CHAPTER II
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Introduction

Although the researcher here is working on Indian women and feminism in India, it would be very useful to consider some important Western feminists. Feminist issues are culture-specific, but there are many universal issues among women all over the world.

Simone De Beauvoir (1908-86)

Simone de Beauvoir was a French feminist. Her famous book is *The Second Sex* published in 1974. In an interview she said that she became aware she was leading a false life. In her early life she accepted male values and lived accordingly. She enjoyed the privilege of male-oriented society without realizing that few women have such access to those sources. And it was she who was allowed to be in mainstream as the result of her education and her family background.

She was an intellectual coming from a family that could afford to send her to the best school and let her play with ideas at her leisure. She managed to participate in the world of men without too much difficulty. She thought if women wanted they could be independent and equal to men. She did not know that rarely other women who were not in the same level as her were invited to “parties” for her mind (Gerassi-1976).

In *The Second Sex* (1974) she says that the majority of women do not have the choices she has had. They are treated as the second sex by male-oriented society. She says that
women could bring change to their lives through two steps—the first is to become aware of their subordinated conditions and the second is to believe in their strength. She also understands that those women who are most exploited, such as workers' wives, would be the last to join to the movement. She knows that capitalism always exploits poor people and she believes that the equality of sexes is impossible under capitalism. She is also sure that socialist revolution can not bring sexual equality—to elaborate her idea she talks about soviet Russia: Soviet Russia demonstrates the confusion between emancipation of the proletariat and emancipation of women. The proletariat is always made by men; therefore the patriarchal values remain intact with the result that women's lives remain unchanged. Therefore she wanted to make it clear that class struggle does not mean sex struggle (Gerassi-1976).

In the same interview de Beauvoir says that her new work had to be rooted in practice rather than in theory. She says that The Second Sex went the other way which is no longer valid. She continues:

It's in the practice that one can now see how the class struggle and the sex struggle intertwine, or at least how they can be articulated.
(Gerassi-1976)

She (Gerassi-1976) suggests that their theory should be derived from practice and what they need is to collect the lived experience of all groups, classes of women, and from all sorts of countries. Then they can make the patterns adjust to the condition of women elsewhere.

De Beauvoir (Gerassi-1976) talks about the separatism of women and wants to know why feminists insist on being separatists. She notes some women groups in French
which exclude men in order to rediscover their identity as women to understand themselves as women. They can tell each other things they would never dare to say in front of their husbands, fathers, brothers or any male figure. Such a desire brings and develops real friendships among women. She says in the past when she was young, women never wanted to be sincere friends with other women. They look at each other as rivals, enemies or competitors. But now because of this consciousness, groups of women have learned to be true friends; they have learned to be warm, open, and deeply sensitive towards each other. They convert sisterhood and fraternity into reality without any relationship depending on lesbian sexuality.

In *The Second Sex* (1974) she says that one wonders whether women still exist and if they exist, what place they occupy in this world, and “What has become of women?” (1974: xv) De Beauvoir says women’s authenticity does not assume a subject attitude. The proletarians have accomplished the revolution in Russia, the blacks in Haiti, but women’s attempt to change has never been anything more than a symbolic agitation. They have only whatever men have opted to grant; they have never taken anything, they just have received. She (1974: xxii) says the reason for such an attitude “is that women lack concentrated means for organizing themselves into a unit which can stand face to face with the correlative unit.” She believes that women have no past, no history and no religion of their own. They live among males and are attached to them through residence, housework, economic conditions and their social standing to certain males, i.e. fathers or husbands. (1974: xii).

The term *Others* which de Beauvoir speaks about is a Sartrean term. Sartre’s ideas are rooted in the philosophies of G.W. F. Hegel, Edmund Husserl, and Martin Heidegger.
But the chief one is Hegel’s description of the psyche as a *self alienated spirit*. Hegel talks about consciousness in a divided arena— the observing ego and the observed ego. Sartre’s aspiration to Hegel divides *Being* into two parts: *Being-in-Itself* and *Being-for-Itself* (Tong-1989:196). *Being-in-Itself* is related to material existence shared with animals, vegetables, and minerals. In contrast *Being-for-Itself* relates to conscious existence and refers to all capacities that one human being shares with other human beings, the common things among all human beings. Sartre adds one more form of *Being* to those: *Being-for-others*. Sartre often describes *Being-for-others* negatively as it is “a perpetual conflict as each for-itself seeks to recover its own Being by directly or indirectly making an object out of the other” (Tong-1989:197).

Each *Being-for-Itself* defines itself as a subject by considering other being as object, as other. The process of self-definition is the process of getting power over other beings. Sartre says:

> While I attempt to free myself from the hold of the other, the other is trying to free himself from mine, while I seek to enslave the other; the other seeks to enslave me... Descriptions of concrete behaviour must be seen within the perspective of conflict. (Sartre-1956: 59)

According to Dorothy Kaufmann McCall (1979:210), de Beauvoir used Sartrean terms in her thesis, but taking *self* for man and *Other* for woman is her own. Then she says if the *Other* is a threat to the *self*, then it is a woman who is a threat for *self*. Therefore man must subordinate woman. MacCall argues that woman’s oppression is different from all other oppressions. Firstly, because woman has been subordinate to man and secondly, woman has internalized man as essential and woman as the inessential.
De Beauvoir intention is to find out how woman became the *Other*. In *The Second Sex* (1974), she analyzes the data of biology, the psychoanalytic point of view, and the point of view of historical materialism in order to answer this question, but none of them gives her a suitable answer.

In her analysis she says female enslavement and limitations of women's power are very important facts; the body of woman is one of the most important elements in her situation. Her body by itself cannot define her as a *woman*; it is the conscious individual that manifests through activities in the context of a society. Therefore biology is not enough to answer the question before us: why is woman the *Other*? (McCall-1979:210)

Then de Beauvoir turns towards psychoanalysis to find better explanation of woman's *Otherness*, but the castration complex of Freud's theory also fails to explain the low social status of woman in the society. She believes women are *Others* due to the lack of power and not because of the loss of an organ that is a symbol of superiority (McCall-1979:210).

Even the Marxist explanation does not satisfy de Beauvoir. Because Marxists believes oppression comes when one class in the social organization exploited the labor of another. Marxists say there is no oppression in a society based on socialism, because all the production is owned by all. De Beauvoir does not believe that shifting from capitalism to socialism can liberate women. According to her point of view, women will remain the *Others* in a socialist society as well (McCall-1979:210).
De Beauvoir (Tong-1989:89) became disappointed with traditional biological, psychological, and Marxist explanations of women's oppression started doing research on the ontological explanation of woman's being to find the answer to her question. In that area she sees woman as self and man as Other. She explains when we recognize ourselves as subject and free being, the idea of Other emerges. “From that day the relation with the Other is dramatic: the existence of the other is a threat, a danger.”

Betty Friedan (1921-2006)

Betty Friedan was an American feminist and writer. She was the famous founder of National Women’s Political Caucus. She first went to Smith College in 1942 and then to Berkeley. In the 1950s she started writing for women’s magazines. She established herself as a liberal feminist classic through The Feminine Mystique (1963).

In The Feminine Mystique (1963), Friedan was more concerned about the educated, middle-class women of America. Those women apparently had everything that was supposed to make them happy and comfortable. Their husbands held good jobs, they lived in their own apartments, their children went to good schools and they had almost all the appliances needed to make life comfortable.

But in such seemingly perfect conditions, women were not satisfied. They knew something was missing, but they could not understand what it was. After listening to women's complaints, pains, and their secret dissatisfaction, Friedan understood the base of all was the problem of identity. She says, though they are living in a modern world, material progress and progressive ideas; men treat women like Victorians who did not
care about the needs of their woman and did not let them fulfil their desires as human beings (P.G. Joshi-2003:129).

By observing articles in newspapers and advertisements of new products, she reached the conclusion that all these advertisements worked together to convince American women that marriage and motherhood were the only way for them to be happy and lead a perfect life. Betty Friedan says that those advertisements portrayed suburban housewives as those American women who had comfortable lives by using up-to-date appliances that freed them from the drudgery and the dangers of childbirth (Freidan-1963). A newspaper describes a suburban housewife in America through these words: “She was healthy, beautiful, educated, concerned only about her husband, her children, and her home. She had found true feminine fulfillment” (Freidan -1963:380).

Friedan believes that the process of women’s brainwashing worked through women’s magazines, advertisement, and all popular writings. They all direct women to “natural life,” which means having no desire except taking care of their husband and children. She finds that all of these media are designed in a “well-calculated manner” to serve some important social demand. They also try to make new consumers for their goods through housewives buying a washing machine, a toaster, a baby carriage etc (P.G. Joshi-2003:130).

Friedan’s advice to these suburban housewives was to go out for work. She said so long as women do not get college educations and work in public they are sentenced to the strange “deep depressions”. She thought if women worked outside of home their children and husbands became better people in their absence. But she noted that
working outside and having their own identity did not mean women stop needing to love or be loved by a man or that they stopped caring about their own children (Tong-1989:23).

