CHAPTER-I
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Dame Antonia Susan Byatt was born on 24 August 1936 in Yorkshire. She was educated at a Quaker school in York and at Newnham College, Cambridge, Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, and Somerville College, Oxford, where she studied as a postgraduate. She taught in the Extra-Mural Department of London University and the Central School of Art and Design, and in 1972 became full-time Lecturer in English and American Literature at University College, London [Senior Lecturer, 1981]. She left in 1983 to concentrate on writing full-time. She has travelled widely overseas to lecture and talk about her work, often with the British Council, and was Chairman of the Society of Authors between 1986 and 1988. She was a member of the Literature Advisory Panel for the British Council between 1990 and 1998. She has served on the judging panels for a number of literary prizes, including the Booker Prize for Fiction, and is recognized as a distinguished critic, contributing regularly to journals and newspapers including the Times Literary Supplement, The Independent and the Sunday Times as well as to BBC radio and television programmes. She was also a member of the Kingman Committee on the Teaching of English Language [1987-8]. A.S.Byatt British writer and scholar, gained worldwide recognition for her novel Possession [1990], which in 1990 won the Booker Prize,
Britain's highest literary award. She was born Antonia Susan Drabble in Sheffield, England, the oldest of four children. At the age of 13, she and her sister, British novelist Margaret Drabble, were sent to Mount School, a Quaker boarding school in York, England. Byatt then attended, on scholarship, Newnham College, University of Cambridge, and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in 1957. She worked toward her doctorate in 17th-century English literature at Bryn Mawr College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania [1957-1958], and at Somerville College, University of Oxford [1958-59]. She left Oxford in 1959 to marry Ian Byatt, a British economist. Their first child, Antonia, was born in 1960 and their second child, Charles, was born in 1961. Byatt published her first critical work, 'Degrees of Freedom: The Novels of Iris Murdoch', in 1965. Her Second novel, The Game [1967], is about the relationship between two sisters, both of who are contemporary novelists. Many believe this story to have parallels to the acknowledged rivalry between Byatt and her sister Margaret. Byatt's second critical work, 'Wordsworth and Coleridge in Their Time' [1970], was her last book for six years.

In 1972 Byatt's son Charles was killed by a drunk driver. This event is said to have had a major effect on her life and her subsequent career. After the death of her son, Byatt accepted a full-time teaching position at University College, London. In 1983 Byatt left University College to
become a full-time writer. Possession [1990] was her breakthrough as a novelist. Its protagonists are two academics who become romantically involved during their research into a 19th-century love affair. The two love stories are compared and contrasted. Following the publication of Possession, Byatt was made Commander of the British Empire [CBE], an honorary member of a British order of knighthood. The publication of A Whistling Woman [2002] completed Byatt's so-called Frederica Quartet, which through its central character Frederica Potter depicts changing patterns of intimacy and family life in England from the 1950s to the 1970s. The other novels of the quartet are The Virgin In The Garden[1978], Still Life [1985], Babel Tower [1996]. Byatt's other works include Iris Murdoch [1976], Sugar and Other Stories [1987], Passions of the Mind : Selected Writings [1991], Angels and Insects [1992], The Matisse Stories [1993], and The Biographer's Tale [2001].
More recently, A.S. Byatt caused controversy by suggesting that the popularity of J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series of books is because they are "written for people whose imaginative lives are confined to TV cartoons, and the exaggerated [more exciting, not threatening] mirror-worlds of soaps, reality TV and celebrity gossip." In her editorial column in the New York Times newspaper, she scathingly attacked adult readers of the series as uncultured, claiming that "they don't have the skills to tell ersatz magic from the real thing, for as children they daily invested the ersatz with what imagination they had."

After the column appeared in the newspaper, her editorial was described by Salon.com contributing writer Charles Taylor as "upfront in its snobbishness." He also suggested that Byatt's claims may be due to jealousy towards Rowling's commercial success.

In an article in the Guardian, the author Fay Weldon defended A.S. Byatt in this controversy over Harry Potter, and praised her courage for speaking out. "She is absolutely right that it is not what the poets hoped for, but this is not poetry, it is readable, saleable, everyday, useful prose," Weldon said. She said she found the sight of adults reading the Potter series troubling, adding: "Byatt does have a point in everything she says but at the same time she sounds like a bit of a spoilsport. She is being a party pooper but then the party pooper is often right."
She was awarded a CBE in 1990, then advanced a DBE in 1999.

Antonia Susan Byatt, is one of the leading contemporary British writers, as award winning, prolific author of eight novels and six short story and novella collections to date. As noted by Olga Kenyon, Byatt is, “One of the most imaginative and intelligent writers of English today”.

