the male superiority and cultural

domination, which helps them to dismiss the misrepresentation of women in the society. Feminism aims to provide women's equal status, identity, education, employment as well as free expression of women's experience. It endeavors to break male domination, suppression and discrimination on the basis of age, class, gender, language and tries to keep balance of power between male and female.

Willa Cather's *A Lost Lady* has elicited many criticisms since its publication in 1923. Many critics have attempted different possibilities of interpretation of this novel right from the beginning to the recent time. John Hollander points out the character of the protagonist:

Mrs. Forrester is from 'lost', if we take title to denote a lady, we take the title to denote a lady bewildered, a lady who has lost, and her way or her condition. It is Neil 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)

She has lost her way because she fights to get her freedom. It indicates whole female's freedom. To get freedom, she fights against the patriarchal society. But the leader of this society, means the narrator Niel Herbert, is also male. He always searches heroine's negative point, not positive point. He says that she is only running after property, but it is not true. She wants to establish her self identity in the society. On the other hand, Hermione Lee, another important critic, bitterly attacks on Marian and directly focuses on the lusty character of the protagonist, Marian and says:

She manipulates her own image in order to manipulate others' . . . .

She is the enchanting lady Forrester, to Ivy Peters. She is a woman with a bucket and rolled- up sleeves, good for a 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 is also male. He does not care female emotion and feeling. Ivy is her tenant and personal lawyer. It is his duty to come her home to discuss about personal things.

On the contrary, Laura Winters comments *A Lost Lady* as a composition about inspiration found, lost, and found again. Protagonist comes to represent both what is best and worst in the muse. The protagonist herself is the embodiment of Cather's emotions about inspiration. She writes: ". . . at a time when the world had broken in two, when Cather was tired, threatened, overwhelmed, in danger of succumbing to fatigue, resentment, bitterness, and depression, she fashioned a parable about inspiration found and lost" ( 25-26 ).

This shows Marian's secret of willing to settle for what is available. Through loss she reconciles with further possibilities. There is the examination of a woman's role in the post- pioneer world of the contemporary society. Similarly, James Woodress states *A Lost Lady* as:

In strained circumstances after the captain's loss of wealth, Stroke, and death, she refuses to be beaten. She fights back, weathers her adversity and eventually regains her strong will and brave spirit as much as the might have deplored Marian's desire for money, Clothes, Jewelry, and society. (349-350)

This thesis has been divided into four chapters. The first one is an introduction, which introduces the main thesis topic, background of feminism, introduction of writer and includes literary review. The second chapter provides a theoretical basis for the analysis of the text. It primarily consists of a discussion on the definition of feminism, and the distinction between sex and gender. The third chapter

analyses the text in 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 as the conclusion summarizes the argument and ideas presented in the textual analysis.

## **II. THEORETICAL DISCOURSE: FEMINISM**

### **Feminism: A Theoretical Modality**

The term “feminism” derived from the French word “feminisme”, was coined by the Utopian socialist Charles Fourier. The term was first used to denote the support for women’s equal legal and political rights with men. Now feminism also refers to any theory which sees the relationship between the sexes as one of inequality, subordination or oppression. Thus the aim of feminism seems to identify and remedy the sources of all kinds of oppressions and subordination.

Feminism is related to the feminist social movement that seeks equal right for women giving them equal status with men and freedom to decide their careers and life pattern. Women are taken to be weak in terms of education, culture, body, religion and society, where as males are considered as strong in every aspect of life. Because of this deep-rooted gender conception, men dominate women. Thus, the main target of the feminists has become to change or revolt against such misconceptions and the gender construction. The female writers have written for the emancipation of female from patriarchy as well as to establish women's position in the society.

The feminists think that femininity is their gift given by god. So, they take it as the weapon to fight against patriarchy. They put female in the supreme place and show that women are also bold enough to decide whatever is better for their life. Feminism is the quest for female autonomy.

Even though it is difficult to define feminist theory, it was thought that feminism could be dividend into liberal, radical and revolutionary phases in the early feminist theorizing; that is into those who argued for equality as men, those who celebrate women's supposed difference from men and those who wished to deconstruct the system of gender difference. Feminist criticism is not a unified



subject. It covers media, literature and civilization as well. Taking feminism as a multidisciplinary field of knowledge Mark Hawkins Dady 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 is no harmony between man and women in relation to their status in the society. Women are silenced in the patriarchal ideology. Thus, feminists try to break the silence of women. There is inequality shown in the norms created by males where women are taking plights to follow shown in the norms created by males of their work 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). She talks in favors of women's autonomy. For her autonomy is the feminist effort to maintain and recreate the innermost subjective human essence in women. The feminist claim to autonomy means a rejection of all tendencies to subsume the women's question and the women's movement under some other apparently more general theme or movement. Feminists are in search of a situational leadership. There should be dynamism, diversity, as well as the truly humanistic environment.

The sense of alienation, powerlessness and dependency felt by women in their everyday life has encouraged the emergence of the study of women. 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, these changes in consciousness led women to search their selfhood. Troil Moi

defines feminists as, "The word feminist or feminism are political level indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement"(135). Moi's concept about feminism focuses it as a political movement which aims at breaking the patriarchal boundary and hierarchy between men and women.

In the same way, a prominent critic, M.H. Abrams has given his view in his own way. 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). Abrams view about feminism states it as women's fight for freedom. It is the search for equality in social, political, educational and cultural aspects. Or in short, feminism is the quest for autonomous existence required by women.

Domination, suppression and inequality in every field cannot continue for long. Feminist criticism has demanded not just the recognition of women's writing but a radical rethinking of the concept of literary writing. Feminist criticism is international in its resources, and the 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.

