Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION: NORMS OF GENDER DISCOURSE
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Discourse is "A body of ideas, concepts and beliefs which become established as knowledge or as an accepted world view. These ideas become a powerful framework for understanding and action in social life."¹

The word "discourse" has a variety of different meanings. Within linguistics it usually means language (oral or written) in use, as opposed to language as an abstract system. The term also has less linguistic, more sociopolitically oriented meanings, for example, it is sometimes used to mean: what is (typically) "sayable" about one or more topics within the constraints of a given time, place, or social, cultural, or institutional setting, as in such phrases like: “19th century discourse about women”, “the discourse of modern education system”, or the “art of living discourse”. Discourse may be defined as an ideology that relates to stereotyping a gender with few fixed attributes and behavioural patterns that literally results in the very capitulation of the class.

One fairly precise definition of discourse is: Gender discourse is a body of concepts and viewpoint, which is established as a cosmopolitan idiosyncrasy. This concept has become a powerful framework to understand and estimate the feminine gender. These
discourses are not just a matrix of words; they determine our social response. The concept of discourse recognizes the very real ways in which words and understandings shape the social life. Various discourses about men and women have appeared over the time. The very basic and bitter fact about gender is that, fairer sex is gender and male society is power. Men have never been a source of writing about gender discourses. It’s the admonished half of the glorious creations: the fragile sex, about whom a lot of literature has been generated.

The discourses on women during the Victorian Era, defined them as weak creatures, a subject to control and a body to reproduce; while men as a disciplinarian entity and power scepters. The Nazi discourses define man as the power symbol and authority and woman as a subject to test, try and discard. So many female writers have written a lot about gender norms and two such esteemed personalities are Afro-American writer Toni Morrison and Austrian writer Elfriede Jelinek.

I aim at making an in-depth study of the interrelationship of race, gender and class, which as systems of societal and psychological restrictions, have critically affected the lives, and conscience of women in general. Elfriede Jelinek and Toni Morrison’s treatment of the interrelationship of race, gender and class reveal that they are deeply committed novelists and highly conscious artists. It is analyzed
that their writing although emerging from specific political, economic, social and cultural experience, reach out to the entire world, and has a good deal of relevance to the postcolonial situation in the literature. I have gone through some major works on feminism to support my analysis like *Her protection for women* by Jane Anger (1589), *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft (1791), *A room of One’s own* by Virginia Woolf (1929), *The Second Sex* by Simone de Beauvoir (1949), *Sexual Politics* by Kate Millet (1970) and *Women, Race, and Class* by Angela Davis (1983).

Unlike the past when women were supposed to be seen not to be heard, the women of today are recognized writers in all the fields and genres. Most importantly, black women are dealing with the political machinations of the racial and sexual beliefs that black men writers have maintained towards black females in the street, in the family and in the bedroom. As a result, we have in their works a woman-to-woman approach, rather than a woman-to-man approach. This can be meaningfully witnessed in the works of Toni Morrison, the richly deserving recipient of the Noble Prize for literature for 1993.

American writer, Toni Morrison was born in 1931, in Lorain (Ohio), in a black working class family as Chole Ardelia (later Anthony Wofford (Toni is her nick name and Morrison is the name of her ex-husband). The second of four children; Toni Morrison established
herself as one of the leading novelists. Having a keen interest in literature she studied humanities at Howard (B.A, 1953) and Cornell University (M.F.A., 1955) followed by an academic career at Texas Southern University, Howard University, Yale, and Princeton University. She made her debut as a novelist in 1970 and drew the attention of both critics and a wider audience for her epic power, poetically charged, and richly expressive depiction of black America. Her fiction is charged with the poetical language, touching details and sensitive observations of American life observed with an Afro-American perspective. She worked as an author for Random House, delivered numerous public lectures specializing in Afro-American literature. She enriched the English Literature with her novels like The Bluest Eye, SULA, Beloved, Tar Baby, Song of Solomon, and Jazz.

Elfriede Jelinek was born on Oct 20th in the town of Murzzuschlag in the Austrian province of Styria. Her father was of Czech-Jewish origin, a chemist, who worked in a strategically important production industry during the Second World War. Her mother belonged to a prosperous Vienna Family. At an early age Elfriede was instructed in piano organ and recorder and studied composition at Vienna conservatory. In 1964, after graduating from the Albert gymnasium, she studied theatre and art history at the University of Vienna while continuing her music studies. Elfriede passed the organist diploma examination in 1971 at the conservatory. While still
young, Elfriede Jelinek began writing poetry and made her literary debut with the collection 'Listas schatten' in 1967. Her writings took a socially critical direction after she came in contact with the student movement (1972). In the early 1970, after spending few years in Rome and Berlin, Jelinek married Gottfried Hung berg. She enriched the English literature with her novels like Greed, Women as Lovers, Lust, Wonderful Wonderful Times and The Piano Teacher.

