CHAPTER – 4
Freeing the ‘Other’ from the Immemorial Subordination
This chapter argues that a methodical study of women’s functions and their imitating strategies accredited to a complex socio-cultural understating of an established patriarchal structures than the incompetent, abstract notion of patriarchy confronted in Indian feminist movement and criticism. The functioning of women in patriarchal system that Deniz Kandiyoti called a ‘patriarchal bargain’ in her article ‘Bargaining with Patriarchy’; “Different forms of patriarchy present women with distinct rules of game and call for different strategies to maximize security and optimize life options with varying potential for active or passive resistance in the face of oppression.” (1). to free oneself from oppression, women do compromise with certain patriarchal norms. So does their representation as a New Woman.

Kapur has utilized her own intelligence in demand to emphasize the complications of women in detail. But the problem in the representation of women is that “women are provided with many more confusing images of themselves than are men” (Humm 4). The multiple images of them create a confusion and dulls the difference between imaginary and real characters. This dilemma is further instigated by the use of patriarchal language in the representation of women. Women writers even attempt to portray their characters on feminist line but, sometimes, they come to the fault line of patriarchal depiction that is prevalent in male writers’ writing. Whenever women writers try to share their experience, they are excluded or undervalued on the masculine norms.

Kapur's *Home* (2006), the third novel, in the resistance of patriarchy, deals with the issues of reproduction, the sexual division of labour and, representation and role of women in the family. These issues were raised and prominent during the feminism movements across the world and are used by
Kapur as she is known for crafting characters that directly deal with the core woman’s issues.

To demonstrate the issue of representation, understanding of gender politics is very important that means gendered identities and gender difference between man and woman; and division of labour i.e. the particular works have been devised for specific gender and one is not supposed to breach the watertight division of gender and if anyone tries to do that will face a social boycott or get discriminated in the certain groups. Kapur portrays Nisha, who blurs, to a certain extent, the constructed division of labour by opening her own shop called Nisha’s Creation. Running a business is conventionally and traditionally believed to be a profession of males in Indian society. If a woman challenges the social norms, she perceives as a hysterical person. Dale spender elaborates it:

The history of women is littered with the patriarchal response to such recalcitrant women who have been described not as disobedient, but as failures. They have failed to become full members of society, failed to see the world the way they should, failed to behave in a fitting manner. The more women have resisted the more it has been suggested that there is something wrong with us (them): in the view of the dominant group we (women) are abnormal, neurotic, frigid or hysterical, or even bitter and twisted. (Spender 2)

Nisha competes between traditions and patriarchy to dismantle stereotypical image of her being a woman. Her struggle against patriarchy conceptualizes
her agency. She is cognizant about the difficulties and desired to battle and rebel against the outmoded and socially established customs and beliefs. She also standardizes the socially constructed roles and duties and managed to rebuild herself in the socially and culturally evolving society. She emerges as a courageous woman who is in search of self-esteem, competence and autonomy in a changing patriarchal world.

Indian society is very patriarchal and hierarchal that is root of many social evil. Home as a unit of society has many elements of it. It discriminates against girl child and does not support them due to its faulty formation. In this context, Bhattacharya summarises the Indian society:

Indian society is highly composed of hierarchical systems within families and communities. These hierarchies can be broken down into age, sex, ordinal position, kinship relationships (within families), and caste, lineage, wealth, occupation and relationship to ruling power (within community). When hierarchies emerge within the family based on social convention and economic need, girls in poorer families suffer twice the impact of Vulnerability and stability. From birth, girls are automatically entitled to less; from playtime, to food, to education, girls can expect to always be entitled to less than their brothers. Girls have less access to their family income and assets, which is exacerbated among poor, rural Indian families. (Bhattacharya VII)

In this novel, Kapur has brought up a new face of a woman to demonstrate the gender division in relations with the materialist analysis of Indian middle class. She in her novels, for the most part, has composed on male and female relationship. The depiction
of daily lives and struggles of women provides a space and is counterhegemonic to the discourse which has ostracized the women and their lives and is preferable to patriarchy. Kapur carries women out of their discursive categories by keeping them in the centre. The space provided to women gives them an agency through which they assert their identity.

