CHAPTER – VI

CONCLUSION

The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn.

- Gloria Steinem

6.1.0. It was proposed in the introductory chapter to undertake a comparative study of the dilemma of modern women in their conformity and non-conformity to the patriarchal roles with reference to the select works of Doris Lessing and Rajam Krishnan. This predominant trait in both the novelists crowns their novels as a feminist critique. Brief introductions to the similarities among the protagonists and about the authors’ background were provided. It made a survey of the changing attitudes towards feminine mystique in the context of the feminist movements, highlighting issues such as the creation of the mystique and the sexual politics through institutions of patriarchy. Patriarchy imposes varied roles on women. Conforming to such roles is unconditionally compulsory. The theme and characterization of the selected novels are vital as they reinforce the dissertation’s nucleus— the socio-familial protest of women who are valued and devalued as per the varied necessities and demand of patriarchy and the patriarchal society. The novels selected and the literary backdrop of the novels signify the much-experienced issue of women the dichotomy between conformity and non-conformity. It identified the causes for modern women’s tendency to escape patriarchal suffocations, the reason behind their priority and dedication they owe their career and their craving to establish self-identity. The sexual politics, which involves creation of mystique, the extent to which women are able to assimilate the roles foisted on them; the psychological and social problems involved in fitting into roles or rejecting such roles; the author’s special endowment of feminist sensibility and sensitivity, which is apparent in their art and autobiographies, were the focus in the first chapter. A feminist analysis of patriarchy discloses that the intricate relationship between patriarchy and its
smaller unit the family with societal sanction has deprived women of their rights and has awarded them the chattel rank. The present deplorable status of women: the origin and implications of monogamous heterosexual marriage; introspection into their inherent craving for establishing their self-identity and through what strategies their self-identity is established were elaborated in the subsequent chapters.

6.1.1. Chapter II— Daughter: Not born but *Becomes* focused on the protagonists’ myriad experiences the girls at teens face due to the biological vulnerability. The analysis was undertaken in three dimensions— the female protagonist’s feminist consciousness as a child, as a teenage girl and as an adult. It also traced their consequential awakening towards the double standards of the patriarchal society that accords them only the secondary status ‘the other’ while exploiting their youth for its personal ego and pleasure. The second chapter has established the protagonists’ sensitivity as daughters towards the discriminations and the way they steer towards non-conformity to patriarchal ideologies, through protests and denials. The ensuing conflicts in the family, project the vying between tradition and modernity. The second chapter also has related the reason for ravaging male instinct to possess women tracing it to the origin of property. It has finally analyzed whether the female protagonists who possess unique sensibility towards suppression and subjugation— establish their self-identity. This chapter further proclaimed that Lessing’s daughters Martha, Ella, Anna and Molly with strong determination resolve to live their own lives as they desire because conformity has only awarded them pain and stress irrevocable. Rajam Krishnan’s daughters— Valli through her personal experience and Rekha in spite of her conservative family background rise to idealistic levels, vowing to join women’s liberation movement and dedicate their lives for the emancipation of women and the downtrodden. Valli is infact a highly remarkable idealistic character who transforms a village into an idealistic village. Mary confused by the society’s view yields to unsuccessful marriage. Devi who belongs to the usual...
middle class family with her limited education accepts her parent’s guidelines and hence unwillingly caught up in an extravagant marriage the impact of which the ensuing chapter elaborated and Meena though a graduate and though marriage is not very desirable switches over to compromise due to compulsive circumstances.

6.1.2. Chapter III— **Wife: Marriage Mars Heaven** traced the process of women’s conformity and non-conformity to the familial and social established norms of the patriarchy while undertaking a wife’s role. Though mostly marriage is their career, the intricacies of fitting into such role are deeply analyzed. ‘Choice’ itself is an unknown territory for females. A close observation at the reasons behind their marriage and their feelings regarding their choice later after some considerable years of married life reveals the truth they never chose marriage willingly and invariably all of them regret profusely the mistake they had committed in choosing to marry. However, family is always spoken of as cozy and pleasure fetching but the reality is only hypocrisy, which is highlighted in the chosen novels, which are good specimen of effective feminist critique. The ironic secrets of real female sexuality are a surprise— not the secrets themselves but the novelists’ courage and openness in expressing them. Whether submissive or dominating; brutal or gentle an ever self-imposing husband’s monitoring a wife psychologically and physically, the pressures and compulsions of marriage and the various unreasonable commitments demanded from a wife are rendered truthfully and with understanding. They have also expressed poignantly a wife’s consciousness of her secondary status, the root cause of which the dissertation traces to ownership ideologies imbibed in men. The struggle is so bitter only silence and surrender seems to be her weapon in her wifehood. The complexities of male domination, some visible outright and others gentle and invisible superficially create regret in all women protagonists regarding the very act of marriage itself– which forms the pre-crisis period of their protest in all the selected novels.
6.1.3. Chapter IV—**Mother: Bearing and Rearing** analysed how women’s capacities for mothering and abilities to get gratification from it are strongly internalized and psychologically enforced by being built into the feminine psychic structure. This chapter traced the male ownership greed, the ambition to overcome mortality through inheritance and the resultant overthrow of ‘mother right’ as the historical reasons for the forceful bearing and rearing vested on women. The ensuing contradictions and conflicts arising in women gave birth to the feminist phase of women who realized their discontent. It is interesting to note how the modern mothers who protest and contradict with their traditional mothers cope with their roles molded by the necessity and practical situations of their modern life. The chapter proceeds to analyze whether these modern mothers suffer or rather assimilate their roles easily. For most of them, it is a suffocating experience. The chapter has further reinstated how the selected novelists have depicted the conflicts arising out of women undertaking the mother’s role. The modern mothers not only protest and contradict with their traditional mothers as in the case of Martha of *The Proper Marriage* but also suffer from an internal vying between the traditional motherhood ideologies nurtured strongly in their characteristics and the emancipated modern realistic mother molded by the necessity and practical situations of her modern life. This chapter exposes the truth that women who have been tolerant and enduring as daughters and wives now seek to shirk their role. They leave home as a token of their protest temporarily or forever which though certainly may shock the patriarchs yet offers them a scope to rectify and make amendments and remedies for the harm they have done women.

