CHAPTER II

THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL LITERARY STUDIES

This chapter attempts to establish the interdependence between literature and sociology, which may serve as a medium for examining social reality as it concerns and affects women. The chapter is aimed at developing both a methodology as also a theory of cultural literary studies in the context of Western and Indian studies. The prime source and models used as references have been provided by Western, thinkers among whom Raymond Williams\(^1\) and T.S. Eliot\(^2\) have constructed theories of culture, found invaluable for this study. "It is the culture of society that is fundamental, and it is the meaning of the term 'culture' in relation to the whole society that should be examined first."\(^3\) However, culture can not be considered, as a monolithic whole because, as new values appear and as thought, sensibility and expression become elaborate, and complex, some earlier values vanish, without in any sense creating the disintegration of culture. Undoubtedly some aspects of culture are wholly dominating, for example religion, and this determines and controls life and action consciously and unconsciously. Extending such notions to an ancient society like India, it is found, culture impinges upon different sections, in various ways. The study of culture is therefore, historically and sociologically specific. This is especially valid when applied to the study of women, as they are and as they are represented.
Social change, as has been brought about through various socio
political movements but especially the freedom movement,
influenced women of India in radical though limited ways.

Women and Cultural Processes

Any study of women and society in India will necessarily
take into account the overall, culture of the society as this
will affect the perspective through which specified literary work
will be studied. The basic premise is that Literature as a
cultural product is determined and influenced directly by the
forces of society and literature in turn provides an analysis and
a critique of social values. Karl Mannhein, observes that
"Culture moves in a kind of cycle, each class nourishing the
other". This, when applied to the context of women who on
account of their secondary status are looked upon as a class
apart, explains how women imbibe the culture that is delineated
for them by men who as a class occupy a superior status. Thus,
the consciousness that women develop of the world and its
constituents is a borrowed consciousness which in the context of
women writers would impinge directly upon their work and the
representations they make of the world. Thus, while analyzing
cultural and literary studies, it is important especially to
discern the writer's or the sociologist's own locus standi vis-
a-vis the subject dwelt upon. Raymond Williams looks upon the
theory of culture as a, "theory of relations between elements in
a whole way of life". This perspective is useful in studying
the rise of the English novel in India as a cultural phenomenon
determined by prevailing social forces as also the position of women in the context of the growth and development of the novel, and their day to day functions as women. There emerges a picture of dual roles and positions, one vis-a-vis men and the other vis-a-vis women. Women are conspicuous by their absence either in the accounts of literary work or in the work force or even in accounts of households where their silence leads to their invisibility and insignificance. Raymond Williams in his study of English Industrial Society refers to a need for redefining words pertaining to the study of culture and society. He states, "A major change was taking place in the nature of the relationship between a writer and his readers; the production of art was coming to be regarded as one of a number of specialized kinds of production, subject to much the same conditions as general production". The new position of the creative art and through the arts a new relationship between the public and the artist/writer was emerging. The arts shifted from a position of inspired outpourings to skilled crafts catering to specific classes and categories of people. The artist's awareness of the public which was being catered to, became an important aspect of the creative arts, determined primarily by the changed relations within society.

The most important characteristic of the industrialized British society and the colonized Indian society was the rise of the large middle class which also became the new class of the reading public. "As a result, the system of patronage had passed into subscription publishing, and thence into general commercial
publishing of the modern kind. These developments affected writers in several ways. There was an advance for the fortunate ones, and in independence and social status the writer became a fully fledged professional man. But the change also meant that the institution and growth of the 'Literary market' as the type of a writer's relations with his readers has been responsible for many fundamental changes of attitude. 7

Raymond Williams draws attention to significant developments which underlie new terms on which writers and writings and the readers are interrelated. This emphasis is especially important while taking up the study of women writers and their work, because the contributions made by women are affected adversely, through control by market values. The undervaluing of women's work is connected with the requirements and inherent features of market operations. This in turn affects the choice of the public and women's creativity thus follows a vicious cyclic repetition leading to an under development of women's creativity. However, this aspect was given due importance only with the rise of feminist consciousness. Raymond Williams was concerned primarily with the development of a literary market and changing relations between the writer and the public, which has made possible the development of specific modes of study of culture and literature. The use of literature and in this case, the novel genre, is of particular significance, on the basis of sociological assumptions of literature, which serve as a model of both reflection and transmutation of social reality. That the study will concentrate
on women novelists is also geared to a functional purpose. The novel is being used by women writers as a medium for transmuting their own experience of social reality, even though most of the experience, though of a personalized nature is projected through a consciousness dominated largely by male viewpoints and attitudes. This would provide the justification of singling out women novelists in the context of understanding women's experience of their womanhood and social reality, as also examining content in the light of sociological findings.

The role of the novel as a new commodity generated and controlled by the intellectual elite was another reason which distanced this creative form, from women. Raymond Williams observes, "The novel, in particular had quickly become a commodity; its main history as a literary form follows, as is well known, precisely the growth of these new conditions... Alongside the rejection of the public and of popularity as standards of worth, increasing complaint was made that Literature had become a trade."8 This is significant also in terms of explaining how the novel became a 'class' genre, belonging to the middle classes for the middle classes. In this context, Adam Smith had written, "In opulent and commercial societies to think or to reason comes to be like every other employment, a particular business, which is carried on by a very few people, like furnishing the public with all the thought and reason possessed by the vast multitudes that labour."9 Women, considered as being closer to readers than writers,
understandably failed to find a foothold in the literary market dominated by men.

The culture of writing that permeated the society was a culture of male writing. The word Art which had commonly meant skill, 'became specialized during the course of the eighteenth century, first to 'painting' and then to the imaginative arts generally. Raymond Williams' attempt at formulating a theory of culture throws light on the changing intra society relations which, in turn restructure the relations between writers and the public determining the content of work produced. "An essential hypothesis in the development of the idea of culture is that the art of a period is closely and necessarily related to the generally prevalent 'way of life; and further that, in consequence, aesthetic word and social judgements are closely interrelated."10 Consequently, an objective understanding of a period and its people is possible through the subjective insights, responses and interpretations of social process and their milieu. The term 'culture' thus lends itself to shifting interpretations, even though it remains a dominating factor in society. The development of a specific genre or the association of a specific class with the genre can be explained in terms of changes in prevailing forms of culture without in any way leading to any kind of disintegration. Emphasizing the role of the arts, I.A. Richards points out, "The importance of literature and the arts is that they offer supreme examples of such organization, and that in doing so they provide values (not
prescriptions or messages, but examples of a necessarily common process). It is through experience of an attention to such values that a wider common reorganization can be initiated and maintained.\textsuperscript{11} In keeping with Richards' emphasis on the role of literature and art, the position of the artist in society may be differentiated from the non artist or the lay person in that the area of experience available to the artist is much more than that which is available to the non artist. Delineating the social function of art, Raymond Williams sums up Richards' description of art as "play" by stating, "The experience of literature is thus a kind of training for general experience: training, essentially, in that capacity for organization which is man's only profitable response to his altered and dangerous conditions.\textsuperscript{12} Apart from the aesthetics that literature stands to serve, the conclusion that literature is socially functional may be established. Consequently as a cultural product which is socially functional, a study of literature provides important sociological insights. The study of the Indian English Novel aims at gaining insights into position of women novelists as also their representations of social organizations and experience as available to women.

Referring to the social potential of literature, F.R. Leavis states that many of the "subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition are contained in our literature and language."\textsuperscript{13} The insights gained through literature are of dual importance because they are the insights from the point of view of the writer as well as the society in which the writer is located. Elaborating
on this notion, Williams states, "Literature has a vital importance because it is at once a formal record of experience, and also, in every work, a point of intersection with the common language that is, in its major bearings, differently perpetuated. The recognition of culture as the body of all these activities and the ways in which they are perpetuated and enter in our common living". It may be argued that the kind of interrelation delineated between literature and the public is valid in a largely literate society and one which has activated a certain degree of technological/economic advancement, since theories of culture and literature became the explicit concerns of nineteenth century critics. However, this stand would amount to ignoring the oral tradition of literature which in terms of social function may be viewed in the same light as written literature. Coupling this approach with the Marxian understanding of culture in which social reality is seen as a complex field of movement within which economic elements are identified as central to organization, one is able to construct a holistic perspective towards the understanding of socio-cultural forces. In modern industrial societies economics play a crucial role in determining art and artists. The long-ranging influence of such a factor is discernible in the relation between gender, genre and class in India. This also points to the general situation that the popular, traditional culture in India remains unannihilated despite the changes that Society has experienced through colonization and Independence. The tradition of intellectual and imaginative work identified with a specific
Social class became reinforced with British colonialism when English language associated with the elite percolated to the middle classes. While looking at the various ways in which cultural and literary studies of a society can be undertaken, the cultural influences ushered in by a Colonial Regime can neither be ignored nor underrated despite the predominance of indigenous culture. This also throws light on the "invisibleness" of women writers, as also it reveals the proximity of a select few to systems of education. In the absence of a tradition of women's literatures in India (Discovered only recently)\textsuperscript{15} women who took to writing were also trying to establish their identity and the process involved either embracing western modes of thought and expression or conforming to available experience and reinforcing the same through traditional myths, symbols and stories. It has been observed that, women writers were not generating literature which was in any way radically different from that being produced by men writers. The situation prevailed till such time, when women writers gradually established an identity of their own as a result of interrelated socio-cultural changes. The study of culture and literature cannot be undertaken in isolation of their larger contact, namely society, of which they are a part. Similarly the study of any class or category of people, women in this context will be facilitated by a study of both cultural ethics as also the cultural products which serve to reflect social reality. It is at this point that a relationship between sociology and culture may be clearly established and considered for gaining further insights. "Writing is to be viewed as a
broadly cultural process, implicating the entire field of
linguistic representation." Referring to the construction of
models of femininity and the ideology of the family in the
eighteenth century writing of England, Shevlow points out to the
role of women first as readers and then as subject of writings
following which, women as writers themselves contributed to such
constructions. The periodical which preceded the novel played a
determining role in carving out a place for women vis-à-vis the
print culture. This factor throws light on how women writers in
India, however small in number, trained in using the English
language, used the novel as a medium of discourse and
construction of role models. Thus began the process of creating
and encouraging a readership of women trained similarly,
responding to the literary representation of women, either by
creating their own discourses or by becoming socialized into the
cults surrounding women in their multiple roles. If Raymond
Williams was concerned mainly with analyzing the
interrelationships between a new middle class audience and the
development of such popular forms as the periodical and the novel
in the period, other social literary critics like Ian Watt have
stressed the "Significance of women readers, in the context of
the growth and form of literary practices. They have emphasized
the profound influences of female literacy and leisure; they have
seen the feminine 'cult' of letter writing, as an influence of
the period's fascination with epistolatory genres; they have
noted a relationship between the formal demonsticicy of the novel
and the culturally enforced demosticicy of the women who read
(and wrote) them and seen women as an important target audience for popular literature like the periodical.\textsuperscript{17} The emergence of the middle class together with the new position occupied by women vis-à-vis the cultural processes of writing determined the nature of the medium of expression as also the content. Ian Watt, showed how production change alone, even if it was on comparatively minor proportions, may have altered the centre of gravity of the reading public sufficiently to place the middle class as a whole in a dominating position for the first time. Elaborating upon the widening base of writing and Reading, Raymond Williams states, "It is from the 1960's that new forms of reading, in the newspaper, the periodical and the magazine, account for the major expansion, and behind them comes the novel, in close relation from its beginnings to the middle class."\textsuperscript{18}