### **History of Feminism**

Feminist critical theory can be said to have begun in the 1960s and 1970s with the work that questioned the representation of female characters in the male authored texts and also questioned the exclusion of the women writers from the canvas. Kate Millet favors power as an inevitable matter to change the society. In her *Sexual Politics* (1969), she has cited the fact that power is exercised in the society by subjugating women. She emphasizes that women should be given power to develop their status and career. She says, "Patriarchy dominates and subordinates the female to

the male or treats the female as an inferior male. Power is exercised directly or indirectly in the civil and domestic life, to constrain women"(137). In the large canvas of male literary works, women are presented just as sexual objects, whose roles are subservient to those of the central male protagonist. Violence and domination seemed to be the main idea by which the unequal power relations in the area of sexual politics are maintained. Women began to understand that patriarchy had its origin not in the realm of public politics but only in men's control over women's bodies, particularly their sexuality and their generative capacities. Millet analyzed the sexual politics of literature in her work. She considers politics an institution through which power is exercised in the society. Her work paved way for the readers to reconsider their evaluations fundamentally about some male writers. After that "Sexual politics" became the catch term of many writers. She says: "The essence of politics is power"(205). Violence and suppression upon women by patriarchy is the main issue raised by Millet. She considers that patriarchy is the main cause which suppressed and dominated women from freedom. Patriarchy doesn't given the equal status for women. it always keeps women in the marginalized space. Women's place in patriarchal society is deplorable and pathetic.

Once of the major feminist writers of the twentieth century, Virginia Woolf had made a great contribution in the field of feminist theories. Woolf in her *A Room of Our Own* (1928) focuses on the women's rights that a woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction. It is taken as the first blow on patriarchal structure. Here, she is not raising the issue of women in general she is specially talking about the plight of women writers. Woolf imagines a society where man and woman would come together in purpose and desire. So, she recurrently exposes about equality between man and woman. She is the first critic to include the socio-

economic dimension as the inevitable part of the females writing. She says that right from the history women writers have been discouraged. Woolf says; "She must have shut herself up in a 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" (819).

An American feminist, Elaine Showalter published one influential work of feminist criticism, *Towards the Feminist poetics* (1977). In this work Showalter provides a survey of the literatures written by the famous female writers of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Through this work Showalter raised a question about the problems of not including the books written by female writers in the literary course and to be printed. Further than this, she argued for the separate canon building of the female's literary texts. She says; "...Women's literature must go beyond these scenarios of compromise, madness, and death..... its purpose is to discover the new world"(1229). It is called "Gynocriticism". She says that women are different in terms of nature, race, culture and nation so they cannot be studied universally. Women texts should have specific style of reading. The text written by the female writers should be read from the gynocritical point of view to justify the woman ness in the text. Gynocriticism is an attempt to establish feminist tradition.

Elaine Showalter categories feminist criticism into two types, 'women as a writer' and 'women as a reader'. Women as a writer consider "women as a producer of textual meaning, with his history, themes, genres, and structures of literature by women"(1226). Women are the producer of the text, language, themes, images and so forth. She gives space to her own experience, where women as reader read the text from the women's point of view. She is a feminist critic as reader. She adds: "... it is historically grounded inquiry which probes the ideological assumptions of literary

phenomena. The omissions of and misconceptions about women in criticism, and the fissures in male constructed literary history" (1226).

Here she studies male's experiences and women's manipulations and exploitation by males and the stereotyped image given by male. It rejects the misconception about women in criticism and attacks the male-made literary history.

Showalter has drawn the history of feminist tradition within three phases. The first phase, feminine, is the period from 1840 to 80. In this phase, women were silent experiences and used to accept male domination. They internalized male values and wanted to reach the male standard. George Eliot belongs to this phase. The second phase, feminist phase, is the period between 1880 to 1920. This phase is a more challenging period for women who required to protect against male cruelty. They oppose male tradition of writing. They tried to condemn male styles. Virginia Woolf, Elizabeth Gaskell, Frances Trollope, and Olive Schreiner belong to this phase. This phase is better known as protest stage. They began to create their own style of writing. The third phase is dated from 1920 to present, the female phase. This phase is the period of women's awakening. Women began to develop the idea of female writing. Writers showed more revolutionary as well. It includes the writers like Dorothy Richardson, Katherine Mansfield. This phase is devoted to the search for 'female language', freedom, selfhood and individuality by women.

Michele Barrett is another feminist who began joint venture with Kate Millet to advocate against women's oppression. She not only blames patriarchy to be the root cause of women's oppression, she thinks there are many other issues to be raised together. Barrett steps further giving an interesting view that any text lacks the 'meaning'. Meaning is formed because of ideologies, circumstances, values and space of the reader in the society. Giving common view against women's suppression Millet

and Barrett say: "The oppressor is seen as consciously endeavoring to sustain the oppression indefinitely through ideology... literary values and convention have themselves been shaped by men and women have often struggled to express their own concerns..." (qtd. in Selden 138-139).

They view that women don't have their own ideologies. They are in problems to express their view in male ideology. Women are suppressed by males forcing to obey their rules.

Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) raises the voice against man-woman dichotomy as the male ideology makes woman the second sex. Women are made inferior which is just artificially made. Beauvoir further says that women are not born, but made. The human culture has given supremacy to the sex that hunts and kill, and not the one that gives birth, to masters of nature and not to the natural functions. The book *The Second Sex* is an overall account of women and tags given to women. Giving her notion about the book, *The Second Sex* M. H. Abrams notes, "*The Second Sex* is a wide-ranging criticism of identification of women as merely the negative object or 'other' to man as defining and dominating subject who is assumed to represent humanity in general" (234).

Women are mystic that they are vast, something reversed and they undergo those processes, but Beauvoir condemns these myths saying that they are natural process and male-made myths are false. She further says males too are mysterious. She claims:

The myth of a woman is a luxury which 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; there dreams where irresistibly guided by interest.

Surely most of the myths had roots in the spontaneous attitude of man toward his own existence and toward the world around him. But going beyond experience toward the transcendent idea was deliberately used by patriarchal society for purpose of self justification; through the myths this society imposed its laws and customs upon individuals in a picturesque, effective manner it is under a mythical form that group imperative is indoctrinated into each conscience. (999)

Beauvoir criticizes the male-made myths about women that myth is just a mirage which is not related with reality at all.

She further criticizes the cultural identification of women as merely negative objective or 'other' to man. The notion of otherness of 'she' effects in the social ideology. Thus, Beauvoir requests the feminists to break the patriarchal norms and values and establish female's distinct ideology which is necessary for women's self identity and autonomy.