6.1.4. Chapter V—**Woman as a Social Entity: Rocking and Ruling** estimated the social consciousness of the novelists, their perspective regarding the society in relation to the status it accords women and the way the novelists kaleidoscope women as a social entity. The void, which Lessing’s protagonists experience in their familial life they endeavor to fill it through their career as
artists, as creative writers and undertaking active role in communist party. On scrutiny, what role the society ascribes on women, it is inferred that the society is always critical about an individual especially about the women. Hence the kernel of the matter for women is always ‘what would people say?’ This is nurtured in to their very fabric from the childhood. The themes of Doris Lessing’s novels are an exploration of the social pressures on a woman. Rajam Krishnan also projects through her career women that society is always oppressive insisting on women’s conformity, which is always painful and futile for women. Individual, women especially fear society so much that even an insignificant gossip causes drastic changes in their lives. However, the consoling fact is that the protagonists were neither lost in their trials to fit into such roles nor do they walk out as misfits eliminated in the process. They positively strive to bring about transformations sustaining their individuality and identity. This is a very remarkably similar feature in both the feminist writers.

6.1.5. And this concluding chapter is going to vindicate how Lessing and Rajam Krishnan’s heroines take strong recourse to a debunking of the feminine instinct, /the myth / mystique of womanhood through their questioning and rejection of the varied roles foisted on them. They all positively attempt to break free from the image of the angel in the house which is crucial in placing the women in a societal context beyond their varied patriarchal roles imposed on them, a steering towards a more personalized self-identity that help women gain a room of their own. All the protagonists execute a socio familial protest from their capacity as a daughter, as a wife, as a beloved and single woman in the family and as an employed woman in the society, which salient feature renders all the familial novels of Lessing and Rajam Krishnan and especially the selected novels the esteem of vibrant feminist critique.

6.2.0. A quick recapitulation of the previous chapters encapsulate that the two selected novelists are feminists because they through their art have established the notion that personal is political, their feminist consciousness oozes
out in every thought process of the protagonists in their feel, emotion, realizations, reactions and convictions. The protagonists certainly are not radicals or revolutionaries yet do protest in their limited hierarchy as middle-class women. The keen realization of their secondary position, the practical, positive, realistic course of action they indulge in to bring about changes in their state—these are the factors which reinforce doubly their conviction in 'a room of one's own' to establish their real self and an identity of their own. It is explicit in these novels, which are a realistic portrayal of life that the protagonists pay their price for both conformity and non-conformity. While conforming to feminine norms their self suffers due to suppression of self-identity while through non-conformity, they earn the society’s animosity but do establish their self-identity and hence this is their victory.

6.2.1. Lessing has always been a critical realist. Her conviction that the political and the personal are inseparable derives as much from literature as from life. “We all know there is a terrible gap between the public and the private conscience and that until we bridge it we will never be safe from the murderous madman or the anonymous technician” (1957:14). Her conviction in line with Darwin, Spencer and Mark is that the individual is constructed by his society. Her prophetic view of the progeny is “…our great-great-great-grandchildren will look back and it will be perfectly clear to them that the way we see the world now, was incorrect. But then their view will be of their time. It doesn’t matter” (GN:319).

6.2.2. Lessing herself has stressed in the Preface to *The Golden Notebook* that it described many female emotions of aggression, hostility and resentment. In fact many very ancient weapons were unleashed, the main ones, as usual, being on the theme of ‘she is unfeminine’, ‘she is man-hater’. However, Lessing the realist’s reply for this criticism is: “There is no record I have read of any society anywhere when women demanded more than nature offers them that does not also describe this reaction from men— and some women” (1983:3). Ros Coward, a British
Cultural critic, eloquently argues that the reproduction of ‘languages’ of femininity and masculinity in film, television and literature construct gender hierarchies and marginalize women. In her challenging essay, ‘Are Women’s Novels Feminist Novels?’(1980), she argues that it is not possible to say that women-centered writings have necessary relationship to feminism and to make such a claim it would be necessary to specify in what way ‘women-centered’ writing, allying itself with feminist politics, did mark itself out as different. She, however agrees that Lessing is different kind of feminist: “… and finally there is a whole host of novels which are adopted as honorary ‘feminist novels’, taking in such different writers as Doris Lessing, Fay Weldon and Alison Lurie” (Maggie Humm: 377).

6.2.3. Those potential women writers have always projected at every crucial juncture the status of women in society. In the analysis of female characterization in the hands of such female writers the tone of pleading or arguing for the sake of women could be intricately felt. In Middle March and Jane Eyre we are conscious of a women’s presence— of someone resenting the treatment of her sex and pleading for its rights. Pleading for their rights is an element which is absent in men’s writing, “…unless, indeed he happens to be a working man, Negro, or one who for some other reasons is conscious of disability” observes Leonard Woolf (1972:144). Similar idea is expressed in Small Personal Voice (1975) an autobiography of Doris Lessing— women who do not speak in men’s presence are cowards and deserve their plight she says. Thomas Gale states in Encyclopedia of World Biography (2004): “Doris Lessing’s work is the work of an exile. As white South African, she was an outsider to European Society; as a socialist, she prohibited herself from re-entering Africa: as a woman, she was left out of a male-dominated culture: as an artist, she was relegated to the outside of the collective of which she and her characters strived so hard to be a part. And her characters were exiles as well.” Though Rajam Krishnan belongs to the aristocratic strata, she is a perfect realist who captures issues of middleclass women to the core truthfully and empathetically.
6.2.4. The themes of Doris Lessing’s novels are an exploration of the social pressures on a woman. She painted the vision of a destructive discourse of women in family heralds, protest and rebellion. Her protagonists learn how to explore their inner eye at the same time life is full of trials in understanding their own heritage. *The Grass is Singing* truly casts the burden of choosing marriage and maintaining certain role within a marriage. This novel intricately describes the agony arising out of the discrepancies between what a female protagonist hears—the society’s powerfully persuasive discourse and her own small questioning inner voice. The novel’s attraction lies in the way the novelist dramatizes how the heroine is able to sustain painfully a dialogue between the two.

6.2.5. Doris Lessing as a creative artist helps us to catch the complexities, to make the small thing that which is rough, apparently formless, unshaped as neat. Any real teaching about literature should aim to produce originality of feeling and excitement about the book. Lessing stimulates illuminates and even annoys at times with her variety of sex-war, politics, and theme of mental illnesses. The author might have a clear picture but various readers see varied patterns and one different from another. Lessing herself agrees that it is only childish of a writer to want readers to see what she sees. A book is alive, potent, fructifying and promotes thought and discussion only because its plan, shape, and intention are not understood comments Lessing in her autobiography.