Moreover while writing on such a burning issue like gender discourse for women I could not overlook these under mentioned feminists and philosophers who produced some pioneering works about the oppression of women and fought for the equality in social, political, cultural and literary context.

Novelist, Essayist and Playwright, Simone de Beauvoir, born in Paris in 1908 was one the most influential thinkers of her generation. "She pointed out that women-hood as we knew it, is a social construct; that the inequality of the sexes is not nature's design, but a result of various social forces. She argues, “one is not born but rather becomes a woman”.

Simone raises the question over this inequality of sexes. "She refers to the 17th century feminist Populain de la barre, who says,"Being men, those who have made and compiled the laws have favoured their own sex, and Jurist have elevated these laws into principles". The male uses religion to brainwash the women into accepting her subordinate position as willed by God himself. She
worked to bring a positive change towards equality of sexes and contributed significantly to the woman's cause. To deduce from Heyden White's analysis of historical discourse, representations of women are representations of a "complex of symbols which gives us direction for finding an icon of the structure of those events in our literary tradition."

Kate Millet, another major American feminist, was born in 1934. Her contribution towards the right and position of women came out in form of *Sexual Politics*. She applies a feminist perspective to sexual relations between men and women and argues that sex is not a purely biological and isolated act. To a large extent, it has a political aspect, which is quite often neglected. She made a fight against the doctrine of patriarchy, in which men dominate women in bed, as much as they do in other walks of life. Through her works like *Sexual Politics* (1970), *The Basement* (1980), and *Politics of Cruelty* (1993), she made a call for the end of monogamous marriage and the family; which is considered as patriarchy's chief Institution. She proposed a sexual revolution, which would 'bring the Institution of patriarchy to an end'. Time magazine hailed her as 'The Mao Tsetung of women's Liberation.'

Betty Friedan, another second wave American feminist produced her most important work *The feminine Mystique* in 1963. She wrote about the educated, middle class women of America who were haunted by something missing out of their lives and were unable
to trace the source of their dissatisfaction. In 1965 Friedan formed the National Organization for Women (NOW) in Washington, to fight the injustice under which women suffered. According to her, monogamy, marriage, child rearing are all patriarchal traps to contain and oppress women. She opposed the society’s expectation from a mother to be the whole-sole nurturer of her children and worked against the workforce, which worked as an oppressor in the form of male-dominated patriarchal society.

Germaine Greer, born in 1939 at Melbourne Victoria is a second wave feminist who advocated rampant sexual freedom for women, rose against the marriage and the family and marginalized women position. She brutally condemned the male dominated patriarchal society, which was unable to give women any sort of emotional and sexual freedom. Through her famous book *The Female Eunuch* (1970), she pointed out that a stereotypical female is a sexual object and she must be completely passive in the sexual act. This desexualization involves not only her body but also her mind and feelings. Thus the ideal woman is castrated creature, a female eunuch. By her works like *Sex and Destiny* and *The Obstacle Race*, she opposed the monogamous relationship and female subjugation and worked for women liberation.

Julia Kristeva, a French critic, psychoanalyst and writer has explored many subjects including structuralist linguistics and
contemporary feminisms. Kristeva's standpoint is in her attempt to locate the negativity and her refusal to the marginal position of woman in society. Throughout her writings over the last three decades, Kristeva theorized the connection between the mind and the body, culture and nature and matter and representation. She asserts that mothering should not be imposed upon women as a gender norm because to some extent maternal function can be fulfilled by anyone—men or women. "She calls for a new discourse of maternity and acknowledges the importance of the maternal function in the development of subjectivity and in culture."5

Juliet Mitchell, The famous writer of Woman’s Estate (1971), Psychoanalysis and Feminism (1974) and Feminine Sexuality (1982) argued that four social structures—production, reproduction, sexuality and socialization are overall responsible for women’s oppression and their suppressed position. She combined socialist thought and psychoanalysis for feminist theory and gave her critical theories for patriarchal society. Through her writing powers she tried to establish and rebuild the lost position and esteem of women in society.

Luce Irigaray is widely known for her feminist texts and psychological approach in writings for human relations analysis. Her writings explore a broad spectrum of gendered related philosophy. "She philosophizes of a language barrier between men and women,
one which has been unrecognized, or ill informed of between the two sexes until Luce Irigaray captures them in her discourse.\textsuperscript{6} Irigaray uncovers a feminine order of meaning to reconstruct the sexual identity of women. She speaks that if women want their own identity, they must sub verb the phallic version of the symbolic.

Helene Cixous is considered one of the mothers of Poststructuralist Feminist Theory. In the 1970’s, Cixous began writing about the relationship between sexuality and language. She asserted that our sexuality is directly related to how we communicate in society. She produced her most influential work \textit{The laugh of the Medusa} in 1975. She worked in a search for emancipation, for the self and contributed a lot to restore women’s lost position in society.