John Stuart Mill and Mary Wollstonecraft criticize her idea that being a wife and a mother left the woman with no time to develop herself and become a "full human person". But Friedan counters and claims that by doing work quickly and efficiently, women can find plenty of time to work outside and develop their humanity (Tong-1989:24).

P.G. Joshi (2003:130) believes that The Feminine Mystique has its own deficiencies. It provides no solution to the problem. Nor does it speak about poor and minority women who work outside not for their fulfilment but for the necessity of their lives. The other point which Betty does not discuss was the presence of men’s self-interest in the present system and men’s opposition to giving freedom to women. From Rosemarie Tong’s point of view (1989:24) The Feminine Mystique (1963) fails to consider how difficult it would be for even privileged women to combine marriage and motherhood with a career unless major structural changes are made within as well as outside the family. But on the whole we can say the change that The Feminine Mystique brought to women lives was miraculous.

Later on she admits her shortcomings in The Second Stage (1981:27). She asserts that in the first stage, full participation, power, and voice in the mainstream were their aims. But they divert from their dream. She says that in their reaction against the feminine mystique that defined women according to their relation to men as wives, mothers, and
homemakers, they sometimes fell into a feminist mystique which refused the core of women’s personhood that is satisfied through love, nature, and home. She says what diverted them from their dream in 1960’s and 1970’s was “sexual politics.” She says that it was counterproductive to insist that all men are misogynistic pornographers, pimps, sexual harassers, rapists; this kind of “man hating” is unwarranted. She believes not only many men like and love women, but also many women like and love men. And any feminism that does not consider this fact will fail.

Friedan (Tong-1989: 25) uses term superwoman. A superwoman tries to be both “the quintessential wife” and mother (the slave of her husband and children) and “the quintessential careerist,” the man who is the slave of his boss and has to go early to work and stay there till late. In this way the superwoman forgets why she goes outside to work. She goes outside to develop and become a human being, but finds she does not have any time to work on herself.

As a solution Friedan (1981) suggests that first women’s movement have to keep moving ahead, and second women attempt to work with men for changes in public values, leadership styles, and institutional structures, which then will help all persons to achieve personal fulfilment and be in the “mainstream.” She believes that the idea that home and family belong only to women and are not a joint responsibility is wrong. Men have to accept spending more time with their family- Especially when both husband and wife are breadwinners and share the burden of earning, the man can afford to give more time to home, children, and recreation.
Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* asks women to be like men, whereas, in *The Second Stage*, she persuades society to consider the difference between sexes till the day “men and women become androgynous human beings” (Tong-1989:27). In *The Second Stage* (1981) she moves towards the substitution of feminism with humanism. Regarding this move Tong (1989:27) asks, “Is it not premature to instruct women to become humanists, when the very notion of ‘human being’ is still contested as male defined?”

She is grateful towards the early feminists who offered the second stage of feminist the right to vote, access to higher education and employment, and in some cases having the legal rights of equality. She believes that by education we can reach the point of making decisions even if it does not take us beyond our housework. Then the “self-respecting image of ourselves” is born. Women acquire a sense of being complete human beings in society (Mahowald-1983:13).

She thinks that men are also the victim of circumstances. If women become free then men can achieve greater “self-fulfilment”. Because all fields in their society such as politics, church, and teaching are made by men. This world is male-structured world, therefore if any space is given to women, women will shift into men’s world while carrying along the shyness of being women. Friedan believed that, “One is made to feel there are three sexes- men, other women, and myself” (Mahowald-1983:13).

She mentions that some women do not want equality with men, because they accept their oppressed condition. They do not have enough self-confidence to move within a competitive society as equal human beings. Hence, the concept of equality is too frightening for them. Freidan thought women have to create the “new women”, “who
are people first”. In order to be “people” women have to take part in making the political decisions, and not just do housework ”(Mahowald-1983:14).

Friedan (Mahowald-1983:14) says, it is women who have to decide what their lives and personality have to be, what the women’s lives have to be and also their personhood are to be decided by women. They do not want the term “feminine” to be defined by men, because men look at women as sex objects. The nature of the denigration of women is their definition as sex objects. Women in order to confront their inequality must confront their own self-denigration and their denigration by society in these terms. Hence, she says that sex will only be liberated, “when women are liberated, liberated to creativity beyond motherhood, to a full human creativity.” She does not mean that women have to be liberated from motherhood, but that motherhood can be a cheerful act when women freely make decision to be mothers.

Friedan says:

Men, we have said, are not the enemy. Men will only be truly liberated, to love women and to be fully themselves, when women are liberated to be full people. (Mahowald- 1983:15)

Till that liberation men have to suffer the guilt of the destiny they have forced on women, the suppressed resentment of that passive stage when there is no fully active, participant love between women and men, the element of exploitation can be seen in the relation between women and men. In such a situation men are not also fully free to be whatever they can be as long as they have to carry the image of masculinity that resists the more feminine qualities of tenderness and sensitivity which are also present in men.
Friedan (Mahowald-1983:19) believes women have to overcome their diversity of varied political beliefs. Women’s common commitment is to equality for women. Women are not single-issue people, but they want a voice for all women to raise it in decision making on all issues from war and peace to the kinds of cities they want to inhabit. Many important issues concern all of women and on these issues women may differ. Freidan asserts that they will surmount this. Political power is urgent for changing the situation of the oppressed 51 percent who are women. Women have to use the power of their actions to make themselves visible as people in America, as a conscious political and social force of change in the society and to enable themselves to live freely as people in it.

Luce Irigaray (1937-)

She (Donovan-2005) is a continental feminist and an interdisciplinary thinker who works with philosophy, psychoanalysis, and linguistics. She was Lacan’s student but she departed from Lacan in Speculum of the Other Woman. In this book she criticizes the “exclusion of women from both philosophy and psychoanalytic theory”. In the following texts she presents a comprehensive analysis and critique of the exclusion of women from the history of philosophy, psychoanalytic theory and structural linguistics. Irigaray states that women have been traditionally are linked with matter and nature at the expense of the female subject position. Women can be a subject only by being assimilated to a male subject. Consequently a distinct subject position does not exist for women. In this book Irigaray attempts to show the absence of a female subject position in Western culture, the downgrading of all things feminine to nature/matter, and the lack of true sexual difference.
From early times, mothers have been seen as being connected to nature and "unthinking matter". Irigaray believes that, historically, all women have been linked to the role of "mother" regardless whether a woman is a mother or not. Her identity is always defined according to that role. The identity of women is taken with the link to nature while the identity of men is associated with culture and subjectivity. Irigaray (Donovan-2005) says if women are excluded from the society, and if they are not considered as a "full subject", society itself cannot fulfil its functions. In the end she says that Western culture is built upon the sacrifice of the mother and, through her, all women.

Irigaray (Donovan-2005) believes that sexual difference does not exist, because men are subjects (self-conscious) and women are the Others (the non-subjects, supporting matter). Only one form of subjectivity is available in Western culture and it is male. A true sexual difference requires that men and women be equally able to become subjects (Donovan-2005). In her investigations of psychoanalytic theory and philosophy she shows how both exclude women from social existence as "mature subjects."

The most famous critical tool of Irigaray is mimesis. "Mimesis is a process of resubmitting women to stereotypical views of women in order to call the views themselves into question" (Donovan-2005). The clue to mimesis is that the stereotypical views are not repeated faithfully. For example women are supposed to be illogical, therefore they should speak logically. Irigaray's essay "The Sex Which Is Not One" explains several examples of this method.

Irigaray says that repeating a negative view unfaithfully suggests that women are something other than the view expressed. She (Donovan-2005) believes overcoming the
harmful views of women can not happen through simply ignoring the views. According to the methodology of psychoanalysis, she believes that negative views can only be overcome when they are exposed and demystified. When mimesis is successfully employed, it repeats a negative view—without reducing women to that view and makes fun of it in a way that the view itself must be discarded.

Luce Irigaray (Tong-1989:226) is the first psychoanalyst who attempts to liberate the feminine from male philosophical thought, even the thought of Derrida and Lacan. In Lacan the Imaginary is the pre-Oedipal domain of prelinguistic. It is special identifications that child mistakes itself for its own mirror image and then gradually concludes that its image is not his or her real self. With this realization, the child comes into the symbolic Order prepared to assume the “I” in language, separated from other subjectivities. Irigaray is interested in the contrasts between the Imaginary and symbolic. But her understanding of the Imaginary differs from Lacan in several ways. For Irigaray there is a difference between a male imaginary and a female imaginary. Lacan believes that Imaginary is a kind of prison because the self is the prisoner of the illusory images. Boys will be liberated form the Imaginary and goes into the Symbolic order that is the realm of language and selfhood. But the girls remain behind in the Imaginary because they never completely resolve the Oedipal phase. Instead of looking at this entrapment as completer negativity, Irigaray suggested that there may be untapped possibilities for women in the Imaginary. She says what we know about the Imaginary and what we know about woman, including her sexual desire, has come from male point of view. The only woman we know is the “masculine feminine,” woman as man sees her. Irigaray asserts that there may be another perspective both on the Imaginary and on woman, including her sexual desire. Perhaps there is not only a
“feminine feminine,” a nonphallic feminine, but also a way to bring woman to selfhood and language that does not need to be mediated in any way through men.