Indian English writers, since its start, have been finding inventive and new topics in writing, especially the women writers like Kapur endures to the look into the woman’s consciousness in a manner that addresses the absence of such themes in the male writers’ writing. The writing against the males and social norms in the Indian context is an encoding of a resistance. Kapur turned out to be more otherworldly, subjective and lively in the invention of spaces, texts and images than male fiction writer’s women characters.

Kapur is essentially a woman's activist author of contemporary circumstances and issues. She generally pens on the constructed nervousness of womankind, such as anxieties, affection, marriage, stresses, desires, longings, education and preparing primarily to economic independence and liberating them from societal taboos, man-centric chain of importance that have been devastating a large number of them, the irritation of barrenness, the stratification of position framework troubling the agenda of lives, and even woman relationship.

Kapur's treatment of such a variety of subjects uncovered the excitement of her psyche and the broad combination of her appreciations. In this novel, she records the issues of Indian women and harps on feminist issues like-female training and their strengthening, economic self-governance, women’s space, agency and experience. She presents noteworthy issues of class, caste struggle and attached them to the rising intelligence of educated women in post-independent India.
Kapur in her novels delineates the image of a new woman whom Pykett, in *The Improper Feminine*, calls “a representation” (Pykett, 137) that raises two questions: firstly, if it is a representation that means it’s a construct of the writer?; and secondly, does the construct reflect any real women? The answer of both the questions can be found by analysing the women characters who demand to hold the same position and status like that of man in the society with equal rights. The representation of Nisha’s struggle of daily life transports a notion of reality. It is an attempt to depict modern woman character in domestic space.

Her reality is featured in minute, day to day practices and struggle which renders an experience of her singularity. Her experience of singularity in relation to reality constructs her genuine self. Along with this, she is decisively and obstinately looking to find her genuine self. She does not especially look for or raise the voice of uniformity and privileges of a woman alone, however, followed more about her space, acknowledgement, regard, and comprehension from her male partner.

Nisha challenges the patriarchy as she is not any more detached and meek, however, a sort of woman who can possibly change the customary whimsical considerations and emotions. Apart from this, her excitement for education and to be skilled in male’s occupation is, for the most part, to be a monetarily autonomous figure. It enhances the notion of womanhood and demonstrates an existence in a way that she needs to satisfy her desires. She defies the conventional ideas of 'Blessed messenger or angle in the house' and 'sexually insatiable picture’. She is principally a woman of mindfulness and taking cognizance of her low position in the family and society and trying to enhance it by being economically independent.
Nisha demystifies the ideologies that is governing her conscious life. Her education and ability to question empowers her to acknowledge that she is being subjugated. This investigation has risen after a great adventure into the enquiry of her compelling impulse to be recognized as an autonomous, individual and sovereign self with free thinking and soul. In the meantime, she additionally battles to acquire changes in society through the cancellation of sexist demeanors and male-centric control. She investigates the possibility of her space, agency and the significance in the male dominated society which indicates the characteristics of new women.

Kapur’s women characters are the personification of new women who are managing to bring stability in their lives between society and family. Her work profoundly engrossed in dealing with the women’s issue and men are cornered. *Home* offers a view on the impassive locus of women in the socially and culturally man-made world, in which Nisha is stressed to overthrow the astringent quandaries of established rules and notion, so attempting to reconstruct her own space with the women’s culture of resistance. It reconnoiters skirmish of Nisha to define a space and attain an agency, consequently engaging in a perpetual material to stipulate the altering and countering the hegemonic man-woman bond.

*Home* focuses on a patriarchal family of Banwari Lal who had firm faith in the ancient Indian traditions and culture. Kapur demonstrates her brilliant magnanimous in the subjects like family and relationship in Indian English fiction writing. To understand the complexity of the financial side of the patriarchal family the Marxist feminist analysis of the text is more effective that “approaches the concept of patriarchy not in terms of the biological basis of power
relations but in terms of class analysis, to allow a more properly materialist understanding of women’s oppression.” (Madsen 70). The novel shows the story of an orthodox Indian family in which the males control the economic matters.