Kathleen Kelly has pointed to the power, poetry and depth of Byatt’s fiction and argues that Byatt has established a firm place in the literary canon: “One cannot imagine a course on the contemporary British novel without her”. Her work is not only critically acclaimed but has also enjoyed a wide success among the general public. “It may appear as a paradox, but her fiction now has ‘best seller’ status in addition to intellectual exigence for the two are compatible, if only in a writer of Byatt’s caliber”. In addition to being a renowned author, Byatt is an acclaimed lecturer as well as a successful critic and scholar, who has widely published on William Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Jane Austen, George Eliot and Iris Murdoch. Byatt’s first novel, The Shadow of the Sun [1964], focusing on the life of a girl growing up in the shadow of a dominant father, was followed by The Game [1967], a study of the relationship between two sisters, both creative writers. Her next novel The Virgin In The Garden [1978] and followed by Still Life [1985], which won the PEN/Mac Millan Silver Pen Award. 1990 saw the publication of Possession, probably Byatt’s best known novel, both
critically appraised and widely popular among the general public. The novel was awarded the prestigious Booker Prize for fiction as well as the Irish Times/Aer Lingus International Fiction Prize and was made into a movie in 2002. Also Angels and Insects [1992], consisting of two novellas, has been adapted to a movie[1996]. Byatt is the author of Babel Tower [1996] and The Biographer's Tale[2000], the latter presenting an intriguing mixture of biography and fiction. One of her latest books is A Whistling Woman [2002]. In addition Byatt has also authored several collections of short stories and fairy tales. Her most recent book, Little Black Book of Stories [2004], offers a captivating collection of stories interweaving the themes of art and creation, death, memory and fairy tales, the beautiful and the gruesome appearing side by side. Of her fictional works, The Virgin In The Garden, Still Life, Babel Tower, and A Whistling Woman form a tetralogy, or what has been called the Frederica Potter Quartet. The Quartet undoubtedly occupies a major place in Byatt’s career; the novels in the cycle have received literary prizes and the single works have been widely discussed in the scholarly publications. Still Life, which Byatt attempted to write “in a very spare language without any metaphor at all” [Byatt in Dusinberre 1983 :194] covers the period from 1954 to 1959 and tackles the theme of marriage, birth and death. Kenyon[1988 :78] points out that Still Life presents a remarkable capturing of real objects as well as real people:
“Facts themselves resonate with real life narrative. Like Van Gogh painting olive trees, there is both passion in their observation- and simple reality”. Stephanie chooses to abandon her career in the academic world and attempts to come to terms with her life as the wife of a curate Daniel Orton and as a mother of two children trying to join the life of the mind and that of the hearth. At the end of Still Life, Stephanie is electrocuted by an unearthed refrigerator. A prominent subplot of the novel is connected to Alexander Wedderburn, who is writing a play on the life of Vincent Van Gogh: the novel contains Van Gogh’s letters and includes discussions on colour theories, art, painting and painters.

In a Whistling Woman, the 33 year old Frederica, “the most fully developed” and many-sided of all Byatt’s women”; [Campbell 2004 :261] becomes a moderator of a BBC talk show, “Though the Looking Glass”, which explores a wide variety of themes ranging from Sigmund Freud to creativity to Picasso’s art. The novel also depicts scientists working on snail memory and brain research as well as portrays how a religious community, gathered on the moors, turns into a threatening, violent force under their charismatic leader Joshua Ramsden. One of the most prominent subplots focuses on the mind and body conference hosted at the University of North Yorkshire, coinciding with a powerful anti-university campaign. The novel ends with Frederica finding out about her unplanned pregnancy with the scientist Luk: Frederica and Luk look
into the future, not knowing what to do next but assuring themselves that they shall think of something. Babel Tower, set in the 1960's, shows how Frederica, Leo’s mother and wife of the domineering Nigel Reiver, is trapped in an unhappy marriage, she decides to leave her husband and starts to work as a book reviewer and teacher of literature in London. Frederica also appears as the author of Laminations, a work of “cut and paste”, a way for her “to deal with the polyphony of the sixties” [Campbell 2004 : 245] B.T. includes other books in it, most prominently Babble Tower, a fantasy about a group of people trying to establish their own ideal community, by one of the characters Jude Mason. A subplot is formed by following the work of a government committee which examines how English should and could be taught and learned at schools. Bable Tower tackles various aspects from the field of sciences, introducing a group of researchers who work on snails and ants and discuss their findings about genes. The novel culminates in two court cases Frederica’s divorce and custody case and the trial of the supposedly pornographic Bable Tower, both of which “produce a kind of degradation of language, in the sense that the language of the court degrades the language both of the book and of marriage” [Byatt in Tredell 1994 :74]. Byatt’s novels include a number of memorable characters, illustrating Byatt’s words, I like novels with large number of people and centres of consciousness, not novels that adopt a narrow single point of view,
author’s or character’s [Byatt IS 1]. Most of Byatt’s characters are passionate about books, reading and thinking and work as scholars, the world of academe being one of Byatt’s most common settings. Additionally, her works do not only include masterful character portrayals but also illustrate technical ideas on narrative and form. Alexa Alexander [1989] has explored Byatt’s use of language and artistic scope in her study of contemporary women novelists, in which she includes a perceptive discussion on Byatt’s combination of intellectual rigour and a passionate interest in the depth and richness of human experience [1989 :41] In her commentary on The Virgin In The Garden and Still Life, she examines the main characters as well as the themes of art and language, manifesting the works Alexander [1989 :16] explores the ways in which Byatt sees, “The traditional novel as having the potential for further development [1989 :16] Byatt writes novels which employ essentially realist methods, while placing within the fiction an authorial commentary which develops thoughts about the complexity of perceiving, naming and recording thereby pointing to the ways Byatt examines the notion of representation and extends the possibilities of realism..

Olga Kenyon, another scholar writing in the 1980’s, places Byatt against the background of the number of other outstanding British female writers and traces the characteristics her work shares with Jane Austen, the
Brontës, Iris Murdoch, and George Eliot, suggesting that Byatt, ‘write[s]
for adults with empathy, intelligence, humour, seriousness and passion
which place women firmly in the great tradition’. [1988 :59] Kenyon is
particularly interested in Byatt’s fusing of tradition with twentieth-
century realism. Kenyon argues that language is one of Byatt’s strongest
concerns: “Part of her distinction lies in examining the limits and power
of language through narrative”. Kenyon notes that [1988 :54] She is a
“self conscious novelist brooding about the choice of words, mediating
on theories about words”. Also her characters are deeply conscious of
language; indeed, ‘each major character represents a different way of
coping, or failing to cope, with the world through language”.

