

A STUDY OF GENDER CONFLICT AND STRUGGLE  
TOWARDS MAINSTREAM IDENTITY  
IN SELECTED NOVELS OF MARGARET DRABBLE

Lalrimawii Zadeng  
Department of English

Submitted  
in fulfillment of the requirement of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy in English of Mizoram University, Aizawl.

A STUDY OF GENDER CONFLICT AND STRUGGLE  
TOWARDS MAINSTREAM IDENTITY  
IN SELECTED NOVELS OF MARGARET DRABBLE

LALRIMAWII ZADENG

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH  
MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my deepest gratitude to God for having blessed me with good health, verve and the indispensable vision while working on this thesis.

This thesis has been written under the consistent guidance and supervision of Dr. Lalrindiki T. Fanai to whom I remain genuinely grateful for her constant guidance and encouragement without which this thesis would remain incomplete.

I express my heartfelt gratitude to the Department of English, Mizoram University for giving me the opportunity to pursue research in the area of my interest.

I remain indebted to my late parents Mr. and Mrs. Dr. Lalnghaka, for having nurtured in me the quest for further educational pursuance. Their loving memory remains a source of inspiration and motivation throughout the writing of this thesis.

I express my gratitude to the Principal and my colleagues, especially, the Department of English, Government Johnson College, Aizawl, for their encouragement and moral support.

I have been granted Study Leave by the Higher and Technical Department of the Government of Mizoram and I am truly grateful for the generous grant. It has enabled me to visit various libraries and centers of research including: Kolkata; British Council, American Centre, Hyderabad; University of Hyderabad (HCU), EFLU, Shillong; NEHU, TEFLU. I have sourced immense academic matter from them that have enriched this thesis.

The Study Leave has also provided me the time to present seminar papers in both state level and national seminars, and the valuable discussions have further enhanced this thesis in significant ways.

(LALRIMAWII ZADENG)

## DECLARATION

I, Lalrimawii Zadeng, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the document of the work that I have completed. The contents of this thesis does not relate to any award of my previous degrees, and to the best of my knowledge to anybody else. Further, I have not submitted this thesis to any other University/Institute for any research degree.

This is being submitted to the Mizoram University for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English.

(LALRIMAWII ZADENG)

**Candidate**

(Prof. MARGARET L. PACHUAU)

**Head**

Department of English

Mizoram University

Aizawl.

(Dr. LALRINDIKI T. FANAI)

**Supervisor**

Associate Professor

Department of English

Mizoram University

Aizawl.

**APPENDICES**

**NAME OF CANDIDATE** : **Lalrimawii Zadeng**

**DEGREE** : **Ph.D.**

**DEPARTMENT** : **English**

**TITLE OF THESIS** : **A Study of Gender Conflict  
and Struggle Toward  
Mainstream Identity in  
Selected Novels of  
Margaret Drabble.**

**DATE OF PAYMENT OF ADMISSION FEE** : **No. 4481, Dt. 24.9.2007.**

**APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL**

**BPGS** : **31<sup>st</sup> October 2008**

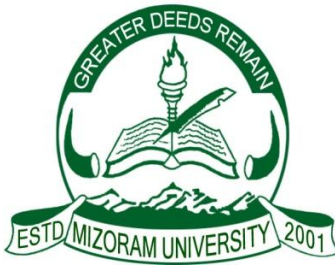
**SCHOOL BOARD** : **25<sup>th</sup> November 2008**