Marxist feminist approach leads to the analysis of economic independence of women controlled by the materialistic clutches of patriarchal society. Economic independence creates a space for women to live and perform individually in their own way beyond the periphery of patriarchal code of conduct.

Nisha’s grandfather is a man of old faith who has a gendered notion of space i.e. men's space is outside and women's inside of the house; similarly, Elizabeth Jackson explains Parthachatterjee’s view in her book *Feminism and Contemporary Indian Women’s Writing*:

> an ideology whereby women were responsible for protecting and preserving the inner core of the national culture – its spiritual essence – ‘at home’, while men had to learn the superior techniques of organising material life ‘in the world’ in order to overcome imperial domination. So according to this ideology, the ‘new woman’ must learn literacy, numeracy and ‘modern’ housekeeping, but she must also be responsible for observing religious rituals, maintaining cultural tradition and ensuring ‘the cohesiveness of family life’ (p.5)

The designation of spaces confines women within the house but women create their own space within the given space to bring change in their lives. This change within the space empowers women with an agency through which they question the dominance of male. This particular space empowers the agency of woman as an autonomous entity. As Smith elaborates:
many feminist historians theorizing women’s every day and social history, offered a way of making space for agency by insisting that subjects, simultaneously implicated in contradictory and conflicting discursive calls, discover or glimpse spaces through which to maneuver, spaces through which to resist, spaces for change. (Smith, 23)

Kapur provides an agency to Nisha by providing space through writing about Nisha’s everyday life as the opening semi-fragment deals with Banwari Lal’s family tale and Nisha’s youthful academy life and her skirmish for preserving her association with Suresh, her shattered connection with Suresh, mangli problem that created an obstacle in her wedding, her sporadic skin spots and her extended expedition after a number of problems and circumstances which stemmed in her fruitful occupational of suit stitching. This depiction of daily struggle of Nisha is a sign of woman’s experience: her institutional presence in the world of men.

Nisha who is trapped in a patriarchal setup, contests against the established practices of the institution to institute her identity and equality. She wanted an equality in which she could fit herself “uncritically into a masculine pattern of life and a masculine model of humanity and culture which was presented as gender-neutral’ (Plumwood, 1993: 27 as cited in Hughes 2002). Such notion of equality beings a criticism but the character’s actions indicate such inferences as the novels ends with Nisha’s marriage with Arvind. She does not challenges the institution of marriage which is an institution of subjugation. She challenges the patriarchy as she raises up and lift up her assertion of
individuality against male-controlled Indian culture and recognizes her own self as an efficacious professional woman, wife, and as a mother.

In a conservative society, Nisha tries to release herself from the imperious patriarchy and to ascertain her own voice and expression to enunciate her opinions, to generate her identifiable means to manage herself is an extensive and operose journey against woman-subordination, subjugation, and sobriety. Kapur's demonstrates, in her writing, worriedness not only about socio-political-economical predicament distressing middle-class Indian women but also about the anonymity of their stature and their altering methods and their competencies in confronting difficult situations.

The depiction of everyday life of women is a tactics to counter the male centric discourse and Kapur does the same as inaugural of the work of fiction familiarizes with Banwarilal's family who inhabits in the Delhi and operating well his textile trade. Sona, an elder daughter-in-law of Banwarilal's family left sterile for years while the younger daughter-in-law of Sushilawas fortunate with two sons named Ajay and Vijay. Sona after a long time apprehends and after ten months, she gives birth to a girl, called Nisha who was flourishing in salubrious setting of a combined family.

The misfortune happens when Nisha was six years old, maltreated by her cousin brother Vicky. This unpleasant incident shattered her childhood. After that, she was not able to eat or sleep well. Nisha was very innocent to comprehend what happened to her body and she grew silent. She dissociates herself from her family. Her mother has faith in cleanness of mind and body but her body is dirty now. She was helpless against the trauma that was haunting her. The same incident happens with Meiji in Manjula Padmannabhan’s *The Island of Lost*
Girls where Meiji’s internal parts were thrust by other girls and as Nisha, Meiji senses her body in a strange way:

She [Meiji] tapped her head, ‘In here. It’s not just a different place. It’s a different way of being. I don’t know how to explain myself. I can feel it! But I can’t see it around me. And no one knows what I’m talking about.’ She flicked her eyes away. She could feel tears prickling under her lids, but she was determined not to cry. (Padmanabhan, 245)

On the demand of her aunt Rupa, Nisha was sent to her aunt’s home where she became a centre of attraction in Rupa’s family who was a barren female. Nisha got her psyche more refined at her aunt's house and made her studies more enhanced under the affectionate care of uncle Premnath. The consequence of this nutrition and care garnered Nisha’s disturbed psyche.

