CHAPTER I
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What Is This Thesis About?

In this thesis the researcher examines two works of Manju Kapur—*Difficult Daughters* (1988) and *A Married Woman* (2002) two novels of Anita Nair—*The Better Man* (1999) and *Ladies Coupé* (2001). The researcher intends to show how women in these works define themselves through marriage, and also how patriarchy imposed itself on the lives of these women as portrayed in these novels. Then this thesis critiques these two writers in terms of their ability to successfully show the ways in which males dominate women and the passiveness of women and whether they encourage readers' understanding of gender issues or not.

These two novelists portray women who entered into the process of self-realization and moved back and forth in time through all the levels of the process to the top level of making their own decisions about their lives. Some women searched for strength and independence and some accepted their lives as it was. As we will discuss later both writers focus on the inner strength of their characters. We shall see how successful they both have been in illuminating the conditions of women who are caught in a net of relationships, conditions that are partly created by them and partly created for them. Then we examine the concept of “new woman” which varies in terms of different cultures and locations.
One of the important concepts we consider is that of the “Othering” of women. This concept is the source of patriarchy (definition in page 26). These novels show how patriarchy manifests through different forms of domination and exploitation. The violation of women is another issue which the researcher touches on. It will be shown how a male-dominated society tries to control women through sexual aggression, scolding, and anger and so on. Though every action has its own reaction which differs from woman to woman, the most common reaction of women to violation is “silence”.

The other aim of this study is to elaborate to what extent these two writers have been successful in showing how patriarchy, subjectivity and marginality affect the women in their novels; what women want from their married lives apart from their husband and children; and whether a woman can live life on her own or not. The other issue in this thesis that will be discussed is about the term “subaltern”—this term is used in postcolonial theory to refer to marginalized groups and lower classes. This term was coined by Antonio Gramsci (wikipedia). This thesis will examine whether the subaltern can inject their voice into the master discourse of the dominant culture through the novels. The traditional equation of the male with activity and the female with passivity posits the female as non-existent and lacking the capacity for thought. Because this tradition has been absorbed into the depths of woman’s consciousness, she finds herself to be non-existent in terms of her bodily and non-bodily desires.

Women are not a homogenous group. The position of women in different societies all over the world is different from that of men. It is the socio-cultural factor that determine the status of women in a society. In India gender inequalities are inherent in the traditional social structures based on caste, community and class and the inequalities
between men and women are seen in areas like economic, health, education, marriage, political areas, etc. Modernization in India has brought changes in the norms and values of the economy, urbanization, and education, which has an effect on gender relation. It is worth noting that in some cases the gender gap has indeed decreased e.g. there are legal changes in inheritance, marriage, divorce, education and employment emphasizing equality. But one should also consider the fact that legal change does not ensure equality and justice for women unless these laws are accompanied by changes in overall attitudes and behavior. Women’s roles are still determined by traditional norms in spite of being influenced by modern values of rights, equality and justice.

Manju Kapur and Anita Nair both portray the actual experiences that women undergo in their day-to-day lives. They try to gain their rightful place in their families and at times in society as well. One of the issues that both novelists have illuminated is the meaning of freedom. Mahowald (1983:12) mentions that since human nature is essentially free and fundamentally good, every individual has the right to seek happiness according to her or his own capacity, while respecting and supporting the right of others at the same time. According to Mahowald, freedom means human happiness and progress (1983:12).

In both novels we meet women who want to go beyond the boundaries their societies and cultures make for them. They try to create a space beyond the accepted norms. These women add something to themselves and make life a little more wholesome and gracious than before. At each step these women take on to the path of deep reflection over the elements of the past and the present they shut the door to the exhausted past, she takes a step into the unknown.
To step on to the new path women need to have the freedom to make a choice and to experience the present. But the social codes of conduct and the roles they enforce prevent women from experiencing the strength in themselves. On their way toward the new path many ghosts haunt women and confront them with the nightmare of isolation, of being trapped, tied at the stake and burnt alive as a witch for making statements about themselves. They face the terror of centuries of suffocation and surrender.

How Do I Argue The Thesis Statement?

In order to connect the events of the novel to the empowerment of women, I assume that the novels enable some degree of transformation in their readers by providing examples of new ways of living in the world which are not available to many of the Indian female readers. I evaluate these new modes of living in terms of the concepts of patriarchy, subjectivity, gender inequality, marginality, and passivity. My main source of insight into these concepts as they relate to the struggles of women are the following six Western and Indian feminist writers. First group includes Simone de Beauvoir (1908-86), Betty Friedan (1921-2006), Luce Irigaray (1937-), Elaine Showalter (1941-) and in second group I talk about Indian feminists—Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942-) and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan.

My view of women’s empowerment and what constitutes positive change is evaluated in terms of self-discovery. For this reason I focus on theoretical issues connected to self-discovery of concepts of self, such as the formation of identity and subjectivity and difference. Elaine Showalter’s view of self-discovery and sharing experience is very close to my own concerns and her view about the role of fiction in relation to self-discovery supports my view that novels serves as examples of transformation for their
readers. She says that the role of author is to grasp reality and write about it in order to transfer it to the reader and allow the reader to reach to the same reality. In this way women can share their experience, explain it from the women's point of view and become familiar with the different strategies of self-discovery.