**REGISTRATION NO.** : **MZU/Ph.D./259 of  
25.11.2008.**

**Head**  
**Department of English**

### **Other Relevant Information:**

- i) Attended and presented papers in state level seminar entitled “Framework on Quality Management in Higher Education; the Mizoram Context”, jointly organised by Mizoram College Teachers’ Association in collaboration with Quality Assurance Cell, Higher and Technical Education Department, Govt. of Mizoram, and State Higher Education Council Mizoram (RUSA), 9<sup>th</sup> December 2014.
- ii) a) Attended national seminar cum workshop on “Mizo Novel Platinum Jubilee” sponsored by CIIL, Mysore and ICSSR-Nerc, Shillong and Mizo Literature and Language Teachers’ Academy MILLTA and Department of Mizo, Mizoram University on 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> November 2011. Presented Paper entitled “Psychological Effect of Social and Economic Changes in Lalrammawia Ngente’s *Rinteei Zingleng*.”  
b) Attended national seminar entitled “Social Justice, Development and Secularism: Philosophical Reflection on Contemporary National and North East Indian Scenario”, sponsored by The Indian Council of Philosophical Research, Delhi and the Department of Philosophy, Pachhunga University on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2012. Presented paper entitled “Specific Socio Cultural Problems of Cultural and Linguistic Communities of North East India: The Mizo Cultural Change”.
- iii) Published an article entitled “Social Taboo and the Female Gender: Margaret Drabble’s *The Millstone* and Shashi Deshpande’s *The Binding Vine* in *Labyrinth An International Refreed Journal of Postmodern Studies* in July 2014.
- iv) Attended Ph.D. Course Work (August – December 2011).



MIZORAM UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that “**A Study of Gender Conflict and Struggle Towards Mainstream Identity in Selected Novels of Margaret Drabble**” written by Lalrimawii Zadeng has been written under my supervision.

She has fulfilled all the required norms laid down under the Ph.D. regulations of Mizoram University. The thesis is the result of her own investigation. Neither the dissertation as a whole or any part of it was ever submitted to any other university for any research degree.

(Dr. LALRINDIKI T. FANAI)

Supervisor

Department of English

Mizoram University



<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Declaration</b>	
<b>Certificate</b>	
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	
<b>Chapter I: Feminist Discourse and Margaret Drabble</b>	<b>1 - 40</b>
<b>Chapter II: Mainstream Gender Conflict</b>	<b>41 - 86</b>
<b>Chapter III: Women and the Male Absence</b>	<b>87 - 126</b>
<b>Chapter IV: Emergence of the New Woman in the Mainstream</b>	<b>127 - 177</b>
<b>Chapter V: Conclusion</b>	<b>178 – 203</b>
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>204 - 216</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	
<b>Bio-data</b>	

## BIO-DATA

**Name:** Lalrimawii Zadeng

**Father's Name:** Dr Lalnghaka (L)

**Address:** TN-234, Tlangnuam, Aizawl, Mizoram.

**Phone No.:** (91)9436143429.

### Educational Qualification

Class	Board/University	Year of Passing	Division	Percentage
X	MBSE	1980	II	59.29%
XII	WBCHSE	1986	II	45.7%
B.A.	NEHU	1889	II	51.5%
M.A.	HCU	1991	II	54.5%
B.Ed.	NEHU	2000	I	60.42%

**Ph.D. Registration Date:** MZU/Ph.D./259 of 25.11.2008.

**CHAPTER – I**

**FEMINIST DISCOURSE AND MARGARET DRABBLE**

Margaret Drabble as a literary figure is noted for her subtle, strong, witty and passionate writings among the female contemporary writers. Her first novel *A Summer Bird Cage* was published in 1963 and in the following year in 1964, *The Garrick Year* a novel with theatrical background was published. Her third novel *The Millstone* (1965) was the winner of the Mail on Sunday/John Llewellyn Rhys Prize in 1966. *Jerusalem the Golden* (1967), won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction in 1967. Drabble was awarded the Yorkshire Post Book Award for the finest fiction in 1972 for *The Needle's Eye* (1972). In 1973, Drabble was awarded the E. M. Foster Award by the American Academy of Arts and Letters. She has published eighteen novels to date and she has also written several screenplays, plays and short stories. Her non-fiction works include *A Writer's Britain: Landscape and Literature* (1979) and biographies. As a biographer she is highly regarded for her works; *Arnold Bennett: A Biography* (1974) and *Agnus Wilson: A Biography* (1995). Drabble has also edited the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> editions of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* in 1985 and 2000 respectively.