Gradually, the girl’s bad dreams grew infrequent. In their cessation Rupa found proof that the demon lay in her home—otherwise, would such a small child willingly leave her mother? She could only marvel at the spirit that she screams till she was rescued. [67]

Kapur has delineated a new image in her female protagonists like Nisha, Rupa and Pooja who represent new women. Sona believes in the futility of girls’ education and has faith in marital status of girls. She thinks that Nisha should learn family unit obligations which would help her after her marriage. Having a different plan for Nisha, Rupa notices the changing circumstances of educational status of women where people don’t think about young woman's future.

Sometimes ago dominance of men over women was not acknowledged where women made no grumbling about it. Now everything is taking a new turn as numerous women now have comprehended their esteem and have begun challenging
the badgering and misuse. Kapur has straightforwardly expressed that new women built up their aptitudes and hopped into the war zone of life battling against all kind of social imperatives, enthusiastic ties, religious limits and social grasps. They aren't just equivalent to men but one stage ahead of them. When contrasted with smothered women modern women have accomplished and maintained a higher status as a general rule despite everything they need to go far. Despite the fact that they confront bunches of hardships they conquer those impediments and began raising their voice for their space, respect and character straightforwardly against the man-centric culture.

Nisha has understood her abilities and has begun to scrutinize the treacheries done to her. She has additionally learnt to choose her own particular ways without anybody's direction. She needs to have full control over her fate. She would do what she likes to do and appreciates life without bounds. For her, nothing is more vital than her own peculiar self. She has set an impeccable case that she can accomplish and achieve her goals without props. In spite of the fact that the advance might be moderate, it is unquestionably reasonable that Kapur in her fictions with power depicts New Women who incorporate positive characters as Rupa and Nisha.

Nisha is a girl of numerous skills and dexterity who can go to any degree to satisfy her dreams and requirements. She is a girl of progressive mindset that becomes clear from her friendship with a boy named Suresh in her school. Pratibha, her friend, makes her cognizant about this boy and asks her to get some pieces of information about his family and position. She also makes Nisha aware of her young age. Nisha just imagines and says that you think a young girl and boy cannot be friends.

This newly found love has transformed Nisha into a valiant young girl and she strolls with Suresh in the gardens and cafés. Gradually, it transforms her everyday life
and shows her enjoyment with newly acquired independence. Suresh prescribes her to trim her hair like Suraiya, a notable film star. She does likewise. It reflects her docile nature but it is not her fault. Indian girls are nurtured to follow their male counterparts without questioning them. However, Nisha departs from traditional role-play in terms of being similarly cognizant about her examinations and when her exam days are drawing close, despite being stressed over, she declines to meet him. She values education over love.

Not just in education, Nisha embraces the modern dressing that is important in improvement of personality. Woman’s clothes are designed to control their mobility and hide their physical beauty. Acceptance of the western clothes is symbolically an indication of her freedom in literal sense. Clothes represent the culture and wearing new clothes are like acquiring and accepting new cultures and their thoughts. In her looks and disposition, she achieves a new look of a new young girl. Kapur delineates in Nisha a young girl, who desires to make self-journey with claimed ability and builds up her own particular and individual character.

By challenging the accepted norms that girls do not approach boys, she candidly discusses her marriage, she solidly asks Suresh when his family would approach hers with the marriage proposal. As her love with Suresh was taking a shape, she was missing many lectures in college and her family received a letter from college about her short attendance.

