Chapter-1

The feminist approach to literature is one of the most dynamic theories of today. It is a multifaceted theory and looks to many other contemporary schools for its attitude and terminology. Julia Kristeva, one of the prominent feminist writers of today is of the opinion that it is a theory that has been “marginalized by patriarchal social order.” She, in other words, sees the theory of feminism in relation with a specific view of society.

It has been pointed out that this theory draws its sustenance from mainly four schools of thought – (1) the historical-Marxist school of thought, (2) the psychological or Freudian School (3) the reader-response or the reception theory and (4) the deconstruction theory. But it is quite clear that, whatever might be the point of view they adopt or the terms they use the feminist writers look at life and literature from a specific, that is to say a feminist, point of view. The point of view or the outlook leans heavily upon the works of Virginia Woolf and the French feminist Simone de Beauvoir. Based on the ideas given by these two great figures, feminism tries to formulate a feminist social theory and thus to develop a feminine aesthetic of its own.

It has already been pointed out that the roots of feminism go back to the nineteenth century. In her *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Mary Wollstonecraft wrote very strongly of the intellectual and other capacities of women. As it has already been quoted above, she very acutely points out the difference between ignorance and innocence and asks why should women be denied knowledge on the pretext that they are divine, innocent creatures. This is just a pretext for denying them knowledge that might make them question the supremacy of men. They have been fobbed of with the rudiments of knowledge.
The pitiable fact is that most women do not even know their capacity for understanding. Thus the feminists believe that women should have political, social, economic and intellectual rights at par with men. Various movements, theories and philosophies are involved in this. It is, as will become more and more clear as the present work proceeds, as a very complex theory. Though it has come into existence as a full-fledged and acknowledged theory only in the twentieth century, it already has a history of its own. The history of feminism has been broadly divided into three Waves which will be dealt with in more detail later in this chapter. At present they can however, be briefly mentioned. The First Wave was in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries, the Second Wave in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third is said to have extended from the 1990s to the present times. To point in passing to their main characteristics briefly, the First Wave referred mainly to women’s suffrage or the right to vote. Those who were supporting it were known as the suffragettes. The Second Wave referred to the ideas and actions associated with the Women’s Liberation movement. This movement asked for and campaigned for, legal and social equality for women. The Third Wave pertains to the flaws and failures of the Second Waves and the reactions to it. In a way, it continues the main contents of the earlier movement. But this is a very brief mention of the various movements. They will be better explained later in this chapter.

As a result of this wide variety of outlook (Marxism, psychology, deconstruction and many others) Feminism has changed, the predominating perspectives in a whole range of areas of thought. Many other side-issues and offshoots had come out of these basic movements. There is a great variety in the discussions that have followed these, like feminist geography, feminist history, feminist criticism, feminist literary theory, etc. Toril Moi, one of the
contemporary feminist, has cast a look at all these varieties and has declared that feminism is an all-inclusive theory, it can well afford to be tolerant and entirely pluralistic in its adoption of literary methods and theories. In fact the term Feminism is very much of a blanket term and the seeds of feminism go right back to the primitives clays, when the early woman became conscious of her individuality. Feminism is often taken to be a twentieth-century phenomenon. It is true that it gained prominence in the last century, but now, in the twenty first century it can be placed against a historical perspective and can be, more or less, evaluated with critical detachment. It will then be seen that the concept of feminism can be traced back to the early nineteenth century. Mary Wollstonecraft had held up the banner of feminism in her famous *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in this manner:

> It then women are not a swarm of ephemeron triflers, why should they be kept in ignorance under the specious name of innocence? Men complain, and with reason, of the follies and caprices of our sex, when they do not keenly satirise our headstrong passions and groveling vices. (100)

Women have always wanted to know themselves, to find an identity for themselves. They have tried for decades, if not for centuries, to achieve self-dependence. Nearly two centuries after Wollstonecraft, we have Karen often saying, or rather asking:

> What is feminism? who is a feminist? How do we understand feminism across national boundaries? Across cultures? Across centuries? (119)

The question of gender differences comprises a range between men and women extending from the biological to the social, moral and even spiritual levels. Woman’s awareness of herself is never to be defined by her sexuality it reflects a situation that depends upon the economic organization of the society which again, in its turn, indicates what stage of technical evolution mankind
has achieved. It is often said that “a women is womb,” but that only proves true of the society or environment that says it. It has often been taken for granted that women are totally dependent on man. A man can think of himself independently as an individual, without depending on women, but a woman cannot think of herself without a man. Constance Jordan has expressed this idea quite decisively:

But the kind of rule differs: the freeman over the stave after another manner from that in which the male rules over the female, or a man over the child. (32)

The word Feminism first appeared in France in the last quarter of the 19th century as it did in England too. It made a slightly late appearance in USA, in 1910. The concept of feminism encompasses a system of ideas as well as a sociopolitical movement that is based on a critical analysis of a male privileges and woman ‘subordina

Feminism, to put it in a nutshell, opposes woman’s subordination to men, whether in the family or in society. It also challenges men’s claims to define what is the best for women without even consulting them. It opposes patriarchy in all forms. Discrimination against women like gender-based violence, economic discrimination, reproductive health inequalities and harmful traditional practices remain most pervasive. This is nothing new – it has been shouldered by them since the Fall for which, again, woman, or Eve,
has been blamed in a patriarchal religion. To quote Mary Wollstonecraft again:

Fragile in every sense of the word, they are obliged to look up to man for every comfort. In the most trifling dangers they cling to their support. (155)

Women are now attacking the traditional ideas of feminism in every way. One of the predominant issues is that of motherhood. The concept of motherhood and child-rearing was one of the most debatable issues of the movement. The women who fought in the Suffrage movement were fighting the inequalities they saw at home and out of the home in society. They often had to fight a war on two fronts; on one side was the status quo system of patriarchal society that sought to use their positions as mothers to enslave them. Their children, especially their daughters, were aware of their mother’s activities and had grown up in a world in which their mothers fought for their rights. Before this their identities had been that of daughter or wives or mothers. Now they could have one of their own. Feminism is something that is centered around one subject and one only: woman. A hierarchy is thus established. The concept of Feminism implies the individual identity of woman. Feminism continues in its struggle to establish itself as a ground for women’s political, economic and cultural ascendance in the face of all opposition. Though it has been called pro-woman, it is not anti-man. It tries to achieve a balance of the two genders for social, economic and political power in a society that has been male-dominated so far. It has developed into a major field during the past decades. Now scholars from many disciplines and many countries have interested themselves in this field. When we cast a look backwards it is vividly apparent how much has changed in the lives of women in the last few decades. Even as recently as thirty five years ago there was no
equal pay for men and women. When a man graduated he was given a pretty senior position in offices. But a woman, even if she managed to get a job, was expected to leave it as soon as she became pregnant. Things have changed now and changed for the better. Women are getting more and more opportunity. This has happened primarily because of the feminists. Cris Beasley has defined a feminist thus:

Many would agree that at the very least a feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain neglected and unsatisfied. (27)

It was Feminism that brought the issue of violence against women into light and created safe places for women to turn to when need arose and necessary changes in judiciary. Simultaneously it brought into the forefront new possibilities for ways in which women would be able to get independence, thus establishing on identity for themselves. There have been many clear, obvious as well as subtle changes in homes, and in workplaces. Women have become aware of their real place in society. Feminism has made it clear that women are equal to men and they can no longer be neglected in any situation. Kathy Davis has explained:

Equality between women and men is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and is also necessary and fundamental prerequisite for equality in development and peace. (40)

With the gradual and continuous development in studies in this field, scholars have stressed the need to recognize the relationship between changing ideas about the public and the private spheres of the role of women in the political and social field. The development of the relationship between feminism and imperialism is a result of this recent study. Formerly feminism was taken to mean, primarily, a concern with gaining equal political and legal
rights with man. But now more and more emphasis is being placed on the oppression of women and their use as object of satisfying male desire. This expanded scope is now central to feminist concern and demands for recognition of their enlightenment. Late eighteenth century saw the rise of demands for the Rights of Women. It was this that provided the basis and the framework of modern feminism, of which our author is a recognized exponent. She is the one to bring harmony out of noise and tension, to bring order out of chaos. Thus in *The Golden Notebook* Ella and Saul find themselves fully in one another:

A man and a woman—yes. Both at the end of their tether. Both cracking up because of a deliberate attempt to transcend their own limits. And out of chaos, a new kind of strength. (633)

But this was still far in future. In Britain the emergence of this consciousness was closely bound with the broad range of the social and economic changes brought about by the industrialization and urbanization in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The French Revolution brought in England a general acceptance of the basic principle of Equality, of the need for women’s rights and political representation. Women whether in France or in England actively demanded citizenship and a direct involvement in politics but were not granted these rights which today are taken for granted.

Barbara Caine has analysed the influence of feminism in England. She examines the relationship between feminist thoughts and actions and wider social and cultural changes over two centuries. She most competently investigates the complex question surrounding the concept of feminism. She shows how much the feminism of a particular period is related to the years that follow it. She declares:
At last we can stop looking at all our problems through men’s eyes and discussing them in men’s phraseology. (188)

The process of industrialization and urbanization considerably changed the social and economic condition of women both in the family and out of it. The former brought the hitherto unthought-of possibility of paid work, however little that payment might be. Women could now move out of their house and stand on their own feet. They became, to a certain extent, financially independent and no longer needed the support of men for the basic necessities of life. The ones who benefited the most by the revolution were the women of the middle class. They now got some respect in society because of economic quality. The concept of motherhood underwent considerable change. There was a new emphasis on direct and close maternal involvement in the care of and upbringing of children. Karen Offen Writes:

Man for the field and women for the hearth: Man for the sword and women for the needle. Man to command and women to obey. All else is confusion. (88)

During this time, i.e. the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century women faced extraordinarily paradoxical situation. Their position as mothers was enhanced and expended and at the same time she had to be a perfect companion to her husband. A man now desired a wife who could not only cook and change diapers but also well-educated and could help financially if needed. Woman was no longer confined to the private world of home and family. She was opening her wings now to reach the outer world, finding new horizons. Feminism has now stressed the need to see the ways in which new and liberal ideas can now germinate. Liberal feminism is now clamoring for equal rights with men, and the right to contribute to society. A greater
awareness of their abilities, as yet but dimly realized is now taking hold of their consciousness. Barbara Caine puts it thus:

We can deemed what we want for women, not because it is what men have got but because it is what women need to fulfill the potentialities of their own nature and to adjust themselves to the circumstance of their own lives. (188)

There was a growing awareness among men about the capacity of women, their intellectual potentiality. So the theoretical concept of feminism underwent a radical change. Women is now not only home-maker but an equal companion to man.

This concept of feminism has now undergone further changes. Now feminism is related not only to females but men as well. The relationship between men and feminism has been complex one Men have taken part significantly in their response to feminism. There have been both positive and negative responses and now these are being taken into account. For example one radical element in feminism now is man’s concept of woman. Men always want the perfect woman, whatever might be their own inadequacies. This again makes for instability and a feeling of inadequacy in women. Modern feminism is very conscious of this factor. Maclean Jean Taylor points out: “At the arrival of the perfect girls, who exemplifies the incredible, girl are in danger of losing their own world”. (25)

A very much more radical concept of feminism comes when woman actively rejects make symbolic order. In this system woman and man are seen to be in conflict for the symbolic order. This is often to be found in our author, especially towards the end of The Golden Notebook:

And Saul stood lecturing me about the pressures of society to conform, while he used the sexy pose. It was unconscious but it was directed at me, and it
was so crude I began to be annoyed. There were two different languages spoken to me. (484)

This is what has been called a metaphysical feminism. It is quite clear from the context that neither soul nor Anna is ready to give up the struggle for supremacy. It is taking place, not openly, but on defiantly subtle level, not apparent on the surface, and this is what makes it metaphysical.

Apart from these two, the radical and the metaphysical, several other different ideologies are to be found within feminism. All of them originate from one overwhelming truth: that justice requires freedom and equality for women. But still they differ over philosophical quibbles about the nature of that freedom, the manner in which it is to be gained, the function of the state and the notion of human responsibility so far as society and the family are concerned.

The conservative view over the concept of feminism is that the treatment of women as a group differentiated from men is not unjust. They allow that in certain cases individual women do suffer discrimination and because of it, unmerited hardships. But, they argue, this suffering is but accidental, it is not because of a system deliberate social oppression. They argue that in essence the difference between the social role of women and that of men is equal. The role of women is not actually inferior to that of men. They point out that women are traditionally better adopted than men to their subservient role. It is surprising to find that writers of the calibre of Rousseau, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Freud argue thus.