Margaret Drabble holds honorary doctorates from the Universities of Sheffield (1976), Manchester (1987), Keele (1988), Hull (1992), East Anglia (1994), York (1995) and the University of Cambridge awarded her an honorary Doctorate in Letters in 2006. Margaret Drabble is the former Chairman of the National Book League (presently known as Booktrust) from 1980-1982 and she is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature (FRSL). She was appointed as Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1980 and in 2008 Drabble was promoted to Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (DBE). Though her works are inspired by her life, yet her works are not entirely autobiographical. Her latest work *The Pure Gold Baby* that centers on a young single mother who has to give up her ambition to be

an anthropologist in order to raise her special child was published in 2013. Margaret Drabble presently lives in London with her husband Michael Holroyd the biographer.

This thesis attempts to study aspects related to gender conflict and struggle in order to attain and acquire the English middle class identity; the mainstream identity which is the underlying theme in the select novels namely, i) *The Garrick Year* (1964), ii) *The Millstone* (1965), iii) *The Ice Age* (1977), iv) *The Radiant Way* (1987), v) *The Witch of Exmoor* (1996), vi) *The Peppered Moth* (2001), and vii) *The Sea Lady* (2006). Even though the protagonists of the select texts belong to the middle class that is the mainstream of the English social class structure, yet each protagonist has to struggle in order to overcome her conflicts since the female gender is considered to belong to the working class due to her unpaid work in the area of domestication, child care and reproduction. In *Freedom Socialist: Voice of Revolutionary Feminism*, Helen Gilbert in “The Revolutionary Harmony of Marxism and feminism” states:

Mainstream, middle-class feminism concerns itself with legal reforms and overcoming barriers to success within the capitalist system. (Gilbert).

Although the female may belong to the middle class or the bourgeois class by virtue of her birth or her marriage, Marxist feminists opine that the female belongs to the working class due to the nature of the work that she performs. In *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*, Deborah L. Madsen in “Gender and Work: Marxist Feminism and Charlotte Perkins Gilman”, remarks of Michele Barrett:

Barrett cites the example of the divorced wife of a bourgeois man; this woman is a member of the bourgeoisie only by virtue of her marriage, in effect she is an honorary member of the middle class. But outside the relation of marriage, this woman must earn her own living and take her

place in the working class to which she has essentially belonged all along. This is a powerful example of marriage as a domestic mode of production, involving the husband's appropriation of his wife's unpaid labour, but it does not indicate how the concept of patriarchy relates to this particular mode of production. (Madsen 70).

The passage illustrates that the female can acquire her class by birth and by marriage while all along the female is subordinated to the working class. The irony lies in the fact that marriage positions the female to the status of the wife; the identity of either the middle class or the bourgeois class and simultaneously the female is submerged to the working class as the unpaid labourer. Though the title of the thesis may seem paradoxical; middle class woman trying to assert her middle class mainstream identity, yet it is not paradoxical as the female has two class identities; the identity acquired by birth or by marriage, and the identity to which she always belongs; the working class, unless it is elevated by her career that gives her an economic status. Thus, the educated middle class protagonists of the select texts try to assert their female personal middle class identity as paid workers; a deviation from the mainstream while moving towards it. The thesis will therefore examine the nature and cause of the conflict and struggle that is inherent and central to the protagonists of these texts who in their attempt to acquire the mainstream identity invariably face the crisis that is innately located in the female gender.