Each one of them focuses on special issues which I highlight in my research, but to analyze all the important incidents in the novels in order to achieve the clear view I have used some relevant ideas of other thinkers such as Hegel, Indira J. Parikh and K. Garg, Frederick Engels, Kate Millett, Judith Butler, Leela Gandhi, Toril Moi, Carl Roger, and so on.

In applying the feminists' theories to the material, it should be noted that the question of what empowerment is remains controversial. Because of this my method will not simply be a straight forward application of their conceptual frameworks. My conclusion deals with some of the difficulties I have had in using these thinkers as a basis for evaluation and how the thinkers themselves are not always in agreement as to what constitutes a true empowerment of women.

Authors' Biographies

In order to understand their works better a brief introduction to the lives of these two novelists follows.

Manju Kapur lives in Delhi. She teaches English at a women's college at the University of Delhi. She has three daughters. Her first novel, Difficult Daughters (1988), received the Commonwealth Award for the Eurasian region. The backdrop of
this book is set in India’s independence struggle and is based on the life of Kapur’s mother. She wrote A Married Woman (2002) and Home (2006) also.

*Anita Nair* was a reporter, a real estate agent and a copy writer, till her poem ‘Happening in the London underground’ was included in the Poetry society of India Anthology in 1992. She has written a few books—Satyrs of the Subway and Eleven Other Stories (1997), The Better Man (1999), Ladies Coupe (2001), Mistress (2005), a collection of Indian myths (Puffin) retold for children and an anthology of writing about Kerala (Penguin) which she has edited. She grew up in a suburb in Madras. Her grandparents lived in Kerala. She has had a lot of exposure to rural Kerala. Even now her parents live there.
Definition of Terms

Often terms such as “empowerment”, “marginality”, “new woman”, “patriarchy”, “subjectivity” and “gender and sex” are used to analyze women’s condition. But rarely are these terms defined clearly. In order to use them properly, the researcher feels a brief definition of these terms shall be helpful.

Empowerment

B.R. Siwal (2002:21) in UN Human Development Report in 1995 says that the human development paradigm has four main characteristics—productivity, equity, sustainability and empowerment. By increasing the capabilities of people, their creativity and productivity become “effective agents of growth”. Economic growth will come after the equal distribution of its benefits. Both the present and future generations have to have equal opportunities. Men and women must be empowered in order to take part in the process of decision making and designing their lives. Without gender equality human development is impossible. Development will remain weak and biased till the time women are included in the process of development.

What does “empowerment” mean with regard to women? “Empowerment” is a process which tries to change the direction of the forces that marginalize women. In this regard, power is seen not as a form of domination but as having the right to choose and also the ability to influence the social and political processes. Empowerment is a process which includes both individual assertions of the right to protest and mobilization that fight with the basic power relations. For those (individuals and groups) whose access to power is determined by class, cast, ethnicity and gender, their empowerment starts with
recognizing the systematic forces that oppress them. The next stage involves the change in the existing power relationships.

Women’s empowerment includes several interrelated components as Siwal (2002:21) notes:

1. Taking control or obtaining further control
2. Saying words and being heard
3. Having the ability to define and create issues from the woman’s perspective
4. Influencing social choices and making decisions that affecting the whole society
5. Being recognized and respected as an equal citizen and human being with a contribution to make
6. Developing skills, especially the ability to make plan, to make decisions, and to be activate. In other words empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity making that help women to participate in greater decision-making power and control.

It is said there is no democracy without giving an equal chance to both men and women to participate in all aspects and levels of decision making. The goal of development cannot be achieved without the participation of women in both the process of decision making and in designing the goal as well (Siwal-2002:22).

According to Siwal (2002:22) there are four main forms of participation: Household Participation, Economic Participation, Social and Cultural Participation, and Political Participation. Siwal says that political space belongs to all citizens and politics is the
basis of empowerment which affects the lives of everyone. The more women participate in political affairs the more they can change political outcomes. Democracy and the participation of women go alongside each other and promote each other as well.

The elements that affect women’s participation in politics are (Siwal-2002:22):

1. Lack of experience in campaigning and public debate
2. Attitudes towards women
3. Lack of confidence and support among politicians
4. The combination of a political career with traditional women’s role in family and society
5. financial dependence
6. insufficient education generally and political education in particular
7. Unwillingness of women to participate in politics
8. Thinking of “Criminalization of politics”.

In Tucker’s view (2003:2) empowerment means acquiring the power to think and behave freely and also to select the best thing among choices and to satisfy one’s potential as equal members of the society. According to UNIFEM the term women’s empowerment means: getting knowledge, discovering gender relations, the directions in which these relations may be changed, improving the sense of “self-worth” and acquiring the right to make one’s own decision about one’s life, acquiring the ability to exercise bargaining power, improving the ability to influence the direction of social change.
Marginality

The concept of “marginality” is better understood in relation to the concept of “centre.” The marginalized are those who always try to enter into the centre. They ask to be recognized as separate but equal human beings. There are various forms of marginality which are experienced by different kinds of people.