Related to linguistic self consciousness and the moving between the
creative and the critical is also Byatt’s intertextuality,” the complex web
created by interweaving from other texts, other discourses, other cultural
associations” [Kenyon 1988 :61].

Richard Todd [1997] emphasizes the concern with representation, realist
and self conscious modes of writing in a concise study covering Byatt’s
body of creative works revealing an overview of Byatt’s major themes
such as familial relationships, creativity and artist’s vision, as well as the
notions of autonomy, marginalization, erotic power, myths, violence and
loss, and the fascination with fairy tales and the supernatural.
Commenting on Byatt’s style, Todd [1997 :17] points out that the reader might be tempted to regard several of Byatt’s novels as representatives of social realism, while he posits that, for example, The Virgin In The Garden, “is enriched beyond measure when the reader surrenders to its status as fiction about post – war English society that is unconditionally embedded in the cultural background designating that society.” Todd thus shows [1997 : 64] that Byatt’s grip extends much further than social realism, and she succeeds in relating portrayals of different orders of reality to each other.”

Todd [1997 :54] also comments on Byatt’s masterful character depictions and suggests that their artistic achievement is connected to Byatt’s emotional honesty which “is of the highest order, coupled with her conviction that her characters must be depicted as having thoughts, that those thoughts are frequently important, exciting and painful.” Characters are for Byatt one of the ways to examine the “battleground between real people and images”.

Celia Wallhead [1999 : 13] has discussed Byatt’s recurring thematic patterns. Wallhead looks at “the thematic relationships that make up the macrostructures of the whole body of fictional works ”, thereby examining Byatt’s recurring motifs of birth, growth, death, metamorphosis, the multiplicity of vision, the family and social life, language, British literature and creativity. Wallhead [1999 :303] outlines
a common pattern of Byatt’s works: “Byatt creates a familiar Byattian scenario through repetition of themes and motifs like the problem of language, that of the artist and its heritage, and the individual in a changing society”. Wallhead [1999 :48] emphasizes the idea that literary and artistic creativity is Byatt’s favourite subject and foregrounds the idea that “from the very beginning she [Byatt] has been fascinated by the figure of the writer in every aspect of her life”. Byatt’s interest is the writer or artist character in the process of creation, suggesting that Byatt depicts different sides of composition, “From the functioning of the brain, through perception and its expression, to the ways in which readers and observers of different levels of critical analysis may react to it”.

In 2001, the first essay collection on Byatt’s works edited by Alexa Alfer and Michael Noble was published. They set the aim of reaching “a more comprehensive understanding of what is perhaps the most recurrent and idiomatic of Byatt’s intellectual and aesthetic concerns: the nature of fiction as the proxy of thought and as an object of knowledge in its own right” [Alfer and Noble 2001 : 2]. The authors of the essays examine Byatt’s both intensely sensual and intellectual fictional worlds, the work’s exploration of storytelling and critical thought, negotiations of history, the post modern blurring of the boundaries between literary and critical games, the mix of styles and forms, reinventions of Victorian poetry and
thought, and Byatt’s continual meditation on the novel form, as well as complications of the “real” in fiction and how to render it.

Jane Campbell [2004] who presents one of the most comprehensive critique on Byatt’s fiction emphasizes the intertwining of realism and self-consciousness shedding light on all of Byatt’s novels and short story collections. Her focus lies on women’s lives and creativity, and her broader emphasis is on “Byatt’s overall growth as a novelist who has been constantly moving into new fictional territory, engaging with new subjects and devising new methods” [2004 :4] Campbell discusses at length the nature of Byatt’s characters and draws the reader’s attention to their masterful portrayal. She notes that throughout Byatt’s work, “Byatt has never lost the sight of the need to present the reader with credible characters evoking sympathy and with the related challenges involving story, narration and morality”. Campbell [2004 :9 ] points out that Byatt values characters who are both “Openly- fictive-‘Papery-and real”. She [2004 :9 ] claims that Byatt’s highly believable “real” characters arise from her belief that a large part of the pleasure of reading fiction is rooted in a very basic, primitive response to characters, a response that can still be made even when postmodernism has taught us to distrust both language and the concept of character”.

The entire history of women’s struggle for self-determination has been muffled in silence over and over. Imaginatively she is of the highest
importance, practically she is completely insignificant; she pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all but absent from history.

This is the ironical paradox of a woman’s life. Men need her, love her, worship her, and write about her but they do so in relation to their own selves. The desires and aspects of a woman’s life, which do not relate to them ordinarily, do not interest them. Women’s writing, struggling against internalization of role models thrust on women has learnt to express the untold narrative of being a woman. Woman’s writing is important today, more than ever before. Literature is a cultural construct and provides us with valuable insights into the development of societies. It helps psychological understanding and reformulations of epistemological constructs. Women’s writing focuses on both, the manifestation of a female sensibility, a feminine reality, and on its significance as a means of bringing about an awareness of this-reality.

Gender, like other categories such as race and class, is a significant category of social and political reality. So far, women’s writing has been dismissed as hardly of any consequence because religious and political thought had assigned them as beings less national and intellectual than the male of the species.

Freedom is perhaps the first requirement, for ‘taboos’ and inhibitions do not allow the pursuit of experience. Women have been kept in kitchens and parlors, in purdah and in luxury, but deprived freedom. The needs of
society, child marriages, child bearing and child rearing were the causes that have kept women tied to their chains. Women's lives had been split into two—the physical and the intellectual—and the latter had been left underdeveloped by the artificial constructs of society. Romance thrived on this underdevelopment and romantic notions served to keep women happy, longing for their demon lover. Paradoxically, while on the one hand women were placed outside culture, outside history, outside time on the other they were treated as the custodians of culture, preserving it and continuing it through procreation, traditions, rituals and conservation. Surprisingly their own relationships and values were referred to as subculture even when families were extended, boundaries were crossed and kinship founded through them.