### **Sex and Gender**

Human beings are differentiated as male and female according to biological characteristics, the differentiation of male and female, is called sex. They have fundamental biological characteristics. According to their body's organs they are known as male and female. Sex is a biological difference between men and women. It is unchangeable and natural process. So, it is also called natural sex. Gender is created by society. It is also called social gender. It is formed according to the concept of society and culture. The society and culture introduce the status and role of male and female. So gender is not fundamentally biology, it is based social and cultural. According to social and cultural norms and values, the community creates the boundaries, rules and regulations for male and female.

In the discussion of sex and gender in human social life, one term emerges as particularly, and that term is natural; in public debates concerning the origins of so-called sex differences and the nature of relations between women and men. Every society has different roles and status of male and female, the cause of difference is their own culture and society. So, from primitive age to recent period males are supreme in the society. So, they create the rules and regulations for their own benefit. They created many boundaries and tags for female, not for male. Females are marginalized in social sector, economic sector, and political sector. Academically also females are back warded. The society gave roles and regulations to male and female. They saw differently to female as daughters are not send to school, and deprived from rights for property, political and others. Traditional gender roles cast men as strong, rational, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional, weak, nurturing, and submissive. These gender roles have been used very successfully to justify the act of excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision- making positions in every fields as in the family, political, academic and economic areas. The main cause of difference is patriarchal society. Patriarchy is thus, by definition, sexist, which means it promotes the belief that women are innately inferior to men.

But feminists do not deny the biological differences between men and women; in fact, many feminists celebrate those differences. But they do not agree that such differences as physical size, shape, and body chemistry make men naturally superior to women; for example, more intelligent, more logical, more courageous, or better leaders. Feminism therefore distinguishes between the word sex, which refers to our biological constitution as female or male, and the word gender, which refers to cultural programming as feminine or masculine, which are categories created by society rather than by nature.



Feminism is a necessary movement to diver the view of society which gives women the subordinate position. Women from the beginning of human civilization are being treated with worth ambivalence and misogyny. Women had to live in the discriminatory male-made culture on the basis of sex, race, age, class. Such culture was the main boundary for women for the freedom of expression of their experience. Jane Freedman says that the "distinction between biological sex and the social creation of the 'eternal feminine' is a precursor of the distinction 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 feminist criticism share as their motto. All the feminists agree that the entire cultural phenomena are dominated by a patriarchal value. Patriarchy plays role not only in political system but also in literary and philosophical system. There is hierarchy made between male and female where male is the standard and female is subordinate. The woman is made to be subjugated by male. Simone de Beauvoir mentioned her view in this context in her famous work *The Second Sex* (1949). In her work, Beauvoir has demonstrated how women are marginalized, subordinated and hegemonized by patriarchal ideology. All the feminists are concerned with destroying the patriarchal ideology. In the literary texts women are always in secondary role. They are ordinary, unimportant and marginal. Feminism criticizes the one sided evaluation of literature. Beauvoir says; "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman .... It is civilization as a whole that produces this creature....which described as feminine"(89).

Patriarchal ideology suggests that there are only two identities of a woman, if she accepts her traditional gender role and obeys the patriarchal rules, she is a "good woman"; if she does not, she is a "bad woman". These two roles also identified woman as "Madonna" and "whore" or "angel" and "bitch". These two identities are

defined according to the place and the time in which they live. According to a patriarchal ideology, 'bad woman' violates patriarchal sexual norms in some ways: they are sexually forward in appearance or behavior, or they have multiple sexual partners. Men sleep with "bad women", but they do not marry them. The "good women" is rewarded for her "good" behavior by being placed on a pedestal by patriarchal culture. She has no needs of her own, for she is completely satisfied by serving her family. For Victorian culture in England she was the "angel in the house". She made the home a safe heaven for her husband, where he could spiritually fortify himself before resuming the daily struggles of the workplace, and for her children, where they could receive the moral guidance needed to eventually assume their own traditional roles in the adult world. The good woman does not want her own self identity in the society. She only knows about the traditional rules. But the "bad women" who are power seeking always want newness in the society. They are courageous that they can do what male can. So, they want their self identity.

Feminists write for freedom, autonomy and self identity of the women. They think that men should take females as their necessary counterparts and help them to come in the independent arena. Women must be regarded as important human beings. Accepting such reality some male writers began to write giving the autonomous power to women character in their literary writing. Women protagonists have individuality in their texts. Consciousness about female as equal human being is some how the contribution of feminist movements. Feminists view that only a feminist struggle will particularly change relations between man and woman that concerns issues such as sexuality, violence, gender discrimination, emancipation, freedom and equality for women.

### **Self- identity And Autonomy**

The concepts of self-identity and autonomy are closely related and inseparable. The concept 'autonomy' expresses the positive goal for the feminist movement. It is the freedom from domination regarding the bodies and lives, Maria Mies says, "The feminist claim to autonomy ...means a rejection of all tendencies to subsume the women's question and the women's movement under some other apparently more general theme or movement"(41). Self- identity and autonomy are associated with persons. We are autonomous to social processes which bring us into being as self for ourselves and others.

There are so many concepts about selfhood and autonomy in the feminist movements. But the most common concept among feminists is 'individual independence', self determination of the individual woman', or 'the right to individual choice'. The emphasis on individualism refers to the autonomous existence. Women in the patriarchy fight for their individuality. Women have united for their self-identity which is taken as the essential thing for women's development. If the person is independent she/he can live her/his life 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 precision the manner in which these two sets of signifiers function"(199).

The individualistic sense of uniqueness and self consciousness is wide spread which is not shared to the same extent by people. Self is inseparable from to the network of kinship relation and nation use the pronouns 'I'. Every person has feelings of self-identity and need their own autonomous. Identity is the social construction. Looking at the western female self, Alison prentice and Ruth Pierson say; "Women

have a human should not have to make a greater sacrifice of autonomy than men” (164). Women in the patriarchal society had false identity. They were restricted to go outside from the house. Feminism is the movement which demands autonomous existence and true identity of female. The identity of person is the cultural representation. For true identity and autonomous are the necessary components.