On the other hand there is liberal feminism. This goes back to Mill’s *The Subjection of Women*. The tradition thus inaugurated is followed by groups like the National organization for women which agitate for legal
reforms to enhance the status of women. Liberal feminism advocates liberation for women and the freedom to determine their individual social role and to complete with men on a basis of equality. Here it has to be remembered that every individual, whether man or woman, is seen to be in constant competition with others in order to maximize his or her self-interest and it is necessary that the state be alert to see that the competition is fair. This is to be done by ensuring equality of opportunity. The liberal feminist sees no need for bringing about whole-sale changes in society to bring about the liberation of women.

The classical Marxist view of feminism is also important since Lessing, besides being a feminist, was once a member of Marxist organization also. This view of feminism looks upon the oppression of women as a direct result of the institution of private property. Feminism, therefore, is seen as part of a broader struggle to achieve a communist society. The long-term interest of women is, however, limited to the working class. Women have an equal interest with men eliminating a society in which one particular class dominates another. As Marxism is rooted in the concept of capitalism, women have a crucial role to play the removal of a capitalistic society. Marxist feminist, therefore, see the oppression of women as part of a socio – economic system. They believe that the restructuring of society will bring freedom to man from his traditional responsibility of providing for women.

Thus the concept of feminism has undergone many changes with the passage of time. Now the time has come to have a look at the history of feminism and place Doris Lessing in it. The feminist movement has been divided into “waves” instead of stages and phases. Thus there are three “waves” of these, the first refers mainly to the suffragettes of the early
twentieth century. The second wave refers to the ideas and actions associated with the women’s liberation movement of the 1960s which campaigned for legal and social equality of women. The third wave refers to the continuation and the reaction to the failures of the second wave of the 1960s.

Though there are feminist sentiments and opinions in many Wollstonecraft yet the feminist movement cannot be said to have began with her. Her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* was a lone voice whose relevance and importance is realized today but at the time it was either derided or dismissed as an oddity. The move was consciously and deliberately began as a protest movement only towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century. It is from that time that the First Wave of the Feminist movement is held to have begun. This was mainly a political movement, concentrating on getting political equality with men in governing the country. It seems odd today that women did not have the right to vote. They had to fight to get it. It was, at the time, known as the suffragette movement and the women who agitated for voting rights were suffragettes. They courted arrest. They bound themselves up with chains to roadside pillars and cried out slogans from there. They were very often ridiculed for their action, they were called undignified and unladylike, but it is because of these pioneers that the women of today can take a hand in the administrative affairs of the country. There are references to the suffragettes in many of the literary works of the time, as is natural. It was particularly in works that dealt with contemporary life, like Shaw’s plays, that one came across passing references to the movement, almost always in a derisive manner. But this was in the first few years of the twentieth century. Before that also there were protests and attempts for legal rights in other spheres.
For example it might seem surprising today that women did not have property rights. That is to say, the father’s property passed to the eldest son. It by chance a woman was an heiress and owned any property, moveable or immoveable, on her own, it automatically became the property of her husband as soon as she got married. There were stirrings against this so that a daughter may have the right to inherit the father’s property.

A far more inhuman law was that the wife and her children were the property of the husband. The husband could do anything he wanted. He could even sell the wife if he thought fit. As a matter of fact a husband could even sell his wife if he so wanted and in one of Hardy’s novels this is exactly what happens. It is true that Hardy shows the man drunk at the time that he sells his wife and tries to get her back when he becomes sober, but here what is relevant is the fact that he could do it at all. This law had to be changed and the feminists managed to do it though not without a struggle.

Many women writers rose into prominence during the First Wave, like Dorothy Richardson who, like Lessing was a novelist and like Lessing wrote a series novel which became one of the most important novels in English literature because of its use of the stream – of – consciousness technique. This was *Pilgrimages* which was a four–novel series. Katharine Mansfield was another writer of this time who was a short story writer. There were many others but the most important of them were, in England, Virginia Woolf and, in France, Simone de Beauvoir.

Virginia Woolf has been called the “founding mother of the contemporary debate in England.” It is Mary Eagleton, a feminist of contemporary times who has called her this and she is perfectly right. Not only was Virginia Woolf a” founding mother,” she was also a prominent novelist
and a leading figure of the time. The impact of her personality may well be judged when one remembers the fact that the highly-debated play *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* took her name in its title. Indeed, she has become a symbol today. It was she who pleaded for privacy in *A Room of One’s Own* and wrote for *The Common Reader* who should be held in mind by the author of any work as his target audience. But she should be dealt with more in detail. Meanwhile a few more remarks about the First Wave are needed. The first wave feminism refers to a period of feminist activities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in U.K. as well as the U.S.A. It was a time when women did have the courage to stand together and fight for their right. Havelock Ellis writes in the *preface of Margaret Sanger* that they fought as individuals, not as mass. In the mass they sank back into blind and hopeless subjection.

This stage of feminism originally focused on the promotion of property rights for women, opposition to chattel marriage and the ownership of women and their children by their husbands. By the end of the nineteenth century the movement on gaining political power, particularly the right to vote. In the first wave women are told to fight for their rights. Estelle B. Freedman writes:

If male aggression and dominance are at the root of female oppression, then the feminist program would logically either the extermination of the offending sex or else eugenics proper to modify its character. (200)

The name of Virginia Woolf stands out at this time along with that of some others. Hers however, is the most prominent among literary persons, if not among the political ones. Her books, particularly *A Room of One’s Own* have become classics in this field.
She is known more for her creative work, her novels, than for anything else. In addition to her novels (The waves is specially famous) which have become subjects for analysis by later feminist critics as well as by others, she produced two critical texts which are important contributions to feminist theory. One of them has already been mentioned, *A Room of One’s Own* which was published in 1929 and *Three Guineas* that was published in 1938. She too liked the other feminists of her time, was concerned with the basic and the material advantages that were given to men but denied to women. The first of these two books focuses on the historical and the social environment that used to control the work of the women who wanted to write. The second book is based mainly on the different professions like law, education, medicine etc. in which women can be interested and can be accepted. With reference to men she raises many fundamental issues in these two books, ranging from mother’s allowance and divorce law reforms to proposals for a women’s college and a newspaper meant exclusively for women. It should be pointed out here that in the early part of the twentieth century though women were allowed to study in the college up to graduation level, they were not given the requisite degree.