In 1912, suffragettes in England exploded into militant action, breaking windows in London shops and even at the Prime Minister's home. Some 150 of them were arrested, including Emmeline Pankhurst, and in prison they continued their protest, refusing to eat, driving the prison authorities to force-feed them. In many ways, the twentieth century can be called the age of women: all over the world their rights and wrongs, their wishes and desires, have been the subject of fierce and heated debates.

Receiving its impetus from the feminist movements, a process of self discovery of a female tradition has been set into motion. It is a journey of questioning of the form of epistemological formulations and personal
awareness. Feminist criticism originated in recognition of love for women writers, in an urge to reveal the diverse ways in which women have been oppressed, misinterpreted and trivialized by the dominant patriarchal tradition, and to show how these are reflected in the images of women in the works of male authors. These two initiating impulses lead to a variety of critical methods and even converge in several places. For instance, studies of the images of women in the works of female authors might also concentrate on the ways in which such images reveal women’s oppression, or on how an author’s own absorption of patriarchal values might cause her to create female characters who fulfill society’s stereotypes of women. An enquiry into the works of women authors holds two related premises about gender. One is that the inequality of the sexes is neither a biological given nor a divine Mandate, but a cultural construct, and therefore a proper subject of study for any humanistic discipline. The second is that a male perspective, assumed to be ‘universal’ has dominated fields of knowledge, shaping their paradigms and methods. A feminist perspective leads to a critique of our sex-gender system. The social construction of gender takes place through the workings of ideology. Ideology is that system of beliefs and assumptions unconscious, unexamined, invisible - which represents ‘the imaginary relationships of individuals to their real conditions of existence’
Elaine Showalter has stated that it is necessary to treat minor women writers historically as well as critically. They should be placed in a theoretical framework that treats them as more than the flotsam of popular culture and be connected to each other and to female literary tradition.

The need for feminist literary criticism as expressed by her, is because in its earliest years feminist criticism concentrated on exposing the misogyny of literary practice: the stereotyped images of women in literature as angels or monsters, the literary abuse or textual harassment of women in classic or popular male literature and the exclusion of women from literary history

Patricia Meyer Spacks was one of the first to group women writers systematically in the female literary tradition that Showalter recommended. In ‘The Female Imagination.’, she examined similarities of experience and response in writing by women throughout the centuries. She questioned the ways of female feelings, the modes of responding, that persisted despite social change, and whether any characteristic patterns of self-perception shaped the creative expressions of women. As Jasbir Jain feels,

The act of writing is l'écriture. It signifies making,
moulding, engraving, creating – writing the body,

writing the ‘woman’

It is necessary to go beyond similarities of image, theme and structure, and to consider issues that link women’s writing to specific socio-cultural realities. It is a fact that women writing in different periods, different genres, women who were geographically, psychologically and historically far apart have shown distinctly similar traits in their writing. For Gilbert and Gubar, as for Showalter, there is no doubt that literature reflects life, and that experience is translated into literature. In their book “Mad Women in The Attic” Gilbert and Gubar propound a complex theory of women’s creativity. The literary text is the space where writer and reader, narrator and narratee engage in dialogue, and where a specific literary piece enters into the literary system and inscribes itself into a network of intertextual relationships with other literary works. Where a discourse appeals directly to an image as a point of its argument or demonstration, one can be sure that all difference is being elided, that the unity of some accepted vision is being reproduced. We must understand that literature, as a representational art, is not per se a patriarchal form of discourse. It is not true that the picturing of experience is gender neutral. In order to disclose the arbitrariness of patriarchal hegemony, feminist critics engage in a dialogical opposition to traditional models and values. In this respect, a textual approach to literature guided by feminist
concerns can be an effective political tool. When a textual reader ignores an author’s presumed intentions, it is a serious act of insubordination for it puts into question the propriety of paternity. Although it may be impossible to escape the hegemony of patriarchal structures, nonetheless, by unveiling the prejudices at work in our cultural artifact, we impugn the universality of the man made models provided to us, and allow for the possibility of sidestepping and subverting their power.

Every nation is a socio-cultural ensemble, which has a symbolic denominator in the form of its art, Philosophy and religious manifest. Such a denominator has a solidity rooted in a particular mode of reproduction. It is also echoed in the corresponding symbolic denominator of another socio-cultural ensemble. This seems natural when the entities involved are linked by history. There are certain formations that summarize the dynamics of socio-cultural organism. It is a question of groups being defined according to their place in production, but especially according to their role in the mode of reproductions and its representation, which, while being the specific socio-cultural traits of the formation in question, are diagonal to it and connect it to other socio-cultural formations.

Feminism is a rich, complicated and often contradictory body of research, aimed at examining gender in society. It is generally believed that Charles Fourier who conceived of women’s emancipation as the buttress
of global social transformations invented the word feminism. A simple
definition of feminism means a study of women not as objects but as
subjects of knowledge. Abigail Adams, Mary Wollstonecraft, Elizabeth
Cady Stanton, George Sand, Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony, John
Stuart Mill, Emma Goldman, Friedrich Engels, Virginia Woolf, Simone
de Beauvoir, Henrik Ibsen, Margaret Sanger, Rosa Luxemburg, Mme.
Curie, and Diderot among others contributed to the original history of
feminist thought and theory. The attempt to include and account for
women continues with Gloria Steinham, Bell Hooks, Bella Abzug and
Naomi Woolf. Although Mills and Engels among others contributed to
feminism, they have found fault with feminism in that it had yet to
develop a viable theoretical framework. Academics such as, Heckman
and Hartsock, Phillips, Gross, Moore, Tong, Whelehan and Oakely have
more recently contributed to developing more complex understanding of
feminine/gender knowledge through epistemological development. One
of the most valuable contributions of feminism deals with epistemology,
ways of knowing, or the theory of knowledge, which has been discussed
in detail in the latter pages.
Donna Langston, in her "Changing our Power: has defined feminism;