Writing for self is for visual portrait and signification. All the markers of possession and of the appropriation of the written object emerge from the tensions inscribed within ‘I’. Self is the representation 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). The feminist ambition to maintain and recreate this innermost subjective human essence in women is expressed and preserved in the concept of autonomy. Everyone is free to fulfill all her/his desires and needs that individual freedom is identical

With the choice of the self- activity and subjectivity of the person Maria Mies focuses her view on autonomy and says:

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

The feminist approaches mentioned above are useful to find out the main causes how the protagonist of Willa Cather’s novel *A Lost Lady* searches the self identity and autonomy by challenging the deep-rooted patriarchal norms and values. The feminist discourse has provided chances to understand the text better. It has

shown the way to know the female problems, identity and existence and their search for self identity and autonomy.

### III. SEARCH FOR FEMALE IDENTITY

Willa Cather, a feminist novelist, in her novel *A Lost Lady*, presents a female protagonist who is in search of identity and autonomy in the patriarchal society. Women, in the Victorian period, were subjected and dominated by the males. It was necessary to break such system and ideology to enfranchise women from the corrupted society. By presenting Marian Forrester as a protagonist of the novels, Cather claims that a married woman is not just a puppet to her husband's hand but an equal partner of his life.

Mrs. Marian Forrester, in *A Lost Lady*, struggles for the freedom and self-identity in the male dominated world. She never shows her agreement with the patriarchal norms and values which were obstacles for the autonomous self-identity of women. Such representation of women as a heroic figure in the novel is Cather's way of strengthening them to act forward so that to get a proper place in a society.

Mrs. Marian Forrester is a woman with different attitudes and behaviors than other women in the society. She is not afraid with the society to work whatever she likes though there was the chance to be out-cast from the society. If she does not follow the rules and regulations of the patriarchal society, she would be followed by unnecessary traps.

Marian is a revolutionary girl who aimed to free and establish women's self-identity and freedom as men have in the society. She does not like the discrimination between men and women. She thinks that males and females are the equal human beings and must get chance to enjoy equality. She believes that if a woman gets equal chance she also can do works as man do. Only a man is not strong enough to do everything. In short, Marian is a feminist who struggles for the self-identity and freedom of the women.

Marian had her own uniqueness in the society. People knew her not only from her walks, clothes but also from her shadow. Female heroism is clearly shown in this novel. She challenges Victorian male-dominated society, which was totally grounded upon traditional and conservative power-seeking tendency of the males and their narrow-mindedness misconception about the females. Quite opposite to this value, twentieth century writing and social belief was:

One of the prevailing notes in the fiction of the twentieth century is that of rebellion against the restrictions of personal freedom. It is concerned not so much with economic condition as it is with limitation imposed by traditional barriers of conventions was written largely by men, so this other phase was developed principally by women. (698)

Therefore, it was mainly the age of search for freedom from women's side.

Marian Forrester is the second wife of Captain Daniel Forrester, a rail-road contractor. She came to Sweet Water, Colorado with her husband after their marriage. She, being twenty-five years younger than her husband, can get everything from him but is not satisfied with him physically. In the then society, women were not expected to talk about sex. But Marian Forrester challenges the society by welcoming the male-visitors who used to come to her home. She wants to make relation with the boys of her own age. So she is the most famous among all young boys of her neighboring towns, Omaha and Denver as Cather cites: "She was always there, just out the door to welcome their visitors . . . if she happened to be in the kitchen, helping her Bohemian cook, she came out in her apron, waving a buttery iron spoon, or shook cherry-stained fingers at the new arrival" (12).

People had different kinds of feeling about her. She had established her personality strongly in the mind of the people. Marian was not a shy girl hesitating to work, speak

and play. She felt free from any barriers. She did not care of anything in front of her freedom. She was restless always seeking prosperity and never idle. So, she did not stop her daily work even after her husband's accident from horse and also did not stop continuing romance with Ellinger Frank, Ed. Elliot (the Don Jaun of Sweet Water) and Ivy Peters, the most immoral lawyer. From her husband loss, she doesn't break herself rather she reconciles herself with further possibilities.

In the Victorian male dominated society male wanted to marry very younger girl than themselves. They wanted to keep female as a kid's puppet. Not only then but still today male like to marry very younger girls no matter what their wives feel from it. But Marian, like extra-ordinary female, challenges the then society. It is her victory over the then society that Marian being a married and then a widow has her fans around her. Even at the time of her marriage, it was her beauty and charm that had compelled her husband to marry her. She never looked old. But her husband did not look handsome and suitable one for her. Whenever they used pass by the road, she was noted by all but not her husband.

Marian does not care her husband's illness and decline. She knows very-well that if she was in her husband's place, he would not have sacrificed his desires for her. She fights against this problem and gets victory over it.

Marian goes to Denver and Omaha with her husband, as usual, to spend winter. He falls ill from the attack of stroke, and Mrs. Forrester brings him back to Sweet Water, their home. It makes Captain Forrester so weak that he can hardly stand with his stick. So he becomes weak physically and is not able to fulfill her desires. His age and illness makes him very weak to fulfill desire of his wife.

But the heroine, Marian Forrester, is not restless woman; she does everything for her identity and freedom. She helps and loves her husband, and also wants to



fulfill her desires. Marian's anti-husband's feeling occurs to her mind when she cannot fulfill her desire of sex from her twenty five year older husband who fades away with wrinkles on his cheeks. Her romance with the young boys brings her satisfaction.

Her boldness is immeasurable. She challenges not only the human law but also the natural law. She dares to do whatever comes in front of her and is not afraid with natural problems: such as heat, cold, rain, storms etc. She walks easily in every situation challenging them. For others, she is an amazing one, not a normal. Her extraordinariness is her main identity, as Cather mentions:

the day when she was chased by the new bull in the pasture. She had forgotten about the bull and gone into the meadow to gather wild flowers. He heard her scream, and as he ran puffing down the hill, she was scudding along the edge of the marshes like a hare, beside herself with laughter, and stubbornly clinging to the crimson parasol that had made all the trouble. (13)

Marian's boldness has something that she can show to the males. She wants to show the power of female which they did not want to accept easily. Cather proves it by bringing forth bull's incident in which Forrester comes in front of it to save her. She is very powerful lady. She does not like it because she knew the fact that she was capable of saving herself from it. When the males were afraid to come out from the house to the garden, Marian comes easily without feeling any difficulties.

