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INTRODUCTION
CHAPTER - I

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1.1 Background

Humanity recognizes no sex; mind recognizes no sex; life and death, pleasure and pain, happiness and misery recognizes no sex. Like man, woman comes involuntarily into existence, like him she has to pay the penalty for disobeying nature’s laws and for greater penalties she has to suffer from ignorance like men. She also enjoys or suffers with her country. Yet she is not recognized as his equal! (Ernestnine: 1881, 1).

Women have all the potentialities and abilities like men still they are not recognized as equal to men. From the beginning, it is said that the literature of a country is the storehouse of the political cultural and sociological aspects of the people. But from the male point of view, literature has been twisted. In India, one can notice that women are the victims of the political, economical and social oppressive forces which relegate them
to a subordinate position in the society. In the matter of sharing the available opportunity for fulfillment of their lives, they are often seen oppressed, suppressed and sometimes even marginalized. Equality is an impossible commodity for women though Indian women establish half of the population because all the superior and positive qualities are appropriate to men and the qualities associated with women are considered to be inferior. Woman is supposed to be an ideal wife, mother and an excellent home-maker with varied roles in the family, in a male dominated society. The qualities required for her as wife and mother are service, sacrifice, submissiveness and tolerance. She as an individual self has a very little recognition in the patriarchal society. Mary Ann Fergusson in her words said that:

... in every age women has been seen primarily as a mother, wife mistress and as sex object.
Their roles in relationship with men (Fergusson: 1973, 4-5).

In a famous shloka, the concept of an ideal wife is represented where she is described as ‘Priya’, ‘Grahini’, ‘Sakhi’, Mata, Shishyalalite, and Kala Vidhu. Thus in the family and the society, she has to perform many roles. As described in one of the shlokas, she is not only a wife but also a counselor, and the playmate to the partner.


In the above shlokas it is described that a woman should serve her husband as minister while counseling, by her appearance she should be as goddess Lakshmi, like the earth in forbearance, as a mother like feeding and in bed she must be like the divine beauty. Thus in many forms, she has to perform different duties. A woman is defined as goddess and divine mother even in great Indian Epics. She is portrayed as an ultimate example of patience, suffering and forbearance. The Hindu woman, for centuries has regarded and
represented the mythic models from the Ramayana, the Mahabharat and other Purana Shastras. She is dependent for her status and survival upon man, at every stage of her life. The man-made culture feels that the goal of the life of a woman is to worship her husband. There are deities too who represent power (Shakti), knowledge (Saraswati), wealth (Lakshmi). But these aspects seems to have faded away, for women have totally lost the power by their constant use and help in effective role.

From time to time women status in Indian society has changed. In *The History of Civilization in Ancient India* (1972) Romesh Chandra Dutt opines that woman, during the Vedic period, was the greatest symbol of Hindu womanhood. He further describes:

**Women were honoured in ancient India, more perhaps than among any other ancient nation on the face of the globe. They were considered the intellectual companions of their husbands… affectionate helpmate in journey of life, and … inseparable partners in their religious duties** (Dutt : 1972, 67).

Before India’s independence, the first generation women writers depicted women who were traditional in outlooks. The writers of this time wrote mainly to voice their concern for the suffering souls- i.e. women of India. In their writings, one can notice that there was no anger irritation or tension because they did not oppose the position of women decided by age old traditions and interdictions. But the women writers in the post-independence period are more realistic in their approach than those of the first generation writers. They search for possibilities of social situations where women can easily attain distinctive identity and fulfillment without shattering or destroying the family community. These women writers have created a deep response and emotional richness in the Indian novel throughout their concentration on women’s side of the life story. K. Sachidanand in his article - *Women’s Writing: Contemporary Trends* writes:
The novels by the women present the awareness of the micro political in the society, analyze and expose the tactics used by patriarchy to alienate, control and marginalize women (Sachidanandan: 2000, 6-7).

Thus, the prime feature of women writers in literature in the second generation women writers have been the search for identity and a quest to lay down and explain the meaning of the self. Their contribution to English literature in general and fiction in particular is worth observing and praise worthy. Leading women writers like Kamala Markandya, Ruth Prawer Jhabwala, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, Geeta Mehta, Manju Kapoor and many more have left their remarkable imprint on the readers mind. The Indian women novelists clearly and distinctly presents the woman’s high ambitions and aspirations, her professional attempts, her newly formed relationship presented in various ways of opposing force of resistance of patriarchal norms. Depending upon the individual writers position, and to a varying degree, these novelists thematized the useful convenience of self-representation, opposed against the barriers of women’s lives and emphasized on the power of resisting. Now, without hesitation, women began to voice their desires and feelings. As Meena Shirwadkar asserts:

As women received education, they began to feel an increasing urge to voice their feelings. The awareness of individuality, the sense of compatibility with their tradition bound surrounding resentment of male dominated ideas of morality and behaviour problems at home and at place of work or in society – all came up in a welter of projection (Shirwadkar: 1979, 201).
1.2 Feminist Theory

Feminism is based on the high evaluation as human beings and rejects the assignment of roles based on gender. Women’s studies are the academic quest of feminism. It is supported by feminist and arms us with knowledge. Since the late 1960s women's studies have grown in American College Campuses. New feminist scholarships from various disciplines are built on to create new concepts and theories as a collective effort. Feminism has been defined as a set of believing, values, and attitudes centered on the high moral values of women as human beings. Women are not valued for attributes on us by others, but for those that, exists and are chosen by women. Women reject negative cultural images and affirm their strength capability and intelligence. Women value autonomy and works for the condition that favour our independent control of our destinies. As feminists, we reject the assignments of social rules with their interlinked qualities according to a person male or female. We reject evaluation based on masculine qualities such as aggression, and denigrate presumably ‘feminine’ qualities like compassion. The discriminatory laws and customs have oppressed women for centuries, and this oppression is disgraceful and harmful to all human beings and through our persistence and collective effort we can change for the better.