Virginia Woolf women have been victimized by men but she also says that women themselves have cooperated with men in conniving at this. They are like a “looking glass,” they themselves give men the image of that which they (the men) want in women. It is in her second book that she turns her mind to an analysis of legal injustice, fascism, militarism etc. She finds them all to be related integrally to patriarchy and goes back to give attention to the domestic sphere that discriminates against the girl child right from infancy.

It should be pointed out here that her significant contribution to feminism that gender identity is imposed from outside by society and is
therefore, by definition almost, subject to challenge and to change. She implicitly voices this in her novels and this feature has been explained by the feminist writer Toril Moi. This feminist critic quotes extensively from Woolf to show how, repeatedly, Woolf applies masculine standards of judgment to women characters, thus rejecting rabid feminism, as well as destroying gender identity. There is, for example, a description of a seventeenth – century writer, the Duchess of Newcastle. At the end of a long description in which male qualities are attributed to her writings, (“vast bulk,” “authentic five” etc.) there is a sentence that can be applied to a woman as well as to a man. Toril Moi argues that in such descriptions Virginia Woolf has “displaced” gender identities. This kind of confusion of gender is typical of Virginia Woolf and is very appealing to feminist critics of a later generation like Toril Moi herself. As will be apparent later, this ambivalence of gender is one of the features of the Third Wave of feminism.

Here it will be appropriate and relevant to refer to Woolf’s, Orlando because, first of all, it is a novel by a feminist, and secondly because of the extraordinary nature of the novel. It will be classed as a historical as well as a fantasy novel. It is not taken very seriously by literary critics and it is doubtful if the author herself ever took it seriously either. This is because of the content of the novel as well as the tone adopted by the writer. The tone is half-humorous, half-jocular. But it is the content which is most extraordinary and particularly relevant from a feminist point of view. It can be called a historical novel because it starts in the sixteenth century with Queen Elizabeth visiting the castle of Orlando’s father, with Orlando a young man in his teens. But it is a fantasy novel on two counts. First of all, though it starts in the Elizabethan Era, it passes though Jacobean, the eighteenth and the nineteenth century and
ends up in Woolf’s own time with the same protagonist, Orlando. But this is not all. Midway through the novel here Orlando undergoes a change of sex and turns into a woman. So half of the book is written from the viewpoint of a man and half of it from that of a woman. It is a very interesting novel. There are many ironical feministic statements in it, two of which may be quoted. Orlando, become a woman, generalizes about the male sex:

> Ignorant and poor as we are compared with the male sex… while they debar us even from a knowledge of the alphabet… still – they fall from the mast – head. (145-146)

This is a clear indication that in the eighteenth century women were denied the knowledge of the alphabet. Except for a very few they could not read or write and it also implies that men were fallible creatures, somewhat laughable in their frailty.

The second instance comes when Orlando, after having changed into a woman, comes back to England to face many legal charges against her:

> The chief charges against her were (1) that firstly she was dead and therefore could not hold any property whatsoever, (2) that she was a woman, which amounts to much the same thing. (Orlando. 153)

Here it is that the feminist in Virginia Woolf speaks out clearly: one might as well be dead if one is a woman. It is true that the sentence is written humorously, but it contains a grain of truth none the less. Such obliquely feminist statements are scattered throughout the novel.

While we have Virginia Woolf in England, there is the voice of Simone de Beauvoir in France, an eminent, consciously feminist writer. Her work marks the transition from the First Wave of feminism to the Second Wave. She was a revolutionary figure in her personal life as well as literary life. This was because she was the socially accredited mistress of Jean Paul Sartre and
an active feminist. One fact about her will make it clear how strong a feminist she was and how much of a revolutionary. She was a pro-abortionist, a fact which was nothing but a sacrilege. Even now an abortion, though it is legally allowed in many countries, yet from a religious point of view it is a sin. One can conjecture how much courage it had taken to profess such views in her own time.

Her extremely influential book *The Second Sex*, published in 1949, has elements of both the First Wave and the Second Wave. That is the reason she has been called a transitional figure. On one hand it recognizes the materialistic needs of women and their oppression as the First wave feminist do, while on the other hand it also looks forward to the Second Wave in that it recognizes an immense difference between men and women in the matter of biological, psychological and economic discrimination. Biological discrimination is something done by nature and nothing can be done about it. One can at most give physical strength to women by affording them proper food and exercise. Psychological discrimination is something more difficult to cope with women are generally soft-hearted and family - centered and home-oriented. This too can be altered to a certain extent. Economic discrimination is totally removable because it is totally man made. Property rights, wage-rights, labour- rights can all be given to women. Women have equal rights with men to join jobs to earn a living, they should be given the same wages as men, and they should have the right to paternal and maternal property the same as men have. She also points out that women have no soliclarity among themselves. This is because they are all dispersed among indifferent, or not hostile, men. Nor have they combined to form an association or a group such
as other oppressed groups has. Such is the vitiated environment in which women live that they are always, automatically put in an inferior position:

Legislators, priests, philosophers, writers and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of women is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth. (qtd. in Widoson, Peter etal. 210)

She agrees with Virginia Woolf in the matter of subjection of women. It has been already pointed out, in the discussion Woolf above, that she (Virginia Woolf) recognizes the fact that women, as a “Looking glass” reflect and encourage men’s image of themselves. Beginning with the Bible, de Beauvoir gives a history of the way in which women have been deliberately put in an inferior position by men. It has come to such a pass that today not only men, but even women themselves believe that they are inferior to men. And this is supported by religion. In the Old Testament it is explicitly stated that woman is the lesser counterpart of men. Elsewhere throughout the Bible women have been belittled. Now to counteract these two thousand years of misdirection, oppression and deliberate lying women will have to make a stand for their own social and economic possibilities as well as potentialities.