The male ideology wants to keep women just inside the house but here male themselves are inside the house and the female, Marian is outside on the open ground. Males were unable to face the storm, snow, rain whereas a female is easily challenging these all as she says:

Niel put on his rubber coat and started for the Forresters'. 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 moment carry it away. One could not cross the ford without a horse. He looked irresolutely across the submerged bottom lands. The house was dark, no lights in the parlour windows. The rain was beginning to fall again. Perhaps she had rather be alone tonight. He would go over tomorrow. (128)

Males have hegemonial power, they have concept that only they are able to do all things, and can challenge everything but it is only their concept not reality. Niel becomes afraid of nature. So, he returns from the way of Marian Forrester's house. But Marian challenges and crosses the river. Here, Marian wants to show that women should not be pressed inside the kitchen by males. They are strong enough to face the difficulties. She faces natural problems positively whereas males take them as problems.

Challenging the natural barriers is a piece of blow for the males who think women are weak and they can not be equal to males: "Mrs. Forrester," he cried, "you can't have crossed the creek! It's up to a horse's belly in the ford" "I came over the bridge, what's left of it. It shook under me, but I'm not heavy." She threw off her hat and wiped the water from her face with her hands" (129).

Marian comes very far from all problems. Her house was far from the main street and far from the narrator's house. But she did not care about it. She used to go there in any weather. She is very courageous and brave. She used to cover that distance many times a day. When she walked on the road in the summer day people

knew her from distance from the way she moved. Everything was equal for her. She appeared very loving and charming:

What soft fingers Mrs. Forrester had, and what a lovely lady she was. Inside the lace ruffle of her dress he saw her white throat rising and falling so quickly. Suddenly she got up to take off her glittering rings, - she them off her fingers with a quick motion as if she were washing her hands, and dropped them into Mary's broad palm. (28)

Marian is not passive woman, but a very active one. She has courage to do all things. It means, she is talented in every field and everywhere. She has not only outer beauty, also inner one. These activities in every field show and point out her quest for self identity. She is naturally very beautiful. But her husband wants her to wear jewels: "Captain Forrester, although he had given her handsomer ones, liked to see her wear these, because they had been his mother's. It gratified him to have his wife wear jewels; it meant something to him" (40). Captain Forrester is agent of keeping woman as a doll. Not only that he also wants to impose traditional hegemony that female can only use ornaments. Obviously, it was a tradition of Victorian society. But these ornaments remain as boundary of female's self- identity. It is known by Mrs. Forrester very well, so she takes out her ornaments which were given to her by her husband: "She took off her rings and earrings and was beginning to unfasten her black velvet bodice when, at a tinkle of glass from without, she stopped short" (59).

Ornaments here, indicate bounded females in the trap of domestic life.

Mrs. Marian Forrester is always active as she never appears dull and heavy. She is quite serious about her health as the narrator depicts:

A little later Niel went plunging down the hill, looking exultantly into the streak of red sunset. Oh, the winter would not be so bad, this year!

How strange that she should be here at all, a woman like her among common people! Not even in Denver had he even 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 one so attractive and distinguished as Mrs. Forrester. Compared 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. (41-42)

She is always fresh and active. Activeness and freshness are positive traits, and the positive traits helped her to establish her self-identity.

The heroine of this novel, Mrs. Forrester engages with one man in extra marital affairs. She wants to show if the male can make many relations, female also can keep relation as male keep with other women. She knows very well about Denver Frank's past as she says: "In Denver Frank was known as a prince of good fellows, tactful, generous resourceful, though apt to trim his sails to the wind; a man who good-humouredly bowed to the inevitable, or the almost-inevitable" (49). She wants to take revenge with him because he had destroyed many women's lives. He is a nice fellow for only the male oriented society, not for female.

He had, when he was younger, been notoriously "wild," but that was not held against him, even by mothers with marriageable daughter, like Mrs. Ogden. Morals were different in those days. Niel had heard his uncle refer to Elliger's youthful infatuation with a woman called Nell

Emerald, a handsome and rather unusual woman who conducted a house properly licensed by the Denver Police. Nell Emerald had told an old club man that though she had been out behind young Ellinger's new trotting horse, she "had no respected for a man who would go driving with a prostitute in broad daylight. This story and dozen like it were often related of Ellinger, and the women laughed over them as theartily as the men. (49-50)

Mr. Ellinger is very bad man but the society gave him reputed place him because of his male origin.

Mrs. Marian Forrester had the sexual relation with him. She is bold lady. She does not want to suppress her sexual desire because her husband is old and sick. She loves her husband, but she, also needed sex as it is a natural one. Due to sexual desire, she loves Mr. Frank. Slowly and gradually, she starts loving emotionally too. After the party, Mr. Frank and she go to bring Christmas tree, where they attach each other to share and care their desires.

The big stranger who was visiting at the Forresters' emerged, carrying the buffalo 'robes on one arm; Mrs. Forrester herself was clinging to the other. 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 a long while holding her crushed up against his breast, her face hidden in his black overcoat. (66-67)

She is bold and strong type of female, it is shown from her sexual relation with her boyfriend, Frank. In this way she directly strikes upon male dominated Victorian

society. She spends lots of time with him. She also takes dinner in the hotel which is enquired by Niel Herbert.

Niel took his meals at the down hotel; on the third day after Captain Forrester's departure, he was annoyed to find Frank Ellinger's name on the hotel register. Ellinger did not appear of supper, which meant, of course, that he was dining with Mrs. Forrester, and that the lady herself would get his dinner. (83)

Women are not free. They are bounded everywhere. In absence of her husband Niel Herbert keeps an eye on Marian's activities as he doesn't like her to be with others. But the heroine does not care him. She also spends her time with Frank in her home. She wants to spend her time with the boys who belong to her age. Frank is very near and dear to her but he is very selfish and coward. He is male, he has also a hegemonic power to marry with very young girl: "the Denver paper: Frank Ellinger's picture on the society page, along with Constance Ogden's they had been married yesterday at Colorado Springs, and were stopping at the Antlers" (127-128).