Feminism may differ in their immediate goals. In addition, the direction in which they chose to focus their energies for change. For some the focus of feminism is on individual change and self-fulfillment whereas for others the core of feminism lies in collective efforts and shared goals. Feminists disagree about whether equality and freedom for women can occur in society as is currently structured or whether a radical change in the social structure is required. Whichever position we take feminists still gain strength through mutual support and collective efforts. Feminism then represents an intellectual, ethical and political position that can be exposed by women or men. Women’s studies can be understood as the academic manifestation of feminism. It is an outgrowth of a realization that we know little, about women and its purpose is to enlighten the ignorant with knowledge. Feminism is an ideology. The ideology of feminism is women are equal to men in every aspect and there cannot be a superiority or inferiority kind of relation between men and women. It was a movement started in the 20th century to fight for the rights of women.
It is not against men, but is against those social institutions which treat women in humanly and consider them as second grade citizens.

Feminism is the persuasion that all people should be treated equally heedless of religion, gender and sexes. It also includes the idea that a person’s gender does not define his/her value and who he/she is. Being a woman or a man should not put a person at an overall disadvantage. It is based on the high evaluation of women as human beings and rejects the assignment of roles based on gender. Women’s studies are the academic manifestation of feminism, and receive support from feminist and arms us with knowledge.

In 1970’s Feminists realized that equal rights alone could not free women from sexual and social subordination. In spite of the laws, the personal freedom continues to affect the lives of women such as domestic domination, physical abuse, sexual harassment, economic expression, etc. As Vimla Patil observes:

Women in India have changed at a faster rate than women anywhere else in the world and their ‘attitude’ has changed the very face of our society (Patil: 2002, 25).

In order to take their rightful place in the world, the feminist seeks to redress the imbalance in the society by providing the women with the same rights and opportunities as men. The basic premise of feminism is that women at present have lower status than men. They are discriminated socially, economically and politically, and this state of affairs must change. Liberal feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, John Stuart Mill and Betty Friedan calls for equalization of women and men in all the realms of political, economic and social activity. The liberal tradition should be seen to imply that women have an equal right to as much education as men, to nurture an occupation that is as fulfilling to hold, public office to choose to have or not to have children, and to be a parent with some leisure for further self-development. To give equal opportunity a reality, special efforts of affirmative action to open up opportunities for women will have to be made. The liberal tradition offers the
basis on which freedom and equality might be developed, so that women also can enjoy the individual right to which ‘all men’ have long been entitled.

The conservatives have often claimed to be concerned about many aspects of life important to women. Traditionally, they have upheld ties of family and friendship against the more calculated and competitive relations advocated by traditional liberalism. They have understood the emotional values of ethnic traditions and role of habits, of disciplines or responsibility. In some aspects, the sentiments of the feminist are parallel to those of the liberals. Feminists understand the importance of family relations, although, we have different perspectives of what constitutes a family. The conservative feminists Sarah Palin, Margaret Fuller, and Katherine Kersten have so far shown no inclination to transform their views in a way that is compatible with feminism. The traditional values the conservatives try to uphold include that of the place of women, in the home, as wife and mother, extending emotional support of a husband who supports her economically.

Socialist feminism seeks to analyze the subordination of women as linked with the other forms of oppression and attempt, to unite the fight for socialism with that of women’s liberation. The family and economy are an inseparable institution. Many feminists look at the socialist tradition as the most satisfactory source of ideas for a women’s movement that will improve the society. The feminist fears that liberalism will merely promote and even more generalized pursuit of self-interest that already exists.

Socialist feminist fears that too many of the women who taste success in the liberal capitalist system will learn to scramble for self-advancement in the corporate hierarchy striving for profits regardless of the good of society, just as men do. And too many other women will be simply left out, especially the third world country and minority women. The feminist claims that liberalism has never paid enough attention to the economy and political issues. Women could gain all sorts of legal rights such as the right to vote, the right to equal admission to professional schools, the right to join certain clubs and even the right to abortion and still be left in a condition of economic dependency, thoroughly damaging our self-respect and our efforts to win liberation. The lack of awareness among the traditional Marxist of the views and the problems of women has resulted in the
development of a socialist feminist position. This has been one of the leading positions among western feminist concerned with the formulation and expression of feminist theory.

Sheila Row Botham and Juliet Mitchell argue that many transformations of the economy called for by socialist are necessary before women confined primarily to the lower paying and least secured jobs can begin to gain real social independence. Many socialist feminists hold that specific demand made by them will need to be met before the society can benefit to provide what women need. All feminists can join the socialists in demanding publicly funded child care and medical care, decent housing for all and no exploitative jobs for all those who can work. Some socialists also recognize that traditional socialism has failed to understand the specific ways in which the women are oppressed as women and not merely workers. Socialist feminist emphasize the traditional gender division of labour within the family as well as outside it will have to disappear. Men will have to learn to have as much regard for women as they have for each other, and that feminist alternatives such as women centered communities and lesbian families will have to be recognized as legitimate.

In Radical feminism, sexual oppression is primary and it aims at changing all oppressive social institutions. In India, in the 70’s and the early 80’s, the autonomous women’s movement has been influenced by the radical feminist perspectives. The USA is mainly a pragmatic society and their political and economic development show radical and pragmatic ideology. They thought that equality of men and women as their natural right. According to Radical feminism, whatever separation of sexes is done, it is mainly because of man-made complexities and misunderstanding. If there exists a problem of female discrimination it has to be removed from its roots. In the economic and social development of the country, the Radical feminists gave importance to both men and women. Without any discrimination,
individual roles should be assigned. One of the thinker of American feminism was Miss Emma Goldman. She was born in Russia in 1869 and migrated to New York. She was associated with socialism in Russia as well as pragmatism in America (Ed., Crow: 2000, 236).

For the Radical feminist, Patriarchy is a historical fact rooted in biology. Today, the biological limitations are overcome by the technical developments. The Patriarchal society is a male dominated society. The norms and the values do not permit sexual equality, therefore Radical feminist envisage a revolution which will restructure the society afresh. The feminist feels that oppression of women is based on the belief of gender differences. Women should first free themselves from the sexist notion, which is imbibed in them. They should fight the male dominated institution and values. The alternative is not matriarchy. By abolishing the gender differences the men will also benefit and there will be a better understanding society with good human relations. They will work and live in a non-sexist and non-oppressive society. The Marxist feminist sees women’s struggle as part of a large class struggle against an exploitative capitalist system. Many left oriented women’s organization in India has used Marxist class frame work or analyzing women’s oppression. The Marxist emphasized that the fight of women against men is not a class struggle, but against the capitalist system and social relation of male dominance. And once private property is abolished the exploitation and oppression of women will automatically disappear. Domination of women by men is intimately connected with capitalism, because Patriarchy and capitalism are mutually supportive. Thus, feminism as a movement of women’s emancipation can be successful when societies are achieving all types of equality between two sexes. Freedom and equality in the field of social, moral, economic and political can be a reality when women are educated and accepted by dominant will of the society. In order to sustain freedom and equality, discrimination and subordination should be eradicated. Mutual understanding is the most important base of women’s emancipation.