The perception of marginality is determined largely by gender, sexual preference, age, ethnicity, and geography. Those who are seen as marginal are female, black, disabled, non-heterosexual, exiled, immigrant, rural, indigenous, foreign, outcast, and all those who take the positions different from of the centre (Oliver-2000:523).

Marginalization is a “slippery and multi-layered concept”. It can refer to the global level or to the local groups in the society such as ethnic groups, families, and individuals. It is not a stable phenomenon (Oliver-2000:526). Those who enjoy a high social status at one time may lose their positions through a change in their social status and shift to the margin. Also people can move in and out of the margin throughout their lives, e.g. as children grow up their marginalized status decreases or the marginalized status of adults may increase as they grow older.

Peter Leonard (1984) describes social marginality as “outside the main stream of productive activity and/or social reproductive activity”. He categorizes marginality into two groups: the voluntarily marginalized people and the involuntarily marginalized. Travelers, some artists, commune members are related to the former and those who are outside the major area of the capitalist productivity and reproductively activities are the involuntarily marginalized ones.
Marginality means exclusion from the advantages of the social lives “at individual, interpersonal, and social levels” (People). People who are marginalized do not have complete control over their lives and do not have access to all the facilities of the society. They are stigmatized. Their contribution in the society may be limited. As a result their self-confidence increases at a lower rate, and the opportunities to communicate with others may decrease. They become isolated from society. As the result of having limited access to social policies and practices, the marginalized lack the opportunity to use “the valued social resources such as education, health services, housing, income, leisure activities and work.” In all these cases of lack of opportunity, the marginalized react differently towards marginalizing process (People).

**New Woman**

When the term “New Woman” arose in the final decade of the 19th century in Europe and North America, it came to represent the ideal of feminists. This ideal was a reaction towards gender roles, where the woman’s role as was given to women in the Victorian era was characterized by the so-called “Cult of Domesticity,” which was a prevailing view among middle and upper class white women during the nineteenth century, in the United States. These women were put in the center of the domestic scene, and were expected to be a calm and nurturing mother, a loving faithful wife, to be a passive and delicate creature. The aim of supporters of the notion of new women was to encourage women to liberate themselves from male domination, control their lives and leave behind whatever might restrict their pursuit of happiness and self-realization.
The particular characteristics of the “New Woman” (Wikipedia) include:

- To have received enough education and to use her knowledge wisely,
- To earn money and be financially independent,
- To decide herself when and to whom she wants to get married and how many children she wants to have,
- To show outward signs of being different by putting on more comfortable clothes,
- Generally, to defy convention and social norms in order to create a better world for women.

But as it is written in Wikipedia the finest achievement of the “New Woman” has been personal liberty which is the foundation of civilization (Wikipedia-New Woman).

**Patriarchy**

Patriarchy is an important concept in feminist theory. “Patriarchy is a trans-historical, cross-cultural political system in which women are subordinated, exploited, and controlled by men” (Adbott-1998:452). Women’s subordination arises in relation to their reproductive role. Woman’s labor is exploited by the man who is the source of authority in the family.

Shulamith Firestone (Adbott-1998:453) says that because human society is based on the reproductive role of women, and has resulted in women’s subordination by men. Women’s reproductive capacity makes women vulnerable to male control and as a result women have been subordinated through history. Firestone (Wikipedia) believes gender inequality originated with patriarchy forcing women through their biology: the physical, social and psychological disadvantages imposed by pregnancy, childbirth, and
subsequent child-rearing. She says that women have to seize the means of reproduction and also use contraception, abortion, and the state has to support child-rearing. Accordingly women can escape their biology.

Christine Delphy (Adbott-1998:453) takes a materialistic stance and speaks about the economic exploitation of women through domestic work in the family. Andrea Dworkin hints at two different forms of patriarchy which are both based on sexuality but in different ways. The first is "family mode" in which women are exploited for life. The second is called "brutal mode" which refers to the time the sexual and reproductive power of women is over, at which time women lose men's support.

Sylvia Walby (Adbott-1998:453) in her analysis of patriarchy looks at different forms of gender inequality through history and across cultures in terms of classes and ethnic groups. She discusses the subordination of women in the household, which is accepted and supported by the labor market. Then she focuses on the close relationship between patriarchy and capitalism.

Sylvia Walby (Adbott-1998) in her book Theorizing Patriarchy lists six structures of patriarchy with reference to capitalism:

The patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions. (Adbott-1998:453)

She distinguishes between private patriarchy and public patriarchy and says that the former is men's control over women in the family and the latter refers to men's control over women in the marketplace. Then she compares men's interest and the urges of the
capitalist. While men are interested in exploiting women in the domestic area, capitalists exploit women in the labor market (Adbott-1998:453).

The other definition of patriarchy states that the “institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general.” (Lerner-1986:239) In other words, in all important institutions, power is in the hands of males. But this does not mean that women are completely powerless or do not have any rights in the society. Historically, patriarchy appears in different modes and forms (Lerner-1986:239).