In *Industrial Culture and Bourgeois Society: Business, Labour and Bureaucracy*, Jurgen Kocka states:

The concept "middle class" comprises merchants, manufacturers, bankers, capitalists, entrepreneurs, and managers as well as rentiers (those who live on income from property without working), together with their families

(lumped together in German as *Wirtschaftsbürgertum* – the economic middle class). It also comprises the families of doctors, lawyers, ministers, scientists and other professionals, professors of universities and secondary schools, intellectuals, men and women of letters, and academics, including those who serve as administrators and officials in public and private bureaucracies (all lumped together in German as *Bildungsbürgertum* – the educated middle class).

“Middle Class” does not include nobles, peasants, manual workers, and the mass of lower – class people in general, although it is debatable where the exact boundaries should be drawn. (Kocka 231-232).

In *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, Ian Watt in “The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding”, denotes:

Women of the upper and middle classes could partake in a few of the activities of their menfolk whether of business or pleasure. It was not usual for them to engage in politics, business, or the administration of their estates, while the main masculine leisure pursuits such as hunting and drinking were also barred. Such women, therefore, had a great deal of leisure, and this leisure was often occupied by omnivorous reading. (Eagleton 148).

Terry Lovell in *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader* : “Consuming Fiction” states:

The work involved in the production of middle-class gentility...these duties and enforced compliance to acceptable bourgeois standards. While the more affluent middle-class women had working-class servants to

perform the arduous physical tasks, there is some evidence that many were nevertheless kept busy to a degree and extent that puts the lie to the popular image of the idle lady of leisure. (Eagleton 151-152).

Thus the middle class that encapsulates a majority of the intellectual English population, working in varied fields, living the life of ‘acceptable bourgeois standards’, with a ‘great deal of leisure’ represent the mainstream of the English class structure, and is the center of attraction for writers and theorists. Although the middle class women experience more freedom, yet they are still under the dictate of male authority in the socio-economic aspects, and this element is the focus of study of the select texts. The term ‘mainstream’ in this thesis therefore implies the intellectual Middle Class English Society dictated by traditional norms and patriarchy.

The term ‘conflict’ is defined by various social psychologists and in *Social Psychology* Baron et al. defines conflict as:

[A] process in which individuals or groups perceive that others have taken or will soon take actions that are incompatible with their own interests. (Baron et al. 478).

It is also believed that the key elements in conflict include:

- 1) opposing interests between individuals or groups,
- 2) recognition of such oppositions,
- 3) the belief by each side that the other will act to interfere with these interests, and
- 4) actions that produce such interference. (Baron et al. 481).

Conflict will thus imply to the fight, strife, adjustments and pressures faced by the various protagonists in the select texts to achieve liberty and freedom without any gender bias and



distinction. The conflict within the English middle class is experienced by the protagonists and they depict the dilemma of educated women caught in between the capitalist and working class. Gender conflict of personal and class identity due to maternity, sexuality, intellectuality, and economic aspirations overlap in a crisis. Instead of a unified whole, the stress of opposition marks the socio-economic condition of the English women in Drabble's novels. The mainstream identity will therefore, refer to the identity of an intelligent and educated woman acknowledged as an individual in her own right, a financially independent person experiencing liberty and freedom, belonging to the English upper middle class economy irrespective of the concerned person's prior status, and one who has achieved equality in all respects with the male gender of the English upper middle class.

This chapter will therefore deal with the introductory aspects of gender issues and their representations in literature, and the feminist reactions towards such representations. Consequently, this chapter will focus on the social and economic elements and its co-relation to the educated female gender as Drabble's focus is on intelligent, intellectual women of the upper middle class English society and the necessity of socio-economic change in England that resonates in the select novels.

The struggle for women's rights began in the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century evoked by Mary Wollstonecraft's writing of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), an objection of women's subordination and a protest against the existing patriarchy. It fuelled various women's movements to fight for women's rights. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Margaret Jackson in "Sex, Class and Hetero Sexual Relations" state:

In it Wollstonecraft described marriage as 'legal prostitution', arguing that wife and prostitute were both equally oppressed, since both were forced by

social and economic necessity to earn their keep by selling their bodies.

(Evans 1).