Nisha as an individual is under the oppression of a dominant power structure known as family. “It is women's responsibilities in terms of the family that appears to be the most resistant to change (Hughes 34).” She faces numerous inquiries from her family side when she tries to avoid her familial responsibilities. She desires to meet her lover once but fails under the obligation of her family. Her boyfriend is mishandled by
her family members. Her family proves to be a big block in development of her personality. She protests against the domination and control of her family over her choices. This rebellious proclamation resounds her courage to defy the powerful familial structure with her newly found voice. This voice helps her to develop the self as per men. She refuses to accept any disparity between man and woman.

Nisha continues to challenge the power structure by raising her voice and getting married by having her own choice and avoiding the norms of the family. The selection of a boy by girl’s family takes away the voice from the girls. Male, generally a father or brother, takes the decision on girl’s side. Djebbar elaborates this replacement of voice in relation to Islamic culture:

A terrible substitution for the word of one by another, which, moreover, opens the way to the illegal practices of the forced marriage.

Her word deflowered, violated, before the other deflowering, the other violation intervenes. (Smith 339)

It has been agreed that the affirmation for marriage which comes from the girls is expressed under the obligation of familial responsibility and honour through her silence or tears. Nisha was under the impression that her family will ask her for her affirmation on her marriage with Suresh but this illusion is shattered when she was detained inside her home.

Nisha expresses her loss of voice, in tears as a sign of expression, to her uncle Premnath who reveals to her that Suresh’s family ought to have met her family. Here, the story takes a turn. Suresh declines to wed her, leaving Nisha into shock. She contemplates that her brother was right in his choice. This incident shows a dichotomy of thought. One should prefer individual thoughts and values to the opinions of elders and family members. The solution of this dilemma is contextual.
and culture specific. This event curtails Nisha’s newly found voice.

Nisha’s dependency on her family returns as Suresh vanishes from her life and this confines her in the courtyard. The space, she was trying to acquire by marrying on her will, has been denied. Nisha has no choice and she hoists her future into the hands of the family. Nisha’s submission is perceived as a victory of cultural obligation over an individual’s desire acquiring the power of accepted norms to decide the future of the girl. Her family makes her sit in front of young men that torments her. She loses her control when she finds that her family has given a promotion for the marriage of a mangli girl. She is tormented under the exercise of absolute power by her family.

Education again shows the rays of hope in regaining Nisha’s strength. She is graduated in English honours and does not like to confine herself in the home. She centers on her vocation and does some professional courses. Meanwhile, Nisha discovers dim sketchy spots on her skin. The skin illnesses has increased the agony in her life as beautiful skin of girls gets preference over their wisdom in Indian culture. Her mother practices some skin treatments like aromatic healing and homoeopathic because she knows the value of healthy skin. Nisha may be rejected because of her skin illness and the very idea is making her depressed. She faces discrimination as her cousin Pooja does not allow her to touch her infant because of dim dark coloured fixes on her skin. She needs to regain her health and confidence at any cost because her freedom depends upon her healthy skin.

Nisha’s independence relies on her being economic independent. Her patriarch Yashpal comprehends the sentiments of his little girl. He finds an occupation of the instructor in playgroup close to their home. Nisha, for a few days, manages to go there, however, following a couple of days she was burnt out in this activity. She is determined to end the economic inequality between sexes that is one of the root causes
of woman’s oppression. She thinks to do the business like her siblings. She tells, with a sense of authority, to her father that she has seen girls working in shops. This uncovers her inner self that demands economic equality.

Nisha dismisses the male-centric association of jobs in an extremely quiet, tranquil and judicious way. She stands against the sexual division of labour. In Marxist Feminist analysis, the division of labour is an important issue which has been brought by making some changes in Marxism on the line of feminism as it “substitute(s) sex for the role taken by class in classical Marxist analyses” (Madsen, 66). Nisha gets discriminated on the basis of her sex in materialistic scenario.

To dismantle the sexual division of labour Nisha cultivates an idea to open up her own shop of salwar-suits. She entertains the profession of males and it is considered that “within Marxism gender equality was based on the assumption that capitalism would increasingly draw women into the labour force and this would destroy the sexual division of labour (Hartmann in Hughes, 51 1981). Nisha’s entrance into man’s occupation provides her a space. This space gives her an authority and a voice to raise her status and to make her presence in patriarchal society. She uses this space and agency to challenge the patriarchal and social norms. She marries to a man of lower caste than hers. Her economic independence empowers her to do so.