An in-depth study of all these feminists and writers provided me a clearer version of feminism and femininity. Toni Morrison’s and Elfriede jelinek’s approach appears much as similar to all these feminists as they also support the opinion that “Feminism is the theory of the political, economic and social equality of the sexes. it is an organized activity on behalf of women’s right and interests.”\textsuperscript{7} These two novelists irrespective of their cultural differences suggest that a stable notion of gender is no longer the foundational premise of the feminist politics.
The artistic excellence of Jelinek's fiction lies in achieving a balance between writing a truly Nazi literature and presenting the real universal literature. The second accomplishment of Elfriede Jelinek as a writer is that she has managed uncannily to invert her own mode of literary representation. Her themes are often those expected of naturalist fiction— the burden of history, the altering social effects of race, gender or class— but they are also the great themes of lyrical modernism— love, death, betrayal, and burden of individual responsibility for her or his own fate. She can compel her readers to learn about themselves by experiencing through her characters' state of mind, which they would ordinarily disavow. As a result of her literary and artistic abilities and competence, Elfriede Jelinek stands in the vanguard of contemporary writers of fiction, transcending both her racial identity and gender. With her powerful narrative, set against a historical and political backdrop Jelinek has captivated the hearts of the common reader as well as scholars of Literature. The numerous awards she has received, culminated in the Noble Prize awarded to her in 2004 for her distinctive writing, bear testimony to her genius as a writer.

Jelinek's women continually quest for personal freedom and self love by placing themselves in relation to the community they live in. By presenting women with all the ordinariness of their lives, their aspirations, their sins and falls and their dreams, Jelinek not only
rescues them from all stereotypical upper middle class bourgeois traps, but also comes close to probing the dimensions representing the general female condition as well.

Sexism, the most oppressive force physically and mentally, is certainly the biggest cause of grievance for the woman of any society. The black woman is considered as having a worse fate. To be black and female is to suffer from the twin disadvantage of racial discrimination also pronounced as gender bias. Possibly, no other social group has been subjected to such an unedifying spectacle of human debasement and depravity. Being Black, the African women suffered from racism, being female they were subjected to sexual atrocities at the hands of the white patriarchs as well as the black and being former slaves, they were compelled to remain on the lower rung of social order. In short the Afro-American women were made victims of triple jeopardy- racism, sexism, and classicism.

The woman has always been a matter of choice for men across cultural boundaries. Men need her or love her; it is always in relation to their own gratification. Even when they wrote about her she always has been the 'Second Sex'. To quote Virginia Woolf, "Imaginatively she is completely insignificant, she pervades poetry from cover to cover; she is all about absent from history." Through this study I make an attempt to analyze the historical representation of women in Indian,
Afro-American and Western patriarchies, which always have rendered women as the inferior gender and crowned them as a matchless domestic creature.

In the fourth century B.C, Aristotle, the Greek philosopher stated that woman is "a deformity of nature." The Anglo-Saxon culture also treated women as an object of exchange and sexual gratification. The Wife's Lament, for example, begins with an impassioned complaint: "I make this song sadly about myself/about my life. I, a woman, say I've been unhappy since I grew up." This is how the amalgamated synchronization of scores of feminist instigators has portrayed the destitution of the pathetic order in which the Black Women are subjected to Afro-American geographical boundaries. The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women, (co-edited by Gilbert and Gubar), in it’s introduction to the various phases of English Literary history, makes a revealing study on women's treatment and their representations in mainstream literature and culture. They tell us that in the West, women always found themselves in the danger zone of being considered as cast off. Women were categorized under two heads: the first image was that of an ideal lady who was always ready to surrender her physical domains and was fragile; and the second was that of a prostitute who was like a "Rose shut in a book/in which pure woman may not look." While the prostitute was desirable, the pure woman was respectable. The sole prerequisite of a good wife
was her surrender to the claims of her husband, but a man could desire a whore and still be a gentleman.

Male ordered society continued to put the question mark on women’s chastity and defined them as the object of their possession. Even the Pope found enough time to recite, “most women have no character at all.” Gilbert and Gubar thus analyzed that the position of women in the western society has always been gendered. Women thus became the object of uses and abuses for men to satisfy their whims and fancies. In the words of Lord Lyttleton, women should “seek to be good, but aim not to be great:/ A woman’s noblest station is retreat:/ Her fairest virtues fly from public sight, Domestic worth, that shuns too strong a light.”