6.3.0. Self-introspection about one’s individuality also mixed with certain fears about the approval of the society becomes the inevitable feature in the characterization of the female protagonists in the hands of the chosen novelists. The universal literary feature is that characterization develops through focusing characters not merely as representations of universal humankind but only by highlighting the unique features, pertaining to male gender and female gender. It is obvious that women characters usually only hold a secondary positions in such creative writings. A woman is depicted as submissive, she is not the decision
maker, anger is to be detested in a woman, strong body language to be avoided but on the other hand the man is the center of action, pivoted for the development of plot, virile, aggressive dominating and emphatic. In real life women is less individual than man is, she runs less with idiosyncrasies, and she conforms rather to the general type. This however, could be identified as owing to the conformity she shows to the conventional patriarchal rules, which the society prescribed conditions and imposed on women. However, a true literary artist is the one who projects innovative expressions befitting to one’s contemporary age but of course without destroying the conventional principles of literature.

6.3.1. Hence, some women writers sought to set new trends for themselves objecting to the literary traditions, which justified the weakness of men and challenged the hurdles, which women had to face when they even slightly deviated from laid prejudiced norms. It is the historical fact that women had to sail assimilating and rejecting those social transformations that occur from time to time. The emergence of women literary artists created change in the literary scenario, which all along dictated and justified women’s dependency on men as quite natural and appreciated her feminine charms. Male dominance through literature also was constantly conditioning women’s psychology towards believing that unless she conformed to the ingrained feminine ideologies which caricature women as the incarnation of patience and forbearance she is determined to face the consequential sufferings which become quite inevitable. Spacks comments:

Through all literary genres— criticism as well as poetry, fiction, autobiography— women demonstrate their approach to the solving of these (women’s) problems, the consciousness of difficulty presents itself over and over (1975:35).

Women are not allowed to state that their problems are important— they are eager to state and desire to solve it but they lack the confidence to say it really matters.
They want somebody else to say it for them. Some hope, some put a brave face and make their misery a good entertainment, — the reader may through the deception of entertainment read the real misery and take them seriously, as they have been forbidden to do so for themselves.

6.3.2. Women become feminists by becoming conscious of and criticizing the power of symbols and the ideology of culture. English as a compulsory subject will always be about power and criticism its weapon. Since any concept of women as independent professionals does not exist, feminism will have to make literary criticism as an integral part of the feminist struggle. The need of the hour is more women critics rather than women writers. ‘Questioning Ownership’ is a fundamentally feminist standpoint. Such questioning reveals the strategies of ‘Sexual Politics’, which concentrates on the socialization of both sexes by classifying temperament into male and female thereby assigning limited sex roles. Activities like domestic service are reserved for females, while technological innovations and other creative spheres are classified as male domains. Traits of dominance and aggression developed in the male sex are seen as evidences of their innate leadership qualities.

6.3.3. The project of recovering the hidden history of women has been common to contemporary feminism. Whether women had a rough and ready equality with men under feudalism or whether there is evidence of a complex sexual division of labour the prevalent sexual division of labour by a large removed women from the arena in which history was made, that of the expropriation of a surplus in labour dues or other forms of feudal extraction. Women were hidden from history because they did not make it. The middle class identity was an important part constituted by class-differentiated gender-conceptions, and relations between the sexes. The making of the English middle class was also the making of the ‘proper lady’, the making of middle class masculinity.
6.3.4. Women’s liberation is not just middle-class women’s problem, socio-economic problem, political problem, or family oriented but it constantly reacts with all these factors and simultaneously functions as an event with its own clause and exists as a part of the social changing factors. Except in matters of sex there does not seem to be much discrimination in the western countries when compared to east. Personal choice is accorded to women in case of sexual relationship. In eastern countries as far as a man and woman relationships is concerned, there are certain conventions and code of conduct established in the society, but such laws are always favorable and beneficial to men and always affecting the growth of women as an individual. In any matter in any relationship and in any working designation the combinations such as boss and secretary, doctor and nurse, men mostly hold all superior designations and the subordinates are mostly women.

6.3.5. In male dominated societies, the stages of the emancipation of women lie in the minds of men and in the attitude of their leadership. Though modes of behavior have changed, modes of thought have survived. Women of course cannot be studied in isolation, but should be studied in relation to men. Women exist as a category, whether biological or social only when considered in relation to its counterpart men and vice versa. Cultural background of any nation also should be taken into account while comparing the existing social status between men and women because as Rajagopalachari enhances that “Culture... is the sum total of living built up by groups of human beings and transmitted from one generation to another. People each with their own long history build up separate patterns of cultures. There is much that is common, but also a great deal that is particular to each nation” (1974:1).

6.4.0. A new thread of argument can be pursued from this point leading for further research beginning with the suggestion that what feminism need to achieve now is shift from politics of equality to politics of autonomy. Equality is measuring according to the given standards, which are always male centered and
hence it implies an acceptance and conformity to patriarchal expectations and requirements. Whereas claim for autonomy should be encouraged since in contrast to equality, autonomy implies the right to accept or reject norms or standards according to their appropriateness to one’s self-definition and implies the right to reject existing biased standards and to create new ones.

6.4.1. This argument could further strive to imply from feminist angle that women are ready to accept the institutions but should be only an androgynous society where everything is reciprocal—chastity, norms, household duties, rearing of children and emotional status. Men and women are interdependent. However, the society does not accept this. When the society honestly accepts that men and women are equal in all respects, they need to value each other equally, that they are interdependent for happy life, they are biologically, intellectually, socially, culturally equal and incentive need to be allotted to women for bearing children. Infact women should be valued superior based on this fact alone; that only she who has a womb can bear a child. If anything and everything is possible in the hi-tech globalised scenario then what the so called second class citizen—the woman intend and imply is: until the society accredits equality understanding of women’s problem and compensate and compromise for the harm done so long there shall be a rebellion. A revolt of disrespecting patriarchy wifehood, motherhood, shed all hood the world shall bear the truth painfully and shockingly as it does now. Of course even if “Women’s biological inheritance included many feminine characteristics and that their natural instincts suited them primarily for home making and childcare… however, that these differences do not justify the unfair treatment needed out to them by society” (Feminist Criticism: 20).