Freud brings up the idea of an imaginary body in *The Ego and the Id* in the section of the same name which I will talk about it in Chapter Four. The thing that Irigaray (Donovan-2005) notes with regard to Freud’s views is that Western culture privileges identity, unity which is related to male anatomy. For example she brings up Freud’s idea about women. In his view a girl or a woman is a “defective man”, because he believes men exist and women are “a variation of men”. Irigaray accuses Freud of not understanding women. He believes in just one sex. Freud tries to explain female subjectivity and sexuality according to a male model. From this perspective, female subjectivity seems to be a deformed and insufficiently developed form of male subjectivity. Irigaray says if Freud had used the tools of analysis and analyzed his discourse then he would have known that female subjectivity cannot be understood through the lens of a one-sex model. In other words, negative views of women exist because of theoretical bias, not because of nature.

There might be a “feminine-feminine” or “nonphallic feminine”, a way that gives women selfhood, and also a language that is not governed by men. According to Irigaray (Tong-1989:227) what really restricts women’s thought empowerment apart from the imaginary is the concept of “sameness” that is the result of masculine narcissism and singularity.

The concept “sameness” refers to Freud’s theory. Freud sees a little girl as a *little man* without a penis. Freud thinks if a woman does not reflect a man, she does not exist.
Regarding Freud's point of view Irigaray says so long as there is the concept of the Oedipus complex, the “feminine-feminine” will remain repressed.

Irigaray brings the issue of difference into the light and says (Hoffman, Serrano-1988:154) because difference has been always functions in a hierarchical fashion no need to reject it, because it has two sides. She believes that it is important to make a double gesture. That means both to interpret and deny that sexual difference has to return to exploitation and subordination, but at the same time to affirm the positive character of difference. That’s why she (Hoffman, Serrano-1988:153) asks women not to seek equality between women and men because it makes them totally like men. What interests Irigaray is not the return to matriarchy but the sexual difference without hierarchy. Irigaray says that the binary values now face with the question. She believes that opposition feminine/masculine is a false opposition which doesn’t truly belong to binarism. And if it is supposed that it belongs to binary opposition then it is completely hierarchized. It is as if there is one pole of the opposition-masculine that constitutes the limit of the system and plays with the other pole according to its needs. Hence, one can not say there is a true binarism.

What Irigaray (Hoffman, Serrano-1988:155) wants to do in order to discover the positive characteristics of this difference is not to return to biology or anatomy, but to find out the specific morphological characteristics of the feminine. When others impose the concept of feminine nature, women should not be taken in. It is important to answer such impositions that all of our culture in which we live depends on a masculine nature and a masculine morphology. So let’s examine the nature of women’s morphology because women’s vision of the world and their manner of creating is not the same as
that of men. Luce Irigaray (Hoffinan, Serrano-1988:157) asserts that the mother is an "alienator", because she has no identity as a woman. Such an issue drive the mother and the little girl into the same nothingness. If the mother finds her identity as a woman she will be able to pass an identity to her daughter. She states it is interesting that these days this relationship is questioned because very little is known about this explosive relationship in patriarchal culture.

She takes a theme in *Amante Marine*. The one that can be found in mythology and it seems to be at the foundation of patriarchal culture. The structuring of the imaginary system can be seen in the great mythological figures. Irigaray talks about the relationship between Demeter and Kore. Demeter is the goddess of the earth. She has a little girl, Kore. She is grievously manipulated. Zeus gives her to his brother Hades, who is the king the underworld. She is abducted by Hades. The little girl is separated form her mother. She loses her voice and her name is changed to Persephone. Because the patriarchal regime is not completely in effect, Demeter rejects to reproduce without her daughter. So, Hades is forced to give back Kore for two seasons of the year; spring and summer. At the beginning there was a good mother-daughter relationship out of the patriarchal regime. One can see how its relationship was destroyed, but it was Demeter who did not allow it happen completely. Irigaray says:

If one were to succeed in creating again a good relationship between mother and daughter, women would no longer subordinate themselves. There would be a feminine identity and women would not submit themselves to what is called the exchange of women among men.
(Hoffman, Serrano-1988-158)

The myth of Demeter shows how the mother-daughter relationship is ruined by the male subjects, and how men traditionally control the fate of women as if they are men's commodities.
irrespective of the women being their wives, daughters, or sisters. She asks women to protect their mother-daughter relationship and strengthen it.

In order the language of women deconstruct the representation, Irigaray states it is necessary to act in two ways. First, to criticize the existing systems and to show how we can deconstruct them because we are at the same time inside and outside these systems. Women have to resist all the major forms of opposition from which culture is constructed. They must reject all the oppositions of fiction/truth, sensible/intelligible, empirical/transcendental, and materialist/idealist. All of these binary opposition function as an exploitation and a negation of a relation at first and of a certain mode of connection between the body and the word for which we have paid everything. In Irigaray’s opinion, the pair of feminine/masculine is an opposition in appearance only, and in not a true binarism. She says:

As with a certain number of opposing values that I mentioned before-materialist/idealist, etc—there isn’t truly an opposition (the masculine) which constitutes the limits of the system and which plays with the other pole (the feminine) according to its need. One is not able to say that this is a true binarism. (Hoffman, Serrano-1988:160)

She (Hoffman, Serrano-1988:160) insists on accepting two poles. She says that we have to accept that there are two poles that are different from each other. We have to consider that the feminine is not the same as the masculine. To equate them would result in the politics of the neuter, which she sees as being a nihilistic politics in the worst sense of the term. She asks why that at the moment when something valuable takes place on the women’s side at once a discourse of androgyny, of nonsexual difference arises. Irigaray believes it is necessary to pay careful attention to the nullifying the difference of women in the discourse of neutrality. Such explanations subjugate women once more to the
new “humanism”. In the University of Vincennes someone said to her: “We are human beings”. Irigaray responded that she rejected the concept of being a human being, because she was not given the possibility of being an exact and complete human being.

Heidegger says each age is preoccupied with one thing (Moi-1987:118) and Irigaray states that sexual difference is the most important issue in our age. Different philosophers have not provided any answers to this issue of sexual difference. All remained silent. Hence, the existence of such an issue has been resisted in theory and in practice.

There is a need for a revaluation in thought and ethics to establish sexual difference in the society, Irigaray says. The relationship between “the subject and discourse, the subject and the world, the subject and the cosmic, the microcosmic and the macrocosmic” have to be re-interpreted (Moi 1987:119). The first thing she asks is for a re-interpreting of the universal or neutral state which is writing in a masculine form, such as man. Man is not a neutral noun. In the field of theory, morality or politics it is a man who is the subject of discourse (Moi-1987:119).

Irigaray and Lacan both have a common view of language (Donovan-2005). Irigaray like Lacan believes one has to enter language to become a subject. In order for this to happen, language has to change at the cultural level. She believes that “language typically excludes women from taking an active subject position. Inclusion of women in the current form of subjectivity is not the solution.” There has to be more than one subject position in language.
She (Donovan-2005) tries to show how women are excluded from subjectivity in western culture through language. There are general speech patterns especially for both sexes but it is the woman who does not take the position of subject in language. Women are not that eager to occupy the subject position. Irigaray says that the structure of English language is not free from sexism. She thinks, "...the dominance of the masculine in both the plural and the neuter, which takes the same form as the masculine" (Donovan-2005). She argues that whatever is valuable refers to masculine gender such as the sun, and what occupies a less important position refers to the feminine. And because language and society have a close relation, the changes in language and society have to occur together. She believes that men and women do not form the same sentences when given similar clues. The way they use propositions in the sentences are different. In other words they use language differently. She wants men and women to look at each other as "irreducible others"; such a thing cannot happen till women learn to use the subject position and men start communicating with women as other subjects.

**Elaine Showalter (1941-)**

Showalter (Reed-2000) is an American literary critic, feminist, and writer on cultural and social matters. She is a Victorian literature specialist and interested in the field of madness and hysteria in literature, and also in women’s writing, and the portrayal of female characters.

She (1986:3) talks about the history of feminist criticism that has emerged in combination with every other critical approach from formalism to semiotics, and in the literary study of every period and genre from the Middle Ages to the mass media. Literary study had always considered the representative reader, writer, and critic of
Western literature to be male, but since 1960's Feminist criticism has argued that women readers and critics bring different perceptions and expectations to their literary experience, and has claimed that women have also written the important stories of their culture. While literary criticism and its philosophical branch, literary theory, have protected the bastions of male intellectual endeavor, the success of feminist criticism has opened a space for the authority of the woman critic that goes beyond the study of women's writing to the reassessment the whole body of texts that comprise the literary heritage. Feminist criticism has introduced gender as a fundamental category of literary analysis concerning the literary representation of sexual difference, the ways that literary genres have been shaped by masculine or feminine values, and the exclusion of the female voice from the institutions of literature; criticism, and theory (Showalter-1986:3).