According to Rousseau’s ideology of femininity, a woman’s whole being is relative to a man’s life. Docile, submissive and somewhat angelic is the property of a good woman. In short, a woman needs to be a silent creature that could cater to the needs of her man at every possible or impossible cost. He declares in *Emile* (1762):

‘the whole education of women ought to be relative to men. To please them, to be useful to them, to make themselves loved by them and honored by them, to educate them when young, to care for them when grown, to counsel them, to console them and to make life sweet and agreeable to them.’
In fact the reason of women’s humiliation was their latent powers, which made men sense fragile and resulted in men’s detest for women’s powers. When men could not comprehend the sexual and emotional complexity of women, they labeled them as transgress and treated them as whores and mad women. According to Tillie Olsen, women in history have always been:

Isolated. Cabin’d, cribb’d, confined; the private sphere.
Bound feet.: corseted, bedecked; denied one’s body.
Powerlessness. Fear of rape, male strength. Fear of aging. Subject to. Fear of expressing capacities. Soft attractive graces; the mirror to magnify man [...].15

Silence has always been referred as the most desirable virtue for women. They were punished for their claim to their subjectivity. Women were given their part to play either directly, through pressure or by rituals and laws. It was the patriarchal society in which the female existence was submerged beneath the masculine authority. The mainstream literature that scaled women against financial bequeaths, came out with a subjugated yellow-bellied conclusion of the instability of both. Their mobility created the possibility of loss so both once won over, need to be confined. Deprivation of full human status of women in society made them treated as an object of
possession. The theme of Daniel Dafoe's *Raxona* also sites maid and mistress on the same ladder. Male-authored texts define the qualities of good women as accepting the restrictions and disappointments with their loving submissiveness to their husbands and fathers despite their cruelty towards them. Now the question arises for how long woman has been the object of possessions and uses and abuses in the world. Now let's consider the woman of Vedic age (c.1500-600 B.C) in Indian society and the story of law and order originating for them.

Women enjoyed a respectable social and religious status in the early Vedic age. The sculptures of Gauri & Sarasvathi were the reflections of those women who led an independent life in society. Women enjoyed the privileges of imparting knowledge and art from one generation to other and the Apsaras, Nayikas were considered the earthly women. Art text *Shilpa Shastras* also makes confirmation of women's competency and fertility and their sign of auspiciousness. The God was energy and the Goddess was 'Shakti' and the form through which God's Energy finds expressions. The Rig Veda also speaks volumes about the freedom, strength quality and roles of male and female at home and heaven's building. The earliest Indian sagas confirm that "then only is a man perfect when he consists of three distinct entities unified, his wife, himself and his son." Nowhere this woman was a secluded creature and thus followed her right to choose a husband through 'syamvara'. But the scenario changed with the
articulation of laws of Manu (200 B.C. - 200 A.D), which stated the position of women solely related to her male relatives: father, husband and sons. Shudra women were denied to education, wives were restricted to fine arts. Women were imposed to be wives, slaves to men and to cater to the needs of their husbands and their families. Sudhir Kakkar’s *Feminine Identity* confirms the role of a ‘good woman’ in the reflections of a good wife. By quoting Manu he explains:

> Though destitute of virtue or seeking pleasure elsewhere or devoid of good qualities yet a husband be constantly worshipped as a God by a faithful wife and by violating her duty towards her husband, a wife is disgraced in this world, after death she enters the womb of a jackal and is tormented by the punishment of her sin.\(^{17}\)

According to the gender norms studied and accepted worldwide woman’s fate is designated to be the slave, craving for freedom and man to be the master and ruler. Even the debates of anthropologists serve the output that the submissive and subservient role of the female gender is either the result of biological necessity or the construct of authority and power relationship culturally determined by society. Every society advocates the superiority of culture over nature; and culture is the means of man’s restrictions/control over nature/woman. A woman’s psyche is further debased when as a wife
she is controlled by the “Pygmalion effect.” The “Pygmalion effect” refers to the wife’s redefinition of the self and an active reshaping of the wishes or needs of the husband.  

Such ignominious transcripts started disgracing women as the inferior gender, ‘the second sex’ and the fittest vehicle to gratify men’s sexual needs and bear their off springs. These pathetic laws pave the ways to declare women as impure and hence should be barred from all religious activities. The whole being of a female was put into the boundaries of– the wife, the mistress and the prostitute. And this role gave a rise to the female submission and male control. These definitions and norms claim the characteristics of a woman as docility, tenderness, irrationality and vulnerability.

If we reflect over the image of black women in mainstream literature we can conclude that the ill treatment of the black women in the West dates back to the history of male authority and colonization. The black history is the burning history of women’s subjugation and exploitation by whites. Black representation in the white mainstream always meant loss and despair. Black femininity was something very exotic for the white male community. In the American mainstream being black itself means being marginalized, thus being black and that too a black female subtly implies mute suffering from malignation. Black feminists have always suffered negligence in the white
mainstream literature and the power of the black presence has always gone disregarded in the racial discourse. Hemingway's fiction makes a beautiful figuration of black female sexuality, religion, caste, cultural code, class and race. It was definitely male fear of female power, which facilitates them to create the image of a woman in the society as submissive and fragile or docile, notwithstanding whether it was Indian, Western or Afro-American. A woman claiming for her subjectivity and individuality was treated with acute rejection and as a whore or witch in western society in earlier ages, similar was the treatment given to Indian women with the "puradah" system and "sati" practices to oppress them and no solution was universal to the problem of feminine gender as being inferior under male domination. Every culture provided moral and sexual freedom to male gender and designated women as creatures who need to be sacred.