According to Aristotelian assumptions, the woman’s position is based on woman’s essential biological or reproduction function, and it is the reason for her inferiority in terms of man’s place. Aristotle believed that women, children, and slaves could not be counted as citizens. Neither women, nor children, nor slaves could participate in the political life of the Greek city state. Since virtue could come only through political participation, women, children, and slaves could not reach real virtue (Code-2002:378).

Marxists (Code -2002:379) criticize the private property of patriarchy and the social division of labor into productive and reproductive. Marx and Fredrick Engels believe that the base of capitalist division refers to the division of labor and power in the patriarchal family. Having a wife and children in the family as slaves is a kind of private property. Engels compares the capitalist nuclear family as the smallest form with this social structure. He takes the husband as the bourgeois and the wife as the proletariat. Because of the presence of privatization and defamation of domestic labour, Engel tells women to stop doing household labour and engage in the productive labor of
the public world. He believes that domestic work should become a “collective responsibility” for the public.

Kate Millett (Bhagwat-2004:181) focuses on the concept of sexual domination in her definition of patriarchy. She believes every organization that carries power is in the hands of the male, such as the military, industry, technology, universities, and so on. In her view such systems are patriarchal. Each and every aspect of such a society is governed by the male—“the ethics and values, the philosophy and arts.”

According to Millett (Bhagwat-2004:181) patriarchy is two fold. First—the female is dominated by the male and second, the younger male is dominated by the older. She discusses how patriarchy differs from one place to another. The historical background of the society also affects the varieties of patriarchy (Bhagwat-2004:182).

**Self-Realization**

Plato and Aristotle (Nielsen-1973:21) regarding the theory of self-realization say that a man’s distinguishing features can only flourish when he realizes himself. This is the time when he achieves the fullest possible degree of his distinctive function. To achieve one’s function means to develop all the capacities that distinguish the human animal to the fullest. Then in doing so we become ourselves and we get close to our own nature. Such a man is the happiest because he realizes himself fully. Happy persons are those who have achieved their maximum potential. Self-realization is human growth and this is the end of all moral endeavors.
Henry W. Wright says:

The explanation of freedom is self-determination, the explanation of self-determination is development—the realization of the latent and often unknown possibilities of human nature. (Wilson-1814:214)

Wright believes that full self-realization needs the realization of (1) the individual Self, (2) the social Self, (3) the Universal Self (Wilson-1914:215).

Subjectivity

Hegel describes “subject” as observer and “object” as the observed. Then he goes further and says:

‘subject’ as active, internal, socially participant, gifted with cognition and will and object as passive, external, acted upon but never really internalized by the subjects. (Wikipedia)

“subjectivity” includes all actions and communications that make individuals or “I’s” as discussed in critical theory and psychology (Wikipedia).

Luisa Passerini (2000) says that throughout history women have always been the subjects of their life. Subjectivity does not just mean strategy of agency but it is also related to the feeling that accompanies plans and action such as fear, imagination. The limits, the nature and the awareness of subjectivity have changed throughout history. Throughout history women have had some opportunity to negotiate different forms of autonomy and decision-making. However, these forms do not imply “absolute liberty” but have enabled them to show their needs and desires and to challenge the conditions that are given to them as their destiny. “Subjectivity” has not been invented by feminism. It has existed before. But the word has been used through second-wave feminism.
Passerini continues that women in some ways have always been the subject of their lives. In her view we should consider the concept of “subjectivity” as widely as possible in order to cover all forms of the subject. We should be flexible enough to find out new forms of “subjectivity”, because women can adjust to difficulties and also use it to their advantages in different ways in their societies.

There are two different meanings of “subjectivity”. First, it focuses on the ability to imagine, think and make decision. Second, it refers to “the subject and subject in the field knowledge” (Passerini-2000). In our period of time both go alongside. The first refers to the “classical” emancipation of women, e.g. working outside home, using contraceptives, and becoming educated, the opportunity to have different forms of relationships and putting on whatever they want. All these forms can be included under the term of “subjectivity”. But it should be mentioned that all forms of emancipation and autonomy may not overcome “patriarchal stereotypes”. These forms of subjectivity can give women some scope to make decisions over very small things, but they cannot bring liberty for women in the true sense. Luisa believes that with each and every new form of emancipation new obligations and chains also arise. In the past the changes related to emancipation were mostly connected to modernity. But Western modernity just refers to one form of subject while various forms of subjects are available all over the world and as a result different forms of emancipation.

Passerini (2000) says modernity takes different forms and happens in the company of “new or traditional forms of community (based on blood, on religion, on marriage)”. In these societies women might receive emancipation in one form but become
subordinated because of other issues. Suppose women get the right to work but they are
subordinated in some other aspects such as education, fertility, dress. Luisa says:

In any case a mixture of subordination and autonomy accompanies
today all ways of emancipation and all assumptions of subjectivity.
(Passerini-2000)

The second process which has great influence on the area of theoretical disciplines is
"the death of the subject". Western philosophers like Nietzsche, Marx and Freud,
Derrida and Foucault look at the subject as the product of grammar, the product of
history, a construct against the unconscious. Some critics reject the idea that the death
of subject could end oppression, e.g. Ute Guzzoni (Passerini-2000) in response to the
question: "Do we still want to be subjects?" says, if subjects are Europeans who
colonized foreign continents, men who dominated their wives, and husbands and wives
who controlled their kids, then there is no need to be a subject. Butler says that the
critique of the subject is not the case of rejecting it but somehow a way of investigating
its "pre-given premise".