Feminist criticism differs from other contemporary schools of critical theory because it doesn't take its literary principles from a single authority figure or from a body of sacred texts. Showalter (1986:4) says that structuralists pay attention to the linguistic discoveries of Saussure, psychoanalytic critics are loyal to Freud or Lacan, Marxists work in "Das Kapital", and deconstructionists refer to Derrida. Feminist critics do not look to a "Mother of Us All" or a single system of thought to make their fundamental ideas. Feminist critics have evolved from several sources—from extensive readings in women's literature, from exchanges with feminist theorists in other disciplines, especially history, psychology, and anthropology: and from the revision and reconsideration of literary theory itself. Linguistics, psychoanalysis, Marxism, and deconstruction have all provided feminist critical theory with important analytical tools.
In *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) Showalter shows the evolution of women's literature from the Victorian period to modern writing and divides this movement into three phases. The feminine is the first phase, and started in the 1840s till the death of George Eliot in 1880. Women writers mostly used the male pseudonym during this period. The second phase is the feminist phase, it began in 1880 with the winning of the vote in 1920, and the last phase is the female phase, from 1920 to the present which is characterized by self-discovery, and identity issues.

In order to discuss the characters of each one of these phases, she (Lee-2006) searches among all other literary subcultures such as black, Jewish or even Americans to see the process of their development. In each subculture and also in women’s literature she sees a long period of imitation, imitation of the dominant male aesthetic standards, and also the internalization of these standards in the feminine phase (1840:80). This period includes women writers such as the Brontës, Elizabeth Caskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, Florence Nightingale, and the later generation of Charlotte Yonge, Dinah Mulock Craik, Margaret Oliphant, and Elizabeth Lynn Linton. These women attempted to integrate themselves into a public sphere, a male of tradition, and many of them felt a conflict of obedience and resistance which appears in many of their novels. Women writers in this period accepted certain limitations in expression such as avoiding coarseness and sexuality and crudity in their writing. Women authors had to remain gentle women and their works were basically about domestic and social issues.

The second phase of feminist criticism brings the discovery that women writers had a literature of their own, whose historical and thematic coherence, and artistic
importance, had been obscured by the patriarchal values that dominate their culture. It was true that critics and writers had talked about women’s writing for centuries, but when feminist criticism started mapping the territory of the female imagination and the structures of the plot, it was something new. Focusing on women’s writing led to a massive recovery and rereading of literature by women from all nations and historical periods. Through that effort hundreds of lost women writers were rediscovered and the continuities in women’s writing became clear for the first time (Showalter-1985:6).

The female phase (1920 onwards), or third phase, (Anglo-american-2005) is a phase of self-discovery and search for identity. As a result, imitation and protest are two forms of dependence rejected by women. Instead they focus on the female experience as a source of independent art extending the feminist analysis of culture to the forms and techniques of literature.

In 1979, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s monumental study, The Madwoman in the Attic, offered a full theoretical account of the situation of the nineteenth-century women writers, their anxieties about authorship as a monstrous and unwomanly activity that transgressed cultural boundaries, and her rewriting of male mythologies in her own texts. Since 1979, these insights have been tested, supplemented, and extended such that we now have a coherent, though still incomplete, narrative of female literary history—a history which explains the evolutionary stages of women’s writing during the last 250 years from imitation through protest to self-definition, and which defines and traces the connections through out history and across national boundaries of the recurring images, themes, and plots that appear from women’s social, psychological, and aesthetic experience in male-dominated. As the black aesthetic of 1970s celebrated a black
consciousness in literature, the female aesthetic also celebrated a uniquely female literary consciousness. Feminist writers, artists, and poets, such as Adrienne Rich, Marge Piercy, Judy Chicago, Susan Griffin, and Alice Walker, supported the female aesthetic. They speak of a women’s culture that has been neglected and has to be revived, of a women's language, and of literary styles and forms emerging from a specific female psychology.

Showalter (1986:8) says that their efforts to define the difference in women’s writing as the expression of a female aesthetic directed them to a renewed interest in theories from psychoanalysis and aesthetics. The process of studying women’s writing directs them to challenge the basic theoretical assumptions of traditional literary history and criticism, from periodic divisions that were rooted in male literary landmarks to the underlying ideas about genre, the literary career, and the role of the critic. In the end, the project of creating a criticism of their own leads them to think about the structure of other critical revolutions and their relationship to them. In the third phase, feminist criticism asks not just for the recognition of women’s writing but for a radical rethinking of the conceptual grounds of literary study, a revision of the accepted theoretical assumptions about reading and writing that is based completely on male literary experiences.

Anglo-American feminist criticism, for all its internal differences, attempts to recover women’s historical experiences as reader and writer, while French feminist theory attempts to see the ways that the feminine has been defined, represented or repressed in the symbolic system of language, metaphysics, psychoanalysis, and art. French feminist theory focuses on the Neo-Freudian psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, the deconstructionist
philosopher Jacques Derrida, and the structuralist critic Roland Barthes. All these theoreticians played an important role in leading feminists to the study of language (Showalter-1986:9).

The influences of the women's liberation movement, the development of women's studies, and the impact of European theory had shaped the feminist criticism of the 1980s. The trajectory of feminist criticism starts from a concentration on women's literary subordination, mistreatment, and exclusion, to the study of women's separate literary tradition, to an analysis of symbolic construction of gender and sexuality within literary discourse. What Showalter and other feminists demand is a new universal literary history and criticism that links the literary experiences of both women and men, a complete change in the understanding of all women's literary heritage (Showalter-1986:10).

Showalter essay "Toward a Feminist Poetics," presented in 1978, deals with the question of feminist criticism's relationship to traditional critical models. At that time Feminist criticism was attacked by some male critics for its lack of theoretical coherence. She says:

...it could not seem to resolve the conflict between spontaneity and methodology, or to find a way of defining its subject that included all the different modes of critical and political commentary that feminism had produced. (1986:12)

In order to solve this problem, Showalter (1986:120) suggests the study of women's writing and female creativity—which she calls gynocritics, which offers the most exciting prospect for a coherent literary theory, and the chance to get away from dependency on male models in creating a criticism of their own.
Showalter (1986) divides feminist criticism into two parts. The first type deals with 

*woman as reader*:

...with woman as the consumer of male produced literature, and with 
the way in which the hypothesis of a female reader changes our 
apprehension of a given text, awakening us to the significance of its 
sexual codes. (1986:128)

Showalter (1986) calls that kind of analysis feminist critique whose subjects cover the 
images and stereotypes of women in literature, the misconceptions about women in 
criticism, and the gaps in male-constructed literary history. It refers to the expl 
oration 
and manipulation of female audiences, particularly in popular culture and to the analysis 
of woman-as-sign in semiotic systems. The second type of feminist criticism deals with 
*woman as writer*, the woman who is the creator of textual meaning, with the history, 
themes, genres, and structures of literature by woman. She (1986:128) elaborates her 
point that:

- Its subjects include the psychodynamics of female creativity; 
- linguistics and the problem of a female language; the trajectory of the 
  individual or collective female literary career; literary history; and, of 
  course, studies of particular writers and works.

Because no term in English can be found for such a specialized discourse, she invents a 
new term, gynocritics to refer to the French term *la gynocritique*.

The feminist critique is basically political and polemic. Theoretically it is affiliated with 
Marxist sociology and aesthetics; gynocritics is “self-contained” and “experimental” in 
relation to other modes of new feminist research. Carolyn Heilburn, the writer, and 
Catharine Stimpson editor of the journal Signs: Women in Culture and Society compare 
the feminist critique to the Old Testament, and say that feminist critique looks for sins
and errors of the past, while gynocritics can be taken as the New Testament that searches for the grace of imagination. Both are important and necessary, because only the Jeremiahs of the feminist critique can direct them out of the "Egypt of female servitude" towards the feminist vision which is the Promised Land (Showalter-1986:129).

The problem with feminist critique is that it is male-oriented. Studying stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics, and the limited roles women play in literary history, does not allow others to learn what women have felt and experienced, but that women have to be what men have thought. The other problem with the critique is its inclination to naturalize women's victimization by showing it as the inevitable and obsessive topic of discussion (Showalter-1986:130).

In contrast, the aim of gynocritics is to make a framework for the analysis of women's literature in order to bring new models according to female experience, despite adapting male models and theories. Gynocritics starts at the point when women free themselves from the "linear absolutes of male literary history," stop making efforts to fit themselves into the male tradition and instead emphasize the newly visible world of female culture. Gynocritics deals with feminist research in history, anthropology, psychology, and sociology, all of which introduce hypothesis of a female subculture including the ascribed status, and the internalized constructs of femininity, the occupations, interactions, and consciousness of women.