The mainstream literature reflects a clear code of conduct for a lady and they are ruthlessly ostracized and punished on any diversion. Morbidly coupled with the oppression that yielded them mute, and also with the ridiculous regulations imposed on their chastity that led them to the extreme attainment of a mere object of sexual gratification made them the signature portraits of the most pathetic creature, the Almighty ever created. In the Greek culture too, while the Goddess like Diana and Athena were worshipped, the common outlook towards women was liberal and women were treated as objects of procreation. The punishment for a patricide was a death sentence but there was no
punishment for matricide. The story gathers pace and the denigration of a female body converted into sexual oppression.

In this context, black femininity was a big problematic issue. For Whites, 'Blackness' meant 'Satan' in a human flesh. The treatment towards black women was oppressive and that of a racist. An element of ambiguity in association with cruelty in the treatment of black women is always present in the mainstream literature. The Black and White relationship of any kind was severely ostracized and was a matter of dissatisfaction in black community. Even the black writers were not benevolent for black women in their writings. Thus women have, since time immemorial, been portrayed with this signature harmony only.

Female imagination though apparently portrays the female gender roles faithfully as oppressed and exploited, yet certain subtle variations are introduced by Toni Morrison and Elfriede Jelinek to emphasize her small steps of self-liberations as a giant leap. They portray the role of woman, which refuses to confirm to the male established model of femininity. Through their outstanding linguistic abilities in their fiction, the above stated novelists have attempted to portray the dilemmas, the rebellion, and the ambitions of women when they have reached the crossroads; though their fiction brutally throws light on the fact that all religions and cultures expect woman to maintain the traditional gender roles heavily loaded against women.
Through her writings Jelinek has made a criticism of civilization by descending the violence and submission, class injustices and gender oppression. In her writings the reader is confronted with the sexual violence against women and the cold-blooded practices exercised by the male society. A highly controversial figure in her homeland, Elfried Jelinek has built a tradition of linguistically sophisticated social criticism. For more than twenty years Elfriede Jelinek has challenged her contemporaries with texts, which are feminist and deeply critical to society. According to Jelinek herself every thing she writes is a paradigm of the division of power in society. Elfriede Jelinek is highly controversial figure in her homeland who like a merciless observer and a linguistic juggler, constantly challenged her contemporaries. Her fictional works show how race, sex, economics and discrimination are interrelated with each other.

If we throw a glance on Literature we may conclude that male authors view the problems prevailing in society from the male angle and their literature dignifies the woman as a matchless domestic creature. But Morrison and Jelinek dare to articulate their anger in their fictional works vociferously and staged a fight for the right position of a woman in the society. Norms of gender discourse is a subject with a lot of complexity and diversity but Jelinek and Morrison show similarity of thoughts on this diverse topic when they fight for a woman's status in society, when they talk about the social order and
power practices, the race and gender bias, and when they make efforts to discard the acrid practice of symbolizing the woman as a fragile sex.

These two feminists have projected feminist consciousness in their writings. "A feminist is one who is awakened and her consciousness is the experience in a certain way of certain specific contradictions in the social order. Toni Morrison's consciousness is the consciousness of victimization." It is an apprehension that one is victim because one is African-American, weak and stereotyped as a female gender and similar is the approach of Austrian Noble winner Elfriede Jelinek. Her heroines are a study in a female psyche alienated due to lack of compassionate relationship.

The common themes in their works concern the character's attempt to define a meaningful identity, independent of conventional expectations and prejudices to sustain one's dignity in a world of absurdity and moral decay. Gender issues such as discrimination, submissiveness and inequalities have started attracting the policy makers, administrators and implementing agencies. The gender issues vary greatly from one culture to another and may not be homogenous within the same culture, different social classes and income groups. Over the years, gender norms and values within the social systems systematically gave rise to gender inequalities. During
the last decade, the issues concerning gender equality have assumed greater importance, particularity in the literature, and enhanced social awareness among the women. Essential to feminist thinking about gender difference has been a particular model of power relations.

Gender has begun to be theorized in more productive ways, moving away from a reliance on binary oppositions and global statements about the behaviour of all men and all women, to more nuance and mitigated statements about certain groups of women or men in particular circumstances, which negotiate within a certain parameter of permissible or socially sanctioned behaviors.