The death of the subject means the disappearance of the old subject and the emergence
of a new one. In Italy there was a conference, on subjectivity with Rosi Braidotti and
Adriana Cavarero, "Sunset of the Subject and the Dawn of Feminine/Female
Subjectivity."

To use the terms proposed by that conference, we have everything to
gain in giving up a conception of the subject, which ignored the body,
denied differences, and privileged the conscious level. (Passerini-2000)

To redefine a subject is a very tough work, because becoming a subject is a complicated
process, it refers to different forms and actions and expressions for "collective
subjects". "Becoming a subject" is related to different levels of subjectivity. It is not a
hierarchical process. It includes a range of possibilities: possibilities which can even happen in the severe conditions of extreme oppression. The subject is always in a process of construction. Spivak (Passerini-2000) says subjectivity is a historical process. She believes it is a series of changes that is not static. It is a development which is not "necessarily a linear evolution". It can be a narrative but not necessarily a single story.

Subjectivity and inter-subjectivity have a very close relationship with each other. Wendy Hollway (Wikipedia) considers this issue to be a concept that is dynamic and non-unitary and one that covers the extra-rational. It is important to note that it is "discoverable only within inter-subjective relations" (Wikipedia). Holloway says that she was influenced by Melanie Klein who privileges the "defense mechanisms" that happen between people more than within a person as Lacan and Foucault say. Inter-subjective relations are a place of discussion over the meaning and its effects by the means of power on subjectivity. Oliver (Passerini-2000) by use of this approach tries to "reclaim subjectivity" for "others" such as black and Third World people and women.

Terms such as subjectivity, self-awareness and reflexiveness describe the capacity of human beings to be aware of their own perceptions, experiences and thought processes. These processes are not essential to one's social identity but they are linked to the self's construction of a personal identity (Greene-2003:99). The essential capacities of a sense of self are those which help each person occupy her place in time. Human beings can affect their past by reworking their memories and their future, and make dreams and plans for their future.
Sheila Greene (2003:100) says that subjectivity is the product of “complex competencies” of a person’s activity related to her world. Subjectivity is imposed, open accidental and unpredictable. It is the result of physical, socio-cultural and different events and also the base of its “own realities” which share in making decisions about the form and content of the person’s experience and behavior.

In late 20th century Foucault, Derrida, Lacan and Deleuze criticize the concept of “subject”. These critics ask whether the subject can be independent of external conditions such as language and from the historical and cultural conditions in which it lives. They rely on Marxist, Freudian and Nietzschean views in their considerations of how consciousness depends on material conditions, unconscious roots (Hengehold-2000:868).

Psychoanalysts bring out the relationship between self and Other and they say that Other is not exactly external. The “masculine” and “feminine” can not be considered apart from each other without an “internal dialectic” (Cornell, Thurschwell-1987:158).

Hegel (Wikipedia) believes that we are the same “qua subjects” but different “I’s”. We look the same because we are “I’s”, but we are “I’s” for the difference among “I’s”. To be an “I” means to be singular.

Hegel and Adorno (Cornell, Thurschwell-1987:159) believe that “absolute alterity is absolute identity”. In the Lacanian system there is nothing the man can tell the woman. Woman is the one that has nothing to say. She is just there to confirm the identity of men.
Gender and Sex

Sex refers to a biological difference in terms of chromosomes, genitals and reproductive functions among human beings that divides individuals 'females' and 'males'. But in practice we do not look at people's chromosomes, or reproductive behavior to find out their sex. We look at their clothes, their hairstyles, the way they walk and the whole host of other physical and behavioral characteristics which are not biologically given. So in practice it is the person's gender that distinguishes women from men. Gender refers to the way people are constructed socially to behave and experience themselves as "women" or "men". The problem with such a definition is that the experience of having sexual bodies is ignored when society has to pay attention to the body at least for satisfying of biological needs such as food. The other issue which is missing in such a definition of gender is that gender can be completely excluded from sex. It is the society that makes gender out of sex. The notion of gender varies enormously from one society to the other (Crowley & Himmelweit-1992:58).

The Summary of Chapters

In the second chapter feminist thinkers are grouped into Western and Indian. In the first group Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Luce Irigaray, and Elaine Showalter's thoughts are examined. The second group includes the writers Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan.