Anthropologists studied the female subculture in the relationships between women, as mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends; in sexuality, reproduction, and idea about the body; and in rites of initiation and passage, purification ceremonies, myths, and taboos. (Showlater-1986:131)
Gynocritics has to pay attention to the different “velocities and curves” of political, social, and personal histories in discovering women’s literary choices and careers. Virginia Woolf in her essay, “Women and Fiction” (1929), in dealing with women as writers, says that women’s work has been influenced by conditions that have nothing to do with art and that they need plenty of room to deal with other things than work (Showalter-1986:132).

Showalter is the most influential American critic of the second wave that outlines a literary history of women writers; produces a history which shows the configuraraiton of their material, psychological and ideological determinants and encourages both a feminist critique and gynocritics. As a feminist critique her target audience is the women reader and when engaging in gynocritics her audience is women as writers. Showalter in her book *A Literature of Their Own* (1977) takes the view that though there is no fixed or innate female sexuality or female imagination, there is a profound difference between women’s writing and men’s and that is why she notes

...a whole tradition of writing has been neglected by male critics: the lost continent of the female tradition has risen like Atlantis from the sea of English literature. (Selden & Widdowson-1993:220)

The major sequence in gynocritical (Anglo-American-2005) reading is moving from reality, to author, to reader, to reality. The author understands objective reality and describes it in her text; then the reader understands it as if it is her own life. In this case author, character, and reader come to know what it means to be a female.
In trying to account for these complex permutations of the female tradition, feminist criticism has examined different theoretical approaches. The natural direction feminist criticism has taken has been the revision and the subversion of related ideologies such as Marxist aesthetics and structuralism and the changing of their vocabularies and methods to include the variable of gender.

Showalter (1986:139) says that Marxism and structuralism look at themselves as privileged critical discourse addressed to higher positions in the hierarchy of critical approaches. The key concept in both approaches is *science*. Both view themselves to be sciences of literature, and deny the personal, fallible and interpretative reading. Marxist aesthetics brings a “science of the text,” in which the author is not a creator but the producer of a text whose elements are historically and economically fixed. Structuralism introduces linguistically based models of textual changes and combinations, presenting a “science of literary meaning.”

Showalter (1986:140) says that the attempts at synthesis are unsuccessful so far because the exchange between feminism, Marxism, and structuralism has been one-sided, while scientific criticism tries to avoid the subjective, feminist criticism asserts the subjective in the title of a recent anthology *The Authority of Experience* (Diamond, Edwards-1977). In the diagrams of the structuralist or the class conflict model of the Marxist, the experience of women can easily disappear, became mute, invalid and invisible. Showalter rejects the statement that experience is emotion and protests against the equation of the feminine with the irrational. She notes that the questions they need to ask go beyond whatever science can answer.
In her essay “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness” she speaks about four theories of sexual difference in women’s writing. Biological, linguistic, psychological, and cultural are those theories that she evaluates in women’s writing. By bringing out female body images, using women’s language, and describing the female psyche, she shows the complexity of women’s cultural position, and the uniqueness of the character of women writers (Tharu, Lalita-1993:21).

The study of biological imagery in women’s writing is useful if at the same time the other factors are also considered. In the area of linguistics and textual theories of women’s writing some questions like whether there are any differences in the use of language between men and women, and whether there is any possibility of creating a new language for themselves are considered by her. The practical use of women’s language is the most interesting area in gynocritics. Language is criticized as abstract and sexist but Nelly Furman goes beyond these issues and declares that, through language we express and classify areas of difference and similarity and then through these differences and similarities we can comprehend this world. Male-centered categorizations build our perception of reality: therefore the focus has to be on the oppressive aspects of male constructed language systems. Annie Leclere, a French feminist, asks for a revolutionary act; she asks women “to invent a language that is not oppressive, a language that does not leave one speechless but that loosens the tongue” (Showalter-1986:254). Mary Jacobus asks women to work within “male discourse” but work continuously in a way to deconstruct it: “to write what cannot be written” (Showalter-1986-251). Showalter has another view towards language she thinks if women start speaking and writing like men do, then the door for their entry to history can be opened. She suggests that feminist critics have to focus on women’s access to
language: "on the available lexical range from which words can be selected, on the ideological and cultural determinants of expression" (Showalter-1986:255). In Showalter's point of view the language is sufficient to express women's consciousness. But the problem is that women can not access all resources of language, therefore they are forced to be silent.

Virginia Woolf in series of drafts for a lecture on women's writing objected to the censorship that put limitations on women and did not let them use language. Woolf said, "Now men are shocked if a woman says what she feels" (Showalter-1986:255). Showalter asks women to express their mind and body through language. Instead of limiting women's linguistic range, critics have to quarrel for opening it, because women's literature has been captured by the ghosts that repressed it.

Psychoanalytically oriented feminist criticism situates the difference in women's writing in the author's psyche and in the relation of gender to the creative process. It includes the biological and linguistic models of gender difference in a theory of the female psyche or self which is shaped by the body, by the development of language, and also by sex-role socialization. There are many difficulties to overcome. The Freudian model needs a thorough revision to make it geocentric. Theodor Riek (Showalter-1986:256) says that women have fewer writing blocks than men because their bodies are built to facilitate release. He says that writing, as Freud said at the end of his life, is linked to urinating, which is physiologically easier for woman because they have a wider bladder. Generally psychoanalytic criticism did not focus on the capacious bladder as the organ which generate text, but on the absent phallus. Penis envoy, the castration complex, and the Oedipal phase have become the Friedan
coordinates defining women's relationship to language, fantasy, and culture. Currently
the French psychoanalytic school dominated by Lacan has expended castration into a
total metaphor to the disadvantage of female literary and linguistic endeavours. Lacan
(Showalter-1986:256) says that the acquisition of language happens at the Oedipal
phase when the child accepts her/his gender identity, the time that a child finds out the
importance of phallus as a privileged signification and the result of female
displacement. Many feminists use psychoanalysis in literary criticism. But the problem
of *lack* is the issue that feminist criticism, based on Freudian or post-Freudian theory,
are in constant conflict with because in psychoanalytic terms, *lack* is linked to the
feminine (Showalter-1986:257).

The hypotheses of women's culture have been developed by anthropologists,
sociologists, and social historians. The aim has been to get away from masculine
systems, hierarchies, and values and to achieve a self-defined nature of female cultural
experience. The term women's culture is still controversial in the field of women's
history. Gerda Lerner explains:

> Women have been left out of history not because of the evil
> conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but
> because we have considered history only in male-centred terms.
> (Showalter-1986:258)

For a solution we have to focus on a woman-centred inquiry, and thinking that a female
culture can exist within the general culture shared by men and women. History has to
portray the female experience through time and has to show the development of
feminist consciousness.
Historians differentiate between the roles, activities, tastes, and behaviors which are prescribed for women as the best in the society and those activities, behaviors that women really produce in their life. Shirley and Edwin Ardener, Oxford anthropologists, try to design a model of women's culture that is not historically limited and attempt to establish a terminology for its characters. Edwin Ardener in his two essays, "Belief and the Problem of Women" (1972) and "The Problem Revisited" (1975), speaks about a muted group established by women.

It is necessary to consider a model of the cultural situation of women from both sides—"How they are perceived by the dominant group and how they perceive themselves and others" (Showalter-1986:259). Historians and anthropologists consider the androcentric models of history and culture as an incomplete and insufficient model for analyzing the female experience. In the past, female experience that could not be accommodated by androcentric models was considered as deviant or ignored. Observation from an exterior point of view can never be the same as perceiving from within.

Edwin Ardener’s model (Showalter-1986:263) has several connections to the issues of current feminist literary theory, such as perception, silence, and silencing. These issues are the base for discussions of women’s participation in literary culture. In Ardener’s view the term muted links to both language and power. Muted and dominant groups support the beliefs of social reality unconsciously, but the ones who take control of the structures in which consciousness can be comprehended are the dominant groups. Hence, the muted groups have to mediate their beliefs through the allowable forms of dominant structures. In other words if women speak, they have to speak through the language of the dominant order.
Ardener (Showalter-1986:262) draws a diagram to show the relationship of the dominant to the muted group.

As shown in this diagram, much of muted circle (Y) is in the dominant circle (X) but there is also a crescent of (Y) outside the dominant boundary which is called wild in Ardener’s terminology. This wild zone is an area that no-man can literally go inside. It is a forbidden place for men. It shows the aspects of the female life style outside of the men’s circle.

Some feminist critics suggest that this female space be considered in women-centred criticism theory and art. In this way the invisible can be visible, and the silent can speak. French feminist critics prefer to take this wild zone as the basis for women’s difference theory.

**Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1942- )**

Spivak (Morton-2005) is an Anglo-American feminist critic and Avalon professor in the humanities at Columbia University. She obtained her bachelor’s degree in India and then continued her studies in America. She is considered to be the representative voice of ‘Third World’ feminism. Her first book is *Myself I Must Remake: The Life and Poetry of W.B. Yeats* (1974), her first collection of essays were published ten years

Ranajit Guha (P.G. Joshi-2003:94), the editor of *Subaltern Studies* used the term *subaltern* to define the subordination of south Asian society. This subordination happens in terms of class, caste, age, gender, and office and applies to heterogeneous groups. Spivak (P.G. Joshi-2003:95) has used this term in her essay “Can Subaltern Speak?” and asks can the subaltern have a voice and affect the dominant culture? Who is the gendered subaltern? And does the *gendered subaltern* have any place in building subaltern groups?

According to Spivak the term gendered subaltern covers a wide area. At one extreme it is from the "urban sub-proletarian female" whose place includes both the pre-existing structures of patriarchy and transformational capitalism, to the other extreme of the prostitute or a Brahmin woman who is breast-feeding children of the landlord’s household in order that the figure of their women not lose its shape. She (P.G. Joshi-2003:97) says through the incident of political independence the power equation had changed and the previous non-rulers have changed position and became rulers. In such an exchange an empty place has appeared unconnected to the culture of imperialism, nor reachable even for “organized labour”. This is the place that Spivak calls “the
habitat of subaltern” with diversity among gendered subaltern. This space is “a space of silence, of an incomplete speech act.” For these reasons, Spivak asks feminists to create a situation for the gendered subaltern in order to find her voice and speak. As a result there is no uniform category that can identify the gender subaltern, because even in a particular social class, men might enjoy the advantages of their political power, while at the same time women in that class are in a subordinate position.

In order to show the socio-economic lives of “disempowered subaltern groups,” Spivak (Morton-2005) focuses on literary, historical, cultural, and economic texts rather than restricting herself to a particular national literature. For this reason she has translated the short stories and novels of Mahesweta Devi (1926) to show the lives and history of the urban sub-proletariat, the rural-based peasantry and indigenous peoples. She highlights the life of those groups who are neglected by postcolonial texts that are based on the dominant national narratives of the elite.

In her essay “Can Subaltern Speak?” Spivak (Baldonado-1996) notes the fact that representation is a kind of speech act, with a speaker and a listener. The subaltern often makes an attempt at self-representation, but such a representation is not heard. It is not recognized by the listener, perhaps because of not fitting in with what is expected of the representation. Consequently representation by subaltern individuals seems almost impossible. The subaltern is incapable of knowing her condition and speaking out. The subaltern is unable to use the means of communication to speak out and protest because she has no control over these means.

Representation is a topic that is presently debated not only in postcolonial studies and academia, but in the larger cultural milieu. The Oxford English Dictionary defines
representation as “presence” or “appearance.” But there is an implied visual
component to these primary definitions. Representation can be clear images, material
reproductions, performances and simulations, it can also be defined as the act of
placing or stating facts in order to influence or affect the action of others. This word
also has political connotations. Politicians are thought to “represent” a constituency.
They think they have the right to stand in the place of another. Above all the term has
a semiotics meaning. It means something is “standing for” something else. All these
various related definitions are all implicated in the public debates about
representation. Theorists interested in postcolonial studies, by closely examining
various forms of representations, visual, textual discovered the different ways that
these ‘images’ are implicated in power inequalities and the subordination of the
“subaltern.” Spivak (Baldonado-1996) makes a distinction between Vertretung and
Darstellung. The former she defines as dislocated and incoherent, "stepping in
someone's place... to tread in someone's shoes." According to this definition
representation is "political representation," or a speaking for the needs and desires of
somebody or something. The small peasant proprietors cannot represent themselves;
they must be represented. Their representative appears on the scene as their master, as
the sole authority, as an unrestricted governmental power that guards them from the
other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above Darstellung is
representation as re-presentation, "placing there." So representing is "proxy and
portrait”.

Spivak (P.G. Joshi-2003:98) talks about the dominant Indian reader and the reader from
the orthodox literary circle who favours the author’s authority and does not question
and challenge the “original vision” of the writer. These readers believe that the writer
has done her/his job conscientiously. They do not consider the fact that the writer may
not be totally aware. The dominant radical reader in the Anglo-US is another group reader, who homogenizes the Third World. They think everything happens in the context of nationalism and ethnicity. These readers are influenced by the radical literary pedagogy in the US and Britain. Spivak shows that the usual theoretical models are not adequate for the Third World text, because when we apply these theoretical models to a representative Third World text, it does not work.

First, Spivak is interested in feminist issues and she uses the tools of deconstruction and Marxist analysis to support her views. Combining both deconstruction and Marxist analysis she builds the concept of woman. She says “the possession of a tangible place of production in the womb situates the woman as an agent in any theory of production” (P.G. Joshi-2003:91). She (1999:11) argues that using deconstruction, Marxist analysis and feminist “synchronously” is a hard task. Especially because she does not aim to synthesize these sources but to preserve them, that’s why she brings the notion of “discontinuity.” She refuses to select one direction towards a “unification Church” which gives a global coherent solution. Not sticking strictly to disciplinary conventions of any particular theories does not mean that there is no coherence in Spivak’s works.

Spivak (Morton-2005) is criticized for using the Western poststructuralist theory of Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan because poststructuralist theory is related to European philosophy and culture, and lacks the ability to criticize the cultural, social, and economic conditions of the colonized. Poststructuralist theory arms her with a conceptual apparatus which gives her the ability to question the cultural and philosophical foundations of western imperialism. One result of this political
investment in poststructuralist theory is that Spivak does not always fall strictly into the codes and disciplinary conventions of a particular theoretical paradigm.

Spivak's strategy of interrupting deconstruction may seem to depart from more orthodox philosophical interpretations of Derrida's thought. Instead of discrediting Spivak's readings as errant or non-rigorous, it may be more productive to approach Spivak's inventive use of Derrida's thought as an exemplary case of deconstruction's usefulness outside the confines of academic philosophy. For example, Spivak's call for a "setting-to-work" or the application of deconstruction in the context of globalisation and development is shown by a series of critical interventions that extend and develop the political implications of deconstruction. In "Responsibility" (1994) Spivak combines a reading of Derrida's critique of Heidegger's complicity with German fascism in his Of Spirit with an account of the contemporary western intellectual's responsibility towards the World Bank's Flood Action Plan in Bangladesh. In A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Towards a History of Vanishing Present (1999), Spivak uses "a deconstructive politics of reading" to show the elimination of the poorest women in the global South in her argument in "contemporary postmodern culture." She, like Derrida, is interested in how truth is constructed rather than in exposing error. She feels that deconstructive investigation allows you to look at the way in which you are complicit with what you are normally opposing.

Postcolonial criticism generally pays attention to questions of identity for individual human subjects in relation to broader national histories and destinies. Spivak's work is of special interest because she has made the synchronized and contradictory factors of ethnicity, class and gender that made such identities her own "subject". She follows this
“predicament of the postcolonial intellectual” in a neo-colonized world in her own case and also in the texts of the Western or Indian traditions she examines. What she joins to her aspects of work is the strategy of “negotiating with the structures of violence” forced by Western liberalism in order to intervene, question and change the system from within. Using such a strategy shows how a label like “Third-World” or “Third-World Woman” demonstrates the desire of peoples in the “First World” for a manageable other, and how a master text of English literature requires an “other” to construct itself, while it does not itself know this need. In her essay “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” she analyzes the novels of Jane Eyre, Wide Sargasso Sea and Frankenstein. In Jane Eyre she sees an allegory of the general epistemic violence of imperialism. In the last section of Rhys’s Wide Sargasso Sea, where Rochester’s creole bride Antoinette is brought to England and imprisoned there as the renamed Bertha. Rhys makes Antoinette see her self as her Other. Brontë’s Bertha must play out her role, in the transformation of her “self” into the fictive Other and kill herself in the fire, and then Jane Eyre can become the feminist individualist heroine of British fiction (Selden, Widdowson-1993:193).

The critical work of Spivak (Morton-2005) on the Subaltern Studies historians is an example of the critical reviewing and “reconstruction of Marxism” in a post-colonial field. Spivak like South Asian historians Partha Chatterjee, Dipesh Chakrabaty, Shahid Amin, and David Hardiman believes that India’s national independence has failed to bring a social revolution for women, the working class, and the rural peasantry. And it is “the dominant discourse of elite nationalism that restricts the voice of subaltern groups”. Spivak’s use of deconstruction as a critical tool helps her to discover the inscriptions of subaltern resistance and agency in the dominant historical archives,
instead of repeating the elimination of subaltern groups from dominant nationalist history.

This view gives her the ability to look at literary texts from different angles and to describe them differently. In her essay *Explanation and Cultural Marginalia* (1979), she discusses Marxism, feminist and deconstructive theoretical texts and also talks about the private as feminine, the public as masculine spheres. Later she says that a feminist handling of the dichotomy would need a deconstructive reading. This kind of reading would show the interweaving of the private and the public. It is obvious that in deconstructive practice, the existing hierarchies are displaced. But they are not completely changed. She states both feminism and deconstruction share a common attitude towards the term marginality. Both suspect the centre of using its position to mask its repressive tendencies.