Wollstonecraft's writing challenged traditionally male accepted ideas about the nature of women and female education. At the same time in France, Olympe de Gouges and Theroigne de Mericourt were fighting for the extension of women's rights, promised by the French Revolution. In the 1840s USA, the Women's Rights Movement emerged and the American women began to fight for their rights. The Seneca Falls Convention of 1848 and the resulting Declaration of Sentiments further moved the women activists to claim for the principles of liberty and equality expounded in the American Declaration of Independence. From the 1840s onward Britain also experienced Women's Suffrage Movement. Margaret Fuller's "Women in the Nineteenth Century" (1845), a feminist tract; a product of her seminars for educated women in Boston motivated the American women of the era to fight for female development in a male dominated society.

Jane Freedman in *Feminism*, writes that the French medical text was the first that seem to use the term 'feminist' to indicate a cessation in the male sexual organ and characteristics, and therefore suffering from 'feminisation'. She states that in 1872, the French republican and anti-feminist writer Alexandre Dumas used the term in a pamphlet to describe women behaving in a masculine way. Quoting Fraisse (1995:316) Jane Freedman in *Feminism* further points out:

...although in medical terminology feminism was used to signify feminization of men, in political term it was first used to describe a verilization of women. (Freedman 2).

According to Freedman, 'Feminism' therefore arouses gender confusion and feminists are perceived as challenging natural differences between men and women. Initially, the term

'feminist' did not indicate women and their actions even though the thought and activity was performed before the term was adopted. Freedman further opines that 'Feminism' is thus a term that emerged at a later stage, long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding equality in their social, economic and political conditions.

Feminism questions many prejudices and assumptions made by male writers. The issue of marginalisation of women's voices, submissive nature of women in a patriarchal society, the unrevealed latent quality of women in relation to psychology, economics, politics, social, gender, writing and especially sexual problems manipulated and perpetuated by male dominance over women produced fierce reactions in many women of the era resulting to the Feminist Movement. The Feminist Movement since the late 1960s, attempts to describe, interpret, and re-interpret women's experiences as depicted in various literatures. In her seminal text *The Second Sex* (1949) Simone de Beauvoir states:

Biology is not enough to give an answer to the question that is before us: why is woman the Other? Our task is to discover how the nature of woman has been affected throughout the course of history; we are concerned to find out what humanity has made of the human female. (De Beauvoir 37).

Beauvoir frankly states the status of women especially with regards to the illegality of abortion, and the inaccessibility and the illegality of the use of contraceptives for women in many countries. She examines different areas; biological, psychological, historical, and cultural parameters, for the factors that place women as the second sex and Women's Liberation movement has effectively employed *The Second Sex* as the focal thrust of its movement. In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan further exposes the frustration and psychological distress of the careerless middle-class American housewives who are trapped into tedious

domesticity. For Beauvoir, marriage is oppressive as it binds a woman to domestic chores thereby exploiting the woman's economic capacity and enforcing her sexual inequality. Friedan on the other hand feels that marriage binds a woman to her secret suffering which produces frustration and psychological anguish. Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics* which appeared in 1969 effectively focuses on the male use of politics in all areas of life. Kate Millet quotes Adams Mildred's *The Right to Be People* (1967), in her *Sexual Politics* and she reflects on the 'First Wave' feminism and highlights:

[T]he protection of women in industry, child welfare, child labour laws, social hygiene, collective bargaining, minimum wage laws, pure food laws, honest election practices, municipal reform, compulsory education, and a unification of the laws concerning the civil status of women.

(Millet 83).

The passage highlights how the League of Women Voters vehemently protested against child labour and demanded for state ratification, but the constitutional amendment failed to make the ratification in 1934 and the League gradually faced its decline. Feminism that declined during and after the two World Wars was revived in the late 1960s and 1970s and was termed the 'Second Wave' Feminism.