6.4.2. The vital question is if the women’s dilemma between conformity and non-conformity persists, it could endanger the existence of the institution of family with its social and psychological implications would be replaced with other patterns of life such as lesbianism, androgyny or Indian solution of celibacy, asceticism, spinsterhood, and bachelorhood—temporarily or forever. Mortality and
temporality of human existence needs to be accepted. Men are continuously battling with nature to establish their immortality. There is never a talk about stopping birth. We never say no to sex. Women to live independently, separately and to teach children to live individually can positively retain this concept then people would acknowledge the vitality of each other. Of course, child rearing would be affected. However, making it a legal contract, either in kind or cash—for a period similar to reservation policies undertaken by the government to render justice equality to those who were treated discriminatively in the past could be considered as a remedial process. Women will suffer. However, life on earth itself has become miserable—global warming population explosion, scarcity of potable water. Cloning is available and may opt for an heir through cloning, but as long as there are children—a nurturer is essential. This is a very sensitive area since children are vulnerable and thereby it becomes a complicated issue.

6.4.3. Even in the novels, it is at this junction; in view of children, the mothers suffering from dichotomy turn close to guilt and finally decide to compromise in the post-crisis period of their lives. When rearing becomes a profession it would be highly paid job and those duties presently, which are expected as unconditional such as wifely duties, and motherhood would really be appreciated.

6.4.4. Sexual identity that is ‘masculine’ and ‘feminine’ is cultural construction from childhood through patriarchal upbringing. If society really cares about women’s equality, individual children should be reared differently and / or collective living relationships should be set up. Such attempts represent an important part of the feminist struggle. The experience of Woman’s Aid suggests that social provision may often come before individual change, or that certainly the two go together. It is hard even to say it in the current economic climate, but today we need more than ever, nonsexist social provision because the family currently caters for many such needs. Unless the family is radically changed, we cannot develop different child rearing practices in which a sexual identity is
constructed that gives more conscious and creative control to the child than she / he currently enjoys. Mental disorder is a serious problem. Even those of us who have no crippling ‘symptoms’ must often experience a loss of energy, a paralysis of the will and an apathy generated by the kind of society in which we live. However, feminists who take psychoanalysis seriously will have at some stage to confront the sexism of the psychoanalytic movement and its institutional practices far more radically than has yet been done, just as feminist doctors have had to confront the medical hierarchy, and feminist social workers, the social services hierarchy.

6.4.5. The New feminism is not about the elimination of differences between the sexes; nor even simply the achievement of equal opportunity: it concerns the individual’s right to find out the kind of person he or she is and to strive to become that person vindicates Carden in Feminist Criticism.

Feminist Utopias promote the thought that seeks substitution of the patriarchal family model for a more democratic model for at least one in which the women had more varied economic and social choices than those prevailing in general society (1976:142),

observes Lerner. Feminist Utopian thinking is generated by the oppressive patriarchal systems and victimization of women under those systems. The Utopian element in feminist thought is embedded in the realities of woman’s life in contrast to other Utopias. It is revolutionary in nature with a view to changing woman’s place in society. Rooted in political consciousness, feminist Utopias question and challenge the oppressive modes and power structures of the world social order. Feminist thinkers like Julia Kristeva envisage a Society in which the sexual signifier would be free to move,

where the fact of being born male or female no longer
would determine the subject’s position in relation to power and where therefore, the very nature of power itself would be transformed (1981:172).

6.4.6. Another dimension of the research suggested earlier is vindicating that the authors have demonstrated in their novels that women have intrinsic value as persons rather than contingent value as a means to an end for others: fetuses, children, the family, and men. Their common concern is for women’s entitlement to full human rights: to say what happens to their own bodies, to develop their abilities without being defined and constrained by stereotypes of the ‘feminine’ to make their own choices and their own mistakes without being punished for them more than a man would be. The novelists perfectly co-inside with the opinion of the pioneer feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, ‘I wish to see women neither heroines nor brutes, but reasonable creatures’—as human beings, no more and no less.

6.5.0. This concluding chapter reinstates the novelists’ endeavour and success in intricately establishing through the selected novels the universal dilemma of modern women between conforming to roles foisted on them—socially, psychologically and patriarchally. This dilemma is identified as the sign of the subjugated intellect’s search for self-identity to gain the status of a human being, the aspiration to re-establish its truthful real self; in her own psyche, in the family and in the society. The constant internal vying between conforming to established notions and standards, her inability and unwillingness to conform has always been problematic to women. This chapter has focused introspection into the protagonists’ inherent craving for establishing their self-identity and strategies through which their self-identity has been established.

6.5.1. Lessing’s selected novels for study: The Grass is Singing; Martha Quest; The Proper Marriage and The Golden Notebook—are specimens of her truth telling heroines, who represent the lives of middle class middle aged house-
wives and professional women. All these women express their discontent, discomfiture of being daughters, lovers, wives, mothers, as professionals and ultimately the discontent and discomfiture of being women overall. Martha the heroine of The Proper Marriage falls headlong in love with Douglas. Surprised and shocked at being pregnant immediately after an hurried marriage and within two years realizes her wrong choice, divorces him leaving Caroline her daughter under the responsibility of Douglas as she doesn’t want to repeat the role of a strict matron like her mother, whom she hated to the core from her childhood.

6.5.2. The femininity that is nurtured into girl children from childhood suffocates them. Martha faces the agony of adolescent misery rebels her mother’s strivings to hide her physical change. The battle of clothes is carried on between the mother and daughter. Anna and Molly feel they grew up by themselves their mother being dead when they were quite young. The female protagonist evolve through their sensitive denials, disapprovals, retributions and rejections, their temperament and the way they face their varied circumstances is what the whole novel projects. The novelists themselves can be identified with the protagonists who are all middle class women clamoring for self-identity, hankering after non-conformity.

6.5.3. Anna is prepared to experiment with herself, to try to be a different kind of person, while she felt that her father’s generation simply submitted to something. When she suffers from writer’s block and stops writing temporarily, Molly her friend warns her: “I’ll never forgive you if you throw that talent away. I mean it. I’ve done it and I can’t stand watching you – I’ve messed with painting and dancing and acting and scribbling, and now…you are so talented, Anna. Why?” (GN: 27). Mary the heroine of was happy to escape from home when she was sent to a boarding school and in fact dreaded going home for holiday times to her fuddled father, her bitter mother. The theme of misunderstanding between mother and child lies like a dark, cold vacuum at the heart of Doris Lessing’s work” “(Doris Lessing and The Means of Change) (Plotting change:
Contemporary Women’s Fiction pg 2). What is interesting is her recurrent reworking of the relationship through out her fiction: May and Martha Quest, and Martha and Caroline in Children of violence (1951-1959), Anna, Janet, Molly, and Tommy in The Golden Notebook.