Like the feminists of the second wave, de Beauvoir differentiates between sex and gender. Some of her sentences in this context have become famous. For example she denies any biological determinism between the genders but she sees an interaction between natural and social functions:

One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman; ..... it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature ....Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an other. (qtd. in Widoson,Peter ,etal.210)

De Beauvoir thus distinguishes between “being feminine” and being constructed as “a woman”. Women will have to break out of this inhibiting habit that has been instilled into them over the centuries. It they can do so, she
firmly believes, then patriarchy will come to an end. Like the feminists of the first wave, De Beauvoir wants freedom from biological differences and widespread social recognition of the intellectual abilities of women. But before anything else, they will have to get voting rights. Once they get that, all the others will gradually follow.

De Beauvoir’s stand is an entirely Intellectual one. She thus rejects the view of some of her contemporaries who, accepting the biological differences between men and women, regard the female body as sacred. They glorify the distinct qualities of the female body and worship its capacities. De Beauvoir does not do this.

Her stand is not only intellectual but very down-to-earth. For example she does not go in for psychological complexities. It was a very great temptation for feminists of that time to lean towards the newly developed terminology of psycho-analysis and talk about the deep instinctive “unconscious” strength and knowledge of women.

Along with Virginia Woolf she is one of the two great feminist figures of the First Wave and her book *The Second Sex* is one of the vital documents of the movement. Even then she has been criticised adversely by some of the feminists of the Second Wave. One of them, Patricia Meyer Spacks has pointed out that very few feminists had concerned themselves with women’s writing. She says of Simone de Beauvoir that she too does not give enough importance to women writers in her book. Spacks complains that de Beauvoir’s treatment of them:

….. always suggests an a *priori* tendency to take them less seriously than their masculine counterparts. (qtd. in Widoson, Peter et al. 213)
It is an undoubted fact that two feminist writers of the Second Wave, Julia Kristeva and Helene Cixous, were both very highly influenced by de Beauvoir. Perhaps this was because, in many respects, many of her ideas had anticipated those of the Second Wave feminists. As it has already been pointed out, her book stands between the two waves. In fact a later writer Maggie Humm, had suggested that the publication of *The Second Sex* (1949) may be taken to end the First Wave and it was acclaimed by such prominent writers of the Second Wave as Betty Friedan and Shulamith Firestone in their books *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) and *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) respectively. Both of them are, as can be seen from the dates, quite early writers of the Second Wave.

The second wave of feminism refers to a period of activities beginning in the early 1960s and going to the late 1980s. Sometimes it is also known as a continuation of the first wave. This wave of feminism, however, continues to co-exist with the Third Wave, and it is specially important to us because Lessing belonged to this wave. Estelle B. Freedman was one of the pioneers of this group. She, while comparing this wave with first, says that while the first wave focused on such things as voting rights the second was largely concerned with other aspects of equality such as discrimination.

There are, according to her, five aspects of this discrimination: (a) biological, (b) experience, (c) discourse, (d) the unconscious and (e) social and economic conditions. These are most important issues in the Second Wave and they have been dealt with very methodically by Elaine Showalter. She is one of the foremost feminists of the Second Wave and will be dealt with in detail later.
Helene Cixous is one of the most important theorists of these feminists. She uses the de-constructive method of Derrida to point out the results of “death-dealing binary thought.” She then proceeds to give a list of binary opposites like Active versus passive, sun versus Moon etc. and comes to the conclusion that this kind of opposition always corresponds to Man versus woman oppositions. In these opposites the female side is always being seen as negative and powerless. This is what she calls “the hidden male female opposites” which automatically calls for a positive/negative evaluation. According to her the female is always equated with death and defeat, as Non-Being. This is the patriarchal philosophy that the feminist has to deconstruct and she devotes her essay Sorties to doing this.

In another celebrated essay The laugh of the Medusa, published in 1976 she takes a visionary and poetic view of women’s writing and finds the female imagination to be not only a beautiful thing in itself, but also infinite in its capacities. She too likes de Beauvoir and many other like-minded persons, thinks that woman must be conscious of her potentialities and must learn to throw off all inhibitions so as to be able to write freely. She leans towards psychology in her attitude rather than on society or sociology. She advises women to put their “bodies” in their writing. In fact in the second wave of feminism, a changed came into being.

They want to contribute, and not only to contribute, but, if necessary, initiate and proliferate social changes. They want to become stronger human beings and to present their individuality in a totally uninhibited manner. They are looking for new horizons for themselves and Cixous has ably voiced this desire of theirs. It is in her stress upon the female body that she differs from Virginia Woolf who had, after all, a Victorian upbringing. Cixous, unlike
Woolf, writes in almost a lyrical vein of the female body. Her vision of the truly liberated woman writer is one who can say:

I…. overflow, my desires have invented new desires, my body knows unheard – of songs. Time and again…I have felt so full of luminous torrents that I could burst- burst with forms much more beautiful than those which are put up in frames and sold for a stinking fortune. (qtd. in Widoson, Peter, etl. 227)

This sounds like a pastiche of Lawrence, but it is not written with any such intention. This is what Cixous earnestly believes.

She also rejects the idea of a theory, any theory at all. She says that women’s writings are not to be confined within the narrow limits of a theory. She calls women’s writings “L’eeriture feminine” and she says that whatever masculine language whether symbolic or not, might ordain, women’s writings will at once alter and “subvert” it in such a way as to create a new identity for women which will, in its turn, create new social institutions.

“The other bisexuality” is a phrase that has been coined by her. This kind of sexual awareness does not negate the difference between men and women but becomes conscious of it in another way. She says, with particular reference to women’s writings:

A woman’s body, with its thousand and one thresholds of ardor…. Will make the old single- grooved mother – tongue reverberate with more than one language. (qtd. in Widoson, Prter, etal. 228)

According to her it is woman’s special privilege and duty to give this new association of ideas to language, specially because that language has been under masculine domination for so long.

Selden and Widdow son give three main characteristics of Second Wave feminism. These are, in the order given by them:
(a) the omnipresence of patriarchy
(b) the inadequacy for women of existing political organization
(c) the celebration of women’s difference from men as central to the
cultural politics of liberation

These are to be found in many important writings of this movement. The highly popular book Germaine Greer *The Female Eunuch*, published in 1970, is one instance. It has given rise to the work of Elaine Showalter in America and her invention of the term “gynocriticism”. This needs serious consideration.