The first Western writer we examine is Simone de Beauvoir. In her book The Second Sex (1974) she tries to bring awareness to the society and enlightens the reader about conditions of women. She discusses the concept of the second sex in terms of the Other.
Betty Friedan is the liberal thinker among these feminists. She claims that though women live in a modern world they are still treated as Victorians (P.G. Joshi-2003). She criticizes the concept of the natural life of women and calls attention to the dissatisfaction and deep depression of women in America. Luce Irigaray (Donovan-2005) is a post modern feminist who was Lacan’s student. She focuses on the term sexual difference, the mother-daughter relationship, and the importance of it. Mimesis is a tool that Irigaray uses as a weapon against the system of patriarchy. Elaine Showalter (Lee-1996) is an American literary critic and feminist who divides the history of women’s writing from the Victorian to the modern period into three phases—the feminine, the feminist and the female. In the feminine phase (1840-80), Women writers imitate and internalize the dominant male aesthetic standards. In the second phase (1890-1920) feminist criticism inspires women to discover a literature of their own, a literature whose historical and thematic coherence and artistic importance had been obscured by values of patriarchy that dominate the culture. The female phase (1920 onwards), or third phase is the phase of self-discovery and search for identity. She divides feminist criticism into feminist critique and gynocriticism. Feminist critique is connected to Marxist sociology and aesthetics while gynocritics is “self-contained” and “experimental” in relation to other modes of the new feminist research. The aim of gynocritics is to introduce new models of representing female experience, in spite of adapting male modes and theories.

The first Indian writer we examine, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, is a postcolonial critic who criticizes the Subaltern Studies Group for not acknowledging the subjectivity of women in the subaltern group. In her essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1993) Spivak discusses the notions of gendered subaltern, and two different forms of representation
Vertrelung and Darstellung. Spivak talks about the double exploitation of the female subalter in terms of what she refers to as the *gendered subaltern*. She notes that the subaltern often makes an attempt at self-representation, but such a representation is not recognized by the listener. It may happen because of not fitting in with what is expected of representation. Spivak notes two different representations—Vertrelung and Darstellung. The first is a “speaking for” the needs and desires of someone else, as politicians do. The second is a “placing there.”

In order to build up and support her views about women Spivak combines deconstruction and Marxist analysis. Her aim is not to synthesize these sources but to preserve them. To defend her stance she uses the notion of “discontinuity.”

Rajeswari Sunder Rajan (1995) is an Indian feminist, who argues about the relation between the *state* and *women* in India and tries to map the space of the postcolonial female subject. In this regard she states that citizenship is not a formal relationship between the individual and the state. It is a relationship inflected by identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices, and a sense of belonging. Later she notes that women have long been excluded from state-citizen relations, which has been the domain of men. Women are included only in relation to culture and the area of family.

She says that modernity has always referred to present times. She adds that modernity as a concept is a complex historical and cultural situation that defines itself in contrast to the past, the traditional, and also the West. The role of the Indian cultural narrative, which includes feminine stereotypes and ideological scripts derived from Hindu mythic
sources, has to be considered to understand the relation between woman and modernity. Such influences are mediated in complex ways within a context of post-colonial modernity.

In the third chapter the researcher critiques Manju Kapur’s novel Difficult Daughters and A Married Woman. In Difficult Daughters Kapur brings a character named Virmati who dared to be different from other women and in A Married Woman, we see a woman called Astha and through her character Manju Kapur shows that being a woman is not a natural thing because “Asth a was brought up properly, as befits a woman,...” (1). It confirms Simone de Beauvoir (1974) words that “One is not born a woman: one becomes one.”

In A Married Woman the discontinuity of patriarchy throughout history is shown by Astha’s father, who insisted that Astha had to continue her studies in order to become independent. Such an act confirms that women have not been exploited all the time through the history. There are times that they are given the opportunity to achieve freedom.

By using phrases such as “As my wife” (180), “A man has to do well”(28), “the little one,”(28) and “make it nice to be with you,”(67) Kapur in A Married Woman shows how patriarchy imposes itself on women implicitly and makes them feel inferior and passive.

The condition of Virmati and Ganga in Difficult Daughters shows the slippery nature of the term “margin”. Virmati lived in the dressing-room at the time that Ganga had
authority over the whole house. Harish considered Virmati as his wife and Ganga as household.

Spivak talks about the failure of Subaltern Studies Group in considering the subjectivity of females. She says the sections that perceive no positive change in their life even after political independence in India are called the subaltern, and the women who are doubly subordinated are called *gendered subaltern*, those who have no control over the means of communication.

Virmati was in the process of subject-construction throughout her life. Subject construction arises through a series of changes that are not static. Astha’s subjectivity process started once she began participating in social activity such as taking part in Aijaz funeral function, the rally set up to protest anti-communal actions and painting to support Manch organization financially.

To elaborate the relationship between body and women, Plato and Irigaray’s views towards this issue will be considered. Plato (Spelman-1998) talks about the body as the lower part of the soul and considers the soul as the higher part and in order to define how lower part can cover upper part, he uses the life of women as an example. He says that paying attention to the body more than soul is the nature of women and if a man does not live righteousness in his next incarnation he will be born as a woman. Irigaray’s point of view differs from that of Plato. She as a continental philosopher tries to show the importance of the body in the life of a woman. She (Cahill-2005) believes that body is not “peripheral to subjectivity,” and like Lacan agrees that biology is very much
influenced by culture. She believes that imaginary body that is dominated the society is a male body and as a result Western culture is biased against women.