Rather than seeing gender as a possession or set of behaviors which is imposed upon the individual by society as many essentialist and conservational theorists have done so for, many feminists have now moved to a position where they view gender as something which is enacted or performed and thus as a potential site of struggle over perceived restrictions in roles.\(^20\)

The overwhelming power of the writer as a teller of stories can be wonderfully felt in the fiction of Morrison and Jelinek. They deal with the theme of love, friendship, beauty, ugliness, power practices, sexual abuses and death. Their characters struggle to understand the aspects of human conditions good and evil. It is a matter of ridicule
that these novelists have been criticized thoroughly time to time for the treatment, given to their characters and few hypercritics denied their position worth as feminists; still they could score such a remarkable position in Literature.

Enough ink has been spilled in quarrelling over feminism, and perhaps we should say no more about it. It is still talked about....Are there women, really? Most assuredly the theory of the eternal feminine still has its adherents who will whisper in your ear...woman is losing her way, woman is lost: One wonders if women still exist, if they will always exist, whether or not it is desirable that they should, what place they occupy in this world, what their place should be, 'what has become of women? Was asked recently in an ephemeral magazine. 21

The Bluest Eye by Morrison emphasizes the devastating effects of race and beauty standards of the dominant culture on the self-image of the African female adolescent. The Novel epitomizes the victimization of a young black girl Pecola. Pecola is obsessed with a myth of physical beauty and as a result plunges into a world of madness. Her self-rationalizations make her vulnerable to abuse not only from her family but also from the community. Pecola's life is devoid of love, full of brutality and ugliness. She is a character with
totally defenseless approach having no sense of self. Ugliness becomes all-pervasive in her character. She is able to suppress all her emotions and senses; she is able to hide behind ugliness but she is not able to keep away from seeing the ugliness that surrounds her in her home. She is obsessed with blue eyes and her eyes transmit ugliness to her mind and thus successfully implant it on her consciousness. Since they perceive ugliness they must, in turn, be ugly, and if they were beautiful, blue, then they would only see beauty. Pecola is too short of adequate arsenals to fight the powerful images that seek to enslave her mind. Throughout the novel she appears as a scapegoat, the sacrificial victim and a completely defenseless creature. She flutters around aimlessly, thrown into unyielding and infertile soil to die before she had a chance to live; while the protagonist of The Piano Teacher by Elfriede Jelinek, Erika Kohut lives a life of weird compromises. A girl who is brutally beaten by her fixatedly domineering mother on the petty issues like arriving home late from work and spending money on clothes. She turns up into a woman breaking the norms of society and visits the seedy pornographic film theatres and live sex shows in the city. She degrades herself by engaging with one of her student Walter Klemmer, in her secret manipulative and self-destructive way of life. Like a fragile character she permits Walter to molest her and is unable to kill Walter or commit suicide. Erika is a daring soul who appropriates
the male right to watch the prohibited, and therefore pays for it with her life. She uses to cut herself and watches the blood dropping. Revenge on her mother and herself; it becomes something she can control and she continues the practice in later life. Utterly untouched by love, she degrades herself and likes to be beaten, gagged and tied by Klemmer. As her mother vented her frustration on her, she too vents her own complex control upon herself.

Toni Morrison has depicted the mutual relationship between two women through *Sula* in the most beautiful manner conceivable. Sula is developed as a character who enjoys breaking the norms of society and creating a world of her own, who is least bothered about men and their importance as being the better half of one’s life. She makes a clear distinction between sex and love. For her, love means to love oneself only and sex is a non-competitive and non-threatening action for her. She has the ability to develop a positive self-image. Sula, is a woman who rejects the patriarchal social order, rejects traditionally ordered principles of marriage, sex and children. This rejection is an automatic response of rebellion. Sula is a speaking subject. She depends least on male orgasms, it is the female sexual jouissance rather than the male orgasm, which characterizes the climax of her sex acts. She believes in complete liberty and develops sexual relations with unlimited men with out any concern of moral decay. Sula is unique in the make up of her mind and feels her own abiding
strength and limitless power. She dares to create a space for herself on the basis of mutual inclusion of the males. "Sula attempts none of their attempts at counter-conjure or their gossip and seemed to need the services of nobody." She moves against the codes and norms of male ordered society and offers a useful model of self, of identity and truest being.