Marriage with young girl shows the domination of males upon the females of that time. This marriage made Marian very sad and unhappy. So, she crosses all problems and difficulties that come in her way. She does not want to live quietly. She wants to give big slap to the society, she belongs to. It is because of this, she goes to telephone Frank Ellinger, a forty year old bachelor from Denver. Marian likes individuality in her life. She arranges a party when he arrives in her town. It was her self-governed party which was not taken positively but it was her challenge to the then society. In the cock-tail party, she powers whisky to Frank's glass. It is a direct satire upon the Victorian male dominated society. But the brave heroine Marian does

not hesitate to do so. She acts as a very tactful and brilliant lady in her telephone conversation with Frank:

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, haven't 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? (132)

She wants to say all things to Frank. She is very right, but he is wrong. But this society does not want to recognize it. Her conversation is listened by Mrs. Beasley, who is an indefatigable reporter of everything that went over the wires. Marian does not care this also. The narrator, Niel Herbert always observes Marian's affair with Frank Ellinger and recognizes that her voice is not secret. It does not matter for her. She is strong hearted and courageous. She wants to tell all things that ever come from her heart. She changes her motions. Firstly, she speaks softly but slowly and gradually, she raises her voice and says:

Play safe! When have you ever played anything else? You know, Frank, the truth is that you're a coward; a great, hulking coward. Do you hear me? I want you to hear!... You've got a safe thing at last, I should think; safe and pasty! How much stock did you get with it? A big block, I hope! Now let me tell you the truth: 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'm dead. I don't want your hateful eyes to look at my dead face. Do you hear me? Why don't you answer me? Don't dare to hang up the receiver, you coward! Oh, you big... Frank, Frank say something! Oh, he's shut me off, I can't hear him. (134)

She does not hide anything from society and its people. She is- not passive towards Frank Ellinger's behaviors. She is not such type of women who spent and lost time to miss their betrayers also. Ellinger's marriage with Constance Ogden does not shock Marian but she also does not hesitate to express her outrage and scandalous feelings at him. It has no effect on Ellinger because of the concept of male superiority that male can only marry younger ones than them. She is very active and not an ordinary type of women as Mrs. Ogden is a woman suffering from mental torture by her husband.

Conversely, Mrs Marian continues her relationship with other males even after her husband's death. She lives her life as freely as men of her time used to live.

Marian is brave lady who is tempted to do further right things in her life. She is not idle after breaking relationship with Frank Ellinger. She further involves sit- down and stand-up with Mr. Orville Ogden, another short man of fifty, proves this fact. Mr. Ogden, though a married fellow from the town of Omaha, admires all beautiful women and runs after them in spite of having a homely wife of his own. But in male-oriented society, no one objects about his relationship with women. Marian therefore wishes to challenge the society. Adolph Blum, a rich feudal, whom she meets along the street immediately after her displeasing retreat from Frank, is attracted by the charm of her witty speech and movement of her eyes.

Marian takes great decision. It was to change her husband's personal lawyer Judge Pommery. He is old and he has weak power to choose write or wrong. His weak decisive power becomes the reason of Daniel Forrester's property's destruction. So Marian replaces Ivy peters. She hands over her husband's whole business to Ivy with her own will. Ivy peters gets strong hold on Marian's life and property after Daniel's death. She spends lots of time with him in her own home because he is her business lawyer. But people interpret this relation very badly.



The narrator, Niel Herbert, wants to beware Mrs. Marian Forrester. He tells her about people's comments when he hears their gossiping about Ivy's being there in her life so much. It was because he had heard comments even on the street. But, Marian has no problem with this talk rather she responds on it by saying that, "I cannot bother about their talks. They have always talked about me, always will Mr. Peters is my lawyer and my tenant; I have to see him"(153- 154).

She does not care back-biting but a mean nature of peters appears in front when he betrays her while transferring her whole accounts funds, securities and business. She starts staying within the home but it does not entertain her.

This society is made by the males who can only guide and protect female. Their thought is that male can give security for females in every house. In this way, Mrs. Marian lives alone in her house after death of her husband. She is widow, so she is subject of gossiping for all people. But Mrs. Marian does not care these comments:

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 knit.If you came 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? (153-154)

She wants to change society and establish her own identity. So, she does not care about comments of people. She knows very well that if people do some extraordinary works in the society, they should face many problems.

Niel says her to leave Sweet Water and go to settle with her own people in California. But her intention is to change the place and boys throughout her life. The

youth of Sweet Water are uneducated and cowardice. To change youth and society means to give newness society:

I am getting rested after a long strain. And while I wait, I'm finding new friends among the young men- those your age, and a little younger. I've wanted for a long while to do something for the boys in this town, but my hands were full. I hate to see growing up like savages, when all they need is a civilized house to come to, and a woman to give them a few hints. They've never had a chance you wouldn't be the boy are if you'd never gone to Boston,- and you've always had older friends who'd seen better days. Suppose you had grown up like Ed. Elliot and Joe Simpson? (155)

She has lots of friends who are uneducated. So she teaches many lessons like how to develop personality and secure future. But her missions are not liked by people, not only others, Niel too does not want to listen to her.

The patriarchal society does not like female supremacy in the society. She knows, if she goes against rules and regulations, people can give many pseudo names to her. But she is revolute: "I know; they call me the Merry widow. I rather like it!" (156) In the society, if female runs according to society's rules and regulations, she gets the name like angel, if she runs out of society's rules and regulations, she gets pseudo name like evil. But she does not fear, and does not change her decision. She has courage to face all troubles. In this way she wishes to change youths, and sell her property according to her price. After all she settles in California. She marries with Henry Collins, a cranky quarrelsome English fellow in New York. Even without getting emancipation, Marian struggles very bravely with the hope of getting it there. After her death it becomes clear that the old Englishman had no problem about her

relationship with Captain Forrester as her sends money for the protection of Forrester's grave in the name of Marian. Though Marian had two husbands, she was able to be loyal towards both of them. She never forgot to take care of Forrester's grave and Englishman knew these all. It is of no doubt that she had relationship with many men and was deceived by all in from any means. But after her death, the narrator finds Marian a perfect woman in comparison to other females and ends the text in memory of her.