In the 'Second Wave' women did not only fight for equal political rights but it was mainly for women's liberation and the fight was centered for greater equality in the field of education, family, work, reproduction and sexuality. The 'Second Wave' feminists challenged traditional views of family and personal life and argued that the private sphere was a crucial area of gender inequality and power inequality. Emphasis was stressed on the relation between the public and the private, and the blame was mainly on the social factors within society.

Feminists criticize the division between the public and the private sectors due to its moral and practical implications. The male gender as the traditionally accepted superior gender is therefore favoured with education in order to improve his intellectual faculties and exert his mastery over the female gender. *Le Rire de la Meduse*, (1975), originally written in French by the French feminist Helene Cixous was translated to English in 1976 as *The Laugh of the Medusa*. It advocates women to define themselves in their writings and that women must write about women. The text is replete with the urge to woman writers to express their thoughts in written form regarding physical, psychological, sexual, social, economical and political aspects pertaining to gender struggles. Since the Women's Liberation Movement, more women writers in their writings have begun to clearly estimate themselves due to which women writers delve into the realms of female consciousness in order to use female expressions and depict female thoughts and sexuality.

Margaret Drabble is one of the first female British writers of the postwar period and her works document the female discourse of the time of her writing. In "A Life in Writing: Margaret Drabble" Lisa Allardice comments on Drabble:

Like Doris Lessing, a long – term friend and influence, she denies (although much less stridently than Lessing) that she set out to write explicitly "feminist" books. But, Like Lessing, she will always be associated with the fledgling years of feminism, as she was one of the most assiduous chroniclers of female experience in Britain during that time. (Allardice).

As Helene Cixous has urged in *The Laugh of the Medusa*, Drabble writes about women and her interest lies in the English middle class social issues. Thus, each of the select texts reflects the

female history and economic condition of the time of its creation, and the female discourse within the texts encapsulates the English morality from a female perspective. In an interview with Lydia Preovic for *Believer*, Drabble states:

But it seems natural to put women's lives today in the context of what went before – either as a contrast or as a development. (Preovic).

Drabble's novels therefore focus on the daily life of women with the desire for change in the areas pertaining to tradition and socio-economic conditions, concerned with the female gender.

Margaret Drabble as a novelist of a particular section of the English social milieu captures the dilemma of educated women caught in between the capitalist and working class, and this theme is central to the protagonists of the select texts. In an interview with Barbara Milton for the *Paris Review – The Art of Fiction No. 70*, in “Interview of Margaret Drabble”, Drabble states:

I wrote my first novel because I just got married and I was living in Stratford-upon-Avon and there was nothing else to do. I was very bored. I had no particular friends there. I'd been very busy up until then- at university, passing examinations- I very nearly took a job that summer and if I had taken a job, I probably wouldn't have written the book. So in a sense it was accidental. Whether I would have written a novel later, I just don't know. (Milton).

The novelist illustrates the socio-economic issues pertaining to the female gender. Her works are replete with critical bent on the English social, economic, political and feminist theme of the 1960s to the present. Central to all her novels is the upper middle class section of the English social strata. Her female characters participate in mundane female activities juxtaposed with

intellectual duties such as their career, writing and other work that attributes to financial condition. In, "A Life in Writing: Margaret Drabble", Lisa Allardice writes:

Drabble's works has always been characterised by astute social observation, a realism borne out of her admiration for Victorian fiction. (Allardice).

In Drabble's novels, the English tradition posits a contrast to the changing cultural scenario especially in the female discourse. She captures the essence of the nineteenth century female hardships in her protagonists who are awakened to the twentieth century women's emancipation. In *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing*, Elaine Showalter Comments:

Drabble has been increasingly ambitious, serious and open-minded; her work is the record of a feminine consciousness expanding and maturing. In some respects she has been clinging to a tradition she has outgrown. (Showalter 252).