Wonderful Wonderful Times by Elfriede Jelinek is the story of four alienated students- two male, two female. The protagonist Anna is a desperate figure, who is physically abused by her father, devoid of confidence and utter physical beauty. She concludes with her experiences of life that power is enjoyed by male, and not by females. She reveals that the power in her house lies with men and not with women. She tries to free herself from her given fate and throws herself into the dark world of violence and disasters. She is also a subjugating figure who bears the brutality of male dominating society. Another figure who is perfectly fit in a domestic setting and denies the possibility of being a rebellion character is her mother, who is forced by her physically handicapped husband to give her porn photographs. The novel shows that men always wish to control a woman at every cost, when physical violence becomes tough, they enjoy mental turmoil of female sex.
Lust by Jelinek is an attack on Austrian culture where the silence and the physical muteness of a woman rarely find any space for expression. The novel is a pornographic description of sexuality, aggression and abuse. She wonderfully depicts that a woman owns nothing more than the "mute kingdom of her body". The man's demand for power, control on violence and the female submission reflects the power structure of the society. "His articulated penis roaring to a standstill in the lay-by of his wife. Where at last he can relieve himself."23 Gerti, the wife of Hermann is used as a property and she is not asked ever how she feels about the nasty ways, Hermann does sex with her. She has to tolerate the marital rape by her husband almost twice a day and every night, which is nothing but a sexual abuse for a female. She is an object for sexual gratification only and wants to isolate herself from that brutality during which Hermann pours his juices into her viciously. She indulges herself in an extra marital love affair with a belief that this time round, she would be loved for being an important individual and not merely a physical realm. But dreams shatter when Michael, a student who rescues her from her barbaric husband, also represents the horrible face of male society only. The vigorous use of her physical entity proves again that he is after all a man. Love is again as distant from sex as was earlier. The relation becomes a love-less horror. Once again the norms of gender discourse portray her as a stereotyped female. The myth of love and defense of woman's sexuality again faces the reality.
Toni Morrison, through *Beloved* expanded the themes of telling stories untold; the thoughts took the form of the writing in the memory of the millions of lives lost during slavery. The plot revolves around an ex-slave Sethe who would rather kill her own children than risk that they be re-enslaved. She has been depicted as a pathetic figure that is raped by whites and her feminism is blown to smithereens. The worst part of this barbarism is the stealing of her milk that was the right of her daughter. A character that is shown as the worthless mud in the wall of the society runs as a contemporary female gender norms. There is a miraculous power in Morrison’s description of Sethe’s act of releasing her child from the destiny she imagines her facing. Morrison not only portrays the cultural barbarism against women through *Beloved*, but also she beautifully paints the struggles of a woman to restore her life in this hostile society.

*Jazz* is the expansion of the gender norms designed for women in all the senses. The novel clarifies that there is no beauty standard of security for females. A black as well as white female is equally oppressed by male dominance. Violet, the wife of Joe disfigures the face of Dorcas, the mistress of her husband. A female is shown as the worst possible foe of a female and both females are the subjects of sexual pleasures for the male society. On one hand, a wife has to fit herself in the role of a faithful spouse, so she has to bear the violence of her husband and on the other hand she has to save the ideal definition of woman. This novel depicts those, whom with Jelinek
empathies most in the society: women without their own identity. The poor ordinary women are economically dependent on the lowest rung of the social ladder; find themselves in the shadow of their men and watch themselves through men's eyes. The gender norms for the women society in Jelinek's writings define that women are expected to give birth to children, dress and cook for men, gratify their men's needs and live in a glass show-case of feminism without the capacity to engage themselves in transforming world.

These oppressed women suffer both the physical violence to which they are exposed with their men and the powerlessness, which they choose for themselves in their womanly role. But none of the women in Jelinek's novel is regarded purely as a passive figure, as an object of men's lust and oppression. Rather they try to tear off the mask of femininity, which have been forced upon them. Her fictional works each within the framework of its own problem complex presents a merciless world where the reader is confronted with the locked down system of male and female, assault and submission, hunter and prey.

The sex may be largely joyless and unhygienic, in keeping with Jelinek's theme that power and male aggression are the driving forces in relationships, but it was explicit enough to leave the Cannes audience speechless. 24

The prevalent topic in her illustrious works is the epitomisation of the malignation and ostracization of the protagonist despite their
innocence in the relative context of their tormentor. Elfriede Jelinek is one of the most influential contemporary writers. Through her writings she has given a new currency to a heretical famine tradition and has expanded the art of Literature. No Austrian author has generated, as much hatred as Jelinek but none other has ever shocked and compelled her readers to think about set gender norms. She is an author who shatters the conviction of her readers with anger and passion.

Toni Morrison, the ninetieth Nobel Laureate, is a literary artist of the first order. She weaves gravity with humour with a verbal music. In her own words “My project rises from delight, not disappointment.” In her writings she regards the African presence in her country as a vital but unarticulated prerequisite for the fulfillment of the American dream. By 1983, a large number of black women writers like Maya Angelou, Toni Morrison, Toni Cade, Alice Walker, Gloria Naylor and Andre Lorde emerged, who articulated inner and other realities of women’s existence in their works. Naylor, with her deep perceptive mind, delineates the sufferings, and the struggle, the limitations of the black women in a racist and a sexist society. Black male writers have traditionally confronted white society, and revealed the conflicts that exist between Blacks and Whites. But the black women writers have traditionally written about what goes on within the Black community, and it is the exposure of this intimate life to the public eye that has
evoked many harsh reactions. Not only is Morrison critical of black women who imbue themselves with white propaganda and thus poison the community with it, she is also critical of those black men who do not fulfill their roles as men.