In the later stages of British Colonialism in India, there was a distinct shift in the class structure when the British system of education percolated its own forms of cultural processes through the elite strata of the Indian society. The gradual bureaucratization of the Indian polity restructured social systems, by which women though insignificantly and in extremely small proportions were exposed to western liberalism and through this exposure to customs and behaviour patterns different from their own. Ideologies pivoted around polarized values of tradition and modernity, which manifested themselves in the representation made in the writings of both men and women.
novelists emerging in the late 1940s through the 1970s, showing distinct changes with the passage of each decade.

To revert to the thesis propounded by Raymond Williams in the context of the study of culture and literature, the study of Indian forms of interrelated culture and literary processes would reiterate his stand in that the cultural roots of a genre determine its scope and representational tendencies. On these grounds, it will also define its readership as well as its active contributors. This also determined largely the evolution of the 'feminine ideal' and as Shevelow explains, "Increasingly throughout the eighteenth century the interrelated categories of masculine and feminine, public and private, home and world, assumed the shape of binary oppositions in which the incoming of each category was produced in terms of its opposite. Gender was constructed through the naturalizing of this system of oppositions; women were represented as naturally possessing qualities that rendered them unfit for the masculine public realm, but endowed with considerable authority within the private context of the home". The cultural processes and their manifestations through library paradigms which Shevelow discerns in the eighteenth century England carried over as inherent aspects of liberal knowledge and information transported through colonialism.

Referring to the emergence of writing as a significant cultural process, Michel Foucault, calls for a historical analysis of discourse, "Perhaps the time has come to study not
only the expressive value and formal transformations of discourse, but its mode of existence, the modifications and variations, within any culture, the modes of circulation, attribution and appropriation.²⁰ The study of the Indian English novel would focus on the nature and existence of discourse surrounding women as readers, writers and characters, bound by social convention and figuring as the subjects and objects of writing, gradually portraying conflicts between stereotypes and alternative role models. The private sphere of home and family achieved a public position, without losing any of its sanctity conventionally attributed to it. Shevelow observes, "Increasing literacy, increasing educational opportunities and the validation of women’s authority to participate in print culture on whatever terms - have liberating effects, even if these effects only resulted in the kind of subversion of patriarchy, necessarily buried and indirect which can be traced in the nineteenth century novels written by women. But in looking at the periodical, which was then and remains now of women’s principal and for many women, the only means of engagement with print culture, we are reminded that the tools of liberation are not in themselves liberating. Print culture can provide the bricks and mortar for constructing a prison - or the dynamite for shattering its walls".²¹ The role of the periodical as a precursor to the development of the novel is extremely significant because it provided the necessary space in print culture for women who were earlier deprived of this mode of expression.
Feminism and the Writings of Women

An increasing number of feminist critics have highlighted roles of art and literature in reinforcing social stereotypes of women controlled by and subjugated to norms of patriarchy. Of specific significance is Janet Wolff's attempt to draw attention to ideas which help in perceiving beyond traditional representations made in literature, sociology of culture. Wolff states, "What women write and paint is related to their experience and if exclusion from social experience has been a general practice in mid nineteenth century, then it follows that women's work will bear a different representation of society. Cultural confinement of women to the domestic spheres is likely to limit and influence their self perception and perceptions of others, which would in turn have its impact on the literature (both sociological and literary) which they create". This observation sums up importantly the delineated roles and output of women artists by virtue of cultural factors. Thus as Rita Felski states, "The political value of literary texts from the standpoint of feminism can be determined only by an investigation of their social functions and effects in relation to the interest of women in a particular historical context". Regarding the position of women and the work thus produced the argument continues that the continuing process of the separation of spheres' of male and female, public and private was, on the whole reinforced and maintained by cultural ideologies, practices and institutions. Wolff explains how this
applies both to the place of women in cultural production (as artists, authors, patrons and members of cultural institutions) and to the dominant modes of cultural representation, particularly in literature and the visual arts and their construction of notions of gender. Those who consciously reinforced the ideology of public and private spheres, did so by controlling cultural production underlining the importance of identifying the influence of that ideology where it operated in the production and distribution of culture, Wolff says, "To a considerable extent, patrons, critics, reviewers, publishers and others colluded in the dissemination of a culture which was sanitized and shaped in accordance with the middle class ideology of separate spheres. In addition, class segregation reinforced social divisions of gender and maintained ideals of femininity and domesticity. This was accompanied by a trend to produce leisure either centred on the home (reading, playing music, gardening) or based on the family. Entertainments and cultural activities which did take place in public were exclusively male." By focusing on male controls over cultural production, Wolff points out to a false consciousness as it manifests itself in literary work and the arts and the restricted spaces to which women are expected to confine themselves by virtue of their sexuality and assumed limited insights and comprehension. The sentences that women construct are, according to Wolff liable to reflect the constructions that women are sentenced to. Adding to Wolff's perception, Cunningham observes, "The general rule was that any woman in a public place of leisure, and unaccompanied by
husband or other suitable male was a prostitute". Such prevalent attitudes led to the glorification of the private sphere which manifested itself in the literary genre of the novel. In this context, Patricia Stubbs argues, "The novel is inherently bound up with the notion of a private life which has its own autonomous moral standards and values. This is particularly damaging to women. For, within Bourgeois society women are confined to this private, largely, domestic world, and have become the focus of a powerful ideology which celebrates private experience and relationships as potent sources of human satisfaction". The novel thus initiated what has always been a fundamental association between women and private life. It is from this association that all the familiar images of women in fiction are derived, the virgin heroine, the wife and mother, the prostitute, the spinster, the mistress the redundant middle aged woman, the single mother. It may be pointed out that the types of women represented in fiction have their roots in the very origins of the form, closely linked as it was with a male centred ideology relegating the sexes to polarized spheres of activity. Elaborating upon the significant interlinkage between the novel as a cultural product and society, Stubbs explains, "It is no coincidence that the rise of the novel has its roots in a socio-historical context which reaffirmed exclusion of women from a wide range of social experience and imposed and idealized feminine, domestic constraints. Privatization of women's roles lent themselves as popular cultural representations depicted by the novel". 27
Substantiating this view Wolff states that there is a definite role of culture in producing, confirming and maintaining (and, perhaps, subverting) ideologies of gender and sexuality...."Culture is not a passive vehicle for the transmission of already existing social values and ideologies, but rather that representation which participates actively in the construction of such values".28

The preceding views establish the interdependent linkages of culture, society and the novel. It is evident that the interdependence creates a situation where one becomes the resource for the other. This type of circular reinforcement of ideologies contributed effectively and largely in determining passive, feminized roles and models till, what has been considered valuable, the reorientation demanded by feminist theory and perspective. The reinforcement of cultural types established through literature was considered detrimental to the development of women's personal and social identity. The images and metaphors projected through Literature normalized modes of behaviour for both women and men. Reasons attributed to representations of types include the fact that most novelists who were considered significant and thereby became authorial, happened to be male writers with inherent masculine perspective. "It is essentially a literature about transformations in the public world and in its associated consciousness".29 This has also given rise to the development of the metropolitan personality, since modern literature is dealing with encounters
in the urban environment and in particular, the world view which the city dwellers develop. Summing up this aspect Wolff points out, "The psychological basis of the metropolitan types of individuality consists in the intensification of nervous stimulation which results from the swift and uninterrupted change of outer and inner stimuli. This is closely related to the money economy, dominant by the late nineteenth century".  