From the day when man, refusing to recognize the efflorescence of life and establishing the ideals to his own convenience instead, and following those ideals tried to
create the woman, seeds of rebellion where sown in the 
heart of woman since then……Since that day when she 
is denied the true potential of womanhood she has also 
been denying man his complete manhood, as a form of 
revenge. Rabindranath Tagore (Chaturanga: 2005, 5-6).

Rabindranath Tagore was worshipped as a poet, writer, playwright composer by 
millions. He was also influenced by fascinating women who were part of his life. He 
created a lot of vibrant energy for women. He believed in women empowerment. A lot of 
intelligent ideas were portrayed by Tagore. In his hands women are complex character, 
who fall and fail under the iron hand of traditions. Their sensitiveness, thoroughly modern 
were strained under the triple weight of Poverty, Patriarchy and Colonialism. In his fiction, 
women were depicted in various ways. The functioning of the society, in those prevailing 
time were social injustice, was a norm and oppression of them was a custom. In those days 
Rabindranath’s creativities portrayed right from the Beggar Girl (1877) to his final work 
Bad Name (1941), the reader discovers women’s potentialities through his characters. The 
portrayal of women’s personality alters with each plot and sub plot and thus leads to 
awareness in the social realm. In his early period 1881-1897, his women are victims of 
injustice where they are confronted with the harsh realities of life in rural surroundings. He 
suggested that women needn’t be passive and should take up the cudgel against their 
pressured.

In the second period of his writing from 1893 to 1913, it can be witnessed that his 
portrayal of urban and educated women as a new force in the society and pleads for human 
rights. The widows at the time of Tagore struggled with their own passion and unfulfilled 
desire for love, ignored social norms and conventions. The woman does not hesitate to 
raise her voice against the ills of society like untouchability, the caste system, the religious 
hypocrisy and demands for higher education and a professional career.

The colonial ideology worked on the pressure of moral superiority in India. The 
colonial administration brought up a number of legislations within its agenda of social 
reformation, with a name of reforming social conditions of the women in the India. During
the second half of the nineteenth century, the widow remarriage of 1856 was followed by 1874 right to the property act, giving a widow a life interest in her husband’s share of property, and the age of consent bill of 1891 which raised the legal age for sexual intercourse from 10 to 12 for girls.

Raja Ram Mohan Roy born on 22nd May 1772, was an Indian religious, social and educational reformer and humanitarian. Under the British rule, he challenged the traditional Hindu culture and indicated the lines of progress for Indian society. He is also called as ‘Maker of Modern India’ and ‘Father of Modern India’. Ram Mohan Roy is also regarded as the ‘Father of Bengal Renaissance’. In the early Nineteenth century, along with Dwarkanath Tagore and other prominent Bengalis, he founded the Brahmo Samaj in 1828. During the Bengal Renaissance, the movement Brahmo Samaj came into existence. He was an apparent influential figure in the fields of politics, public administration, education as well as religion. Rabindranath Tagore described him as the Father of Indian Renaissance and the ‘Prophet of Indian Nationalism’. The religious reforms of Roy contained beliefs of Brahmo Samaj as Brahmos believed in the existence of One Supreme God and worship him alone. They also believe that worship of Him needs no fixed place or time.

In 1828, Roy set up the Brahmo Sabha which was a movement of Reformist formed to fight against social evils. He also demanded property inheritance rights for women. His political background influenced the social and religious approach to reforms of Hinduism. His experience working with the British government taught him that Hindu traditions were often not respected or considered to be credible by Western standards, this affected his religious reforms. By implementing humanitarian practices, Roy’s ideas of religion sought to create a fair and just society and thus legalize Hinduism in the modern world. He is remembered for bringing women reform laws, especially law banning Sati practice. He was stirred by loss of his sister-in-law, who became sati. In 1818, some Hindus objected to guideline restricting Sati but Roy produced a counter petition requesting the Government to pass a law banning sati practice. He started a campaign against sati practice, risking his own life, in which he was supported by Devendra Nath Tagore. Under the British law, Roy appealed to William Bentick to pass a law banning Sati practice and his appeal bore fruit and this practice was banned on 1829.
The Indian thinkers who wanted the women to be equal as men struggled against the institution and customs which contradicted the democratic principles of equality. They demanded democratization of social institutions and removal of unjust practices not in the name of liberal philosophy, but on the basis of programs of Vedic society in modern India. The educated liberal Indians are recognized as the reformers who had viewed the western liberal culture and hence invoked liberal principles as individual liberty, equality of human beings irrespective of sex and other distinctions. In a message to All India Women’s Conference in 1936, Mahatma Gandhi gave to the issue of the women’s freedom and strength in the struggle to build a humane and an exploitation free society. He saw women not as objects of reform and humanitarianism, but as self-conscious subjects, who could, if they choose to become arbiters of their own destiny. Gandhi says “it is good to swim in the water of tradition, but to sink in them is suicide”. He made use of the traditional Indian symbol – Sita, Damayanti, and Draupadi – the three ideals of Indian womanhood to convey a contemporary socio-political message. Women should not consider themselves ‘abalas’ but rather to be like Draupadi a symbol of ‘robust independence’ who could bend even the mighty Bhima himself to her imperious will.

Gandhiji brought some radical changes in women’s life which would have been otherwise very difficult to bring in society which accepted reforms at a very slow rate. Never before was a woman as strong or powerful as during the freedom struggle of India. To a great extend the reason for this was Gandhiji’s attitude toward women. He did not want her to be weak and helpless in any way. His constant message to women was that they can also become Rani of Jhansi’s they could emulate like Sita whom even the mighty Ravana dare not touch and courage was not the monopoly of men.