6.5.4. Women develop group characteristics, which are similar to those, developed by people who suffer minority status and a marginal existence. Gender identity I am a girl, I am a boy is the primary identity any human being holds, the first and the most permanent identity, which has far-reaching implications. Children are trained into feminine and masculine temperaments. All young women yearn for loving, understanding, appreciating people around them. She is only cared as a treasure for her chastity not as a personality. Women at teen age are vulnerable to treachery and cheatings.

6.5.5. ‘Marriage’ and ‘family’ in patriarchy are celebrated as sanctified institutions and considered as inevitable for human perpetuation. However, feminists view them as vile institutions, which only subordinate women for male gratification. All the selected novels highlight the monotony and servitude involved in undertaking the homemaker’s duties and the widely existing tendency to devalue such household chores and ultimately the person who is engaged in such economically unrewarding business, which is always a wife, is also devalued. Consortium — an annexure to the institution of marriage is sanctioned as legitimate and fulfilling experience for men but once again the involved double standards, which prescribe rules and regulations for female sexuality, are antagonizing from women’s point of view in reality. The complexities of male domination, some visible outright and others gentle and invisible superficially create regret in all women protagonists regarding the very act of marriage itself— which forms the pre-crisis period of their protest.

6.5.6. After some years of married state be it arranged marriage or marriage by choice or living together pattern of life, the foremost feeling all women face is
only regret. They all regret their very choice of marriage, the persons they have chosen, the monotony of household chores and the forceful role of a wife foisted on them. The husband’s disloyalty, their tendencies towards extramarital relationships, their unappreciable sexual life, and the wives hatred for their husbands expressed through criticism of their physical features and behaviours. Anna’s criticism is, “None of you ask for anything — except everything, but just for so long as you need it”. (GN: 569) All these only reveal their discontent and the various constrains in their married life. But women are unable to express their true emotions to the male members because women are not encouraged to have individual expectations or identities. They indulge in silence and towards the later stages in their lives; they develop neurosis or go crazy. Those who are courageous establish their self-identity and are content with it. Saul is ironical about women’s expectations, “…you are looking for a man in your life, and you’re right, you deserve one, but …you’re looking for a happiness”, (GN:495) implying that women can never get it from a man.

6.5.7. At the initial stage of non-conformity, Lessing’s and Rajam Krishnan’s protagonists as wives start complaining and criticizing. Of course, the protagonists come across the feeling of dichotomy a vying between the traditionally conditioned female attitudes and the spontaneous inherent feminist attitudes. At moments of crisis, they do switch over to non-conformity and establish self-identity. The initial step towards attaining self-identity is the regrets they convey about their family and married state. Women are under the compulsion to keep resolutely changing according to the various roles they play in different stages of their life. There is no stability either even in the identification by the society or in their own selves. Women are expected to keep on changing their identity and attitude, which is not very easy. Some women do change it as though attitudes were ‘thin shells’ that crackled at the top of a finger; but not for Anna, Martha, Mary, Devi & Meena. They suffer from non-conformity because they find the scope of changing attitudes too complicated.
6.5.8. When the protagonists caught up in the delusion and depression of married state reflect upon why they married they get the insight that after all it was not their choice. Even a few who have chosen their own course of life regret the fact and feel they made a wrong choice. It is not just the monotony of household chores but the servitude and servility involved in playing the role of a wife, which injures them deeply. The repressed and suppressed female sexuality, the disloyal men, the impertinent society violating a women’s original aims and desires, the crippled feminine psychology which compels a woman towards enduring the silent sufferings—these amalgamate together and represent the pre-crisis period in a woman’s life. The unreasonable, illogical and ungrateful patriarchy suffocates the protagonists so much that their suppressed anger and intentions to overthrow their subjugations are surging, awaiting an outlet. Conformity by itself proves fatal as in the case of Mary who is murdered by the native, yet the locals for her non-socializing only look this upon as a punishment. All the other protagonists Martha, Anna, Molly, Ella, Devi & Meena resort to bold non-conformity only in their motherhood stage.

6.6.0. Leasing and Rajam Krishnan criticize the most vital causes of women’s subjugation and oppression—the major institutions of society such as patriarchy and marriage frankly and subtly. The heroines unanimously echo that married life is full of deceptions, lies, and evasions offered by the husband and the wife to each other. All women regret in the case of arranged marriages or marriage by choice or living together pattern of life, after some years of married state or living together.

6.6.1. Introspection into why people desire to marry reveals that men and women desire to marry for different reasons. Molly of The Golden Notebook conscious later after a quick divorce she married at eighteen because: “She knew now she had married out of a need for security and even respectability’ (GN:28), Yet parents and the society have a varied interest in promoting marriage. Marriage is a very controversial concept, which dictates unequal and unjust terms and
conditions on women. It imposes monogamy on her socially and ensures polygamy for the husband. A wife has no individuality or identity; to her the husband is the ‘sheltering tree’. House wifery is an economically dependent occupation – married women engaged in unpaid home duties are not regarded or realized but only treated as ‘others’ economically inactive.

6.6.2. Anna and Molly of *The Golden Notebook* is specimen of new women or free women. They call themselves so and endeavour to live without husbands but are their life fulfilled is the vital issue. Whether is it a husband or a male sleeping partner woman attach some emotions but whereas men are very clear about the drawing line of partition.

6.6.3. Marry the heroine in *The Grass is Singing*, a successful professional with affluent money a lot of friends, a niche in the town suddenly lands up in hasty marriage. Curiously she is neither able to establish conjugal relationship with her husband, nor conform with the house-wife’s home maker duties under the impoverished conditions of her husband Turner’s household in the extraordinary heat of African suburban. She once even tries to run away from Turner her husband to the city. But the former successful secretary – recently turned housewife is unable to cope with the professional traditions of the city and is hence rejected by the professional community. Her dilemma between conformity and non-conformity is torturous and her end pathetic.

6.6.4. The protagonists of *The Golden Notebook* on the other hand are specimen of new women who ‘dare’ to live with men but without the licence of marriage conventions and legalities. The heroine and her close friend Molly are identical in their values, approach and pattern of life infact their society; colleagues and neighbors look upon them as one and find no differences between them. Moreover there is one more character Ella who emerges in the novel written by the protagonist Anna who is none other than Anna herself. Hence, I consider all the three Anna, Molly and Ella as symbolizing the heroine character— ‘three
in one’. However, the new women who are able to overthrow the rituals and customs of marriages, do they draw gratification from their relationship with men and how do such men react with them shall be discussed in the third chapter.