As a result of social segregation of women and domestic/private sphere, there is thus, a marked invisibility of women in accounts of city life. When the woman appears, she is there because of her role and position as either the prostitute or the pathetic woman. Wolff implies that the literature of modernity is characterized by the invisible woman. Both rationalization, the Industrial and Business concerns as hallmarks of modernity were experiences of men. Central to participation in city cultures was the male figure who fleet ed in and out of crowds and streets during day and night while a female counterpart of this figure was inconspicuous because of ideological prescriptions. However, in the Indian context, by the time the Indian English novel developed its own tradition and became rooted, the technique of introspection provided valuable psychological insights into ways in which women were perceived socially and individually. But it must be noted that such insights were presented in meaningful details largely by women writers, and women were depicted and represented mainly as appendages with negligible degrees of access to public spheres
except for during the period of Gandhian movement which became a popular source for novel of the twentieth century.

Wolff's threefold explanation for invisibility of women in Literature of modernity, may be said to have a general relevance:

1) The nature of sociological investigation
2) The consequently partial conception of modernity
3) The reality of women's place in society.

Thus, according to Wolff, the Literature of modernity, like most sociology of its period, suffers from what has recently been called the "over socialization of the public sphere". The limited vision of its authors explains why women only appear in this literature through their relationships with men in the public sphere, and via their illegitimate or eccentric routes into this male arena - that is, in the role of whore, widow or murder victim.31

In most work of this and subsequent period, women thus appear in juxtaposed opposition. On the one hand, is the ideal wife, the embodiment of socially prescribed values and on the other hand, is the socially condemned marginal figure of the vamp or the good-woman-turned-bad, even though victimized yet isolated and culpable and accountable for her fall. These images percolated from the nineteenth century representations in Europe, to the mid twentieth century fourr representations in Indian English novels. However, the class structure introduced some variations and shades of differential attitudes towards such
representations. Wolff observes, "The real situation of women in the second half of the nineteenth century was more complex than one of straightforward confinement to the home. It varied from one class to another, and even from one geographical region to another, depending on the local industry, the degree of industrialization and a number of other factors. And although the solitary and independent life of the city-male was not open to women, women clearly were active and visible in other ways in the public arena". 32 The latter is reflected vividly in novels of both western and Indian English context, through the social positions which women acquired through male supporters. In this context, Thorstein Veblen's observation is especially valuable. "At the stage of economic development, at which women were still in the full sense of property, possessed by men, the performance of conspicuous leisure and consumption came to be part of the services required of them. The women being not their own masters, obvious expenditure and leisure on their part would redound to the credit of their master rather than to their own credit, and therefore the more expensive and the more obviously unproductive the women of the household are, the more credible and the more effective for the purpose of reputation of the household or its head will their life be". 33 Consequently, women became symbols of social respect and position ascribed to men with whom they are associated through marriage. This was the only kind of consciousness which was associated with women, a consciousness which generated intra class/gender divisions.
The conspicuous absence of women from public spheres and their invisibility in Literature and the Arts became a matter of pivotal concern for feminism which found forms of articulation through modernisms.

Virginia Woolf's statement, "In or about December 1910, human character changed", is socially significant because it suggests an awareness of new modes of expression which would have a significant bearing on social relations and self perception. For Virginia Woolf, the change in human character and consequently in Literature seemed to offer real possibilities for women to break away from what she describes as "the sentence made by men - heavy, loose and pompous". The woman writer, she says, "must make her own sentence, altering and adapting the current sentence until she writes one that takes the natural shape of her thought, without crushing or distorting it". Recognizing that the tools of one generation are useless for the next, woolf began the task of creating a Literature to suit the age Woolf's themes and forms initiated a significant tradition heralding women's writings which marked an important departure from traditional gendered modes of expression and identification. The influence of this departure was far reaching in bringing about changes at the level of social and individual consciousness.

Highlighting the limited experiences of women, Rachel Bowlby shows, how by the end of the nineteenth century, "shopping became an important activity for women, the rise of the department store
and of the consumer society providing a highly legitimate, if limited participation in public life". However, such activities as also those of the working class women did not figure as part of the content of literature, because they were alien to and considered insignificant for representation by men writers. Bowlby's account clearly brings out the manner in which women were excluded from participation in activities which define and assess concepts and cultural productions. She concludes that an analysis of modernism without the feminist perspective is only partial if not distorted. It is not that women were not depicted by men in and their work "but the masculine definition of modernity produced a skewed account, in which the only women visible (apart from the home and the family) were marginal women".

In order to further authenticate women's exclusion from cultural production, it is important to consider the mechanism and practices through which this occurs. Wolff's account helps to explain the processes, "The institutional organization of knowledge operates to marginalize women, as well as to reinforce the gender inequalities in contemporary society. The historical development of different disciplines, reinforces division of sexes". Consequently, women's access and entry into certain areas of education and subsequently professions is controlled and constrained. Cultural production in the form of books and the arts reflects the marginal position women hold in their contribution. Wolff points out that it is ironical, when critics...
bemoan a dearth of women in creative work, because they only reflect their own narrow understanding of institutionalized knowledge. The fact that institutionalised knowledge reflects (and also produces gender inequalities, giving priority of the increasing professionalization of work, including academic work. Since this happened to coincide with the period in which the separation of spheres took on its most exaggerated form in Western societies, this also produced the physical conditions for an increasingly fragmented and compartmentalized way of life, facilitated by the social divisions of gender, and the ideology of femininity and domesticity. The need for establishing the images, ideologies and systems of representation of patriarchal culture, is because of misrepresentation due to partial experience of social reality. This is based on the feminist argument that knowledge is grounded on experience. Human experience differs according to the kinds of activities and social relations in which humans engage. Women's experience; systematically differs from male experience, upon which knowledge claims to have been grounded.

Thus, the development of interdisciplinary approaches in the study of literature and sociology have provided a conceptual framework in which, as has been pointed out, "one can move from a narrow, historically and politically uncritical focus on a succession of Texts and writers, to a more adequate understanding and interpretation of literary works and practices". Similarly, Wolff argues for the need to combine the two approaches to
textual critique and sociological analysis of institutions of cultural production in order to produce a comprehensive feminist account of literature which can link conditions of production in order to produce a comprehensive feminist account of literature (Women as authors) with characteristics of representation (Narrative and literary conventions as constituting and limiting the presentation of women in the text.\textsuperscript{40}

In recent years, some of the more important contributions to literary scholarship have been made by those literary historians and critics who are committed to the perception of literature as a social product. Sociology of literature is thus considered as a cross disciplinary collaboration between sociologists and literary critics. Citing Raymond William's argument, Wolff agrees that culture (and hence literature) has to be analyzed in terms of institutions as well as in terms of representation, calling this approach a 'sociology of culture' - "A sociology of culture must concern itself with the social relation of its specific means of production. It must further concern itself, with the ways in which, within social life, 'culture' and 'cultural production' are socially identified and distinguished.... A sociology of culture must further and most obviously concern itself with specific artistic forms".\textsuperscript{41} The emphasis articulated by Janet Wolff is that the study of literature must be both at the level of texts and at the level of institutions and processes.
There prevails a sense of class difference in women's lives, not in terms of spending habits, or living arrangements and employment but of ways of thinking, feeling and imagining. The analysis of women's writings highlights the fences on the inside as well as the outside which have separated and antagonized women. Virginia Woolf believed that one could look for socio historical truth in new ways of writing which could accommodate amongst other things, the women's point of view. Reflecting on women's relation with space and institutions woolf observes that no one has lived more on the 'inside', than women. Subsequently, the conceptual opposition between Abroad and Home applied to male female divisions and relations to space. "Abroad was culture, romance and sexuality, home was philistine, prosaic and frigid. Home was also the place where women were, after 1919, in the majority and where women writers were coming into their own".42

By exploring the writings of middle class women, one can go straight to the centre of a contradictory and determining tension in English Social life. It also seemed that many of the women made no bones about preferring the kind of personal life with their own circles of respectability, offered even if they felt limited and constrained by them. Alison Light, points out, "The 'middle class' was itself undergoing radical revision between the wars and any use of the term must ideally stretch from the typist to the teacher, include the beautician as well as the civil servant, the florist and the lady doctor, the library assistant and the suburban housewife, and the manifold differences between
them". The most valuable contribution made by women writers at the time was that their work could provide the sources to contemplate a full repertoire of feminine desires, of feelings and behaviour spread over a gamut of roles and positions. Most of the women writers' own lives were shaped by the values of domestic privacy and both the positive and negative aspects of a private house. There is, significantly, a shift in focus from what goes on outside to what is contained within the institutionalized domestic life with its rituals of marriage, birth, death, emotions and conflicts.

Patterns of behaviour reflected in the novels written even by women had their sources in prevailing social traditions firmly established through Victorian ideals. In conformity with the Victorian ideals of femininity, they represented economic and intellectual dependency of women their prescribed service and self sacrifice as quintessential forms of 'womanly behaviour'. From early childhood girls were encouraged to suppress or control ambition, intellectual courage or initiative - any desire for power or independence. Strong intelligent women wrestled with their feelings of ambivalence in order to reconcile their desires with what they had learnt to perceive and value as their feminine "social identity". What Carol Dyhouse recounts as the first lessons in femininity, reflects patterns that prevail in most societies and more significantly so in post colonial societies. The family is identified as the primary and most powerful agency of socialization. It role in the socialization of girls, particularly, was even more important. It was, then much more
effective in determining and controlling the influence of other social groups and institutions - especially the impact of schooling on the growing girl.

The Victorian ideal of the family consolidated itself towards the end of the nineteenth century. A respectable working man aimed to support his wife and children in some degree of comfort. Married women working for a wage outside the home - was not considered responsible or respectable. A working wife endangered a husband's status and self respect, bringing into question both his class position and somehow his manhood, because of definitions of manliness which were so intimately bound up with a particular form of domestic life. So, too, were patterns of authority, still revealed in common speech. Men might object to their wives working lest they become dominant - considered to be against the natural order of things.