Nisha’s actions demand for equality but before that she acknowledges that she is different from the males of her family. In the issue of difference she values herself over her family. The acceptance of difference between men and women makes the ground for different roles and demands to fulfill by them. The assigned different roles become accepted norms. This norms becomes the tool in the hands of patriarchy to subjugate, marginalize and ostracized women.

The difference between the sexes was validated before and after the
independence movement of India under the influence of the western feminist thought. The origin of this notion of difference is ascribed to the writing of Mary Wollstonecraft. The notion of difference is not accepted under the ambit of gender studies because it postulates it as a social and cultural construct. This novel indicates Kapur’s emerging disbelief in the western notion of equality.

Kapur has given preference and central position to women characters rather than men characters. Women are provided more space and has valorized the difference. Nisha is different from but equal to them. She has complimentary virtues that men lack. She rebuts, refuses and attacks all the given preferences to man over women through her actions like marrying on her will with an outcaste man, opening a shop and all. Her difference is superior to man. Her virtues and values are adhere to some kind of universality of womanhood.

It demonstrates a new kind of consciousness in women who are not undermined by the differential treatment. The main reason behind their subjugation is the differences that have given them secondary status in the society. It valorizes and celebrates the difference as women’s virtue. The celebration of difference gets valediction from the notion that women’s experiences are different from men and it should be celebrated.

This depiction and celebration of women’s experience raises questions: who are the women and which kind of experience? Are these women belong to all parts of the world? Have they some kind of universality in their characteristics and identity? Have they common experience or have some difference? The postmodern and post structural understanding question the category of women and denies any fixed identity of women. As it promotes “women is no longer understood as a unified whole but as a process, as fragmented, as in the flux and as multiple (Hughes 58).” This notion questions the unifying identity of women and depiction.

Every characterization of women is incomplete and complex because there is no fixed image or identity of women and it’s changing consistently. There has to have
some fixed or stable characteristics, traits or features of women on which one can project its depiction of characters of women. The absence of any universally accepted image of women questions all the depiction of women and brands them unreal and just a product of imagination of writer or puppet to fulfill their propaganda.

The experience cannot impersonate itself without a self. The representation of woman’s self is problematic. The consciousness of woman’s self is primarily formed by the given cultural and materialistic conditions. Depiction of women, out of the culture, is not possible because women collective identity is embedded in the culture. It develops in relation to the others like mother, relatives and other women. The unique and individual identity is foreign to women. It’s white, heterosexual and male identity. It’s very difficult to portray a unique identity of women as it’s always relational.

The relational identity or image of women questions the actual identity or image of women. Simone de Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex* postulates women are culturally and socially constructed. So what is the real self of women? Is there any real self of women? Are women aware of their real self? Are they conscious of their construction? These questions further question the depiction of women by writer either male or female. Which self of the women are they representing in their writing? If the constructed one, who is going to portray the real one and how the constructed image of women can raise or bring the issues of women in the existing knowledge?

It leaves the main issue problematic. For that reason writers claim to write i.e. to bring the women’s issues and experiences in the domain of public sphere. The question of real self of women put question on women’s representation. Rowbotham, in *Women’s Consciousness, Men’s World*, makes it more difficult by proposing a hall of mirror of culture based on Lacan’s concept of mirror stage. She postulates the
The evolution of women in front of mirror which is “the reflecting surface of cultural representation into which a woman stares to form an identity... that mirror does not reflect back a unique, individual identity to each living woman; it projects an image of WOMEN, a category that is supposed to define the living women’s identity (Smith, 75)”. This leaves women identity as fluid and in flux.

The absence of accepted image and universalized women’s experience brings the difference in the depiction of women not only in male authors but in female writers itself. The western women writers promote the western white women experience as universal that undermines the experience of women of other race, class, region, ethnicity and colour. The women writer of non-western countries, due to lack of any model, either identify themselves with such notion of experiences or reject them. In both cases they relocate their experiences to some different place which leaves their characters unreal or imaginary. To undermine such difference and depict the real women, they take the help of culture. The real image and voice that exist in oral culture and not diluted by the western invaders. Such images and voices have the real value and virtues of real women of different cultures.