Feminist theory is a body of ideas which attempts to
explain the status of women in society, how this
status originated, why it persists and what must be
done to change this status

This definition makes a good jumping point. The inequality regarding
cwomen persists even today, although in a very different form now than in
generations before. Strong women in history-suffragists, civil rights
workers, feminists- have worked hard to get their status to the point it is
right now, but young feminists are learning through theory that they have
to pick up the torch and continue to strive toward improvement of their
social status. A large part of modern feminist theory has to do with the
last part of Langston's statement-"What must be done to change this
status". Simone de Beauvoir's question, "what is a woman?" has set the
agenda for feminist theory for twenty years. It has pointed feminists
towards an examination of the social, economic and linguistic structures
that give meaning to the biological sex differences that have traditionally
defined women. As they attempt to analyze these questions, feminist
theorists take philosophical perspectives that result in complicated and
often indistinctly defined political and theoretical divisions. These
divisions often fall under such labels as liberal, radical, cultural, socialist,
Anglo American, French and post structuralist feminism. Each of these theoretical stands falls somewhere along a continuum, on which gender is defined according to essentialist or constructivist paradigms. Women have always been seen as essential. From the beginning of the women’s movement, women have felt compelled to redefine their history, biology, psychology, literature and epistemology as different from the circumscribed definition that the masculine patriarchal tradition imposes. American feminists, in particular, have attempted to end the erasure and powerlessness that characterize women’s place in the social order and to affirm women’s selfhood and community.

Historians of modern Western feminist movements usually speak of a first wave feminism and a second wave feminism.

THEORY OF FEMINISM

The long and slow advent of women intellectuals toward group consciousness and toward a liberating analysis of their situation proceeded in a spasmodic, uneven and often repetitious manner. Marginalized by the male tradition and deprived of knowledge of a female tradition, individual women had to think out their way out of patriarchal gender definitions and their constraining impact. They challenged patriarchal definitions, prescriptions and explanations and insisted on their capacity and right to education. But their arguments and
mental constructs remained abstract and Utopian as long as they were not rooted in transformative social action. Only women organizing on behalf of women could generate truly liberating thought.

In his “The Subjugation of Women” [1869], as John Stuart Mill saw Victorian England at the time, all human beings were free to use their capabilities and make their own life choices, with the exception of women. He denounced the society’s denial of the use of the talents of half of society’s members solely because of the ‘fatality of birth, which no exertions and no change of circumstances can overcome. The colossal medical and social construct that women are preordained to be inferior to men has, until the present day, defined women through socialization, education and internalization.

Many of the women who battled the constraints of patriarchy in those years were self-supporting as opposed to the picture so often represented-middle- upper class, educated women whose only purpose was to be sensitive and decorative. These women comprised what has come to be called the first wave of feminism. There was no theory then; only action and speaking out was the order of the day.

At the same time in history, Sigmund Freud began his landmark work in psychoanalysis in Vienna, which took the problem out of the gynecologist’s office and put it into the psychiatrist’s office. But it still held the view of women as defective. There were several Freudian
analysts in the 1920s and 1930s that raised questions about the fundamental assumptions concerning the psychoanalytic conception of women.

In her groundbreaking book, "The Feminine Mystique," Betty Friedan described how, during the 40s and 50s, psychology, anthropology and sociology came together to form the school of functionalist thought. The perspective looked at institutions, including the family, in terms of their function and structure in society. This new social science was greatly influenced by Freudian thought. Margaret Mead, who was the symbol of the woman thinkers in America, looked at her anthropological data with a Freudian orientation in which sexual biology determines all and anatomy is destiny. She warned of the dangers a woman faces in trying to realize a human potential, which her society has defined as masculine. In her "The Second Sex", Simone de Beauvoir wrote extensively about all aspects of a woman's life. "The Feminine Mystique" and "The Second Sex" had an enormous influence on women who were feeling the frustrations of the social definition of what it meant to be a woman. These books helped to consolidate a growing inclination towards action among many western women. The notion that 'the personal is political' became a call word that reminded women that their personal troubles were inextricably related to society's problems and to the politics that institutionalized it all.
We cannot say that there is a single feminist theory because of the many areas of divergence and disagreement between Marxist feminists radical feminists, women of color, materialists, idealists, postmodernists and others. Despite the many differences within and between disciplines, there is an agreement on certain central ideas.

1] Social experience is gendered. Gender itself is a social construct distinct from the biological category of sex.

2] All theory, like all practice, is inherently political; it necessarily either perpetuates or challenges the status quo.

3] Theory and practice cannot and should not be separated. Feminist theory is explicitly emancipatory and critical.

4] Subjects and objects are not and cannot be separated. Feminist thought directs attention to and admits a broader range of experience as legitimate and valid knowledge.

What clearly emerges from these studies is a fundamental feminist principle: at the moment, only concepts, tools, methods and methodologies developed by women, rather than men, will unveil the creative capacities of women in moral, aesthetic and epistemological realms.