In Gandhi’s view, one of the glaring abuses of Indian womanhood was the custom of child marriage, which is an evil related to childhood and to give it a religious sanction to be a brutal custom. And by countenancing it “we recede from ‘God’ as well as swaraj”. To him the question of women’s oppression was linked to social and national health. Gandhiji also believed that women should have the freedom to remarry just as men have ordained perpetual widow had for women and conferred on themselves the right to remarry on the cremation ground itself. He believed that a wife had the right to live separately if
her husband was unjust. He criticized the dowry system and preferred girls to remain unmarried than to be humiliated and dishonored by marrying men who demanded dowry. He saw education as the most important means for enabling women to exercise their natural rights, so reading and writing is a must. To deprive women of their equal rights on the grounds of illiteracy is unjustifiable. In Gandhi’s view Sita is the ideal embodiment of womanhood.

He asked the Indian women to rise above wifehood and become ‘sisters’. ‘A sister is such to the entire world, while a wife hands herself over to a man. Wifehood is needed, but as not to be cultivated as it includes the possibility of satisfaction of passion’. He grieved that our women ‘know how to be wives, not sisters’. It was possible to become the world’s sister only by making “Brahmacharya, a natural condition and being ‘fired by the spirit of service, and become ‘sisters of mercy’ by serving the poor and unfortunate. He asked them to relate the movement for their own emancipation and that of all the oppressed people to make common cause with them, directly linking women’s aspiration with the national aspiration there by giving the movement a wider perspective and a greater legitimacy. He did not see marriage and motherhood as the only mission for every young Indian woman. To remain unmarried for a noble cause of serving society was more preferable ideal for self-realization.

Gandhi created a favourable atmosphere for women in politics and public life. He gave them an equal opportunity of leadership which was a very good thing done by him. A plain ignorant Gujarati women, Gangaben was raised to the status of a fellow worker who was a pioneer in a new era, through her miniature craft industry. Gandhiji spotted her for her alertness and Independence and who became the organizer of the khadi movement in India. Gandhiji followed an ideal of all the women such as Kamaladevi, Meerabahen, Vijaylakshmi Pandit and Sarojini Naidu. In response to this he had a devotion for his purposes. Gandhi’s view about women and their role in society are not very different from those of the 19th century reformers, but the only difference is that he does not see women as objects of reform as helpless creatures deserving charitable concern. He views them as active self-conscious agents of social change.
Shri D.K. Karve is an outstanding social reformer of Maharashtra. His contribution in transforming the life of Indian women on a higher level is outstanding and unique. He started a Mahila Vidhyalaya in the year 1907. He wanted to educate the girls and the widows. But his grandest achievements were the famous creation of Karve Women’s University. The courses for study drawn up for the widows with an idea to make them self-reliant. The aim of education in the Mahila Vidyalaya was not only to prepare them for education, but also to be a good wife, good mother and good neighbors. Karve’s work has a great historical significance in the movement of liberation of Indian women. It is his extensive successful work for the widows, which brought a change in the attitude towards the widow. His scheme of education for women, though based on a one sided approach of their sphere of activity, the gates of education for a number of women opened up. He guaranteed the continuity of the process of education of women by not only creating a school but a well ramified university. Once he described himself as a madman’ because he felt inspired by a single dominant idea ‘the cause of the women’. Karve, the great social reformer made a simple beginning in the field of social work when he read the newspaper to illiterate villagers by establishing a women’s university to dispel ignorance of thousands of women was the glorious climax of that modestly begun work.

Ram Manohar Lohia was another socialist leader and an exceptionally talented person, was deeply influenced by Karl Marx and Gandhi’s concept of satyagraha. He believed that inequality between have and have not’s to be resolved through a non-violent men. He was against huge massive machineries for production as in Western Countries; this can be done by employing more hands thereby providing jobs for millions. More than half of the population is of women. He lamented at their pathetic condition. Cooking food, bearing children and being a slave to her husband is not a woman’s destiny. They should be treated equal to man not only on paper but in its true spirit. The latent talent of women brought out to limelight society does not progress as long as women remain oppressed. The society must be rid of the deep rooted beliefs and old practices. Every woman must be given justice according to Lohia the emancipation of women ‘was the foundation of the social revolution, without this there can be no prosperity’.
Jyotirao Phule was a great social reformer who fought for the rights of women and down trodden throughout his life. He rebelled against the caste system and untouchability. He threw open the water tank in his house for people who were considered untouchables. He opened a school for women and the down-trodden. He educated his wife Savitribai and asked her to teach girls of his school. Savitribhai Phule was the first Indian female teacher. He was a staunch critic of the unjust treatment meted out to the farmers. He spent his entire life in fighting for the rights of women and the downtrodden. Jyotirao stood for the dignity of man, religious tolerance and human rights. He was known as the champion of female education and of lower caste people all over Maharashtra. His life is an inspiration to those who really aim at achieving emotional integration and at giving a human, social and economic content to the Swaraj of India. According to Phule if women were educated the home could become a school where the educated mother could teach her children. The school set up by Phule gradually made progress. He and his wife taught or served without any remuneration.

After the setting up of the educational institution for women his attention focused on the issue of widow remarriage. Those were the days when sati, infanticide of girls and widow burning were rampant. Even though liberated from self-immolation on the funeral pyre of her husband, the widowhood stared at them from a young age. Jyotirao proclaimed in modern India the dawn of a new age for the common man the down trodden and the Indian women. He finds among men and women, women are the superior sex, one can repay everyone’s debt, but never that of the mother who gives birth. A home is not a home without a woman in it, a woman is selflessly looking after everyone.

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was born on April 14, 1891 in Mbrow, Madhya Pradesh. He was born untouchable and suffered right from the childhood, school and workplace. Even when he became a barrister he was looked upon as an untouchable and no other fellow barrister even had a tea with him. He grew famous among the poor and the downtrodden. He was one of the greatest thinkers and visualized a casteless India. He wanted to get rid of the Chaturvarna which is the root cause of all inequality. In 1924, he established an organization ‘Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha’ for the upliftment of untouchables in a non-violent way. Dalit women are the most discriminated person in a society dominated by case
heirarchy and patriarchy. Women are subjected to the most extreme forms of violence, discrimination and exploitation even at the hands of women of the upper caste. Whenever upper caste metes out violence upon Dalits, women bear the brunt of the violence and brutality, including rape, mutilation, molestation and disrobing. Dr. Ambedkar played a major role in the Dalit women's movement. He reminded them of their importance in the community development as mother or wives. He also involved women in his struggles and tended to give them unguarded positions. Dr. Ambedkar asked women to be good mother so as to shape up their sons or to be good wives to their husbands. He struggled for women’s liberalization system. In 1942, at the conference of the Depressed classes Women in Nagpur, he stated: ‘let every girl who marries stand by her husband, claim to be her, husband’s friend and equal and refuse to be his slave.