6.6.5. In Rajam Krishnan’s novel *The House*, Devi the Protagonist is the representative of the ideal homemaker all-feminine in her virtues, a dedicated wife and a devoted mother. However, as an individual she constantly undergoes an inner crisis, which often reminds her that she is being exploited and that her family is neither very keen on being grateful to her nor interested in upholding her values. This grain of dissatisfaction keeps on enlarging and there occurs a crisis in her motherhood stage. In Rajam Krishnan’s second novel taken up for study *After the Sound of Fury*, Meena an orphan girl adopted by the old servant ‘Aaya’ of the same orphanage, yearns for a respectable identity in the society. This urges in her the craving for a decent life. Her strong desire to escape from her slum background is directed towards focus on studies and good morals. When she starts her career as a teacher, she encounters the upper class society. She is shocked at the exploitation of women, the hypocrisy and at the atrocities of the upper class male. Though she reluctantly lands up into marriage forced by circumstances for a secured life, yet her craving for independence and respectable self-identity induces her to separate from her husband and to even under take abortion.

6.6.6. Rekha in *The Chains* when comes face to face with the dualities in the society is shocked and unable to conform to practicalities— the adjustments that a woman has to undertake in society when an innocent girl like Rekha who has been under the protection and conditioning of an orthodox family. Rekha resolve to join women’s liberation form to escape the suffocations she faces in her advent with the larger world.

6.6.7. Valli in *Mailampattu Valli* is a symbol of women from below poverty line who live in slums in filth and poverty / ignorance and exploitation. But the author deftly and realistically promotes her from ordinary slum girl into a young
woman who emerges as an ideal character who transforms her village as a model village through her dedication and endeavours. However, like all daughters, she shows signs of protest and escapism into love marriage but the ensuing treachery teaches her a lesson where by her individual transformation takes place.

6.7.0. To sum up according to Gerda Lerner’s broad definition in her Placing Women in History, patriarchy is the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. Women are conditioned to be stereotyped any other temperament or enterprises in a woman other than the stereotype images are rejected and hence undergo lot of tension and mental agony to get identity. Temperamental differences are nurtured in children. Girl children are conditioned towards more endurance, to suppress their anger and to maintain silence but women only use up anger positively as weapon. The social and economic roots of women’s oppression lies in the relegation of women to roles associated with their sexual or reproductive activity, which is disadvantageous to our progress as individuals and as a race. The strange discrepancy between the reality of their lives as women and the image to which they were trying to conform with led women to question the feminine ideal of motherhood.

6.7.1. Doris Lessing depicts the tensions and conflicts arising out of a woman’s mother role. The institution of motherhood gains sanction and is reinforced by religion that is essentially patriarchal. The image of the benevolent mother in both Western and Eastern tradition is an additional burden the woman has to carry. The mothers featuring in the selected novels accept the patriarchal definition of motherhood though in varying degrees yet is not silent conformists to feminine motherhood. Lessing’s own life has been challenge to her belief that people cannot resist the currents of their time, as she fought against the biological and cultural imperatives that fated her to sink without a murmur into marriage and motherhood. Lessing herself married at nineteen and the two children a few years later, feeling trapped in a personal that she feared would destroy her, she left her
family, remaining in Sails buries. Motherhood is such a grueling and enduring experience that they all pose certain expectations on the family in return. Nevertheless, when nothing materializes, when no gratitude is returned the fact that nothing is judicial and nothing is reciprocal dawn as a thunderbolt upon them. They start disintegrating. Motherhood is spoken of as a great ideology but daughters have aversion for their mothers. Society’s way of institutionalizing motherhood breeds guilt into the very fabric of a woman’s character. Women who bring up children as single parent are dumped with the extra burden of carefully maintaining the normality of their children’s life. The Social, psychological stigma of the unwed mother compels women like Anna into unwanted marriage. Men are immune to any guilt, remorse, or castration. Women try to inculcate the values essential for a ‘Model Mother’. With the birth of subsequent child, they begin to feel increasingly the burden of motherhood. Maternal ideologies cripple both male and female.

6.8.0. While examining the novelist portrayal of the protagonists in their societal roles as social workers the novelists have revealed positively women’s capacity to maintain good interpersonal relationship with their superiors; with colleagues and with those other than their own family men and women. On examining the extent of protagonists’ conformity to societal roles and the hierarchical status the society accords them in return it is observed that almost all the protagonists are career woman; either self-employed or in writing and teaching profession. The authors focus the limitations and the oppressive aspect of the society also. The fact, who becomes social worker and why is noticeable. Only those disappointed with their unrewarding familial roles or those who learnt a lesson from experience, cheated or feel exploited, undertake social work.

6.8.1. Lessing has written about the class cluster, the gross injustices of racial inequality the struggle among opposing elements, within an individual’s own personality, and the conflict between the individual conscience and the collective good. Moving to the Indian scenario Rajam Krishnan’s protagonists turn out to be
more determined and revolutionary in establishing their identity as successful career women and in fact go one step ahead and prove to be absolutely idealistic in dedicating their life for social transformations and emancipation of innocent ignorant mass living in the slum.

6.8.2. The society is always critical about an individual especially about the women. Hence, the kernel of the matter for women is always ‘what would people say?’ This is nurtured in to their very fabric from the childhood. The themes of Doris Lessing’s novels are an exploration of the social pressures on a woman. Her ‘new woman’ raise a very vital question “What’s wrong with living emotionally from hand-to-mouth in a world that’s changing as fast as it is?" (GN: 31).

6.8.3. Society is always oppressive. It insists on women’s conformity, which is always painful and futile for women. Individual, women especially fear society so much that even an insignificant gossip causes drastic changes in their lives. Men in society are oppressive and only cheat and exploit women, take advantage of their subordinate position, empower them through physical and mental aggression, violating and tress passing limitations at the least possibilities and provocations.

6.8.4. There are certain stigmas prevalent about male female relationship also. Men inside the family though are not very violent are yet in their trials to conform with established norms of masculinity do cause emotional violence directly or indirectly. In the society, comparatively a woman who is docile submissive and subordinate or the one who pretends to be so is able to thrive well. Sexual identity is constructed in the context of male power. Freud often describes very accurately the construction of the male power at the psychic level. The subordination of women occurs in a privatized way it has often been assumed that the struggle against it necessarily consists of for the most part private struggles — to change men, to change relationships with men, or (an entirely different but equally problematic solution) to abandon all relationships with men develop
relationships with other women is the recent trend. Lesbianism is observed as a recurrent factor in hostel life in metropolitan cities among students and employed women.