Beyond doubt, this power structure is reflected most clearly in the Elfriede Jelinek through sexuality; Toni Morrison is never afraid of presence the race, sex, social and political bluff. She has been minutely studying the utmost delicacy in the feelings of the fairer sex as well as its vulgar counterparts. The horrendous and shocking nature of violence against women and the power practices of male organized structure of the society through the gender specifications make an attack on the darkly satirical critique of the society. Jelinek wants to provoke into existence the radical thinking about an alternative female identity and sexuality, where womanly feelings need neither to be trading commodity nor to be transmuted into utter muteness and anorexia. She makes an attack on the Austrian idyll and male dominated society. Through her female characters and their discourses she shows that man control not only the violence but also the debase humiliating sexualized language. The woman's world on the other hand is kept silent and she rarely finds any space for her own expressions. With her feminist consciousness Jelinek aims in her own way to create a linguistic space of their own for women and to cause them to reflect the power structure of society.
The most oppressive and pathetic aspect of gender politics against women is the demand of the total obliteration and erosion of the female stuff by patriarchy. The treatment of women's identity as absence rather than presence, the description of her existence as an "object", and not a "subject", is revealed through life and art within an environment of varied social traditions. Margaret Atwood, Alice Walker, Anita Desai, Bapsi Sidhwa, Toni Morrison, Elfriede Jelinek, Pearl Buck and numerous women novelist as well as sociologist of the world are out to examine female experience and the confirming norms of society. These feminists focus on the gender roles of women seen through the lens of female activities, experiences, values, relationships and modes of communication. Prescribed gender roles of women are quite banal: cooking, childbearing, gossiping, enticing and entertaining. Alice walker in *The Color Purple* with its Afro-American ethos views the problem of gender politics as cultural stereotype that makes women physical, social and emotional victim of male sexual agency; represented through husband and sons. Celie is abused physically, emotionally, sexually and socially. Though she is faultless, she is condemned by the cultural norms and her condition is deplorable. Her physical degradation exiles her from the conservative camp of "good girls". On one hand, the male dominated society pollutes her and on other hand, same society of male-power condemns her. That always has been the ironical situation with
women since ages. A woman is always the mute observer of this fate in the history. Daughter raping is common incident in black Afro-American society. Either we take the case of Pecola in *The Bluest Eye* or of Celie in *The Color Purple*: their position frames a woman's status in an Afro-American culture. The dominant gender has always manipulated to keep woman down through financial slavery and emotional as well as sexual exploitation. The gender norms again and again imposed that a girl is nothing to herself. Her whole timid-self is relative to her husband. In all the cultures and societies women are viewed through a limited idealism, which assumes that marriage and motherhood are the only routes to female fulfillment and maturity.

The gender norms heavily loaded on women of any culture do not permit them to fight the institution of marriage. The female gender rebellion is never pardoned by the dominant gender. Women's contempt and happiness as per the traditional ideologies must be epitomized through children, home and family. They are not expected to look beyond the parameters set by the patriarchy and if, for any reasons, they stray from the predetermined path, they are supposed to be treated like the pigeons in the cage. Anything different is intolerable; especially the sexual autonomy is vehemently opposed in all the traditions.
Simone de Beauvoir Portrayed similar male approach on paper and wrote that "Her grasp on the world is more restricted; she has less firmness and less steadiness available for projects than in general she is less capable of carrying out. In other words, her individual life is less rich than man's." None of the women are liberal to lead a life with a sense of me-ness. On the contrary the gender norm designed a course of dependence on their society and male orders for females. Unlike their male counterparts, they do not wish to be free from their social responsibilities and voluntarily ensconced in the community activities. They remain satisfied with in a certain boundary. In black woman's fiction, the troubled protagonist like Celie may search for complex relationship with her own gender for fulfillment but in other cultural boundaries it may still be a taboo to discuss the matter plainly.

To sum-up, I may infer that the discussed female Noble Laureates are the best minds and the linguistic jugglers. Through their writings they try to get rid of conventional boundaries and pattern of thoughts. The themes of these winners' work prove them thorough feminist who try to bring out the spiritual silence and physical muteness and reflect the power structure of the society through gender discourse. The similarity between the characters that live in the shadow of violence, threatened by unpredictable brutality is shown most clearly in Jelinek and Morrison. The same spirit of describing the complexity of race and class, codes and conventions, violence and
Submission, power and powerlessness, hypocrisy and egoism, brutality and sexuality provide a new standard of measurements of an individual and the institution. Remorselessly both of them have exposed the hollowness of the social conventions, rituals, and the hardcore traditions, which lead to the oppression of women; abuse of power in the male dominated power structure of the society.
Works Cited


3. ibid., p.72.


5. Tandon, Neeru., p.83.

6. ibid., p.87.


10. ibid.


13. Ibid.


25. ibid.