The image of the prosperous businessman dressed for the city who lined the platforms of suburban railway stations each morning were setting off into a world remote from their children's experience. It was emphatically a male world of public events and finance.

There were many other aspects of organization in a middle class household which would have reinforced children's impression of the dignity and separateness of the male world. The existence of space exclusively identified with male retirement - a space which was excluded for both women and
children. Even in working class families fathers were likely to get the best portions of food and the most comfortable of spots. In most such families girls of ten or twelve were made to feel they constituted a drain on the family budgets, if they went on living at home and they were expected, even at that age to move to more affluent households and work as domestic servants. If boys happened to work at home, giving a helping hand with domestic chores, that was voluntary work for the girls it was compulsory.

There are also sufficient accounts of differential attitudes of mothers towards male and female children. This also served as the root cause of antagonism between mothers and daughters - the latter being reduced almost to captive labour force by mothers who were overwhelmed by the constant demands of domesticity. Literature, especially the novel, contains vivid impressions of ambivalent female values, and socially valuable details of domestic lives viewed through the perspective of women thereby, reflecting specific experiences of women which at the hands of male writers remained more or less invisible though central to the sociological novel. In terms of man-woman relations, Literature, by and large offered a biological explanation of sex differences, premised on the assumption of fixed characteristics of male female tendencies. It is important, at this point, to focus on the dynamics of the novel, which, while representing and reinforcing cultural social stereotypes and prescriptions became also the source for effecting social change through different representations and discourse. The Victorian faith in the
powers of the art of literature was instrumental in making the novel effective in influencing/altering social consciousness. This has been brought out specifically by focusing on the close association between social reformers and the novel. It has been pointed out how Josephine Butler's social awareness was sharpened by the sensitive representations made through Mrs. Gaskell's novels. What had moved and inspired Butter was the complete isolation of every so-called fallen woman, who was, in fact, a victim of male corruption and seduction. This situation owed itself to the inalienable right that men seemed to be vested with, over the use of women. As a result, many women suffered - the fallen woman had no power to assert herself; she had few rights, if any. Through the study of the sexual fall of women, novelists like Thomas Hardy, Charles Dickens and George Eliot in the Western tradition and Kamala Markandaya and Nayantara Sahgal in the Indian tradition were able to highlight the intense and complex problems of women from all classes, expose the sham respectability which personifies patriarchy and give themselves the role of social reformers.

The novel has thus been periodically identified with a means of social reform. Representations and discourse of the nineteenth-century image of women helped to shape the attitudes of the twentieth century. The aspect that social reform novelists tried to underline was the systematic way in which suffering of women was transformed to guilt. The assault on women is turned into a fall which is deemed as final and
irreversible, causing misery and suffering for the wronged woman. The debate generated through the novel brought into focus the hypocritical male oriented morality of the age which pronounced vicious judgement against the wronged women. At the same time, such novels defined what the middle class Victorian males desired. For them, there were two types of women, the pure ones to be married, the other to be used.

"Keeping the two worlds apart was essential for the status quo. If a woman transgressed, this represented a threat to the whole system - this threat could not be tolerated. Individual dynamism as reflected by the Victorian novels was a male province. The Queen Victorias, the Florence nightingales and the George Eliots were so few in number, that they became the exceptions which proved the rule". However, the study of the position of women in the novel reveals more about the society that oppresses them, than about the women themselves. What emerges through the study of the fallen women is how the vision of the novelist and the novel itself can be instrumental in reshaping perception.

The influencing and changing role of the novel as shown in the western culture could be paralleled with the role of the popular epics in the Indian society. The Ramayana and the Mahabhartha had a far-reaching influence on the mind and life of India in particular and the whole of South Asia in general. In fact, post epic literature mostly borrows from, or improves and reconstructs on the themes taken from the epics. Besides
this, what is of significant relevance to the present context is how women characters of the epics have been held as ideals for women. Thus, the Indian English novel, which was conceived through a Western tradition of form drew from the Indian Epics for its representations. The epical representations are important in terms of the influences they exert on the consciousness of writers and types of depictions made through their novels, even when the medium of expression is English. It is noteworthy that the events in the epics span over a probable period between 1400 B.C. to 100 B.C., the character thus representing the tensions and types of the age, which find popular, edifying and positive relevance to a new genre, as also to readers. The content of the epics had provided an inexhaustible and varied source even for the twentieth century writer, and has been described as a conglomeration of epic and didatic matter, containing old and new ideals, as well as different popular practices. "The epics show how women mostly follow the ideals prescribed and the passages decrying women are few and can be justified with reference to the context. The condemnation of women occurs in direct association with their exercise of evil and harm to others. 47

Sociologically, and particularly in the context of this study, the epics also trace the story of the fall of the status of women in the Hindu society. Commenting upon the marked decline, A.C. Das observes, "Womanhood was sacrificed at the altar of supposed social convenience and purity and out of its ashes arise a race of cribbed, cabinet, confined and delicate
creatures, too fragile for the propagation of vigorous life and too ethereal and womanly, to be of any earthly use. 48

However, considerable freedom which was once possessed by unmarried women in contracting and even living unmarried, gradually diminished. The guardian's control and various limitations took possession of all her rights. However, the family, as was traced in the epics was Patriarchal and Patrilineal. "Even though wife or "Dampati" which etymologically means joint owner, was considered to be vested with equal rights regarding property, yet, the custom of inheritance tilted sharply in favour of males. Due to gradual confinement, and lack of education, loss of religious status and child marriages women lost their judgment and other significant abilities with their personalities gradually merging with the personalities of their husbands". 49 Therefore, the gap in learning and achievement between the husband and wife gradually widened - the husband emerging as somebody who was learned and the wife as somebody who was ignorant.

Mothers and women, have also been considered as inspirers. Therefore, "Energy or shakti was personified by the mother goddess to whom even the greatest of gods turned for protection". 50 Accounts indicate that mother worship in the Epics was at first the outcome of dread and fear and lack of understanding of the mysterious power of creation in women. Since the family was considered as the basic unit, "mothers emerged as educators, guiding and sublimating influences and
considered as an integrating force in society. They were also attributed with a pivotal role in determining the character of her children".\(^\text{51}\) Such ideal types influenced representations in the Indian English novel.

**Women and Language**

An important aspect of representation of women which has received considerable attention and emphasis by feminist theorists is the way in which language has been used to express basic values towards women. It is now acceptable that language reflects social and cognitive structures and thus, "it is indicative of attitudes beliefs and values of the past and the present".\(^\text{52}\) Ginet suggests the importance of linguistic processes in correcting individual human minds in a large socio cultural order, by raising two questions:

1) How do women (and men) speak?
2) How are women spoken of and to?

Ginet, point out, "anthropologists have long recognized the importance of vocabulary as an important repository of social, cultural and historical information about the people who have used it. Following in this tradition, language and the general patterns of its use can be taken as an index of culturally shared or predominant attitudes and values connected with women and men, with sexuality and with the sexual distribution of social roles and status. The range of forms of expressions available for speaking of particular topics (terms that refer to prostitutes,
for instance, and their inter-connection can be viewed either as a cultural artifact bearing testimony to the past or as a mirror of socio cultural patterns widely operative in the contemporary situation, or both). For example, through vocabulary, one can make plausible conjectures about the lives of our fore mothers and in some cases about past cultural conceptions of femaleness and maleness. A formal connection existing within contemporary language may point to an earlier semantic link, e.g. spinster and the word 'Spin'; 'Henpecked' does not have a male co-relate in the form of 'cockpecked', 'mothering' is a long term activity but 'fathering' the act of an instant". 53 Ginet has also drawn attention to the different ways in which men and women use language because of differences in their acculuration. Certain patterns of speech are almost exclusively associated with men whereas women in turn are associated with terms which are courteous and considered more feminine. Women's preference for refined veiled and indirect expressions appear in contrast to the coarse and gross expressions of men. A near universal dislike by women of coarse forms, may well be linked to the widespread use of sexual insults by men as a potent weapon against women; explanations of the frequency of indirectness in women's speech appeal to social and cultural conceptions of power.

Emphasizing the social dimensions of women's language use, Ruth Barker raises three types of questions about the impact of the social world on women's speech: "1) How is women's speech determined by the social position? 2) How is speech a means of
coping with their position? and 3) to what extent do the differing social experiences of men and women lead them to use language in differing ways and to do different things.\textsuperscript{54}

In no society are individuals defined only by gender, but also in no society is gender irrelevant to social identity and position. However, as Barker points out, some features of speech are acquired as part of learning to speak and act 'like a man' or 'like a woman'. Other features, although they also correlate with the sex of the speaker, are primarily the result of social position and social experience. In the same vein, Robin Lakoff argues that women's speech is related to their social position by a two way process. "First women learn to use specific linguistic features as part of the process of learning to act lady-like, to behave like acceptable women. Second, the specific linguistic features that they learn prevent them from asserting themselves in conversational interaction and limit them to being powerless and ineffectual members of society".\textsuperscript{55}

While studies of language as a function of social position demonstrate the existence of major constraints on women's speech, it is also true that there is some flexibility in the ways women can respond linguistically to the constraints posed by their social position. Research has also shown that some language use characteristic of women can be seen as a means of coping with their social situations. It has also been traced that women are more likely to be monolingual than men in contact situations. Since men have greater contact with outsiders,
access to knowledge of language became their prerogative. Women's monolingualism in such situations was seen as a function of their restricted contact with non-local language speakers as a result of their involvement in domestic and locally based activities in contrast to men's involvement in public politics and migrant employment. The different social worlds occupied by men and women shape the words and thoughts of men and women differently. Women's subordinate position to men led them to develop skills aimed at 'teasing out' information and talking around issues. The more conversational and 'mundane' verbal genres that are recognized as distinctively women's, reflect the terms through which women align themselves with the world as they know it. Women's language, style and expression reflect her secondary status, and at the same time provide signals to the study of the socio-cultural system. The existence of a women's language has important bearings on the writings of women. Lakoff concludes, "Through women's experiences, internalization and social position - their articulation generates culturally a feminine style - which often lends itself to creative fiction writing .... If men write out of primitive or heroic occasions, women write, out of everyday occasions, because of women's close interaction with their environment". 56.