6.8.5. Only, those disappointed with their unrewarding familial roles or those who learnt a lesson from experience, cheared or feel exploited, undertake social work. The protagonists do fairly well as career women and social workers as they are recognized for their qualification, efficiency and potentiality. However both the British and the Indian authors focus on one side the society which accords them recognition and accreditation and on the other side the darker side of the society with exploiters and cheats who await ever ready to engulf and extinguish women. The tools of the oppressive society are male ego, sexual desire, gossip and scandalizing, girl child abuse and sexual extravagances. However, our protagonists who are rebels most of the time do not succumb but put up a protest and fight rather than be victimized.

6.9.0. In a nutshell, the comparison between Lessing and Rajam Krishnan leads to the inference that both the novelists Doris Lessing the British and Rajam Krishnan the Indian acknowledge the conflicting demands made on women as daughter, lover, wife, mother and worker. They both invariably portray how everything (work, sex, play) and everyone (family, friends) that could be a source of woman’s integration as a person become a cause of her disintegration. This feature uniquely renders their novels the status of feminist critique. All the heroines belong mostly to middle-class family and are mostly home makers. The characterization evolves in the household background, the span of time covering their childhood, youth and married life. It is interesting to note the similarities in impressions, emotions and regrets all the heroines hold regarding their own childhood breeding, concept of love, marriage and motherhood. This feature is not worthy because the authors themselves belong to various clime and country; culture and linguistic background.
6.9.1. All the protagonists are married women of middle age. All of them are educated and mostly employed or some involved in self-employment. The novels are full of open declarations of cynicism and discriminations in the life of a woman while performing the varied roles from her birth until death in all spheres of her life. Search for self-identity being the main theme other feminist issues such as criticism on patriarchy; the institution of marriage; conditioning of gender identities and reluctance and discontent towards role-playing are voiced through the heroines. Both the novelists criticize patriarchy and marriage the major institutions of society frankly and subtly as these are the most vital causes of women’s subjugation and oppression.

6.9.2. All the novels are descriptions of their role-playing and depictions of strained relationships with other members and their own self. The stories are loaded with flashbacks about their childhood breeding. Their realization of the discriminations their open declarations about the emotion love which they all discover later as foolishness is also similar. Their motive for marriage lies in seeking a change of place, to escape from parental custody. They all realize that their role-playing as homemaker is reward less and hence its fruitlessness regretted. Even mother’s role is relinquished as an unrewarding experience and object the idea that children are only the excuses for one’s living– the scape goats. Finally they are neither able to stick fast to their roles as imbibed in their psyche nor they are able to shed the bondages to live for self-gratification. It is clear they do not want to destroy patriarchy to the chore invisible but then what they yearn for is a set up with modifications. However, between the escaping and the establishing there are lot of trauma, guilt and consequences that such protesting women undergo which are elaborated in each chapter related to each role. This is what the British novelist and the Indian novelist strip out through their characterization of unique female protagonists whose sensitivity and endeavors are identical inspite of cultural variations between both the countries.
6.10.0. Both the authors are conscious feminists though Lessing denies, because of their criticism and ironical views on all the patriarchal institutions and the patriarchal society as a whole. Culturally though we may feel western women enjoy more freedom and have better scope of establishing their self-identity but with the issue of patriarchy and its vicious clutches the state and status of women is universal. In fact both the novelists are androgynous in their approach and hence labeling them as feminist is not acceptable to both of them.

6.10.1. The selected novels embellish as feminist critique because the selected novelists do not mirror model mothers or dependent wives or role-playing daughters nor do they portray heroines who roam greater distance indulging in sexual activities which exposes them to unwanted pregnancy, sexual abuse and in jeopardy until they find a secured protection of the hero. In her preface to *The Golden Notebook* Doris Lessing aptly describes her conviction about her writing: “The sex war has existed in the past and shall exist in future also” (1983:2). Rajam Krishnan’s novels stand proof to identify her as a ‘pure feminist’ as a creative artist who loves revolution and as one interested in women’s problems. The foundation for male-domination is the organization called the family. Hence, she insists that the fight against male-domination should begin from the institutions called family. Women should unite to thwart the female subjugation, which are perpetrated against women through the structure called government, through its various claws such as law, judgment and authority. She also insists the necessity for separate women’s organization. However, at the same time she does not deny that men and women have to unite in the course of fight to bring about social changes. However, many of her stories help to identify her as the one who accepts social changes and aspiring for revolution, they expose male-domination and record a special, individual feminine voice against such atrocities. She questions the communist views, which are conservative in their ideas regarding liberation. Devi in the Tamizh novel *The House* chooses to leave home at the crucial juncture of her daughter’s wedding day compelled by the resultant stress
built up of her age long tolerance. Mary in *The Grass is Singing* and Meena in *After the Sound of Fury* are under constant contemplation to shake off their conventional roles of being a wife and mother but unable to completely assert their identity in terms of what they really are, that is asserting their rights and identities. Martha in *The Proper Marriage* decides strongly to leave not only her husband but her infant daughter also. Rekha in *The Chains* vows to join women’s liberation movement and plans to ward off marriage, Valli in *Mailampattu Valli* after accomplishing tremendously as a social activist gets married to another social worker.

6.10.2. Anna and Molly of *The Golden Notebook* decide to take men casually as bed partners the same way as men do without attaching emotional significance to their relationship with men. The Protagonists in *The Golden Notebook* though are specimens of ‘New Women’ who dare to live with their male and without the license of marriage, yet land up in self-discovery. They awaken to the self-realization that the new women too are incapable of drawing any gratification because they learn from their experience that men are incapable of loving their women but whereas women require love quotient to sustain their happiness. However, they were able to overthrow, the customs rituals of marriage of marriages yet they are unable to draw gratification from their relationship with men because they are emotionally dependent on their men for assurance such as they do love them— and believe they can live with only men who really love them. They do not believe in just ‘affairs’ and though they decide to take men as they come without any emotional binding or expectations finally they land up in rejecting / dreading male community as a whole.

6.10.3. The British protagonists Martha, Mary and Anna and the Indian protagonists Devi, Meena, Rekha and Valli are specimen of middle class women and employed women. Their modes of marriage may differ— either arranged such as Devi’s or of own choice as Martha’s or the daring, novel living together type such as Anna’s and Molly’s but their regrets of married life are similar.
Search for self-identity; discomfiture with their relationships towards their male partners; their strivings for conformity with their roles; their inability and hence the protest; the causes for their protest, their methodologies and their final decisions are all in totality similar.