Showalter is easily the most influential of the American feminist theorists of the Second Wave. Her book *A Literature of their Own*, published in 1977 is a very important work as it gives a history of women writers in Britain. This landmark book examines women writers from the three Bronte sisters (Anne Bronte, Emily Bronte and Charlotte Bronte) from the feminist point of view, thus encouraging a completely feminist critique that concerns itself with women readers and “gynocritics”, concerned with women writers.

Her chief argument is that there is no pre-determined or inherent female sexuality or female imagination and here she reveals herself as a Second Wave feminist. All the same, she holds that there is a profound difference between women’s writings and those of men and that the entire traditions of women’s have been neglected by male critics. It has been her sacred task to bring women writers to the light when they had been lost in the darkness of neglect and ignorance:

“…..the lost continent of the female tradition has risen like the Atlantis from the of English literature”. (qutd. in Widoson, Peter, etal. 220)
Show walter has divided this tradition into three phases and R Salden and Peter Widoson have referred to this in their book:

1. The “feminine” phase (1840-80) - This includes Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot. According to Showalter the female writers of this phase assimilate and express the male aesthetic standard prevalent at that time. The patriarchal values of the time required that female authors can be authors, but they should remain gentlewomen. They dealt with their immediate domestic and social circle, and suffered from a guilt complex because they were writers.

2. The “feminist” phase (1880-1920) – This includes radical feminist writers who protest against male values in support of the suffragette community of sisterhoods. Writers like Elizabeth and Olive Schreiner are included here.

3. The “female” phase (1920 onwards) – This includes Dorothy Richardson, Kathar-Ine Mansfield and Rebecca west, all of whom – develop the idea of a specifically female writing as an aspect of self discovery she takes three writers as mentioned above. Of these three Dorothy Richardson is of peculiar interest to us because, first of all, her long novel-series _Pilgrimage_ is rather like the novel series of Doris Lessing a and secondly because at this time Joyce and Proust were writing about the male consciousness and she wrote about the female consciousness. (qutd.in. Widdowson, Peter, etal.220)

Again, Elaine Showalter differentiates between the early novelists of the third phase and the later. After Virginia Woolf, she affirms, there is a new view of sexuality in women novelists, for example in the novels of Jean Rhys. After her came a different generation of women writers who were educated in the universities and did not feel the need for writing about oppression and deprivation of women any longer. Writers like A.S. Byatt and Margret Drabble belong to this group. Then in the early 1970s there was a shift
towards a more aggressive viewpoint as well as tone of expression and we have the novels, primarily, of our author, Doris Lessing and others like Penelope and Muriel Spark.

The fact that Showalter is indebted to Virginia Woolf is reflected in the little of her book, *A Literature of their Own*, that echoes the little of Woolf’s celebrated *A Room of one’s Own*. In their aims too, as Mary Eagleton points out, they resemble each other in many ways. Showalter however, criticizes Woolf for not being openly a feminist, of denying her femaleness which calls “retreat into androgyny,” as has been pointed out earlier in the context of discussing Virginia Woolf as a First Wave feminist. She, however, resembles Woolf in many things. Both of them are passionately interested in the writing of women and in researching on such works. Both of them know only too well that women who write are unknown by others, they are almost invisible. This is the reason why both are anxious to do research work on them and bring them to public notice. But there are certain points over which the American gynocritic differs from Virginia Woolf as well. Showalter for example lays stress on the female author and charter, and takes for authentic the experience of the female writer which she can later transmute into literary works.

Toril Moi, a feminist of the Third Wave, has written extensively Showalter and she that Anglo American feminist theory is characterized by a lack of a coherent theory of its own. Nor is there any systematic quality there in whatever theory is actually there. She, since she is a later critic, has a better perspective on Virginia Woolf and therefore a better understanding of her, and she disagrees with Showalter’s judgment. Showalter also makes certain connections between literature and reality on one hand and between literary evolution and feminist politics on the other. It is only after doing this that she
relates the two of them. But, according to Toril Moi, all of these connections and inter-relations are weakened and undermined by their inherent theoretical weakness. This view is a result of the theory of post-structuralism that came in fashion later in the century. According to this view the text is everything, and therefore, the very idea of women writing, and also that of women writing about the experience of other women is a mistaken idea. According to this view then, Showalter’s position is naturally seen to be a weak as well as a wrong one.

Showalter is quite aware of this criticism of her work and had replied to it in her essay *Towards a Feminist poetics* in which she attributes this weakness (which is largely hypothetical) in her work to the “essentially male character” of the theory itself. She emphatically says:

What I mean by “male critical theory” is a concept of creativity, literary history or literary interpretation based entirely on male experience and put forward as universal. (qtd. in Freedman 23)

The second part of this sentence raises a very pertinent question, which goes far beyond the individual stance taken by Showalter – it refers to a question that has very wide references – it concerns the universality of art. So far, in a male dominated patriarchal society, masculine literary and artistic standards have been accepted without question. The question now, from the feminist point of view is how valid are they? This is a very relevant question since it has been claimed, by many writers, that Doris Lessing’s writings have this indispensable quality in them – a quality indispensable for literary greatness, for immortality. Up till now, the judgments on this topic have been entirely masculine. No doubt there are certain, in fact there are many works that universal from any point of view, but equally well, there are many whose
universal quality can be called into question. The opposite might as well be true. Some of Lessing’s work, which enthusiastic feminists have declared to have universal relevance may, from another view point, be found to be wanting in this quality. But that, however important it might be, had better be kept for later discussion.

A few words should also be said about another feminist of the second wave. She is American and represents, unlike Showalter, radical feminism. In American the second wave got its impetus from the protest movements of many types that were taking place at the time: the civil rights movement, peace movement, and such other. The feminist movements that grew out of these were radical in nature and Kate Millet’s belonged to this group. Her book *sexual politics* published in 1969 is an important book in this context. The publication of this book is a pointer, as can be seen at a glance if one looks at she dates of some other books of this kind:

1968 –Mary Ellman, *Thinking about women*
1970- Germaine Greer, *The female Eunuch*
- Eva Figes, *Patriarchal Attitudes*
- Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of sex*