### **Deconstructing Gender**

Not only by playing with the boys Marian gets satisfaction, she always seems thoughtful on the matter of presenting herself as a very strong decision maker. In process of taking care of her husband's property, she gets success. From the primitive civilization, husbands, not wives, have been taken as helpers. People believe that wives can not help their husband, mainly in his economic problem. They believe that wives have no knowledge how to control economic power and how to run property. But Mrs. Marian Forrester aims to help her husband's decreasing business. She knows very well, how husband's business decreased. She gets the fact that her husband's personal lawyer is not taking care of her husband's property very seriously. So she says with Niel, "your uncle is terribly involved. He has been so careless that he's not much better off than we are Money is a very important thing. Realize that in the beginning; face it, and of us." (114). She realizes very well that only morality and philosophy are not sufficient for reality. If we want to make self identity and live freely we should know the reality that money is important for us. Even knowing the fact that Judge Pommery is their faithful lawyer and cannot work sensibly because of his old age, she takes out him from her business, "Niel Flushed I'm sorry, Mr. Ogden, he brought out, but Mrs. Forrester is no longer a client of my uncle's. After the

captain's death she saw fit to take her business away from him"(149). After her husband's death she takes great decision to run her business. So, she takes her husband's business seriously. She consults with Judge Pommeroy:

Judge Pommeroy began to explain to Mrs. Forrester the situation they had faced in Denver. The bank, about which Mrs. Forrester knew nothing but its name, was one which paid good interest on small deposits the deposits were wage-earners; railroad employees, mechanics, and day laborers, many of whom had at some time worked for captain Forrester. (90)

She starts her Journey with business. She wants to show that female also can run business. She knows business policy that only emotional belief with anybody is not good for the improvement of any business. She is able to reveal many weak parts of her husband's emotions. Even from business, she comes to understand the bitterness in-side it and gave its whole responsibility to Ivy Peters. Marian is very kind hearted lady. She does not see difference between lower and upper class. She also loves children very much. When the town's boys were searching picnic spot for her, she was ready to give her own place quickly. Not only place, but she also orders her maid for cookies and says: "Mary, when you are baking this morning, put in a pan of cookies for those boys. I'll take them down when they are having their lunch (16)". It shows her as a very kind hearted lady. Besides, it also reveals the fact that Marian has never forgotten her female attitudes while acting as males. Marian has stored her emotions within herself. It is a feature of a woman to be emotional one. But she knows that she should reveal it only at a proper time. Otherwise, the same emotion becomes a weak part of a woman in front of a man. She is popular among the boys (children) and they like because of her good treatment to them. She never scolds and

teases them thinking lower class, so she is liked by them. The person who behaves equally to others wants equality from other. Like this, Marian also wants equal behaviors towards her from others.

Once, While Marian was in the mountains in the summer at a camp, with friends of her father's, she went to climb mountain with a boy, Fred Harney. At that time she was only Nineteenth. Mountain Climbing is dangerous and challenging. One should have courage to climb and it was Marian who climbed comfortably. Mountain Climbing game can be taken as the symbol of freedom. Climbing of mountain also shows the climbing from the rules and regulations of the male dominated society. So,

One afternoon she had persuaded young Fred Harney, an intrepid mountain climber, to climb a cliff-they were almost down, and were creeping over a projective 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. (164-165)

Unfortunately they fell down from mountain, and her companion died but she was strong enough that she caught a pine tree whole night until the rescue team came. She chooses to climb mountain to show the courage of women that female also can play such dangerous games. She seemed confident throughout the game. It happened so because she had a belief over herself that she can do anything which any other human being (male) can do. Therefore, even facing dangerous incident, she fully enjoyed the game.

Marian makes relations with many males without hesitation. She does not hesitate because she thinks male and female are equal. She does not have feelings of shyness. She is open-minded. Before her husband's death, many parties were arranged in her house and she drank whisky with her husband's friends and laughed and spent

time. So, she arranges one party, “I want you to come to dinner Friday night. If you came, there will be eight of us, counting Annie Peters. They are all boys you know, and if you don’t like them, you ought to! Yes, you ought to!” (157). She does not stop her life after the loss of her husband. It shows her determination to break society’s rule and regulation. She knows she has her own life which cannot be finished along with her husband. After selling her all properties, she goes to California and marries again with English-man.

She was all done up in furs, with a scarf over her head, but 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 in to 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; Henry Collins was his name.

(173)

She shows that male does, a widow also can do by remarrying. In husband's presence, she took relation with many males. It is also the fact that she always acted as a very much dutiful woman because even after her second marriage, she does not forget to send flower to her ex-husband’s grave: “After she left Sweet Water, wherever she was, she always sent a cheque to the Grand Army past every year to have flowers put on captain Forrester’s grave for Decoration Day”(174). This process of sending cheque, shows her humanity and duty towards her ex-husband. She is happy when she can give something to others. She wants to show that a female gives so many things to males.

When Marian was in trouble on the death of her husband, she wanted to sell her property, but her near and dear friend Niel, was not ready to help her. She wanted to sell her property in twenty thousand dollars. But Niel was not ready to help her and

had said teasingly, “you’ll never get it. At least, not until times have greatly changed” (155).

Marian had given him many things from her, he praised her for those things by saying thing like; “... what soft fingers Mrs. Forrester had, and what a lovely lady she was”(28). But when Marian asked him to help her by selling her property, he says, “However there is no use discussing it, if you’ve thought it over and made up your mind. I spoke of it because I thought you mightn’t realize how it strikes the townspeople”(156). He could help her by giving a company but he has a male ego within him which does not allow him to help her. He enjoys Marian's problems and ignores her as if she can do nothing without his help. He ought to have helped her because she was in great problem but he thought his work to be more important than Marian’s problem.