A feminist psychologist Juliet Mitchell uses the word Patriarchy to refer to kinship systems in which men exchange women, and to the symbolic power that fathers exercise within these systems. This power she says is responsible for the ‘inferiorized’ psychology of women. Lack of control over private assets compels women to endure violence in marriage. Even where they have legal rights to inherit, they do not get actual control due to a whole array of customary practices, social sanctions, and sometimes even plain violence. Patriarchal ideology creates an intra-household division of labour and the burden of household and its subsistence fall on them as if it is natural. Sylvia Walby calls it as a ‘Patriarchal mode of production’. Women’s labor is an ex-appropriated by their husbands and the others who resides there Sylvia calls housewives as the production class and husbands as the expropriating class, their back breaking endless and repetitive labor is not at all considered as work because housewives are seen to be dependent on their husbands. Outside the home, she can’t take up productive work, but when the financial condition worsens it is the women’s labor which comes to the rescue of household. The ideology of patriarchy has served to reinforce the popular stereotype of the male breadwinner as reality does not bear this out.

The problem of inequality between the sexes was highlighted by Mary Wollstonecraft who in The Vindication of the rights of Woman (1875) later titled Thought on the Education on Daughters appealed for the equality of opportunities for women based
upon the equality of values. She was one of the first English women to write eloquently and angrily about the rights of women and the wrongs they often experience. According to her, education can make women strong and give them the sense of discrimination and judgment. Her Vindication remains a classic of feminist theory, in which women remain enslaved because of a corrupt process of socialization and thus teaches them that their purpose in life is to serve men. She particularly practiced and exercised over the empty, foolish and silly lives that upper-class leisured women were encouraged to lead.

She is conscious that women must develop and improve their beauty and their senses at the age of their minds, because their only means of establishing themselves economically and of obtaining a measure of power is by attracting a husband. The most important single item that Wollstonecraft believes on the feminist agenda is that proper education and proper training in critical thinking. The two-fold benefit that Wollstonecraft projects is to enable women to think clearly and sensibly about their own situation, which will make them less deceivable and less likely to forget their own self-interest and to become slavish prostitute. The second fold benefits projects on the improvement of women’s power of critical thinking which enables them to develop and grow their souls spiritually. She also shares the Enlightenment faiths in individualism in which one of the benefits of critical thinking for women is that it will facilitate their self-determination. And thus it will enable them to think for themselves who they want to be, to control their lives. She too believed in the dignity of work.

Thus, Marry Wollstonecraft who was having a power of reasoning and a stoic firmly believed that critical thinking can liberate the individual from the mindless repetition of mere physical existence, and that proper education could liberate women from subjugation to their stipulated role of serving men. She strongly believed in the effective quality of critical thinking. She declared strongly that women’s natural rights had been refused them by men, and debated that women and men were principles and belief and intellectual equals.

Few feminists perceive sexuality as a result of Patriarchy. The men within the family have the greatest control over women because of their reproductive capacity. They
believe that women are controlled and oppressed by men. The family is the primary source of affirmation for women rejection by them means isolation and therefore women is unable to and unwilling to assert themselves. Motherhood is not a personal aspiration, but a means of social recognition. In the case of the upper caste, women’s sexuality is controlled by the patriarchy. Women are perceived and are in actual fact, gateways through which caste purity can be threatened so, upper-caste men have greater interest in the preservation of a system which was highly in favor of them. Hence upper-caste women were subjected to tight sexual control over women’s sexuality directly manifests itself in the control of their physical mobility whereas lower caste has little choice but to send their women to work and relax norms for sexual chastity. The control over women’s mobility is maximum during the childbearing ages and older women enjoy a greater degree of freedom of movement. In both rural and urban areas, women’s mobility is restricted due to the purdah system and various other controls. Probably the most decisive factor that can record the power relation between men and women in the public arena is the entry of women into the political sphere. Women have to deal a lot of criticism and ridicule, if they have managed to hold political positions. From the stone-age to the present time it is believed that man is born superior because of his greater physical strength, he becomes provider while women reproduce and re engaged in nurturing and mothering. Hence, they require protection, thus they are dependent on men.

One is not born as a woman,

One becomes one (Beauviou: 1973, 301).

For a woman in the conservative society the home has been considered the only activity where she is supposed to find satisfaction in performing her duties in varied roles such as mother, sister, daughter and daughter-in-law. It is considered to be wrong for her to desire to go beyond the limits of home, as it is her place or duty. Therefore the home is really an interior space for a woman and a persona in itself. The threshold restricts a woman’s physical and mental word and this marks her boundaries. Indian culture and heritage, as far as women are concerned, the quest for identity, individualism, protests and concepts of rebelliousness have often remained alien ideas. Women are not supposed to
raise their voices against injustice or customs, rituals and superstitions and for their rights. Women have to merely exist in the patriarchal system. They have to be obedient, submissive, quiet and passive, not claiming any of their rights not only as women but also as a human being.

In each and every discipline of knowledge Indian woman is the embodiment of love and affection, hope and patience from time, beyond the reach of memory, immemorial. Manju Kapur has left her permanent, indelible imprint on the pages of history – an imprint which is covered, suffused with such a powerful and beautiful color which cannot be erased, deleted, expunged, effaced, blotted out and darkened, obscured by Time. She tried her best to deal with, apart from many other things, the pathetic condition or state of forsaken women who are fated to suffer from birth to death. Manju Kapur’s protagonists have to suffer insult and abuse, tyranny and injustice without any rhyme and reason in this male-dominated societal framework. The answer is clearly sought in the religious scriptures The Bible, Its says:

Then the Lord God made the man fall into deep sleep, and while he was sleeping, he took out one of the man’s ribs and closed up the flesh. He formed a woman out of the rib and brought her to him (The Holy Bible, Verse 21, 5).

And this even at the very onset of the creation contains the germ of disparity between Man and Woman. Man boasts and brags, domineers and dominates over the woman only because the woman has come out from a man, she is one of the ribs of man. The social stature in Hindu religion is not certain, sometimes upgraded and sometimes degraded.