Feminist approach to cultural literary studies, has importantly contributed to the study of "image" of women, to explain women's characterization and to analyze the economic restrictions, social taboos and cultural norms which in specific historical contexts, govern women's behaviour. In a second
phase, feminist critics have argued that since it is largely the works of men which inform their literary standards, these reflect a male view of life. Thus, the neglect which has be fallen many women writers can be attributed, in part to the prevailing cultural biases which discount women's interests and perception of life and women's views of experience. Citing the importance of literary text for the reader in a process of interaction with the social structure, Virginia Woolf explains, "Not only is the literary text a transmitter of explicit and implied cultural values, but the reader as well is a carrier for perceptual prejudices. It is the reader's acumen, expectations and unconsciousness which invest the text with meaning". At the same time, Woolf, stressed the need to focus attention on language medium used, since the articulation of language and meaning can provide feminists with a useful methodological tool to expose the cultural components of the linguistic medium and undermine the myth of linguistic neutrality. Stressing the importance of the social function of language, Roland Barthes says that "It is language, which teaches us the definition of man, not the reverse. Since language is the place where the individual is apprehended as a social and historical being, language can also show how women are defined, understood and appreciated in society." 58

Recent research indicates specific characteristics with which women's writing is identified, as distinct, from the writings of men. Gayatri Spivak has discerned features, like
"more of non communication and introspection and talking through metaphors, as distinctive stylistic turns in relation to the writings of men.59

In the early history of the novel, women so dominated the genre, it came to be thought of as what Josephine Donovan believes a "female thing". With the rise and development of the novel, women moved rapidly from relative literary obscurity into a position to be seriously reckoned with. Women first learned to write about their experience and about themselves in diaries and letters. Josephine Donovan explains that the novel, "which deals with everyday problems, often borrows material and narrative techniques used in private correspondence. Since letter writing was a popular activity for upper class women, they found prose fiction a comfortable mode of expression with that also developed the consciousness of sexism and a move away from it as reflected through various efforts, some earnest, others half hearted".60

In India, educators promised to deliver a curriculum that would recognize and nurture the fundamental equality between men and women. Thus, the Indian Government agreed to rewrite the textbooks of independent India to prepare its young for an era of equality, by inspiring, "each sex to develop a proper respect towards the other because....it is unscientific to divide tasks and subjects on the basis of sex and to regard some of them as 'masculine' and others as 'feminine'. Similarly, the fact that the so called psychological differences arise between the two
sexes, not out of sex, but out of social conditioning, will have to be widely publicized and people will have to be made to realize that stereotypes of masculine and feminine personalities do more harm than good. 61

However, the reality is far from the projected mission. A survey of 41 books used widely as textbooks by nearly 13 lakh students, showed that there was distinctly a bias in favour of men, their activities and roles in society. N.N. Kalia points out, "Not only were the majority of characters male, but in 75% of the lesson plots men also emerged as dominant figures. There were 47 biographies of men, only seven biographies of women. Men routinely abused and violently beat women in many lessons. Over 100 females were victimized as a result of their sex roles. In most lessons, men ventured out to seek fame and fortune, while women stayed home to wash dishes and clothes. Males in Indian text books occupied high prestige occupations. Both in and outside the home, they appeared the dominant decision makers in the wide range of activities. Of the 465 occupations held by characters in the plots, women were completely excluded from 344. Most women were relegated to low prestige, low income positions (housewife, servant, prostitute). Their authority to make decisions was generally restricted to domestic matters. As if catering to a male readership alone, the authors and editors of Indian text books used nouns and pronouns that excluded females from generalization about human society. 62
Sexist language, would constitute the creation and promotion of irrelevant distinction between the sexes, causing or resulting in the oppression of either sex. The ramifications of this are explained at length by Lakoff, who observes, "If we feel positively towards any given thing in the world, we are more likely to describe that thing by using words with positive connotations than we are by using words with negative connotations".63

Sexist language thus strengthens and reinforces sex role stereotypes giving rise to parallel images projected through paralleled visual languages, which have a wider impact. For societies which are structured along gender divisions, such images are instrumental in being detrimental to women. Images of women projected through the screen, and Radio, show them as decorative or items of utility or service. The image of women from the written word to the screen is couched in negative, limited, and derogatory representation. C.S. Lakshmi64 focuses on the question of the male gaze' which in a patriarchy represses women through its controlling power over female thoughts and desires.

Both the visual and textual representation/images of women play up to the controlling male gaze through the lens the writer's consciousness, as also the viewer's /reader's responses and internalizations, carrying overt or covert metaphors into the very process of socialization. Thus, Toril Moi's assertion that the principal objective of feminist criticism65 has always been
political, because it seeks to expose, not to perpetuate patriarchal practices, provides both methodology and perspective for sociological and literary analysis. Elaine Showalter believes that a text should reflect the writer's experience and that the more authentic the experience is felt to be, by the reader, the more valuable the text. Accordingly feminist writing is identified as work that offers a powerful expression of personal experience in a social framework. Feminism thus adds an important dimension to Realism, as Lukacs states, "True great Realism thus depicts man and society as complete entities, instead of showing merely one or the other of their aspects. Measured by this criterion, artistic trends determined by either exclusive introspection or exclusive extroversion equally impoverish and distort reality. Thus realism means a three dimentionality, an all roundedness that endows with independent life, characters and human relationships". 66 Given this perspective, any art that represents the division of the complete human personality or social reality into a public and private sector, contributes to the mutilation of the essence of a human being.

The lack of a totalizing representation of both the private and the working life of women is Patricia Stubb's main complaint against all novels written by both men and women in the period between 1880 and 1920. 67 Pointing to what is involved in feminist writing, Julia Kristeva 68 argues that many women are critical of the symbolic order which is the patriarchal order,
ruled by the law of the father, and any subject who tries to disrupt it, stands in a position of revolt, which manifests itself either externally or internally.

The most dominating and prevailing stand that has reflected itself so far is that of liberal feminism in feminist writings of English and Indian English Origins. Stereotypes of femininity were identified in the writings, especially of males and consciously or unconsciously undermined, gradually in the writings of women. Mary Ellman sums up the eleven major stereotypes of femininity as presented by male writers:

a) Formlessness,
b) Passivity,
c) Instability,
d) Confinement,
e) Piety,
f) Materiality,
g) Spirituality,
h) Irrationality,
i) Compliance,
j) The images of witch and shrew.

Ellman suggests that male reviewers just cannot attach the same degree of authority to a voice, they know to be female.

Women writers had therefore, to confront a number of factors which were conventionally accepted, justified and male directed, or male centred. Thus, they first tried to deviate from the stereotyped images of women projected by presenting introspected
experiences of self and their interaction with others. This itself had to counter neglect and non acceptability till feminist criticism gave such writings their rightful status in the literary world. One of the prime tasks envisaged by Ellman is to counter the stereotyped images of women, which she believes are "verbal constructs in the services of patriarchal ideology".70

Feminist criticism brought to the field of Literary criticism a wholly new perspective according to which criticism is 'value free', as, Florence Howe71 points out, "We all speak from a specific position shaped by cultural, social, political and personal factors. It is authoritative and manipulative to present the limited, male perspective as 'universal', and the only democratic procedure is to supply the reader with all necessary information about the limitations of one's own perspective at the outset".72 Emphasizing the important role of autobiography in bridging the connection between literature and feminism, Howe, believes that it is in the consciousness that lives and expression begin. This also provides the reader with the right to know of the writer's life.

Summing up a literary work from the feminist point of view, Cheri Register states, "A literary work should provide, role models, instill a positive sense of feminine identity by portraying women who are, self actualizing and whose identities are not dependent on men".73 The feminist writer is here also cautioned about striking the necessary balance between realism
and idealism, because the demand for authenticity supersedes all other requirements.

With the development of a distinctive feminist approach and interest in women's writings, Showalter cautioned, "Women writers should not be studied as a distinct group on the assumption that they write alike, or even display stylistic resemblances distinctively feminine. But women do have a special history, susceptible to analysis, which includes such complex considerations as the economics of their relation to the literary market place; the effects of social and political changes in women's status, upon individuals and the implications of stereotypes of the women writer and restrictions of her artistic autonomy." The most significant development during the decade of the seventies was the emergence of a distinctively feminist approach and identification of norms, styles and values which impinged upon social views of women which in turn determined their status. What distinguishes feminist tradition and criticism is that it is able to state that it is society and not biology that shapes women's different literary perception of the world. Earlier studies, described as "stepping stone" for the more mature feminist literary histories, were often characterized by an emphasis on personal details and biographical anecdotes. Following this phase, Showalter identifies that major phases of historical development claimed to be common to all literary subcultures: First, there is a prolonged phase of initiation of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition and

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internalization of its standards of art and its views of social roles. Second, there is a phase of protest against these standards and values, including a demand for autonomy. Finally, there is a phase of self discovery, a turning inward, freed from some of the dependency of opposition in search for identity.