Spivak is also concerned with deconstructing the centre/margin binary. Through her debate she tries to enrich women's awareness. She points out how the centre creates division by inviting selected members from the margin to join it resulting in further marginalization of those who join the centre. They are further marginalized because their joining the centre is not really accepted, meaning they carry the label of belonging to the margin. This label results in a kind of psychological marginalization which is in some ways worse than being physically marginalized. In spite of the danger of such kinds of marginalization, Spivak's advises women to enter the centre, as in doing so they will be able to find out how politics marginalizes. She says a deconstructionist can become a shuttle and move between the centre and margin. As a result this movement becomes an indicator of displacement. Later on she mentions that it is not fair to give
much attention to the concept of metaphor margin, because it helps the centre to maintain its importance and keep its higher position in terms of margin. In this case "the concept of metaphor margin" works with the centre and not in opposition. She says instead of romanticizing the concept of metaphor margin we should omit it from the text.

I am beginning to think of the concept metaphor of margins more and more in terms of the history of margins: the place of interests for assertions rather than a shifting of the centre (P.G. Joshi-2003:92).

Spivak (Kilburn-1996) works on "un-learning our privilege as our loss." She says from the outside it looks complicated and also intellectual. Audrey Hepburn in Roman Holiday (Kilburn-1996) writes that privilege is also a kind of insularity that cuts off the privileged form certain kinds of "other" knowledge. Accordingly, one has to understand these limitations and overcome them in order to increase one's knowledge. The way to do this is to work on one's beliefs and prejudices and find out how they have become naturalized. Michael Kilburn (1996) says that any Zen master, or guitar teacher will tell you that real learning can only start when years of mental habits, bad posture and learning riffs the wrong way are undone or unlearned.

Spivak searches out psycho-biographies, regulative psycho-biographies to establish a constitution of the "sexed subject" that is outside the realm of psychoanalysis or counter-psychoanalysis. Spivak says "It seems to me that when one thinks about the question of women or women specifically as sexed subject either in terms of psychoanalysis or in terms of counter-psychoanalysis, what it leaves out is the constitution of women as sexed subject outside of the arena of psychoanalysis." Spivak shows how completely heterogeneous the field of the woman elsewhere is by focusing
on regulative psycho-biographies that are very culture-specific. Such an issue clarifies that the constitution of the sexed subject in terms of the discourse of castration was a thing that appeared through the imposition of imperialism; "so that the discourse of anti-psychoanalysis is in itself the working within a field which leaves out the constitution of the female subject elsewhere" (Spivak-1990:9).

Recently Spivak (Morton-2005) has refused to be called a postcolonial theorist. She has come to the view that postcolonial theory is concerned with the domination of past forms of colonialization, and so it cannot criticize the effect on more impoverished countries in the "global South" of the contemporary global economic domination and the structural adjustment policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

**Rajeswari Sunder Rajan**


Her debate on the relationship between women and the state in India recorded in her book *The Scandal of the State: Women Law, and Citizenship in Postcolonial India* (2003). She says, "Living in the nation today involves, also, living with the state" (2003:1). Citizenship is not about a formal relationship between the individual and the
state. According to a recent collection of essays on women and citizenship, it is necessary to move beyond the “liberal and political science” understanding of the “formal relationship” between the individual and the state. Citizenship is about a more total relationship, inflected identity, social positioning, cultural assumptions, institutional practices and a sense of belonging, and consequently should go beyond the formal relationship between the individual and the state.

Citizenship has been the domain of men for so long. Women’s identities and their lives have been excluded from or included within a purview of state-citizen relations. Women are important only in relation to cultural institutions in the area of family and community.

Nation-state formation is recently beginning to acknowledge the identitarian differences among its citizens instead of a lumping them together as a unity. This process is found within the frame of “multiculturalism” in relation to ethnic, religious, racial and other cultural minorities but we do not find the same situation in terms of gender. Women’s issues have a tendency to remain a mere item on the developmental agendas of postcolonial nations.

The gendering of citizenship shows the way the state constructs “women”—first, in terms of their difference from men by formulating laws and policies specific to them, and second, by differentiating among them. Women may be “different” in law and in policy as a result of having different religious identities, or in terms of categories of “good” and “bad” (housewives and prostitutes), normal, deviant (the “deviant” including the destitute, insane, mentally retarded, or criminal populations), working or
not working, child or adult. But at the same time the rights of “citizenship” drive women into equal and “same” identity with men and with other women, which is necessarily contradictory in its effect.

Many feminists talk about the state as a category to be investigated, while they consider the terms gender and woman as relatively stable. But how correct and useful is it to talk of women in relation to state when the identity of women is itself full of confusion and difficulties at all levels, conceptual, empirical, and political? There is the problem of women defined in binary opposition to men, a definition explained in terms of either lack, the negative (not-man), or of an “essentialized alterity”. These definitions are rejected by feminists because they overlook the social construction of gender identities and they build on a fixed and “unchanging oppositionality” between women and men.

The identity of women becomes more problematic by lines of thought from poststructuralist theories that try to destabilize the unitary and fixed man at the centre of Western metaphysics and history, showing him instead as an ensemble of subject-effects.

But women and minorities are suspicious of this theoretical move, produced when subjecthood is now being claimed by those categories of human beings previously denied it. (Sunder Rajan-2003:13)

Sunder Rajan’s response to this problem is to invoke some kind of essentialism to ground a feminist politics, but one that at the same time considers the differences among women.
An understanding of the state and women with regard to poststructuralism has potential for contemporary feminist political struggles that are more heterogeneous and contradictory than the single-issue agendas of earlier phases of the movement. For example the agenda in the work of Chantal Mouffe (Sunder Rajan-2003:15) encourages an anti-essentialist critique and an articulatory politics of radical democracy. Consequently women are not defined only by sexual difference, but in the domain of politics, and as far as citizenship is concerned, sexual difference cannot be a valid distinction. A radical democratic politics needs the replacement of communitarianism (a group defined by a single identity) by pluralism (the individual defined by multiple identity) as the subject of politics. It also needs an articulatory principle that would entail the construction of multiple points of unity and common action. Then feminist politics would no longer be a form of separate interest-group demands; then the following of feminist aims would take place within.

Issues of gender are central to post-colonial national culture and politics.

The sense of gender as a construction of the identities, roles and relations of people on the ground of sexual difference(s), is usefully consonant with an understanding of decolonization as initiating the historical process of new nation-state formation. (Sunder Rajan-2000:2)

In India the nation’s political and cultural meaning are not separable. The centrality of gender in such an analysis has to do with women’s role in the political process, their identity as citizen-subjects, their considerable legal entitlements, and their constitutional equality with men in the new nation-state. With such an approach gender quickly becomes an issue of crisis, problem, and scandal. The demographics of the female-male population ratio, women’s workforce participation levels, and levels of literacy and
health in 1974 that first showed in the *Towards Equality* report of the Government of India portrayed how women were faring poorly on all counts in independent India. There was little complacency once it became clear that violence against women was on the increase along with increases in the cases of rape in police custody, deaths inside the family, and sexual harassment at work and on the streets.

A women's place is defined in terms of her relations within the structures of family and community. Whenever they approach autonomy and freedom, they encounter resistance. During recent times in India, women become *national subjects.* The most important item of being a national subject is citizenship, which by its universal definition has to be offered justice and equality. In practice the state fails to follow its promises.

> Therefore the nation is a space that, while it may be expected to offer an alternative to women's absorption into family and community structures often simply functions in extension of them to define their "belonging" in a fashion identical to theirs. (Sunder Rajan-2000:5)

The terms of *female identity, subjectivity* and *agency* are often related to women's rights and their behaviour. In the context of citizenship, women figure as political subjects who ask for their rights. This is in direct opposition to their identity as family subjects. Sunder Rajan (2000) noted that the most fearful of the female subjects is the outlaw woman whose image is even more fearful than the subversive female subject who seeks her entitlements in law. The outlaw woman is the opposite of the passive victimized woman who represents Indian femininity, e.g. the film revenge story of "Bandit Queen" tells the case of Phoolan Devi who in 1981 killed twenty two Thakurs in Behmai Village to take revenge of their public sexual humiliation of her.
Modernity has never been the time of the present. It is in post-coloniality more than elsewhere. It is a complex historical and cultural situation which is defined by contrasting itself with the past, the traditional, and also the West. It is attached with different kinds of value as to what it represents. It is within cultural narratives that women are produced. In producing such women the power, the influence of feminine stereotypes and ideological scripts taken form religious Hindu mythic resources have to be taken under consideration, which are mediated in complex ways within a context of post-colonial modernity. Such models that come under the category of femininity shape the nature and behaviour of females. Modernity is the destiny and the narrative of the Brahmin male subject, even in the most liberal of perspectives. This is a project that leaves women and other castes out; who is considered simply as obstacles to the transition to modernity.