When the Indians came in vital contact with the British in the latter half of the Eighteenth century, the position of the Indian woman had reached the maximum degree of deterioration. Ideologically woman was considered a completely inferior species, inferior
to the male, having no significance, no personality; socially she was kept in a state of utter
subjugation, denied of any right, suppressed and oppressed.

The most important institutions as far as woman’s life is concerned are marriage
and family. The type of marriage and the family organization, and the mode of descent
create a social-cultural setting in which woman lives their lives. Therefore, the status of
woman is very much dependent on these institutions. She has no religious status and
property rights. She is married very young, very often a child, she has to go to a household
where her value is limited for child bearing and household work. Moreover, she is the
victim of family rights and conflicts generally generated by the elderly women folk of the
family. Maintaining the house and bearing and rearing children is the primary duties of
women. They never went out, except to the village temples on occasion or for pilgrimage
in old age. If her husband is away or if she becomes a widow, she has to continue to live
with husband’s family and serve its members.

Thus, not only social institutions and customs thwarted the free growth of her
personality, but the prevailing ideology also assigned the Indian women an inferior status.
She is denied independent personality. Her life, as Manu says, is to be associated with and
subordinated to either the father, the husband or the son. In fact, she has no personality of
her own. She has no dreams of her own. She has no separate status as a member of the
family or society. Her existence is taken for granted. Her opinion, her desires, her likes or
dislikes is never to be considered. In short, the prevailing conception of woman is,
basically, feudal in character. The daughter is considered by the father as a burden to be
disposed of as quickly as possible through her marriage. For her husband, she is an object
of having male children. She is further regarded unfit for participation in social, political
or religious function of any significance. She is not even worthy of receiving education.
She is a slave. The Indian woman on the eves of the British rule, had not only lost her
independence, but her sense and urge for freedom and consciousness of independent
personality.

Slowly during British period all the family relationship underwent changes.
Women took to education and gradually she gained authority. But the traditional outlook
persisted. The majority of the women took the old concept of subordination as natural. Women came to view themselves as citizens and independent of men. Women also began to have their own aspirations and dreams. The woman is recognized as socially equal of man the old institutions like caste patriarchal family, religious mores and dominant social value systems still reign with considerable vigor. All these institutions and ideologies are surcharged with the spirit of male dominance.

Indian society is essentially a male dominated society, in which the ascribed status of women has been very low. Even the educational achievements and economic independence, she continues to be subservient to man in almost all fields, though, constitutionally no discrimination can be made against her and there are several legislation to protect her. All the fundamental rights contained in part III Articles 12 to 35 are applicable to all the citizens irrespective of sex; certain fundamental rights contain specific and positive provisions to protect the rights of women. Most of the Indian women are not conscious of their low status and those who are aware of it are mostly helpless because of our social structure and cultural values. In free India women are still bound by customs, traditions - economic and socials, caste, community, religion all play important roles to keep their low status. The level of oppression of women may vary from group to group, but in general everywhere women are exploited. Thus, exploitation of women is a socially accepted phenomenon and women hardly think of rebelling against it. Husbands cannot accept their wives earning more than themselves. Man is not only the head of the family, but also of the society. Men are controllers at home, but even outside, they do not like to work under women bosses though these prejudices are changing, the rate of change is so slow that women under these circumstances are mentally and emotionally suffering a great deal.

In the past women and men have studied women from a male perspective only, that is because, all theories about human beings, our nature and our behavior have been ‘man’ made. Everyone is aware that men and women are different. But behind this notion lies certain uneasiness: How different are they? What does it have for the male and female behavior treated in the society? Women’s status in India can be discussed by studying the various roles they are playing, rights and opportunities provided to them by the state and
the social cultural institution. It is very difficult to predict the status of women because some say that they enjoy a very high status in India, and at time enjoy a very low status. There is a sharp difference of opinion about the position of women in the family and the changes taking place.

During the Pre-British period, the position of Indian women deteriorated increasingly. In this phase, women sometimes considered as the Goddess and at another time as slaves but never as a human being. During the Vedic period, father was the head of the family and hence it was patriarchal. The birth of a son was essential in this period and the birth of a daughter was looked upon as a disfavour. But once born the daughter was entitled to avail all the privileges given to a male child. Within the framework of the patriarchal society, the position of women as a whole was high. Regarding the post Vedic period, Manu assigns the Brahmins with new privileges, deprecates the Shudras and women with inferior status. The Manva code describes that wife should tender implicit obedience towards her husband even though he may be virtue less (unworthy), seeks the pleasures outside and beats her. According to Manu she is a tool of collection and an expenditure of his wealth, in keeping everything lean, religious duty, in cooking food and looking after the domestic duties. A wife, a son and a slave these three are declared to have no property, the wealth which they inherit is of him to whom they belong – Daughter’s son gets greater importance if the son is non-existent. The wife has only the right of ‘Streedhan’ which was given to her before the marriage as a token of love from her parents, thus, the high status that the women enjoyed during the Vedic period continued to be increasingly suppressed.

Buddhism arose as a protest against the steadily rigidifying Brahmanism. During the post Vedic period, the dominance of rituals increased and empowered the Brahmins with indomitable power. Buddhism emphasized the interrelation between God and Man and open the portals of religion to all without distinctions. In this sphere of religion, Buddhism brought greater freedom and equality for women. It is generally believed that the age of marriage is to be between 16 to 20, though the status of husband is superior, the relation between husband and wife is that of mutual respect. Puranic writes contended that the husband is God for the woman and the devotions to his is equivalent to man’s devotion
to God during the Puranic period. By worshipping her husband, she would derive the same benefits as she derives by worshipping the God. This enslavement of her to man was known and glorified as ‘Pativrata’.

Therefore, the advent of the Muslims, the position of women deteriorated and became worse, child-marriage became rampant, girls’ education turned out to be absolutely nil, and the practice of widow remarriage declined. The custom of sati further increased and became prevalent. The Muslims invasion brought about further deterioration in the position if the woman on her rights and freedom. In India’s history, it is one of the darkest period for women. Till the 19th century, the deterioration of her status steadily continued. The two most important, social institutions of the Muslim conquerors of India were Polygamy and the Purdah. Not only the women were required to live in a secluded apartment in the house, but also they had to dress in apparel which completely covered their body expecting the eyes under the Purdah system.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, when the Indians came in contact with the British the position of women deteriorated to the maximum degree. They were completely inferior to the male having no personality, no importance no identity, and social subjugated. The main hurdles for the free development of woman were the custom of polygamy, the patriarchal joint family, the permanent widowhood, early marriages, property structure and the purdah system. Thus, on the eve of British rule, the Indian woman in the family had not only lost her independence, but also her sense and urge from freedom and consciousness of independent personality. A new type of economy, state structure, education system was created and introduced by the British rulers thereby the preconditions for the transformation of the position of the Indian woman. In their declared policy of non-interference in the religious matters, the attitude of the British to the social problem of the Indian society was best reflected.