An appropriate terminology for women writers is to call these stages:

a) Feminine; b) Feminist and C) Female

The Feminine period starts with the appearance of male pseudonyms in the 1840s and lasts until the death of George Eliot in 1880. The Feminist phase lasts from 1880 until 1920 and the female phase starts in 1920 and is still continuing, though it took a new turn in the 1960s with the advent of women's movement. This approach analyzes ways in which dominant patriarchal ideology presented artistic creativity as a fundamentally male quality, by which the creativity of women had been consistently isolated. However, by and large the emphasis is not merely on creating a separate female enclave as Moril Toi puts it, but the building up of a female tradition in Literature as more than a methodological choice; it is an urgent political necessity with far reaching implications, involving the status of women.

Discourse on the feminist tradition in literature in the Indian context became alive in mid 80's when feminist insights became matters of discourse and technique identifying women
writers as a class to be reckoned with on their terms. This also provided impetus to the study of women characters as delineated by both men and women writers. Commenting on the situation in India, Lola Chatterji observes, "Feminist Criticism has grown from tentative inquiries into the themes and formal problems of women's writings and their depiction in work written by men". One of the problems that Indian Literary feminists take upon themselves is how to define women writers as a distinct literary group without falling into a radical essentialist feminist position.76 The idea of "sexual difference as against opposition, or complementariness has to be based not only on factual data from biological and psychological studies, but also from the ways in which women have been represented in intellectual discourse and cultural stereotypes".77 Moreover, both identity and development are to be seen not merely as ends in themselves but rather as processes. This is contrasted with the situation in which social roles are more rigid and require accommodation to male paradigms. "The interaction between female consciousness of such identity and the variable norms of social and professional behaviour related to technological advances and changing political power structures lead to dissonance and stress for both sexes, but more so far women".78 This emphasis on female identity as a process occurring in the context of a given social structure is a major concern of Indian feminists critics.

**Sociology and Literature**

Elizabeth and Tom Burns in a pioneering attempt to establish
the interdisciplinary relation between literature and sociology through compiling various readings under one head, begin by defining the concepts involved in their introduction. "Literature is an attempt to make sense of our lives. Sociology is an attempt to make sense of the ways in which we live our lives". The common concerns shared by literature and sociology was brought about in the 1960s with a declining emphasis on functionalism and a greater concern with a pluralistic approach. Referring to Literature as a mineral resource, F.R. Leavis states, "without the sensitizing familiarity, with the subtleties of language, and the insight into the relations between abstract and generalizing thought and the concrete of human experience that the trained frequentation of literature alone can bring, the thinking that attends social and political studies will not have the edge and force it should". Investigating social reality through supplementing viewpoints as was identified by sociologists, literary critics of the mid twentieth century, released disciplines from the confines of prescribed ends and methodology, creating and identifying new and more broad based trends in the study of society. Literature had established itself as a social Institution, and came to be reckoned on these terms even to new modern criticism. From this aspect, literature, like religion, education and family life, could be seen to have developed its own values and norms but it would either be dependent upon or attributable to the norms and values of contemporary society. "The link between those values and norms which are exoteric throughout society and those which are
esoteric, specific to certain literary genres and schools or even writers, could be provided by the enduring but changing structure of conventions which enables a book to be read, or a play to be watched with understanding. They represent an agreement between writers and readers whereby the artist is allowed to limit and simplify his material in order to secure greater concentration through a control of the distribution of emphasis. Literature is like a vehicle that serves to transmit social norms and values through different levels of society and serves to provide a cohesion of thought and tradition.

Isolating the novel from the body of literature, Michel Zeraffa points out, "In the sociology of the novel, sociology is dealing with an art. True narrative fiction is contained within language and takes most of its own character from it, the form and the content of the novel derive more closely from social phenomenon than do those of other arts, except perhaps cinema; novels often seem bound up with particular moments in the history of society." This view of the novel raises several questions regarding the nature of the novel and the extent to which it may be treated as a social manifestation and the extent to which it may be viewed as subjective interpretation of social reality. For the purpose of the study in hand, the former view point is both acceptable and viable, without reducing the text to a documentation of social facts. The novel may be defined as a representational genre of social reality which provides insights as also a means of socialization through its gallery of role
models. As such the Indian English novel developed into a significant medium imbibing and creating traditions interrelated with existing social reality, operating on two distinct levels from a sociological point of view (a) The content of the novel (b) The mind behind the novel.

These points provide a vantage for analysis and comprehension, because the writer, going by the European theories of fiction writing, "analyzes the 'data' of social life, interprets them, and tries to determine their essential features in order to transmit them in writing. In other words, as Henry James states in the Art of Fiction, "Writing must be born from the rational observation and experience of well defined reality". Assigning the novel with a definite function, Zeraffa states, "The novel should, at one and the same time describe what is happening to us, extract its meaning, and signpost the direction in which we are going". In the Indian context and through women novelists, the novel served to make public, private experiences associated with women's inner feelings which remained largely unexpressed. Therefore, the novel performs another function, conforming to what Barthes has said, "The novel taken in its most concrete term, is a sociable act, it establishes literature as an institution." Defined in these terms, the novel signifies also the dynamic relation between ideas and events, which makes it instrumental to an understanding of milieu and social relations.
The interrelation between literature and society is expounded by Raymond Williams. He observes, "works of literature contain material so laden with values that if we do not deal directly with them we have literally nothing to deal with....similarly, social studies which deal directly with social relationships will necessarily be dealing with their active values and choices as well as the values of the observers. The common stance of objectivity adopted by sociological research can shift to a humane stance through literature which offers a free discussion on values. A statistical analysis of values brings out a picture of static reality; because it does not take into account choices".87 Williams explains further how societies and literatures have active and conflicting values which are either side stepped as in sociology or plastered against a static totality as in literature. As an alternative to the limitations of study evolving from coming to terms with false totalities of literature or a study - sans - values as in Sociology, Williams attempts to develop a different kind of theory of social reality in order to see the "study of culture as the study of relations between elements in a whole way of life, to find ways of studying structure, in particular, works and periods, which would stay in touch with and illuminate particular art works and forms, but also forms and relations of more general social life".88

An application of theory of social totality generates a new dimension to the study of cultural forms and the kinds of interpretations they forward. Thus, many points of contact
between literature and Sociology can be worked on; studies of the reading public, for example, where literary analysis of the works being read and sociological analysis of the real formations of the public can be combined. Or the actual history of writers, as changing historical groups in any full critical relation to the substance of their works. Or the social history of literary forms in their full particularity and variety but also in the complex of their relations with other formulations. 89

In the context of Indian Socio-Literary studies, where the traditions to be adopted have evolved only recently, there is sufficient ground for analysis where a combination of literary analysis and sociological analysis of social conditions and relationship can be made. This may be extended to what Goldmann argues. “The relation between literature and sociology is not a relation, between, on the one hand, various individual works and on the other hand, various empirical facts. The real relation is within a totality of consciousness: a relation that is assumed and then revealed rather than apprehended and then expounded” 90 This observation brings into focus the emphasis on consciousness underlying coherence and social structure. Building on the relation between Sociology and literature Goldmann explains further, “The new sociology of literature that a genetic structuralism will be concerned with, the more fundamental the relations of possible consciousness, for the greatest literary works are precisely those which realize a world view at its most coherent and most adequate, its highest possible level. We should not then merely study peripheral relations:
correspondences of content and background; overt social relations between writers and readers. We should study in the greatest literature, the organizing categories, the essential structures which give such works their unity, their specific aesthetic character, their strictly literary quality; and which at the same time reveal to us the maximum possible consciousness of the social group - in real terms, the social class which finally created them, in and through their individual authors. This points out, in a significantly cogent way, the direct relation between a work of literature and society not in any general way but in specific terms so that one throws light on the other. In Goldmann's view, literature and the associated social group inter-dependently reveal the level of consciousness of the time and people involved. The study of the Indian English novel will draw from the concept of the level of consciousness which is indicated through the content of the literary works under study, as also the sociological studies, undertaken by an empirical exercise through a questionnaire directed to elicit responses which would throw light on the level and nature of consciousness developed by respondents of the target group. The results could be indicative of a trend and movement of social processes and also the status of knowledge as it exists in specific literary work, manifested through the representations and the readers. The viability of such a study draws its strength from what Raymond Williams and Goldmann have postulated.
According to Goldmann, Literary phenomenon was a response to underlying and formative structures manifested in contemporary institutions and beliefs. "Thus the dramatization of a process, the making of a fiction comprised elements of real social life and beliefs which were simultaneously actualized and in an important way differently experienced, the difference residing in the imaginative act. Through the sociology of Literature, the interpretation or the unity of the most individual and the most social forms of actual life is being worked out". The theory of culture further elaborates the relation between literature and society as Williams states, "The relationship between the making of a work of art and its reception is always active, and subject to conventions, which in themselves are forms of (changing) social organization and relationship".

Thus, in order to analyze and understand a work of art, it is valuable and relevant to look for the conditions of a practice or convention which generates the work through the individual. A study of the novel reveals the linkages of this genre with the articulation of the upper classes, for which women have displayed an easy affinity.

Literature is valuable primarily as a record of detailed individual experience which has been coherently stated and valued. Changed social relations bring about a change also in the social tone of criticism. This is essentially pertinent in the context of social attitudes and criticism vis-a-vis women writers. It was only after women writers were able to establish
a tradition of writing with which they could identify themselves, did the critics, who earlier comprised a male consciousness, decided to reckon with them and include them in accounts of literary history. Since there exists a distinct interrelation between personal qualities and social relations in the realist form, it is, therefore, not surprising that the character of novel in its early manifestation was sociological in perspective. As Williams observes, the divorce between the two, results in a breakdown of the sociological novel. Moreover, approaches to the study of literature and society would depend also on the period covered because of the pattern of evolution. Williams maintains, "In the novel, we may have to learn a mode, which seems to me not an impossible one which combines chapters of fiction with chapters of what would be more like social analysis or history." 