Drabble builds her foundation on the Victorian England that represents tradition and thereby moves on to the present era. She thus exposes the educated female's desire and capacity to work as paid employee in order to enhance personal or family economic condition. Critics often compare Margaret Drabble and Doris Lessing to George Eliot and George Sand for the picturesque description of England, the social life of the people, the economic problems and the political instability. Drabble comments on her writings in *British Council Literature*, and in "Writers Biography: Margaret Drabble" she states:

'When the book begins to move, everything changes, and everything I see or hear or read seems to be part of, to contribute to the new pattern. This is

exciting. It's the only time when I forget time. Past the half way mark, a novel almost writes itself. Events beget events, characters insist on seeing one another again, I just sit and transcribe. I get quite cheerful and communicative. A strange process...' ('Writers Biography: Margaret Drabble,' *British Council literature*).

She also comments on her writing to Barbara Milton in "Interview of Margaret Drabble" for the *Paris Review – The Art of Fiction No. 70*, and she states:

We can choose not to be selfish or as self-indulgent or as hard-working as we are by nature. We can choose to go against our nature, but only very slightly. You can't completely alter what you were given without doing yourself a great violence, which means that you go mad or become an infective person. It also has to do with where you start from. (Milton).

As a writer, Drabble believes that the starting point of anything is very important, especially in writing. She also feels that the writer has very little choice in the characterization of the protagonists. In *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing*, Elaine Showalter states:

The women in Drabble's novels are unselfconsciously named for the great Victorian heroines, as if the supply of women's names were, after all, very small: Rosamund, Clara, Emma, Lucy and Jane. (Showalter 250).

Showalter further comments that of all the English women novelists, Drabble is the most passionate traditionalist. Drabble's past is often reflected in her novels: her Quaker background, Oxford days, dislike of her mother, a mild father and sibling rivalry. In the select texts, Margaret



Drabble documents with clarity the educated female prejudice, and subordination that discriminate the English middle class female gender in the socio-economic and political areas.

In *The Garrick Year* (TGY), Drabble focuses on the female desire to generate income in the family which is obstructed by male dominance and superiority. The protagonist Emma Evans relates the account of her conflict with her husband David Evans:

‘Now look here, Emma,’ said David, and at his tone I bent my face all the more intently away from him and towards my baby, ‘I don’t honestly see what I can do about it. We’ve got to go, and that’s that. It’s only for seven months, and you’ll have to bloody well lump it. I can’t afford not to go.’  
(TGY 8).

In this passage, Drabble depicts the traditional male supremacy between the husband and the wife. David is ignorant of his wife’s need while he dominates his wife to fulfill his desire on the issue of his job. To his manipulative and authoritarian command Emma knows that she is losing the battle. Feminists’ sentiment of the 1960s is reflected in the character of Emma who ardently longs to pursue salaried job. Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic* remark that women in patriarchal societies have in the stages of history been reduced to mere properties, characters, and images in male written literature:

From Eve, Minerva, Sophia, and Galatia onward, after all, patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men, the children of male brains, ribs and ingenuity. (Gilbert & Gubar 12).

The passage shows the disparity of the female situation and condition within Western society and the underpinning of misogyny upon which patriarchy stands as an edict for all humankind. Gilbert and Gubar also argue that patriarchy in creating its pedestal reveals its misogyny by

imprisoning fictive female characters who are silenced by depriving them autonomous existence even though lives are given to these characters and further generating the possibility of creating such female characters to other male writers. Drabble's protagonist Emma, unlike the traditional female characters that remain silent, voices the doubt that is within her and she questions her husband:

‘And what about me?’ I said querulously, knowing that I had lost as soon as I realized that the economics of the scheme had met with David's approval, and would therefore certainly meet with mine. ‘What about me? I'd got everything so tidily arranged, I can't just mess it up again to go trailing all over England after you, can I?’ (TGY 8-9).