Indian society is a male dominated society since Independence and the status of women has been very low. She continues to be subservient to man in almost all the fields, even with education achievements and economic independence. By household drudgery, women are still imprisoned and polygamous marriages are still taking place. In recent years
 dowry harassment and deaths have increased greatly. To some extent the health and education of women are neglected. Due to our social structure and cultural values, most of the Indian women are not conscious of their low status and those who are aware are helpless. The legislation has remained on paper and out of the reach of common women. Women are still bound in India by traditions, customs, community, religion, economic and social, though all play a vital role to keep their low status. From group to group, the level of oppression of women varies, but in general everywhere the women are exploited to a great extent. Not only man is the head of the family, but also of the society. They are the controllers at home and would not like to work under the women bosses. They do not like women earning more than themselves. Even though the prejudices are changing, it is at a very low pace. Women under this situation are suffering a great deal mentally and emotionally. A great change has been noticed in the urban areas where husband and other family members have started supporting the working women. But, still the attitudinal change is lagging behind. To improve the status of women, many new policies and programs have been introduced and implemented.

To fight against the injustices against women, various women's groups, sensitive lawyers and democratic rights groups have been launched. In the family and society, the life situation of most women has not changed radically. If equality persists so does discrimination, ill-treatment, low status and so on. Still, the father is considered as the natural guardian of a child and head of the family. Very recently, equal property rights have been given to the women. In employment discrimination continues. Regarding the position of women, there has been a great deal of change in the past two hundred years. It is a worldwide phenomenon and it can be seen in India too. The Indian constitution gives all its citizens equal rights, status, freedom irrespective of sex, creed, religion and colour. Women are educating themselves, have even taken professions, and work outside the home. Even there have been many changes notices in her traditional role as mother and homemaker. And these changes, partly reflect the changing times. And the results of efforts are made consciously to change her position in the society through women’s movements. The basic biological differences are accepted among the feminists, but they disagree that these biological differences can lead to differences in abilities and aptitudes. They believe
that women are more natural mothers and home makers. Women are confined to child rearing and homemaking. They demand that men should also share these responsibilities. There is basically no difference in drives and disposition, though there is some physical difference.

The major issues and problems raised by Manju Kapur in her four novels relates to the middle class or upper middle class women, which is not only an issue confined to the position of women within the family or their rights to equality with men in different aspects of social life. Manju Kapur discusses the role of women in her novels in the context of the change which is taking place in the various fields of social, political, economic, and intellectual. The novelist’s female protagonists are mostly educated aspiring individual autonomy within the confines of a conservative society. Their education leads them to think for which their family and society have become intolerant of them. They struggle between tradition and modernity. It is their individual struggle between family and society in an effort to carve an identity for themselves as educated women with faultless background. She has portrayed her protagonists as caught in conflicts between the passion of the flesh and yearning to be a part of political and intellectual movement of the day. The novelist highlights many issues related to middle class women. The choice of the girl for her own choices is long debated issue for a long time in our country.

_Difficult Daughters_ is a story of freedom struggle. While India fights for freedom from the British empire, Virmati the protagonist fights for her freedom to live life on her terms. She is a character designed to evoke complex feelings in the reader’s mind. In Virmati, Manju Kapur has remarkably blended the complex and convoluted emotions of guilt and ambition, drive and regression, clarity and confusion. It certainly depicts the modern Indian woman. In this novel she explores the story of social struggle in which the educated Indian woman has launched herself in order to emancipate herself from the confinement of patriarchal Indian social structure that circumscribes her being. It also examines how Virmati’s journey of realization and freedom scrambles into incoherence and aggravates her misery of life and closes all the doors of happiness. Thus, the novel depicts the shattering of all her romantic illusions of equality which ultimately forces her to lead the role of a second wife in a man-made society. The women characters in the novel
are divided into three generations with their own value systems, conditioning of minds and relationship. It presents the traditional patriarchal society where women distinctly discriminate against men. She has no voice, no choice or freedom or right to pursue studies, career and even the choice of her mate. The real business of a girl’s life is in getting married and looks after her home.

The crisis in the values of the traditional bound family arises when Shakuntala, Virmati’s unmarried first cousin, challenges the established norms with her liberal views on marriage and education. Virmati looks upon her as her ideal and feels at times restless in the patriarchal enclosure. The ideas and thoughts churning in Virmati’s mind coincide with a break in the generations old joint family. The joint family, which has been supporting all his members suffers a few cracks and Lala Diwan Chand splits his establishment ‘Divided into sub-units for the family of his two sons’. (Kapur: 1998, 27). Virmati the eldest of the eleven siblings of Kasturi born in Amritsar, aspires to a freer life than offered her by those around her. Virmati, like so many other sub-continental women, is asked to accept a typical arranged marriage to which she rebels to the lasting shame of her family. She insists on higher education and leaves for Lahore for further studies.

A Married Woman carries in its body its flesh, the marks of the gender. The feminist does not believe that a man and woman are identical. Her novel traces the life of Astha from her young adulthood through her early middle years. She has tried with sincerity and honesty to deal with the physical, psychological and emotional stress syndrome of women. Thus, it is an artist story whose canvas challenges the constraints of middle class existence. As in a typical Indian family Astha in A Married Woman is brought up properly with large supplements of fear. She is her parent’s only child. Astha’s education, her character, her health, her marriage, these are the responsibilities of her parents. She is their future hope and though she does not want them to guard her so carefully, as they do. Her father even slaps her once or twice to shape her in his estimate. She is married to an American returned groom Hemant Vadhera with all those traditional desires inculcated in girls from a decent family. She has now become a homemaker. Responsibilities lie heavily on her. For her work at home, she neither gets salary nor savings or social security benefits. Her work goes unnoticed. Its’ just routine work whereby
she has little time left for herself. Astha submerges herself in the role of daughter-in-law, wife, mother, teacher and an artist.