According to Williams, there is always a crucial relation between a particular piece of writing and its conditions of production. An important conclusion that impinges on this study is that neither a text nor a writer can be understood adequately if it is analyzed apart from its milieu. The argument that side steps this stance refers to the school of thought that ascribes aesthetics to imagination and relieves the text of its social linkages. The latter view has however, experienced gradual marginalization owing to growing sociological analysis of writers and writings which have produced incontroversial evidence to support ways in which social factors have played a determining
role in the production of writings, their content and their impact on the readers. What emerges as an important trend to be considered for further research in the socializing role of the novel, a trend which forms an integral part of this study is that socialization, works as a two way process—one which conditions and determines the consciousness and world view of the writer and the other which through the representation made, acts upon the consciousness of the readers. Thus writing cannot be divested of its social roots without making it wanting in the kinds of interpretations that are made through it. The position of a writer and how she/he should be defined raises important questions. According to Raymond Williams, the relation between experience and expression in an individual writer and in the language and forms which the writer shares with the society, is an important factor in defining a writer. The nineteenth century has been an apt illustration of how social experience has been an integral part of the writer's consciousness, conditioning the development of the novel. It is this form of the novel which one encounters in the Indian milieu, a product of confronting and assimilated culture and traditions.

Like Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart emphasizes the inevitable nexus between literature and society. "Read in and for themselves, with an openness to the author's imagination and art, works of literature give an insight into the life of an age, a kind of intensity of insight, which no other source can give. They are not a substitute for these other sources; to think so, would be foolish. It is just as foolish to think that these
other sources can be sufficient in themselves. Without the literary witness the student of society will be blind to the fullness of society's life. Hoggart explains further that the intrinsic quality of discernible literature lies in its power to decrease the experiential wholeness of life, the life of the emotions, the life of the mind, the individual life and the social life, the object laden world, thereby, embodying the sense of human life developing in a historical and moral context.

Making distinctions between the novel and other forms of literature, Hoggart explains the specific relations between the novel and social life. It gives a sense of the texture of life as it is lived; and of the way in which that texture is all the time shot through with moral choices. Moral in this sense does not mean moralizing or enunciating ethical precepts. It means exploring the ways in which we are day after, involved in value judgements, whether by commission or omission, it means recognizing that our lives are irradiated with qualitative commitments and reorganizing too the almost incredible complexity of these relationships.

Hoggart firmly maintains, that literature can help the social scientist to avoid setting up questionnaires or other tests that contain assumptions which a closer sense of the 'things in themselves' could have corrected. Drawing a parallel between the literary imagination and the sociological imagination, Hoggart explains that both the writer and the social scientist work on material in bulk. From the point of view of a
sociologist's understanding, what distinguishes valuable writing is the writer's ability to focus on 'significant detail' which more or less resembles the social scientist's effort to pinpoint 'ideal type'. While the two are related, they differ widely, Hoggart points out, "Ideal type analysis abstracts from the detail of society, so as to make a usable theoretic design, creative writing recognizes significant detail whilst at the same time recognizing and recreating the flux of untypical life. Part of the experience of literature is this sense of pattern-and-lack-of pattern at one and the same time". Literature and the novel in particular is able to provide valuable indicators towards an understanding of social reality through the medium of personal and social relations.

Both social scientists and literary critics have discerned a mutuality of concerns between social psychology and Literature. This mutuality is instrumental to a better understanding of both Text and Context, especially where concepts like femininity, environment and the self are concerned. To most social psychologists, particularly those with a humanistic inclination, the most obvious way of treating literary material would be to see great art as a source of insights into social life and human psychology; perhaps also a repository of data.

Rosalind Coward points out that a spate of novels have recently been published which claim to analyze the situation of the modern woman and which even threaten to change women's lives, through their insights. According to Coward, "some books, are
written with the explicit purpose of portraying what it means to be feminine and oppressed in Western Society. These works are marketed with their self discovery tags and their discourse is clearly labeled as a collective women's discourse. They are generally assessed as a source of self knowledge for all women, everywhere. Coward maintains that the social psychology of sexual identity, is supposed to chart out female and male experience, identifying the different realms of subjectivity which accrue to gender. Therefore, the psychological insights contained within literature could become a resource of new material for the social scientist. If novels do provide a guide to feminine psychology, and the modern novel clearly seems to do so, a symbiotic relationship can exist between literature and social psychology. Thus, the novel can be harnessed to improve social science.

Women novelists, as part of the tradition established in the West consciously began to portray, and argue that women sought self definition through their relationships with men.

The subject matter of such novels and of the whole genre of women's novels typically concerns women characters who can be described as 'half emancipated' socialized into the usual dominant-submissive sex roles, and the emotions of these characters' and their expectations are discordant with the lives they lead. Such literary works appear to be a record of their contradiction. According to early feminist critics, writers like Sylvia Plath, Doris Lessing and Margaret Drabble can make a woman
reader discover a measure of herself. Such writers, mentioning only a few among many who furthered the tradition, offer a psychologically penetrating description of feminine experience. Experiences which perhaps women readers may find inchoate the woman writer can articulate lucidly either directly or through metaphors. Thus, shaping, defining and accounting, for feminine reality, the novelist offers self understanding, through her protagonists who in some way, can explain and contextualize through their own history. Besides the self definition and self knowledge offered by women writers, there also evolves a kind of recognition of oneself in an external text which can produce a sense of identification with other women. "This also generates, perhaps, for the first time in Literature for women, a feeling of being understood. Such work also contains the latent power of socializing women into opting out of disfunctional patterns played out by the protagonists".\textsuperscript{102}

However, Coward also points out that a certain class of novels fits readily into general consciousness-raising programmes and forms part of broader social and political movements. This class stresses the socio-historical contexts in which literary works are produced, seeking not only to interpret modern works by women, but also to recover a feminine literary tradition and identify a distorted masculine criticism by providing a distinctive feminist theory of literary production as well as the contract of this production. Literary interpretation becomes a personal and progressive, as well, as scholastic art
form, viewed from this perspective, as each woman critic discovers more about her own oppression through studying the images in texts and the general constraint of women writers.

The literary models and sociological critique evolving from novels of women against patriarchal society offer concrete knowledge and information in time present, and on past generations of women. It is assumed that the experience and character of a woman is affected by her position in a social and natural order. Most women writers draw upon the notion of subjective differences. They concentrate particularly on women's role as the other or object rather than subject and indicator, and the emotions, expectations and reactions that go along with that identity. Women's novel show that there is available a sociological record of subjective experience. The techniques of splitting a character into 'I' and 'me' in order to arrive at a critical and analytical understanding of the 'self'. 'I' is the subject which examines 'me' as the object socialized into a set behavioural pattern. Initiated by Doris lessing, the technique gained currency because of its relevance to appropriate methodology for the purpose of analyzing the identity of women.

Coward explains, "The division of the self into two components a contemplating "I" and a 'Me' which is the object of that contemplation is standard literary and social science practice. (This allows for a representation of self experience). It is commonplace to see one part of the self as made up of any number of psychological traits, emotional reactions, social
roles, socialization patterns, and habits. This part of the self which is dramatized and put into action, reacts as the situation demands according to its own limits, history and constraints. However, the whole person is also more than this 'me', there is always the surveying 'I' which can observe the 'Me's' performance with regret, compassion anger or criticism. Since the text is continually genderizing and universalizing, Literature is thus ultimately to be seen as an institution, caught up in certain relations of social power, rather than as a set of isolated works. Texts can thus be explained either in terms of the author or in terms of the readership. Coward also points to two important assumptions underlying a sociological analysis of literature; (1) People are passively influenced by literary texts (2) Reading 'texts' is a straightforward process of receiving certain meanings. Literature performs the role of offering available stock of interpretative systems for making sense of the world. Another theorist has stretched this to imply that meaning is not considered to be within the text but to be a product of specific context dependent on readings. "The aim of analysis is not to strive after some hypothetical 'real meaning' of the texts, but the more modest yet analytically more viable aim of examining the way specific versions of the text's meaning are constructed for particular purposes".

In the context of this study, cultural studies have proved especially valuable in examining the images of women as they prevail upon the minds of people. A close parallel has been established between prevailing images of Indian women and those
which have existed in ancient systems of fantasy and family. Amidst the male perceptions of women a predominant view is that women can threaten male order, male life and sanity and consequently there is need to curb and control them. If women appear central to the social system, they do so only as transmitter of property without having any control over that property themselves, and they are perceived and projected as being incapable of a self-determining act. In Greek as well as in ancient Tamil Societies any association with what was female was in contradistinction to the idea of sanctity even though women function as a focus of sanctity from ancient through medieval to modern European and Indian Societies. The study of rituals, rites and literature shows how contemporary society felt threatened by explicit female expression. Thus Cameron and Kuhrt in their study of ancient cultures show that the majority of women in the ancient Orient have left no trace in the historical records. They remained nameless and unnamed. Exceptions that escaped anonymity are mostly of a notorious kind. To the qualities that guaranteed a number of these women a place in history belong love of intrigue, artful and treacherous seductiveness, credulity and even murderous inclinations. Explaining the one sided focus on women Cameron and Kuhrt say, "These qualities are closely associated with the unwholesome atmosphere of the harem, supposedly typical for oriental studies. From this secluded place in life, these women apparently managed to obtain control over the men in power and to influence
decisions that in turn affected the well being of entire nations, or empires. Some tablets depicting scenes from Persian life show extra rations for female workers after childbirth. These rations are premiums and not a form of wages, as can be deduced from the fact that the portions are not the same in all cases. Mothers with male babies get twice the amount given to women who have delivered a daughter.¹⁰⁶ Such socio historical aspects generated literary prototypes that would serve primarily as models for female behaviour. Literature and history the world over indicate clearly that women were by and large a silent, invisible force. If they came into public view or positions of power, it was so only temporarily as in situations of emergency, where male control was not available. If women were involved directly in decisions it was only by virtue of their close association with a male husband/brother/father already in power. Thus, the model of the ‘power behind the throne’, was incorporated into religion from the world of politics, and survives in notions of approved behaviour of women in the twentieth century Literature.