6.10.4. In the novel *The Grass is Singing* Mary’s dilemma between conformity and non-conformity is torturous and her end pathetic. Unable to re-enter her profession and yet unable to conform to her home-maker role she dies as a victim of racism murdered by the African Native with whom her relationship is very complicated and peculiar.

6.10.5. Surprisingly, the protagonists professionally successful are unable to attain success or self-content in their personal life or in their relationship with men. They are at times doubtful whether they are good mothers and suitable for the role and sometimes feel that motherhood is burdensome and too suffocating and that it is not worth the mental and physical pain that they invested in.

6.10.6. The realism in the authors’ portrayals is remarkable. It is surprisingly interesting to note that though the novelists and the protagonists belong to different country and clime, the emotions, sentiments, heart burns and the trauma of rejection and non-conformity; the struggle that women undergo to establish their spirit of self-identity— in short their cause of protest and the methodologies of protest are all similar.

6.11.0. Self-identity can be termed as the self-consciousness and the accreditation by the society that one is a self-entity who is entitled to feel content if not belated about her birth, gender and existence. Every individual naturally expects to choose one’s life pattern, career, achieve aims and desires, to overcome any discrimination, to be respected and valued, to be adjudged on her intellectual capacity, above all to be valued for her potentialities and capabilities in short an ignoring of one’s gender and to be identified as a person and not as a lesser species. The heroines of all the selected novels experience and express a
discomfort with their life. Their life pattern is classified under three phases. The way they express and exhibit sharp contemplations on their subjugations and secondary status is identified as the pre-crisis period. This mood gradually leads them to a crisis point during which they finally take recourse to strong decision to put an end to complying with patriarchal hypocrisies and they yearn strongly to transform into an autonomous being. During the third phase the post crisis phase it is observed that, most of them are content about their resolutions to break away from patriarchal fetters. But unfortunately or fortunately for patriarchy some of them show tendencies of returning to the patriarchal shell of course with modification not only hoping to claim a room of one’s own, but of course with the positive hope of gaining for themselves an extra space to fit in their own body, mind soul and an intellect of their own.

6.11.1. Certain differences based on culture, breeding methodologies, mental attitudes and in undertaking the philial duties are obvious while comparing the British and Indian protagonists in their capacity as daughters. In mother’s role also sensitivity towards suffocation/bitterness/willingness to break bondage are similar. As social entity, Indian women are more revolutionary in attitude of questioning and in establishing their rights. In the west, profession is more satisfying and rewarding though surveillance and submission is tolerated and neglected.

6.11.2. A vying between tradition and modernism is a common feature between both the set of protagonists. Those who are free in marriage seek the burden / security of child rearing. Those who are submissive in wife’s role are ready to throw away family and children during the crisis. Those who are good / successful professionals are unable to attain recognition as good successful homemakers, but dilemma between conformity and non-conformity is quite common. Coming to their own decisions finally— Meena resorts to compromise, Valli and Rekha are left in a dilemma, young Martha and old Devi overthrow
their family and children and Mary who tries to compromise is victimized in the process.

6.11.3. Visualized in comparison, the female protagonists’ personal regretful experience as girl-child, as lovers, and choosing marriage as a mode of escapism, their sinister psychological, physical experience as wives, mothers and as an unsatisfied, unrecognized single entity are all thrillingly similar. For instance the descriptions about their husbands immature attitudes, about their grueling experience of pregnancies and discomfort with physical changes during puberty; personal emotions like loneliness, rootlessness, anger, silence, achievement, inferiority complex, jealousy, sex and motherhood are exactly similar.

6.12.0. This dissertation focuses the ways in which the feminine womanhood socially conditions a woman through reductive images of manhood that override a woman’s personal self. Patriarchal society identifies women with conforming to role-playing and values them only for such capacities. It demands an abandoning of their original aims, desires and careers through inculcating in women the ability to relate to others via their familial roles. Persistent psychological conditioning from childhood onwards instills in mothers a desire and dotting for sons rather than daughters so that the patriarchal rule is perpetuated. Family ideologies confines them to the domestic sphere; creating the “The Angel in the House”, asserting that the mother-love is supposed to be unconditional as female anger threatens the institution of feminine hood; uses religion, myth, customs and rituals to determine familial structures that subordinate women.

6.12.1. Especially in the various divisions of domination and methods of subordination, women in their family relationships are facing the democratic changes. This personal experiences and in general the domination through male/female sexual ideologies have been the directive forces in their uniting on a general ground irrespective of class distinctions.
6.12.2. The concluding chapter has reinstated that all the protagonist of the selected novels at every stage in their life as a child, as a grown up daughter as a lover, as a wife, as a mother are acutely sensitive towards the pangs of both conformity and non-conformity to roles foisted on them. On observation, it is evident that conformity causes internal repercussions; non-conformity causes repercussions in their relationship inside the family and in the society. The heroines of all the selected novels experience and express a discomfort with their life. Their life pattern could be classified under three phases: the way they express and exhibit sharp contemplations on their subjugations and secondary status was identified as the pre-crisis period. This gradually leads them to a crisis point during which they finally take recourse to strong decision to restrain their hypocritical conformity and strive for transformation as autonomous individuals with self-identity. Finally and during the third phase—the post crisis phase it was observed that most of them are content about their resolutions to break away from the patriarchal fetters. However unfortunately or fortunately for patriarchy some of them show tendencies of returning to the patriarchal shell of course with modification not only hoping to claim a room of one’s own, but of course with the hope of gaining for themselves an extra space to fit in their own body, mind soul and an intellect of their own.

6.12.3. The selected novelists are feminist whether they accept this label or not and their answer to the vital question, ‘Are women human’? Yes. Their argument is not about whether women are better than, worse than or identical with men. Neither is their concern about trading personal liberty—abortion, divorce, sexual self-expression for social protection as wives and mothers. It is about justice, fairness and access to the broad range of human experience. It is about women being judged as individuals, consulting their own well-being, as individuals rather than as members of a class with one personality, one social function, and one road to happiness.
6.12.4. The selected novels turn out to be feminist critiques because the consequential strivings in a woman to establish her real normal self, the ensuing pain and stress have been expressed with empathy. The dichotomy that women suffer in this process of tug of war between conformity and non-conformity and the consequential familial and societal reactions; their mental agony; the guilt feeling they are ridden with— their mental trauma that they undergo in the process of establishing their self-identity are brought to light. All the writings of both Doris Lessing and Rajam Krishnan and especially the selected novels are thus feminist critique in exposing the oppressive nature of the patriarchal roles imposed on women and in highlighting women’s craving for reinstating and re-establishing their self-identity.