The history of the West is, in large part, the history of its exploitation of its non-white, non-Western Others. Colonized countries have been profoundly affected by the exploitative, racist nature of this interrelation,
which was, and remains economic, political and cultural. The economic and political legacies of colonialism have radically changed the ‘racial’ and ethnic make-up of societies, bringing with them problems of white ethnocentrism, ethnic conflict and racism that feminists must address. For a long time mainstream white Western feminism paid scant attention to the question of race. Racism was seen as secondary to patriarchy and, at best, the problem of non-white women. Many white women took a liberal, colorblind position that claimed not to see difference or act upon it. It took a long, hard struggle by black women to have racism included on the feminist agenda. One of the most poignant and powerful critiques of white complacency came in 1980 from the radical black feminist Audre Lorde. The strong tendency of white women to disregard racism was an effect of white privilege—a point that women of color were forced to make repeatedly. The tendency to downplay differences has long been part of mainstream feminism. Indeed much advance in the position of women in the West rested on discourses of sameness and human rights. From its inception in the early 1700s, feminism in the modern West has consistently held universalist aspirations and feminists have argued for women’s rights as human beings. In radical feminism since the early 1970s, women as a group, sharing fundamental oppressions produced by global patriarchy, have been the basis on which feminists have sought to ground political action.
The emphasizing of a common shared humanity remains a crucial political strategy within feminism and a movement which began by representing the interests of white, Western, middle-class women has diversified to the point where human rights have been placed at the center of the agenda for a global feminism. In the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, it was clearly established that women are a global action and social acceptance. They preferred to exert pressure on the government, for policy changes. Including the different facts of women's activities in the census influencing policies of progress and the five year plans, amending laws, and creating a special cell for oppressed women are no mean feats.

Various ideological strands like liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, and post-modern feminism are reflected in Indian feminism with slight variations as the women's movement in India originated in social movement. Liberalism emphasized the right of all individuals to pursue their self-interest and the duty of the state to enable them to do so. It stressed that men and women should have equal rights and women should get equal opportunities. The liberal feminist ideology made it possible for women to enter all fields. It spoke strongly of the individual woman's rights and legal reforms and advocated networking and services for women. This approach could not
challenge the existing structures and systems that kept women as subordinates.

Radical feminism was linked with the writing and thinking of feminists like Shulamith Firestone and Kate Millet. It’s stress was upon the idea that the conflict between man and woman is the primary contradiction in society, and that all structures in society are based on male power. They were not concerned about the differences among women. The ideology of Marxist feminism drew its inspiration from Marxism, especially Engel’s important work. “Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State”. It situated the women’s question in the antagonistic relationship between classes. They saw their struggle essentially as one against capitalistic systems of male domination. The emphasis was on the collective struggle against public forms of patriarchy and violence. They took up issues like the rights of working women, equal wages, job security and better working conditions, without considering the sexual division of labour. Socialist feminists wanted a transformation in the modes of production, economic as well as cultural change. Most of these theories undertook to discover general all-comprising principles that could be used to explain natural as well as social reality. Post-modernism had a deconstructive relation with these theories. It pointed out that both, working to reform these theories, or adopting a separatist position and moving completely away from them would be insufficient. The effort
had to be to call to question the enterprise itself. It maintained that all knowledge was situated knowledge and was governed by the perspective of the knower. These perspectives were multiple and interdisciplinary. All concepts were contestable and even language was considered to be non-neutral.

STEREOTYPES AND ARCHETYPES OF WOMEN.

Archetypes:- Jung and Jungians at times describe the archetype as simply a propensity or a predisposition to act or image in a certain way, and the category of archetype is often used as a category of being itself. Society is a human product and each human being is a product of society. Society is not only an objective reality, but also a coercive force in the lives of individuals. The theories of psychology by Jung are suggestive and comprehensive in the study of the psyche. He formulated his own concepts, which include the archetype. His theory included a revaluation of qualities like ‘feminine’. The most important implication of this theory was that culturally defined masculine and feminine qualities are equally available for development by either self. Archetypal images that Jung had described were frequently understood as absolutes. Instead of being explanations of reality experienced by females, archetypes of the feminine had become categories to contain women. Naomi Goldenberg feels that ‘feminist’ scholars must examine the very idea of archetype or
redefine the concept. There are only two options: either to accept the patriarchal ideas of the feminine as ultimate and unchanging and work within those, or to indulge in a rival search to find female archetypes, one which can support feminist conclusions.

Goldenberg has posed the possibility of abandoning the concept of archetypes. She calls them absolute, transcendent ideals of which our changing experiences... are only inferior copies. She suggested that we understand all imaginal activities, all images... as archetypes to the degree that they move things and partake of what we might want to call numinosity.

Hillman thinks that all ‘rich’ images, that is fecund, generative images that merit out repeated attention, are archetypal. We make them archetypal as we extend and value them in our image making work.

James Hall writes that the most profound contents of the objective psyche are the archetypal images...

There is no fixed number of archetypes, since any recurrent human experience can be archetypally represented... Archetypes are not inherited images; they are part of the tendency to structure experience in certain ways.
Peter Berger states,

Although human beings are entirely responsible for creating institutions, they perceive institutions as something that can act over and against them. The socialization process occurs in three phases—externalization, objectivation, and internalization.

"Externalization is the outpouring of human being into the world, both in the physical and the mental activity of men. Objectivism is the attainment by the products of this activity [again both physical and mental], of a reality that confronts its original producers as a facticity external to and other than themselves. Internalization is the reappropriation by men of this same reality. Transformation is once again from structures of the objective world into structures of the subjective consciousness.