Kate Millett’s book, thus, appeared at a time when the second wave feminism just came to be known as a perceptible, visible movement and became instantly popular. She argues, taking her examples from history, literature, psychoanalysis, sociology and many other areas, that economic inequality is not the only cause of women’s oppression. Ideological brainwashing or indoctrination has much to do with it. The book takes patriarchy at the centre and she says it needs a systematic overhauling. It is Millet who, borrowing her terms from sociology, differentiates between “sex”
and “gender”. According to this “sex” is a biological factor but “gender” is a psychological one. She argues that the typical, traditional concepts of sexuality are propagated as much by men as by women. People act out these unequal sex roles and domination on one hand and subordination on the other is the result of this “sexual politics”. This is an important, a pioneering concept in the feminist movement. Women of second wave contributed markedly to social changes. They felt a need for an individual identity of their own. They did not so much hanker after quality with men which were an issue before this, as to create a free world within and outside themselves. They wanted to break free. Freedman says:

Although the women’s movement of the late nineteenth century contributed to the transformation of women’s social roles, it did not a separate, unique female identity. Most Feminist did not adopt radical demands for equal status with men that originated at the Seneca Falls convention of 1948. Rather they preferred to retain membership in a separate female sphere, one which they did not believe to be inferior to men’s sphere.(23)

It is taken for granted that society has to undergo a massive alternation and this change can only be brought about by giving freedom to women. The feminist activist carol Hanisch invented the slogan “The personal is political which became synonymous with the second wave. This wave also saw women’s cultural and political inequalities as being inextricably linked and encouraged women to have a better understanding of their own potentialities. They had to work in order to get financially strong and became free of male domination.

Betty Friedan’s book The Feminism Mystique (1963) takes up the age-old issue of motherhood and tries to explode the idea that a woman find fulfillment in child-rearing and home-making. In fact such a role limited a
woman’s potentialities and generated unhappiness. Often enough a woman has to give up a really promising career in order to bring up her children. Women have been brainwashed for millennia and told that their true fulfillment lies in home-making. All this has to be changed. It makes for misery. A career is as essential for a woman as it is for a man. The position of woman in any society is a mark of civilization reached by that society. This is what Juliet Mitchell calls “the index of advance most social or political ideologies in democratic societies have taken equality between the sexes as a principle, not as a practice. Charlotte Brunch says that feminism is not just:

a laundry list of so-called women’s issues such as childcare and equal pay. While these issues are important, feminism is not a new ghetto were women are confined, to be concerned only about a selection of topics separated from overall social and economic context of lives.(204)

This feminism, on the other hand, has been called “a transformational politics that touches every aspect of our lives. Some of the feminist of this group pay attention to the practical aspects of life like equal pay etc. While others seek to abolish the moral and spiritual ascendancy of men over women. Lessing belongs to this group. Her protagonists come mainly from the privileged classes are therefore free from racial oppression. The struggle is for abolishing gender discrimination, to establish reciprocity and harmony in life. Thus Saul says to Anna:

He came over to me and put his arms around me. He said, “we are comforting each other. What for' I wonder?” Then, with his arms around me still, “we’ve got to remember that people with our kind of experience are bound to be depressed and unhopeful.” (TGNB 496)

Simone De Beauvoir, in her famous book The Second Sex gave voice to the mentality of this generation of feminist. She maintains that a woman is not
born, but made by society: “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” Doris Lessing places her women characters in conflict with a parochial society and depicts:

“I’m sixteen,” said Martha, between set teeth…..“My dear, nice girls don’t wear clothes like this…….”“I’m not a nice girl” broken in Martha, and suddenly burst into laughter. (MQ16)

This wave of feminism expressed very vocally by Lessing, continues well into the third. Many of its tents continue to be accepted by the later feminist though Lessing belongs, most firmly, to this wave.

The third wave of Feminism arose in the 1990s. It was a response to the perception of the partial failure of the second wave. It seeks to challenge or avoid what it takes to be the second wave’s definitions of femininity which, according to them, overemphasized the importance or experiences of the upper class, privileged white woman. It also contains internal debates upon “difference feminists.” This involves elements of psychology as in card Gillian who believes that there are important differences between the sexes. A completely new view of women is to be found in her book. It says that men and women were created as equals by God. He had endowed both of them with certain rights which are basic ones and cannot be taken away, nay, should not be taken away, by anyone:

We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men and women are created equal: that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the content of the government.(Carol 33)

This is a point of view hitherto not expounded, for the traditional belief is that God created Eve as a weaker partner to Adam. Gillian argues the
opposite. She says that of all humans a woman is the only one who shares a unique power with God: the ability to create a separate human being within herself.

The reinterpretation, in their own terms, of gender and security is the central theme of the third wave. They also focus on politics and the second wave’s standards as to what is good or not for women.

What is good or not for women. This is all the more important since, even now, sexual double standards still continue in society. We have to understand the conditions that oppress us and then only can female freedom be truly gained. They say that “silence is ignorance” and we must not remain ignorant of our inner selves and the rights that we have. It is always better to speak out for ourselves it we want to get what we should have got long ago. Machean Jill Taylor says:

Tell them about how you’re never really a whole person, if you remain silent. Because there’s always one little piece inside you that wants to be spoken out and if you don’t speak it out it will just up and punch you in the mouth from inside.(69)

One of the problems faced by the modern girl, as seen by this author, is the male concept of woman. Men want a perfect woman for themselves, however inadequate they themselves may be. This necessarily makes the modern girl feel insecure, for she will never come up to the ideal. On the other hand it is also true that the patriarchal concept of woman is being steadily challenged by women. They have joined hands and have come forward to investigate the whole word. This too has been explained by Janel Todd. She is of the opinion that the patriarchal concept of women has received more than
adequate expression over the years and this was a world from which women have been hither to excluded this needs to be changed.