In this chapter the term *silence* and the different cases in which women keep silence will be analyzed according to feminist views. Sunder Rajan (1995:84) states that speech is identified as self-expression and silence as self-extinction. These two terms are very important in the project of subject-constitution.

One of the negative consequences of the imposition of silence on women is shown through Virmati’s attempted suicide. Her act gives us a chance to study the trauma a woman goes through after suicide and the reaction of the family and the society towards the case. As a result of Virmati’s suicide attempt her grandfather did not come to Amritsar any more to avoid being criticized by the society.

How women can make their life meaningful and create an identity is a project of Indira J. Parikh and Pulin k. Garg (1989). They believe that the sharing of experience is very important for those individuals who want to move beyond old roles and create identities based on new definitions and roles. They assert that women, in order to discover new horizons of becoming, need to pass several thresholds and struggle with multiple invitations and evocations to achieve freedom and go towards the new horizon of being and becoming.

In *Difficult Daughters*, Manju Kapur portrays the relationship between men implicitly bringing about a comparison with relationships between women. Men reserve the right to have relationship with a woman before and after marriage and talk about that with
other men while a woman’s relationship with any other man before and after marriage is not acceptable and it is not easy for them to talk about it to each other.

De Beauvoir’s view towards the different attitude between man and woman about marriage is considered. She shows how they see marriage differently and how their will in the marriage differs from each other.

The internalization of patriarchy values is exemplified by these writers in their novels and shows the importance of this factor. To clarify the crucial role of this factor in subordination of women the researcher has used Friedan and Irigaray’s views. They claim that this form of internalization allows patriarchy to subdue women without any effort of system.

The first step of women towards emancipation is self-realization. The time women recognize how they are oppressed, they will try to find a way out. In this regard de Beauvoir (1974) points out the source of the existing feelings of inferiority and passivity in women and how this passivity is taught to them. A.H. Maslow attempts to explain how self-actualizing people do not think in terms of passivity and activity and how the definition of love for self-actualizing people differs from conventional norms.

The notion of independence comes in all of the novels regardless of whether women could achieve it or not. I discuss the relation between independence, education and emancipation. I would like to highlight what is the role of education and how much it affects women’s emancipation. To do so I exemplify the kind of education given to
Kasturi, Virmati, Swarna, Shakuntala in Difficult Daughters and Astha in A Married Woman and try to compare them together.

Kapur in A Married Woman pays careful attention towards change and its effect on both women and men’s lives. Hemant becomes an Indian father after being an American. Astha becomes a woman who does not only consider her husband and children but social activities as well and also the change in the life of Astha’s mother.

Abortion is a very controversial debate among feminists. Kapur portrays the conditions of women before and after abortion with regard to legal and illegal abortion. Abortion is contradictory in terms of rights. Some feminists take abortion as the right of women over their bodies while other feminists discuss about fetus right over her/his life.

In the fourth chapter, two works of Anita Nair will be discussed—The Better Man and Ladies Coupé. In The Better Man Anita Nair shows her male character Mukundan who was suppress by the rule of his father, Achunthan. Anita Nair shows how the rule of Achunthan, a symbol of patriarchy, extends to the public from home and subordinates other people also. In Ladies Coupé, it is women who are marginalized while in The Better Man we see a younger man subordinated by an older one.

In this chapter I want to elaborate why women are subordinated in the light of Irigaray’s theory of sexual difference. She explains Freud’s point of view and show how Freud conceives of women and how his definition of women by using biology claims a universal basis. In other words Irigaray criticizes Freud for looking at women through Victorian eyes. The root of woman’s marginalization is the patriarchal view of their
reproduction ability, which see this as a basis for considering women to be a part of nature. The view that women are part of nature and men part of culture underlies the marginalization of women. Spivak attempts to describe this concept regarding women life and shows the characteristics of marginalization in Indian society, and the “slippery” nature of the term marginality. Anita Nair exemplifies marginality through her different characters such as Ammini, Achunthan’s mistress, and Paru Kutty, Achunthan’s wife; Mukundan and Achunthan; Akhila and her colleague at office and so on.

We can see that becoming a subject as Lusia Passerini (2000) discusses needs to pass a complicated process which refers to different forms and actions and expression for “collective subjects”. The one who first has learnt to be a subject is Bhasi and Anita Nair explains how Bhasi can achieve to that level of subjectivity.

Simone de Beauvoir (1974) describes why women lack subjectivity in their lives and Anita Nair portrays episodes that confirm de Beauvoir’s view. There are several examples in Ladies Coupé that show how the subjectivity of women is not developed in their private or public life. Sunder Rajan sees the issue in terms of the diversity of cast, class and religion. Anita Nair portrays three kinds of subordination in her work—man subordinating women, women subordinating other women and man subordinating other men. This subordination happens through internal and external oppression as Sebasti L. Raj (1991) defines.