Mores, in her work *Literary Women*, assumes that the consciousness of women can be expressed directly in writing but she underestimates the language plays. To understand the play of language it is important to know Lacan’s theory of mirror stage:

The child knows himself as a spate entity by seeing his whole shape in the mirror and identifying that false image with a sense of a distinct and coherent identity. As the Odeipal phase supplants the early narcissistic sense of self, that child continues the process self-construction through the acquisition of symbolic systems, pre-eminently language itself. To
Lacan, the self constructed through language is also false, like the image in the mirror. (Smith 74)

The construction of the self is not real as it’s evident that the child perceives and forms an imaginary self. The imaginary self remains with him, for the whole life, that he wants to achieve. If one’s own self is fictive how that person can depict the self of the other with the help of language when the self, that language forms, is a fictive self. When the child see himself in mirror:

That, the child says to itself, is me! And thus the self becomes split. The split in the subject inaugurated by the entrance into language generates the sense of an ever elusive grasping toward self-presence that is forever unachievable. For the split in the subject can never be sutured. Thus, Lacan proposes, the coherent, autonomous self is indeed a fictive construct, a fantasy of the fully present subject in language. (Smith 18-19)

As the characters are constructed by the language so the depiction of real self is questionable when even the language itself is patriarchal. The formation of literary character is thrice removed from reality.

Primarily, the creation of imaginary characters helps to counter the real issues that make the lives miserable of an entity called woman. The woman’s writing advances attack on patriarchy by creating new role models and new pattern of living. The formation of a new image is subjected to ideology. Louis Althusser’s concept of ideology:

[U]nderstood the social subject as a subject of ideology- not ideology in the narrow sense of propaganda but ideology in the broad sense of the pervasive and inescapable cultural formations of the dominant class… as
a way of understanding how ideology works to confirm the subject, Althusser differentiated “Repressive State Apparatuses” (RSAs) from Ideological State Apparatuses (ISAs)... both RSAs and ISAs “hail” the subject who enters them, calling her to a certain subject position. In this sense she is ‘interrelated” as a certain kind of subject through ideology that informs and reproduces the institution. (Smith 21)

But while doing analysis it draws the attention to the isolation of the text from the writer. It may abscond a number of issues and experiences of women which can radically transform literary depictions. The relation between author and text is needed to observe the women characters either in terms of realism or stereotype.

Kapur has chosen realism to represent the characters. Her characters replicate the life of real human being. In realistic novels protagonists fight against the unjust social norms and emerges as a winner at the end. Women characters are shown on the same line. It seems that Kapur has observed in India an exciting and rare experience: the appearance of women in search of a destiny that should surpass, though not essentially substitute, the domestic space.

To sum up, Kapur emphasises on the depiction of daily life of Nisha, contrary to male writers’ depiction of male characters that shows male’s achievement and status in the society. This depiction not only provides a space to characters in the society but also provides a space in the existing knowledge. Male writings hardly depict women and domestic space in the positive terms. Kapur’s depiction of Nisha’s daily life struggles brings the core of women’s issues in the centre of discourse. The discourse that always favours the powerful ideology. Women’s experience has no space in the prevailing knowledge and discourse.
This experience frames Nisha as a role model. This new pattern of living counters the old fashioned stereotypical representation of women in male centric writings. This representation provides a new image of the women. This new image and space work as an agency for the women to attack the patriarchal social setups. Through this authority, Nisha gets the voice to question the sexual division of labour. She not only questions it but also dismantles it by opening her own shop. This dismantling of sexist division of labour counters the western binaries that impose hierarchy. The absence of hierarchy paves the way for the equality between the sexes. That’s the just demand and the reason for the women’s writing in a very broad sense.

This chapter also underlines the issues of representation or depiction in the writing. The character itself is a construct of ideology. The subject itself is a subject of the ideology. The culturally constructed self takes the real self away from the reality. Even language fails to depict the real self, due to its non-referential nature. After discussing the number of theorist and their theories; it’s evident that there is hardly any possibility to depict the real self in the text. It can be referred from the above discussion that the creation of an imaginary character helps the writer attack the biased social norms that subjugate, marginalize and ostracize women.
Works Cited