Socialization is an ongoing conversation between significant others and the individual. The socially constructed word is an ordering of human experience. Language is a strong enforcer of social reality because it bestows an objective and apparently permanent status on humanly produced institutions, making them resistant to change. Language tells us what is and religious language tells us what is in the realm of the sacred.
The mythological language used by Jung and the Jungians locates the archetypes within a cosmic and sacred frame of reference. The language of Jung’s psychology contains both scientific propositions and religious overtones. He believes that irrational modes of behavior are possessed by an archetype. Jung’s definition of archetype is as follows—

The concept of the archetype... is derived from the repeated observation that, for instance, the myths and fairytales of world literature contain definite motifs which crop up everywhere. We meet these same motifs in the fantasies, dreams deliria and delusions of individuals living today. These typical images and associations are what I call archetypal ideas... They impress, influence and fascinate us. They have their origin in the archetype, which in itself is an irreprehensible, unconscious preexistent form that seems to be part of the inherited structure of the psyche and can therefore manifest itself spontaneously anywhere, at any time. This concept of archetype has one problem. Jung uses the word numinosity a quality attributed to the experience of the archetype. Jolande Jules explains that the archetype has a dynamism which makes itself felt in the numinosity and fascinating power of the image. Our understanding of archetypes can illuminate the way women’s and men’s psyches both reflect and conflict with images of women and men given to us by a patriarchal society. The human tendency to internalize imprisoning, and oppressive images is exposed when we view, in the cultural context, the
experience of being possessed by an archetype. Being possessed by an archetypal image, so that a man acts like an ‘anima’ and the woman acts like an animus, both being inferior feminine and masculine ways of acting. The anima and animus are two especially powerful archetypes. The anima is the female component of the male psyche and the animus is the male component of the female psyche. To understand the socially constructed nature of the archetype as it affects the woman, we can compare the concepts of the anima and the feminine. The anima is a component of the male psychology and the feminine is a component of the female psychology.

Anima or the soul-image is composed of three elements;

1] The experience of real, adult women, whom the particular man has known — an imprint on his psyche.

2] The man’s own, usually repressed femininity.


Carrying forward this description Toni Wolff names and describes the female archetypes as the mother, the Hetaira, the Amazon and the medium. They represent, according to Wolf, the major ways in which women experience the world. Ann Ulanov explains it in “The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and Christian Theology”. These fundamental
archetypal forms of the feminine are described in the myths and legends of all cultures throughout history, as for example in the recurrent tales of the princess, the maiden, the wise woman, the witch, etc. In our everyday speech, when we describe women we know or know about, we often resort to typing them unconsciously using archetypal imagery. The archetypal forms of the feminine describe certain basic ways of channeling one’s feminine instincts and one’s orientation to cultural factors. They also indicate the type of woman one is or the type of anima personality a man is likely to develop. In such a discussion, the feminine, a social role definition and a way of relating to the world, has acquired ontological status. Archetypes of the feminine, with their aura of the numinous have entered the dimension of religious experience. A standardized conception is held in common by the members of a group. Popular stereotypes are images, which are shared by people who have a common cultural mindset. These stereotypes are the way a culture, or a significant sub-group within that culture defines and labels a specific group of people. We hold very narrow images of people, places and things, depending upon our personal outlook. To define the cultural mindset, we must search and examine wide social patterns of thought and behaviour. Stereotypes are direct expressions of beliefs and values. Once a stereotype is identified and defined, it automatically provides us with an important and revealing expression of otherwise hidden beliefs and
values. They are especially useful in tracing the evolution of popular thought. They help in knowing how the beliefs and values associated with specific groups change with the passing of time.

Being a natural function of the mind, stereotyping is morally neutral. A culture later on endorses moral or immoral actions based upon the beliefs and assumptions implicit in the simplifying stereotype, and every culture tries to simplify a complex reality in order to better determine how to act in a given set of circumstances. Stereotyping occasionally functions in a useful way. It is sometimes valuable in the classification of individuals. It is sometimes used as a countertype, which is a positive stereotype. It associates a group of people with socially accepted characters. For example, all mothers sacrifice something for their children. But even countertypes are oversimplified views of the group being stereotyped, and as such, cannot be accepted at face value. Sometimes, countertypes are only surface correctives, underneath which lies some old stereotype. For example, beneath the independent career woman, there is just a lonely dame who wants to be loved.

In story telling, stereotypes are helpful because they allow the storyteller the luxury of not having to slow down, to explain the motivations of every minor character in the story. The author can then concentrate on the plot and the action. Stereotypes in imaginary, created worlds are often valuable indicators of attitudes and feelings, which are very real. They are
not always benign, being frequently negative. Negative stereotypes are associated with images of extremely harmful nature and ugly emotions. The oversimplification of the characteristics of any race of people into a narrow, negative stereotype can have tragic consequences. Another danger is that stereotypes are not merely descriptions of the way a culture views a specific group of people, they are prescriptions as well-thumbnai sketches of how a group of people is perceived and how members of the group perceive themselves.

Society has two motives to encourage people to live up to their stereotypes. The first is to encourage them to act like the images a culture already has of them, as popular culture is conservative. The second is to thereby fulfill their proper social roles. Stereotypes help people to internalize a cultural image as their goal- a task that may be convenient for the culture, and for the power structure status quo. This proves to be impossible and damaging to the individuals who are being asked to mould themselves in such a narrow manner. As a human being, each of us has infinite choices about what kind of a person one wants to be. Most of us want to be several kinds of persons - efficient in the office, sloppy around the house, formal with the boss, informal with friends, warm and loving with our parents — we enjoy wearing different types of personalities for different occasions. If we restrict ourselves to someone else's stereotyped image of how we ought to be, we tragically limit our
choices. We confirm ourselves to be narrow and standardized. For example, the image of an attractive woman to be pencil thin makes a self-destructive stereotype. If accepted fanatically, it is the ultimate symbol of dehumanization and death. Advertisers make use of this internalized stereotype to exploit the engendered in individuals who have embarked on the futile task of moulding themselves into the narrow, stereotyped image. Women, who accept the 'Barbie-doll' image of themselves, can be easily convinced to spend a lot of money on latest fashions.