*Home* depicts the tranquil world of a joint family of Banwarilal. He is a strong believer of tradition. Here it exhibits that Men carry forward the lineage, which the women enable in their mission. It is full of episodes of manipulation and politics of the joint family, which runs into the second generations. The life women lived and struggled under the oppressive mechanism of a closed society is reflected. Manju Kapur’s female characters like Virmati, Astha and Nisha move into a forbidden territory. Virmati has to face first at the hands of her mother then from her own daughter with her rich family set up, Astha is disillusioned and find solace in the company of another woman, while due to astrological reason Nisha has to wait for a long time in spite of all her physical and mental attainments.

In this novel, the novelist depicts a story of a large joint family of Delhi that has a flourishing business in the clothes trade, in the bazaar of Karol Bagh, Delhi’s chief shopping destination for middle-class Indians. The novel starts with two sisters – one is attractive and the other plain looking. The fairer Sona is married to the Banwari Lal family’s eldest son Yashpal and the unlucky Rupa is married to a junior Govt. Officer of less significance. The mother-in-law is a sassy old woman, the husbands are lethargic and wives are selfish.

In Manju Kapur’s novel *The Immigrant*, the protagonist Nina finds that she is torn between the cultural gulf and her barren relationship. She is a thirty years old lecturer in English, who is working in New Delhi and staying with her widowed mother. We can see that Nina is struggling to make her ends meet. Ananda has recently emigrated to Canada, having spent his life building his career. He is in search for something to complete his new life. Ananda’s sister proposes an arranged marriage with Nina, but she is very uncertain. Can she really give up her home and country to build a new life of her, with whom she barely knows? Both of them struggle to adapt to married life and Nina’s, whole world is once again thrown into a big question. Thus, the novel is an honest mean to find out the outcome of marriage what it costs to start again and what we can never leave behind.
Manju Kapur was born in 1948 in the city of Amritsar, a city familiar with difference, in different religions and struggle. She has lived through a lot of changes, confusion and disorders in India, she presents the women of the 1940s where they had no voice to assert their rights most important the voices of the protagonist. She raises the voice against male chauvinism to claim the rights of economic independence. She makes the woman a cult figure that fights against social and joint family restriction and constraints laid by the patriarchy in the tradition. The women seem to be the personification of new women who have been carrying the burden of embarrassment since ages and wants to be free now. She clearly exhibits the difficult situation of women who carry the problem of being female as well as the added responsibility of being mothers to their own sex. In the age old tradition, marriage is regarded as the ultimate goal and destiny from which no women can escape. As a past colonial writer Manju Kapur has significantly contributed to the progression of Indian fiction, she innately realizes the position of women in the patriarchal society and deals with the problems of women. And in a male dominated society, Manju Kapur succeeds in bringing the real picture of women.

1.3 Objectives, Significance and Limitations of the Research

Objectives of the Study:-

- To study and analyze the selected novels – Difficult daughter, A Married woman, Home and The Immigrant of Manju Kapur.
- To evaluate Manju Kapur as a feminist novelist.
- To study the internal and external conflicts of Indian women as depicted by Manju Kapur in her female characters of novels.
- To focus on the dominance of males in the Indian society as depicted by Manju Kapur in her selected novels.
- To analyze the patriarchal norms dealt with women’s characters of Manju Kapur.
- To analyze the new identity of Indian women as depicted by Manju Kapur in her selected novels.
- To study the changing roles of Indian woman at different stages of life.
• To understand the woman’s role expectations of others and vice versa.
• To understand the position of Indian woman as revealed in the novels of Manju Kapur.
• To study female subjugation, crises and gender as reflected in the selected works of Manju Kapur.

**The Significance of the Research:**

• My research work will help the readers and the students who referring Manju Kapur, for the best and thorough study of Manju Kapur’s male and female characters.
• It will focus on the various roles of woman as portrayed by Manju Kapur in her selected works.
• It will analyze the mental position of the Indian woman. It will also analyze the actions and reactions of the woman in the certain circumstances.
• It will analyze Manju Kapur as a keen observer of the behaviour of male and female.
• My study will be a bridge of understanding for the other students of literature to comprehend the roles and expectations of the woman.
• The study will record how literary representation sensitize woman empowering.
• The study will present particular aspect of Indian social consciousness.

**The Limitation of the Research:**

Each research cannot be extended to beyond boundaries. Every research is bound by certain limitations. My research also has certain limitations which are mentioned below:

• In the present study only four novels – Difficult daughter, A Married woman, Home and The Immigrant of Manju Kapur are analyzed.
• The study is dealt with trends and tribulations shown in the proposed writer’s women characters.
• The study focuses on aspects concerned with women characters.
• The observed data is interpreted in the view of socio-psycho norms.
• The study focuses on internal and external conflicts of female characters only.
• Time factor and availability of literary facility may constrain further study.
• Considering reliance on secondary sources, the research is further limited by the availability of literature and the information contained therein.
• Literature reviewed in research generates author’s viewpoint which is not always stand to be true in many situations.

The first chapter describes important information about the works of Manju Kapur and her rich, remarkable and varied contribution to the Indian literature.

The second chapter focuses on the kind of feminism Kapur presents to examine critically the difficulties and the struggle surrounding the Indian woman.

The third chapter analyses the patriarchal norms dealt with the woman's character in Manju Kapur’s novel. She exposes the long struggle of the women to establish an identity and has tried to make a space that women have to occupy in domestic relationships.

My fourth chapter deals with Manju Kapur’s female characters who is in search of their identity as a new woman.

In this way, the concluding chapter is a sincere effort made by me to analyze Manju Kapur’s views and treatments of different aspects of women in her novels.

The purpose of this research is to study the new women in the novel of Manju Kapur. So taking into account the complexity of life, different histories, cultures and different structures of values, the woman’s question, despite basic solidarity needs to be tackled in relation to the socio-cultural situation. Women under the patriarchal pressure and control are subjected to too much more brunts and social discrimination from the civilized world. They are more discriminated and are biased in lieu of their sex. In this way, it is a sincere effort made by me to analyze Manju Kapur’s views and treatments of different aspects of women in her novels. This is the base for my thesis. Till now she is author of
five novels but, my research concentrates on the four main novels, namely *Difficult Daughters, A Married Woman, Home* and *The Immigrant*. 
WORK CITED

PRIMARY SOURCES


SECONDARY SOURCES


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