Niel did not help Marian to guide her life. So it is false to think males as the guide of female’s life. Niel did not give her suggestions but only threatened her that her life is damaged. According to him, she can not do anything because she is female. Niel only wanted to make her weak. But Marian is not afraid with such small matters. She takes his laughter as a challenge and acts ahead without his help. She had her fixed aim in her life. She did not like to bow down in front of Niel, a male. By selling her property without anyone's help, she shows her heroism in the society.

Marian does not loose her strength even when she is refused by all people of Sweet Water, she is unhappy with the corrupted society stubborn with their conservative thinking. Even if she is no helped by anyone, she did not like to bow in front them. So she again marries in California. If she did not marry again, it would be her failure shows bow down in front of society. She married only to prove that every woman has a full right to live their life in a way males do after the death of their

wives. Males do not even mourn a day for their wives' demise but females are expected to mourn for their husband whole life. It was the concept which Marian challenged by marrying an English man.

After the death of Marian, Niel and Ed. Elliot are alone. Niel always searched a helpful female like Marian but he never gets one like her. Then he says: "He has known pretty women and clever ones since them,- but never one like her, as she was in her best days. Her eyes, when they laughed for a moment into one's own, seemed to promise a wild delight that he has not found in life" (171).

Her goodness, kindness and helpfulness always reminded him his mistreatment at the time of her problem. Marian was always in his mind after her departure. Not only Niel but also Ed. Elliot feels so: "I knew you'd feel that way," said Ed. Elliot, as a warm wave of feeling passed over his face. "I did!" (174). By presenting herself successful in handling any sorts of problems with full of enjoyment, Marian establishes her own identity. Her identity is an identity of a woman who dares to challenge the rule bound so called sophisticated society. Though her action of envolving herself with different males appears meaningless in the Victorian society, she is still right person to be appreciated. She is a woman who does everything against the norms and conditions of her society no matter what other people think of her. The only thing she has in her mind is to enjoy life with her own wishes and expectations and take advantage of her freedom in proper time as every male does since the beginning of human civilization. Marian suffered many troubles and comments but she did not care. To get out of it she started avoiding others comments. She involved herself to get the real happiness and, therefore lived a real life. What she desired from her life was not prosperity and so called respect but a single and most important thing that was happiness, an experience of reality.



The then society always put forward different troubles in every step of her life. The bitter experiences of society did not have negative effects in her life, rather it inspired her to struggle more and challenge the norms of society. Every time she engages her-self with different males and mocks upon the so called sophisticated society which is beyond our expectations.

These things are the main causes by which Marian has already established her identity among people because after many years of her death people remember her boldness. She became alive in them even after her death. It can be said that through the image of the bold and courageous lady protagonist, Cather, the novelist is advocating the individuality of women in general.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This research has analyzed Cather's *A Lost Lady* from feminist perspective. It has analyzed her novel as women of the Victorian society attempts to free herself from patriarchal boundaries by establishing her self- identity and autonomy. Marian, the protagonist's success to rebel against the rigid restraints of the society dramatizes the possibility of freedom of women.

The hierarchy made between men and women by the patriarchal society has marginalized women from the social position. But, some conscious women have raised questions against such discrimination and tried to stand on their own. Willa Cather rejects the view that women should serve males and look after the household and children. Her motto is to focus her work on the welfare of women who are suppressed in a male- dominated society.

The original background of this novel is the Victorian period where women were dominated and oppressed by the patriarchal society. Cather has written this novel to emancipate women from that discriminated society. The protagonist, Marian Forrester is fighting for women's freedom and self identity. She views patriarchal dominance as a social evil. The novel, *A Lost Lady*, shows that the female is an indicator of the failure and success of a man's life where Niel Herbert and Ed. Elliot's life became useless in the absence of Marian. They always miss her inspiration.

According to the social rules and regulations, women should only involve themselves in the household works. It was restricted for women to involve in party drinking wine and after marriage to have affair with denounces other males. Marian rebels against the conservative male ideology, which women's involvement in party, wine and affair with other male. Women in multiple activities are highly accepted in this novel. This novel is an attempt to introduce women's involvement in party as

men. The woman protagonist, Marian Forrester, involves herself in party and as a revolt against patriarchal society for the emancipation and self identity of women. Not only this, Mrs. Ogden and Miss Constance also involve in party.

Cather in this novel seems to be against women's dependence on men because such dependence defeats the very purpose of meaningful life. Cather herself remained unmarried in her life to involve herself in the field of art. But she wanted to show in this novel. That not only unmarried woman fight against the male- dominated society, married too do so. So, the married female character, Marian Forrester, involves in different fields. Marian's bringing Christmas tree, fighting with bull and going to cross dangerous bridge are her manly qualities which prove that she is not less in any sector than males.

Female heroism is one of the salient features of Cather's writing. The necessity of female heroism in the literary texts is to keep female in social dignity. In short, female heroism in the literary text was necessary to abolish the social concept which gives women the marginal status. To bring women in the world of freedom and equality, it was necessary to give women the role of the protagonist in the literary texts and to help women to come in the open ground without hesitation.

Marian raises the feminist voice for freedom from male domination. She has shown masculine qualities to change the life by living it autonomously. Niel Herbert, changes in his life something from the inspiration of Marian. Not, only Niel Herbert, many native boys change their behaviors and they changed them into respective position in job like Ivy Peters, Ed. Elliot. She is so determined in her aim that she never surrenders before male's decision. She rejects the decision made by Judge Pommeroy and Niel Herbert, not changing personal lawyer. She also rejects the decision made by Niel Herbert to sell her property in very little price. So, Niel Herbert

cannot force her to follow his decision directly. Marian embodies the vitality of her sex and duty and works as an agent for the improvement of her sex

Willa Cather is a woman with full understanding of women's status and their power in society. So, Willa Cather herself can be taken as a feminist writer. That is why her portrayal of Marian in *A Lost Lady* in the novel correlates with her ideas of the female as being equal in society. We can conclude that Cather has demonstrated Marian as a conscious, bold and courageous woman who fights for women's rights against patriarchal society. Her courage and behavior help her to challenge the patriarchal society and get Victory over it in order to attain the autonomy and self identity in her life.

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