The patriarchal nature of language and culture must inform the tellings of history. This is the genre from which women have been especially excluded and into which they are now entering as objects of study and as writing subjects. (62)

This is the approach which disturbs the canon and all readings of past literature. Several such minor branches of feminism have developed over the last few years and there are some feminists who identify themselves with, not one, but several such movements. There is a multifariousness in them which has served to diversify the movement. For example there is a socialistic branch which connects the oppression of women to Marxist ideas that are connected with exploitation of labour. Socialist feminists see women as being held down as a result of their unequal standing in their workplace and home. Their freedom is being limited by masculine domination. This however, is by no means a modern phenomenon. Doris Lessing had pronounced Marxist sympathies earlier in her life and her early novels give clear evidence of it hater on however, she was able to distance herself, put this view in perspective and say, in 1971:

But Marxism and its various off shoots has fermented ideas everywhere, and so fast and so energetically that, once the “way-out”, it has already been absorbed, has become part of Jordinary thinking. (Preface to TGNB11)

It can be seen that Lessing has been able to outgrow Marxist feminism. Yet she belongs essentially to the second wave though she has clear affinities with the principles of the third wave as well. Indeed it is but automatic for a second wave feminist to glide into the later group.
The concept of feminism and its ramifications over the decades have now been studied. A very brief history of the movements has also been given and Doris Lessing has been placed within the relevant group. It remains now to be seen how for one is justified in thus placing her. In the case of a committed artist, the critic is more or less safe in labeling an artist in a certain way. In the case of Doris Lessing it is not very safe. She has a very long life-span and a long career as a literary artist. She has seen the world change around her artist must, undergone many changes in her own life and her psychological make-up. Yet it is true that in spite of all the changes she has gone through, it may be said that she started as a feminist, continued as a feminist and died as one. As late as in 1971 she said:

“To get the subject of women’s Liberation over with – I support it, of course, because women are second-class citizens” (Preface to TGNB 8)

The study of her novels that ensues will adequately support this claim. It is hoped that what follows will enrich one’s understanding of the feminist movement as well as of the novels of Lessing. It is interesting to see how her concept of woman in the many different roles in her life had gradually but subtly changed over the years. In her earlier works, for example, she regards marriage itself as a negative institution. It stifles a woman's personality because it is a patriarchal and mostly tyrannical institutions, and they are mostly women, like Marion Mary Turner, Martha, Maisie, Marjorie, Molly, Ella and Anna are all victims of possesssion. They however refuse to accept the domination of males. She however, quite often presents the males point of view. Martha’s husband in *A Proper marriage*, Douglas Knowell, is congratulated by his friends on having such a fire wife and he justifies his surname-knowell-fully by showing that he is quite aware of his good fortune:
They think I’m a helluva lucky” he announced and at the thought of the scenes in the bar with the boys, a reflection of his proud and embarrassed grin appeared on his face. He swooped over to her, ground her tightly to him, and announced, “And so-so I am.(APM34)

He looks upon his wife as an object of “amusement” or even a decoration piece for his drawing-room and she resents it. She wants to be recognized as an individual in her own right. She does not take pride or delight in her husband’s status or property. One the other hand, unlike the other wives like Mrs. Maynard or Mrs. Talbot she finds satisfaction in being “unique, individual and altogether apart from any other person”. (APM 31) and soon enough she looks at her marriage as being “a foolish mistake”, that it is not “a proper marriage”. This is in her temperament. So she is not happy with her second marriage either. She resents what she thinks to be possessiveness in her second husband, Anton Hesse. She cannot adjust in his relationship.

This does not mean that Lessing approves of, or wants, free love women. On the other hand, she approves of such relationships that are solidly based on mutual love, consideration and esteem. She had said in an interview:

I’m impatient with people who emphasize sexual revolution. I say we should all go to bed, shut up about sexual liberation, and go on with the important matters. (Interview with Jonah Ruskin 1)

The main issue with Lessing as a feminist is not sexual freedom but emotional fulfillment. In *The Golden Notebook*, written many years after the serial novel beginning with *Martha Quest* Anna and Ella have one affair after another where there is no question of marriage because the men are all married with children. The men in his and other books look for love, sexual satisfaction and fulfillment outside their marital life. But Lessing shows the double standard prevailing in society because a like license is not allowed to women. Men can
have extra-marital affairs, but not women. Thus in *A Proper Marriage* as soon as he comes to know that Martha mixes with Air Force men, he starts suspecting her of being unfaithful to him and starts to ill treat her. In order to do some constructive work she has joined “Help for our Allies Committee” and one night she comes home late after attending a meeting, and Douglas has an altercation with her:

“Tell me, Martha-did you sleep with him, did you?”

“No, I didn’t”.

He respected it; she repeated. She fell off to sleep again. Again she woke up in the dark, to hear that persistent voice, this time repeating, “Did you sleep with Hesse?” She laughed, “No, don’t be absurd.” He went through a list of names. (APM351)

All this because he merely suspects, he has no proof. Martha, on the other hand, know that he has had any number of affairs, but it seems as though she has no right to put any questions to him, far less take any steps against it. Like any sensitive novelist she too thinks that such double standards, domestic tyrannies, jealousies etc. destroy married life.

In *The Golden Notebook* she visualizes a life for a woman in which she is totally free. Here in the last section Anna, who is herself a novelist thinks of writing a comic and ironic short novel. In this novel there is a woman who determines to herself of male domination. She deliberately takes two lovers simultaneously and sleeps with them on alternate nights. After some time they suspect what she doing and each reacts differently. One of them is jealous and falls seriously in love with her while the other becomes distant and aloof. Now, though she herself had thought of remaining detached and free, yet she finds, most strikingly, that she is falling in love with this man who loves her:
Nevertheless, although she is in despair that she is as “unfree” as ever, she announces to both men that she has now become thoroughly emancipated, she has at last achieved the ideal of full sexual and emotional pleasure with two men at once. (TGNB 552)

This, however, is supposed to be a comic and ironic novel, not a serious one, but the very fact that her heroine can think of such a plot speaks volumes. The situation in real life is quite different:

Then I began to laugh because of the distance between what I was imagining and what in fact I was, let alone what Ella was. (TGNB 552)

Yet, as is clear from the ensuing pages, Anna herself is in an ambiguous relationship with soul, her companion or her lover, for the present. It is an ambiguous relationship because she does not understand what it is she wants—detachment or involvement:

I was wondering what would have happened if, all those weeks ago, he had not put up his arms around my neck, unconsciously, in his sleep. I wanted, then, for him to put his arms up around my neck. (TGNB 555)

But she is afraid of this desire, she wants to remain detached, not to commit herself. Yet she feels deep affection for him. Altogether, it is a most puzzling situation she has created for herself, or rather, that Lessing has created for her:

I felt towards him as if he were my brother, as if, like a brother, it wouldn’t matter how we strayed from each other, how far apart we were, we would always be flesh of one flesh, and think each other’s thoughts. (TGNB 556)

One wonder if this is the extreme end of her development as a feminist, when she portrays a woman having an intense relationship a man, yet remains “free”, psychologically and socially. The study that follows will reveal unexplored in her world.
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