The term 'stereotype' was initially used to refer to a printing stamp, which was used to make multiple copies from a single model or mould. The great journalist and commentator Walter Lippmann adopted the term in his 1922 book "Public Opinion" as a means of describing the way society set about categorizing people—stamping human beings with a set of characteristics as well. He identified four aspects of stereotypes, which are as follows: [1] They are simple. [2] They are acquired secondhand. [3] They are false and erroneous, as they are attempts to claim that each individual human being in a certain group shares a set of common qualities. As each individual is different from the other, stereotype is a logical impossibility.[4] They are resistant to change. From the feminist point of view, stereotyping is a major hindrance in the women’s quest for self-identification and self-location.
THE DEFINITION OF SELF

It is necessary to know the term ‘self’ for the discussion of problematic of self-location. The psychological definition of the term is based on the set of feelings and attitudes that people possess, and a certain sense of who they are. The term has two distinct sets of meanings. One set is related to people’s attitude about themselves, their picture of the way they look, the impact they believe they have on others, and their perceived traits, abilities, eccentricities and weaknesses. This collection consists of ‘self-image’ or ‘self-concept’. "...Attitudes, feelings perception and evaluation of ... self as an object. The second set of meanings relates to the ‘executive functions’- processes by which the individual manages, copes, thinks’ remembers, perceives and plans. The first set sees self as an object, the second as a process. Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow experimented with people and formulated two theories. Rogers’ Theory of self does not involve complex personality structures or stages of development. Rogers emphasized the whole of experience the phenomenal field. It is the individual’s subjective frame of reference, not related to the external reality. He had realized that the self was an important element in the experiences of a person. In addition to the present self, there is also the ideal self that a person would like to be. Everyone strives to attain their concept of the ideal self, but a few achieve it.
Abraham Maslow believed that each person has an essential nature that presses to emerge, like the ‘press’ within an acorn to become an oak tree. In his view, we all have higher-level growth needs—such as the need for self-actualization and understanding of our selves— but these higher needs only assume a dominant role in our lives after our more primitive needs are satisfied. The growth needs make us distinctly human. The characters of the self as one experiences it, and on which the self-psychologists lay their emphasis are, first, its persistence or self-identity; second, its individuality or uniqueness; third, the fact that it is fundamental or basal to its experiences, and finally the fact that it is related its social and physical environment. The individuality or uniqueness of each self is the characteristic that distinguishes it from every other self. Both, the persistence and the individuality of the self imply the fact that it is basal to the specific, concrete experiences to the perceiving, imaginings and the emotions. The relatedness of the self to the objects making up its environment has been specially stressed by the ‘social’ and ‘differential’ psychologists like Ward, Mitchell Rehmke, and by ‘functional’ psychologists, notably Angell and Jung who admit a self.

Though the psychological definition does not differentiate between men and women, it was Simone de Beauvoir who, being acutely aware of gender discrimination, first questioned the status quo and provided answers of her own. In the Second Sex’ she writes. “Humanity
is male and man defines woman as relative to him. For him she is sex-
absolute sex, no less. She is defined and differentiated with reference to
man and not with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as
opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute, she is the
other”. This category of the other is as primordial as consciousness itself,
in her opinion. The duality is expressed in the most primitive societies
and the most ancient mythologies. It is the duality of the self and the
other. Originally this duality was not attached to the sexes, nor was it
dependent upon any empirical facts. As Hegel states, in our
consciousness there is a fundamental hostility towards every other
consciousness. The subject can be posed only in being opposed. It sets
itself up as the essential, as opposed to the inessential, and the object. But
the other consciousness, the other ego is another individual entity. It sets
up a reciprocal chain. Nobody will voluntarily become the other or the
object. But if the other is to stay as the other, not to regain the status of
being the One, he must be submissive enough to accept this point of view
of another self. The question arises regarding the beginning point of the
submission of women. Just as men are men by virtue of their anatomy
and physiology, women are women. The otherness is natural, not
incidental like other historical facts. It is absolute and beyond the
possibility of a change. The reason is that, a condition brought about at a
certain time can be changed at another time; not so in case of a natural
condition. Secondly, woman fails to become the essential because she herself fails to bring about this change. The bond that unites her to her oppressor cannot be compared to any other. It is a basic trait of woman that she is the other in a totality of which the two components are necessary to one another. If he is the master, a bond of a reciprocal economic need unites her, the slave, with him. The master does not make a point of his dependence because he can satisfy his need through his own action. The slave is acutely aware of her dependence. The two never shared the world in equality. If she declines to be the Other, she must denounce all the advantages conferred upon her. If she remains a secondary entity, she gets economic protection and the metaphysical risk of a liberty in which ends and aims must be contrived without assistance. It is an easy road, but full of loss and ruin. She should manifest her complicity when the man makes her the Other. She lacks resources, and she is often pleased with her role as the Other.

Most societies have tried to regulate sexuality by placing it firmly within their marriage and kinship structure. However, in societies that evolved male dominated forms of family, marriage became an instrument of control over female sexuality. In the west, Engel preceded the feminists in critiquing the sexual morality inherent in such male-dominated family structures. He saw the destruction of the patriarchal family as a necessary step towards freeing women from men's control.
Efforts to promote sexual liberation in the west were accompanied by a very high rate of breakdown of families and marriages. At the same time, subjective expectations of marriage became more and more exaggerated. Walking out of marriages in search of more exciting liaisons is no longer only a male prerogative. Women frequently exercise this option. However, even though the idea of lifelong sexual loyalty in marriage is no longer assumed in the west, the majority of believers in sexual liberation expect a new form of sexual commitment —serial monogamy. For whatever duration that a couple is together, the new morality assumes that they will refrain from sexual involvement with others.