In current ideologies of the right, women are not denied a role in the time-space of the modern but a sufficient modernity is measured for them with variations in terms of class and caste differences. As the citizen of a modern nation-state, women inevitably are considered modern subjects. They become modern subjects in the global and national projects of development, in human rights discourse, and in the political arena. Such achievements counter traditional social norms and result from the changed conditions of the modern. When women become visible in the spaces of modernity they voluntarily take the risk of getting harassed.

Sunder Rajan (2000:8) suggests that to recognize and counter the problem of gendered difference and discrimination the meaning of “national” culture, the shift in the relations of gender and culture and the conflicts between women’s fixed, traditional, prescriptive
roles and their differently defined legal rights, their changing social roles within modernisations and their involvement with the political space of nation have to be defined.

Sunder Rajan (2000:330) in her paper, “The Story of Draupadi’s Disrobing: Meaning for Our Times”, which was presented at a conference on Women and Violence at the University of Pennsylvania in 1995 criticizes the ancient Sanskrit epic of Mahabharatha with the reference to gender issues and women’s right. Rajan tries to show this epic with its different plots, sub-plots and episodes in Indian cultural history. It is the text that functions as a resource for managing relations of power.

The phenomenon of that peculiarly Indian form of male sexual behaviour known as *eve-teasing* mostly happens in larger metropolitan cities and is increasingly becoming an aspect of small town and rural Indian life. Eve-teasing women, stripping and parading them in the public have its source in the aim of sexual humiliation of women resulting from misogyny and methods of social control.

In her paper she (2000:334) describes the disrobing scene in the second book of the Mahabharatha which narrates the struggle between two clans, the Kauravas and the Pandavas, for the possession of a kingdom. Draupadi is the joint wife of the five Pandava brothers. The Pandavas have already lost all their possessions in a gambling-match with the Kauravas. They are then persuaded to throw the dice the last time with Draupadi as the stake. The oldest brother throws the dice and loses. Draupadi is asked to come to the court. As a princess she was not supposed to appear in public and further she was menstruating and ritually impure. Hence, she refuses to come and sends a
message asking the gambler whether he lost himself first or her. Later she is dragged by
the hair and brought to the hall by one of the Kaurava’s brothers. In the court she again
asks whether Yudishtar, the oldest brother of Pandava, has the right to stake her if he
himself had already become a slave. Karna on the Kaurava side, orders her to be
stripped, because she was married against custom to five men; she may be considered
as a “whore”. But whatever the case may be, when her garments are pulled off,
miraculously more clothes appeared to clothe her. The blind old Kaurava king cries out
to stop this unjust action, and gives Draupadi three boons to compensate for the insult.
According to Sunder Rajan (2000:336) it’s not just her disrobing in public but the
barrier between the public and the private that defines the differences between
respectable and non-respectable women. Asking Draupadi to come to court is
trespassing into the private language of the female body.

Draupadi’s question was left unanswered. This is the feminist question over the sense of
men’s ownership of women in the patriarchy system according to Alf Hiltebeitel
(Sunder Rajan-2000:337). Iravati Karve says that Drupadi’s question was unacceptable.
She was standing there arguing about legal technicalities like a lady pundit while crying
out for decency and compassion in the name of the Kshatriya code for being in a
despicable condition. Iravati Karve points out that not only was Drupadi’s question
unanswered but her courage to speak out, especially in the assembly of men, was seen
in an unfavourable light. Karve notes that no matter what answer might have been
given, her position was desperate. Karve speaks with the bitter irony of a woman who
knows how women have to obey the rules. Functioning as a powerful verbal marker in
a public forum bestows authority upon the speaker. Drupadi can not claim the authority
of a prosecutor when at the same time she is criminal and victim of crime. Her question
is an example of women's inappropriate because of unaccustomed speech, the thing Sunder Rajan called it as "linguistic excess." By "Linguistic excess" Sunder Rajan means that when women are allowed to have access to public forums the exceptionality of this entry may produce confession, curse, polemic, diatribe, profession of faith, revelation and prophecy proliferate in existing accounts of, for example, women's court trials.

Though such 'speaking' does dignify 'truth', as lies, fantasies, desire and distortion do by other means than referentiality, they stand discredited when judged by the standards of strict veracity—and as a consequence the speakers often invite retribution by being subjected to containment, punishment and backlash. (Sunder Rajan-1993:88)

Janaky, Draupadi scholar (Sunder Rajan-2000:338) argues that by asking the question of slavery Draupadi shows the class and caste aspects of sexual oppression. When the Kauravas had already taken the kingdom of the Pandavas and made them their slaves, the disrobing of Draupadi was a huge insult that led to their moral defeat as Hildebeitel (Sunder Rajan-2000:338) says. This scene exemplifies the violation of women of a defeated territory, which is normally portrayed as the victor's crowning triumph. This story shows that patriarchy is not a monolithic, ideology without any chinks, but one that has its roots in legal, political and humanistic sources and that the upholders of this unpleasant system are men.

She (2000:340) then draws out the differences between eve-teasing, stripping and the rape of women. Eve-teasing and stripping happen in public places and mostly by a group of men, while rape happens in privacy. Eve-teasing is the harassment of women in public-verbally, physically or both. It may happen in a group or alone while the
women are normally alone. These phenomena have been taken seriously in situations where women’s chastity and their men’s honour are major values.

Attitudes to gender and modernity argue in “conflictual” ways. On the one hand there is a tendency in the contemporary analyses to blame modernity for its intrusion into established ways of life and on the other hand women’s rights is an important component of modernity. Stripping women naked and parading women in the village streets is a traditional punishment by men in village councils towards the women convicted of sexual offences such as adultery, elopement with a person of a different caste etc. A modern example of this action can be seen in the relation of upper-caste landowners to scheduled caste women with whom they have disputes in property, especially when the women are more vulnerable or more independent than others in their community, or even upon the men of the community for similar reasons. But disputes can emerge from a number of larger factors such as inadequate land reforms, ineffective enforcement of Minimum Wages Act, continuance of bonded labour, and the punishment of women in a familiar form of retaliation.

The story of Drupadi is not mentioned to legitimize these actions; it is presented in order to illustrate contemporary events in the Indian society and to show how cultural resources are selectively appropriated to mesh with the postcolonial nation-state’s requirements with the reference to the social control of women in the context of “modernity.”

CONCLUSION

Simone de Beauvoir, French feminist, takes the term “Otherness” and tries to elaborate the conditions of women accordingly. Betty Freidan the liberal American feminist talks
about middle-class woman who were not satisfied with their married lives though they had comfortable lives. In \textit{Feminist Mystic} she asks women to become like men while in \textit{The Second Sex} she suggests looking at the differences between men and women and minimizing the gap between them, till the time these two become androgynous human beings. She does not tell us how to remove these differences. She believes that women do not want equality and they don’t have enough self-confidence to move in a competitive society. She considers marriage and motherhood as the only way for women to achieve happiness. Luce Irigaray is a French psychoanalyst feminist and was the student of Lacan. She tries to show that all philosophers exclude women from their philosophy. Her areas of interest in feminism are the mother-daughter relationship and true sexual “difference” between women and men. Elaine Showalter, the American feminist and Victorian literature specialist, creates subdivisions of women’s literature from the Victorian period to modern writing. She uses the term gynocriticism. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the Anglo-American feminist, originally Indian, focuses on the gendered subaltern and through her essay “Can subaltern speak?” tries to clarify her position. Finally we considered an Indian feminist called Rajeswari Sunder Rajan. She analyzes women’s conditions in India from the perspectives of culture and nation, the relation between gender and culture, prescriptive roles, women’s defied legal rights and their changing social roles within modernization; she has done several case studies to elaborate the source of women subordination in India.

"Though Simone de Beauvoir is an existentialist and Showalter is a literary critic. Both believe collecting and recording and distributing women’s experience helps feminists explain women’s conditions and to achieve emancipation. Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, and Sunder Rajan all think that the problem of women is their lack of
subjectivity. De Beauvoir and Betty Friedan both argue that women's place in the world is in relation to men. They have no identity of their own. Irigaray and Showalter both discuss the difference between men and women in the use of language. They say that the basis of language is man who dominates their thinking and uses language as a tool to support his position. De Beauvoir and Showalter argue that a theory based on culture can explain women's conditions. Luce Irigaray suggestion is to bring about true sexual difference without hierarchy, but she does not give any practical solution.

Spivak, the postcolonial feminist takes the term subaltern and criticizes Subaltern Studies Group for not considering the existence of women in explaining the subaltern's conditions. She uses the term gendered subaltern to show the double exploitation of women. She proposes the deconstruction of the centre/margin binary opposite and reaches the conclusion that this binary opposite cannot be completely removed from society. She is also included among other feminists who do not give any practical suggestions in terms of changing the condition of women. The last writer, Sunder Rajan tries to explain the relation between modernity and tradition; and state and women. She suggests replacing communitarianism with a pluralism that brings about the construction of multiple points of unity and common action.