Given this socio historical situation, Edwin Ardner draws attention to the problems of finding out, how women see the world of which they are a part when informants are men. "Women are less likely to speak, to act as our sources. There is also an analytical or conceptual dimension for even when our informants are women, the model of the world and of their place in it which
they give may be less acceptable to the observer than the neat, bounded categories given by the male informant. In social terms, women can be put under the control of men being assigned a specific space within male culture and society where they can given birth, weave and cook, while being excluded from economic and political spheres.¹⁰⁷

Feminism thus broke ground by drawing attention to women's own consciousness of the situation which they deemed natural and inevitable for the survival of society. Both cultural and literary studies were subjected to reorientation in order to evolve a unified perspective of life and society particularly with reference to women's point of view.

It would be pertinent to note that with a growing consciousness of feminism the use of novels, poems and plays gained importance as sources for sociological understanding. John Goode in a pioneering study points out, "There is no reason why social historians cannot use novels, poems and plays as documents that reflect reality, - indeed given the particular importance of the novel in the emergence of a distinct literature aimed at a female audience, that genre at least forms an unavoidable body of evidence. However, what the novel reflects is mediated by its fictional nature, by the discrimination of its characteristics, by the history of forms and by the highly specialized productive station of the writer. Literary analysis, on the contrary, has this very mediation as object of study. The context of women's
studies seems to demand a radical revision of procedures of literary analysis. Texts are thus treated as projects which can contribute to the construction of historical meaning, even if they provide a medley of different voices, languages and positions. In the context of the emergence of feminism in literature, which developed at a specific, historical, cultural juncture, Alison Light observes, "The more I read of writing by women in the post war years, the more I am struck by the sense of something radically other to, and rebelling against the domestic world, prior to 1918, which at the same time was quite compatible with deeply defensive urges. Even those who would by no means call themselves feminists, were linked by a resistance to the 'feminine' as it had been thought of in Late Victorian or Edwardian times." A significant aspect of women's writings is the tension they reflect in prevailing social life.

Women's representation in the literary text, and the influence that is exercised by the text are factors that combine to reduce women to objects of consumption starting from their childhood when they are idealized and mythologized. Thus texts highlight both the justification and the injustice of the social status of women. Summing up the position and role of literary texts in furthering sociological interpretation, Goode states, "The articulation (Through the text) is not independent of economic and ideological determinants, for it is made in the specific mode of production and the material it makes up (in both senses of the word) is a representation of reality and a
representation which is undoubtedly ideological, in which it is axiomatic that all people, who live in society at all, must live in some relationship to whatever is the dominant ideology. The relation between sociology and literature is explained through a model of structural analysis in terms of the structure of ideology itself as brought out through contextual images, position of writer and response of reader. Through Goode's model, sociological analysis from a feminist perspective gains further impetus, since it becomes possible to view the position of women through diverse approaches.

**Defining the Perspective**

In order to work upon the common meeting points of apparently ambivalent subjects, it is important to come to terms with the subjects by looking at the standard definitions, of terms and concepts used for understanding social reality. Writing is defined to reflect the tendencies which are determined by cultural values operating in specific situations and prevailing ideology. Patriarchal beliefs and dominance of male centred culture over years had created a suitable medium which reflected and consequently perpetuated cultures and social systems constructed upon gender divisions. Literature had clearly been largely a male centred social institution till it was analyzed for its representations initiated largely by feminist concerns. To day the growing body of feminist writings and criticism has created an important dimension to literature.
Sociology on the other hand, attempts to understand behaviour as it is organized in a society and as it is determined by such factors as the number of people it contains, their culture, their objective situation and their social organization. Culture may be defined narrowly to mean mainly the system of symbols, including language and values, shared by a given people.111

In order to understand the relation between a section of people and the society of which they are a part, for instance, the relation between women and society as in this context, the delineation of an approach to cultural literary studies is of direct relevance and importance, because it brings into focus those aspects of society which determine the self and social perceptions of women.

REFERENCES

2 T.S. Eliot: Notes towards the definition of culture. Boston, Faber and Faber, 1948.
3 Ibid. Pp 50-51
5 Ibid. P 10
6 Ibid. P 312.
7 Ibid. P 243
8 Ibid.


Ibid. P 27

29 Ibid. P 40


31 Ibid. P 45

32 Ibid. P 46.


37 Ibid. P 59

"Three things are made clear. First, the definition of the modern and the nature of modernism, derived from the experience of men and hence excluded women. Second, women of course, had their own experience of the modern world and were engaged in articulating this in Literature and Painting. And third, there is no doubt that women writers and artists were as much involved in the revolution in literary and visual languages as men.


39 Dale spender: Man made language. London Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980. London "Research on language has also suggested that a patriarchal culture silences women through the very concept and linguistic practices which prevail. Descriptive linguistics has shown that women are often described relationally (a man and his wife) and those supposedly generic terms, 'man' and 'he' don't in fact operate as neutral in respect of gender. Dale spender demonstrates this with a telling comparison of the perfectly acceptable 'man is the only primate that commits rape' and the totally ridiculous statement 'man, unlike other mammals has difficulties in giving birth. Vocabulary is also based in terms of non equivalents. e.g. the very different connotation of 'master' and 'mistress' expose a whole history of meanings and social
inequalities". Ann Oakley has argued against the orthodox research methods of sociologists through strict 'objectivity', which she feels is a sexist notion. This was inappropriate for interviewing women. Instead, a dialogue based on a co-operative, two way relationship between the interviewer and women subject elicited better understanding of women. This suggests that any research based on dialogue will be better.

41 Ibid. P 76

Sociologists of Literature and Art are today in a position to pay more careful attention to textuality and representation, rather than simply taking texts as unproblematic (and unexplored) entities which only needed to be related in some way to social structure and process.

The initial line of attack of feminists working in literary criticism and teaching in departments of literature was necessarily the critical reading of texts. This involved exposing the limited and limiting, array of female stereotypes which have operated in literature; undertaking studies of particular authors and texts in order to make explicit their patriarchal content; analysing the dominant narrative structures which collude in the ideological containment of women, and deciphering the various subversive strategies available to contemporary readers of texts including or perhaps specifically those by men.

47 Ibid. Pp 58-60
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
53 Ibid. P 35
54 Ibid. P 82
56 Ibid. P 69


Ibid. P 36.


Ibid. P 58


Ibid. P 64.


Ibid. pp 1-2

Ibid P 7


F.R. Leavis in his address to the students union of the London School of Economics cited in Burns, 1950.

The genesis of the concern with literature (along with law and religion and of course, economics and political theory and later science) as a system of thought as a social institution, lies in marxism. Burns Op.cit. P 11

Ibid. P 31


191
85 Ibid. Pp 38-39
88 Ibid. P 14
89 Ibid. P 15
90 Ibid. P 16
91 Ibid.
92 Ibid. P 22
93 Ibid. Pp 23-24
94 Ibid. P 25
96 Ibid. P 165
97 Ibid. P 263
98 Ibid. P 265-266

Continuing to explain the difference and relation between the two disciplines. Hoggart says, "Not all of us are equally good at finding order and 'significant detail'. Some people are so quick that they seem able to find illuminating instances from the tiniest amount of material, as though by a sudden 'gift'. I think it was Aristotle who said that the greatest gift of the writer was the power to make metaphors and in my sense every metaphor is a significant hypothesis or making of relationships and perhaps one either has that power or not". P 266

100 Ibid. P 16
"If she had longed for nothing else steadily all these years it was for a close complete intimacy with a man...."

"There is a type of woman who can never be, as they are likely to put it themselves, with anyone but the man to whom they have permanently given their hearts. If the man goes away, there is left an empty space filled with shadows. She mourns him who brought her self to life. She lives with the empty space at her soul, peopled with the images of her own potentialities until the next man walks into the space absorbs the shadows into himself, creating her allowing her to be her self - but a new self, since it is his conception which forms her". - The Children of Violence. Doris Lessing. 1984.

"No Longer was I alone wholly responsible for my ambivalent and sometimes seemingly hypercritical feelings. I, like Esther Greenwood, was a victim of socialization of dancing classes girl scouts, Junior proms and motherly advice " - The Glass Bell Jan, Sylvia Plath. 1982.


Ibid. P 73


Ibid. P 18


According to the editors of Female Studies, the Feminist Approach to Literature and the Literary Criticism needs to serve two essential functions. The first is to awaken women to the fact that literature is a masculine institution, which throughout history, has never ceased
transmitting a patriarchial image to women. This image which is ever more sophisticated, is the ultimate objectification of the emotions of the primitive male, perceiving women as the personification of the mystery of fecundity, and therefore, as being strange and disturbing— in a word, other. Therefore, literature as masculine institution must be denounced as an institution of socialization, responsible for offering to both sexes, behavioural models and roles that match the sexual hierarchization and polarization of our patriarchal societies.