Anita Nair delineates several events that show the importance of gender oppression in patriarchy. Nair shows gender inequality through her characters. In this regard Friedan
(1963) explain how even men are not happy with their own gender role and whatever the culture imposes on them, such as being out of the home for long time or being considered as a stranger by their member of their family. Friedan (1963) asks whether change in the gender role can liberate women, the change that is already realized by men cannot satisfy them.

Examining the basis of patriarchy, I consider views of gender according to Marxism, socialism, capitalism, and radicalism. The underlying view of all these theories it that patriarchy and social control build upon gender inequality in order to preserve patriarchal authorities.

Simone de Beauvoir explains how gender inequality emerges in the society according to how a girl passes her childhood and is trained to behave as a female. In Anita Nair’s works we see the issue of gender inequality and also the shift from one role to another as it happens through Akhila in Ladies Coupé.

Freidan (1963:105) uses the notion of growth and in this regard criticizes Freud for not paying proper attention to the growth of ego and for defining women according to their relationship with men sexually. She believes that society blocks women’s growth in achieving a full human identity. Society does not give women the opportunity to realize their full potential and achieve their interest and ideals. Interests and ideals are important factors that stimulate women’s growth. By portraying the life of large number of women especially in Ladies Coupé, Anita Nair provides evidence for understanding how women define themselves in marriage. In defining women’s marriage we use the terms difference as Sunder Rajan (1995) uses in reference to class, caste and religion;
Simone de Beauvoir describes how women's *Otherness* arises because of the lack of power not because of the loss of phallus. To explain, she uses an ontological model of women's being. She concludes that biology can never be understood outside its social, economic and psychological context, noting that she can differentiate between women and *feminity*.

Self-realization is a very important issue in both novels. Mukundan in *The Better Man* and Akhila with other women in *Ladies Coupé* went through the process of self-realization to reach to emancipation; emancipation from the internalized values to the rule of father for Mukundan and social norm for Akhila and other women in the same Coupé. In this regard Friedan shows how the notion of *growth* is close to self-realization. Friedan (1963:269) says growth according to the sciences of human behavior means "man's will to be all that is in him to be," while self-realization understand what abilities are in him. Freidan later notes that in the hierarchy of needs in human beings, some needs are shared with animals and some exclusively belong to human beings such as the needs for knowledge and self-realization. Then Friedan (1963:277) differentiates between high and low dominance people and the kinds of characters that belong to each category, such as good self-confidence and self-assurance for high dominance persons and lack of self-esteem and having the feeling of inferiority for low-dominance persons, and shows how high-dominance women are successful in their private and public lives as well.
Considering heterogeneity among women and their socio-financial situation women define their marriage differently. In Ladies Coupé we have gallery of women's characters where each has different conditions and ambitions.

Luce Irigaray in her book I Love to You: Sketch for a Felicity Within History (1996) attempts to find a ground for a possible inter-subjectivity between two sexes. She tries to find out how women can move to a new era of sexual difference in order to establish a relationship between men and women without reducing the other to the status of object. To do so, she focuses on means of communication. She proposes a kind of communication that does not consider one as the object of the subject but allows for an indirect relation that is why she replaces “I love to you” instead of “I love you.” Then she tries to find the answer of “how am I to listen to you?” By asking this question, she means that she listens to her and her words are something unique and new. Such listening does not mean Irigaray knows her and has no need to listen to her and Irigaray can plan her life.

The notion of violence against women within the family and outside it will be considered and the different kinds of violence, mental and physical, will be discussed with regard the events in the two novels and feminist theories. We shall see that domestic violence is a common issue in Indian society, which is based on myth and shows the power inequalities and discrimination inherited in the structure of patriarchal family. Sunder Rajan defines rape as follows:

> Literally, rape as the forcible penetration of the female body by the male sexual organ is the expression of male sexual domination and hence of patriarchy itself. (1995-77)
Some feminists examine the issue of rape within a complex politics based on the recognition that patriarchy is not the only way of oppression in the society, and those advantages and handicaps differ within the categories of men and women. Women's sexual vulnerability is focused by their identity as class/racial subjects. In analyzing the term rape, the fear from rape and the miserable conditions women go through after rape will be discussed in detail according to the rape case of Marikolanthu. Anita Nair portrays not only how Marikolanthu was tortured physically as the result of rape but how she was isolated in the society for being raped.

Then we consider the term new woman. The image of New Indian woman and how it emerges in Indian society with reference to the national identity and modernity will be considered.

Age is another issue that divides the history of individual women not just physically and mentally but also socially as Simone de Beauvoir (1974) and Friedan (1994) hint at.

In the fifth chapter, I initially offer a brief review of the chapters. I then juxtapose the analysis of novels and highlight the concept of “otherness” in the relations of women with men and women with women; the role of education and financial dependence in women’s lives; the tool patriarchy uses to maintain its superiority and power in the society; gender inequality; the concept of difference with regard to the sexes and also the diversity of caste, and class subjectivity, rape and abortion; and the meaning of marriage universally and locally in India. Finally I talk about how useful the theories of these thinkers were in analyzing women’s problems and the issue of women’s empowerment, which areas these two writers have no covered, and in the end what the main characters of the novels are seeking.