The educated wife Emma Evans, after three years of maternity and motherhood, longs to hold a salaried job and recently she has been promised an interesting venture by a television company. Although Emma states her objection to David's manipulative authority, yet she knows that she has to compromise as it is socially and traditionally deemed fit for women to obey their husbands. Quoting Michele Barrett's *Women's Oppression Today*, M. A. R. Habib in *A History of Literary Criticism: From Plato to the Present* writes:

Explore the relations between the organization of sexuality, domestic production... and historical changes in the mode of production and systems of appropriation and exploitation. (Habib 693).

In this passage Barrett suggests three concepts central to the Marxist feminist dialogue: patriarchy, reproduction and ideology. Patriarchy exerts authoritarian pressure over the female gender thereby subjecting the female to an inferior status. This creates gender hegemony and in the passage of time the female submits to the role that she is imposed and she is confined to

domestic wageless employment. The biological difference of the female gender further enables her to reproduce and generate work force within the society. But, this reproduction factor exists as an element of exploitation for the female gender as it confines her to domestication and reproduction. Emma's thought process represents the educated English females of the early 1950s whose mindset has been molded by intellectual education and further influenced by feminist thoughts of the time in contrast to women from girls' finishing school.

Although some television companies in England did have female news readers and announcers, yet, serious events were solely read and announced by male news readers and announcers. Drabble documents the feminist sentiment of the 1960's regarding equality of sexes in work allocation. The protagonist Emma therefore states:

I must say, however, that even if David had waited like a politician for a promising moment to approach me, he could hardly have found one. I was very unapproachable at that time, and I found the idea of going to Hereford peculiarly upsetting. I had been promised a couple of months before a very pleasant job as a news reader and announcer by a television company which had decided, as such companies will, to have another attempt at the equality of the sexes by allowing women to announce serious events as well as forthcoming programmes: I was to have been a pioneer in this field, and I fully expected to succeed where others had failed. The job, admittedly, had been procured for me by an old friend and admirer, for whom I used to do a little sporadic fashion modeling before my marriage, but despite this string-pulling everyone admitted that I was admirably suited for such a post. I have a face of quite startling and

effective gravity, a pure accident of feature, I believe, and people automatically trust what I say. The nation would have been impressed by the news as read by me. And I for my part would have enjoyed reading it: I have always had a passion for facts and a mild yearning for notoriety, and I could imagine no more happy way of combining these two interests. And after three years of child-bearing and modeling maternity clothes, I felt in serious need of a good, steady, lucrative job. (TGY 10)

The extract reflects Emma as a salaried woman before her marriage and that she has had to forgo her job due to her marriage and child-bearing. The passage further signifies the female confinement to reproduction and maternity that is central to Toril Moi's argument in *What is a Woman?* Moi explores the woman's will to change which in phallogentric writing is sadly omitted. Toril Moi questions herself and states:

And although theory is produced in all kinds of disciplines, I am going to stick to a loosely defined field stretching from literary theory to philosophy. This may sound unduly conservative. Am I not imprisoning myself in traditional disciplinary thinking? Have I no understanding of the need to cross and breakup generic and disciplinary boundaries? (Moi 124).

Moi's vital question that directs its argument to 'traditional disciplinary thinking' is a patriarchal construct that subjects women to male dictates and one that submerges women's identity within themselves. Women's submission to male authority and oppression by the male gender reflected in the gender division of labour such as, domesticity and motherhood that entail wageless female workforce, is a traditional imposition on the female gender for the supremacy of the male gender

and to which women are disciplined. Moi terms this confinement as the 'generic boundary' and it is this confinement that marginalizes and subjects Emma to her home.

Emma's enthusiasm about her job reluctantly diminishes as soon as David manipulates in his patriarchal way and dictates her to follow him to Hereford where his theatrical acting will confine him to the locality for a period of seven months. In *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory: Feminism*, Susan Hekman in "Feminism" remarks that Nancy Hartsock developed her 'feminist standpoint' from Marx's concept of proletarian stand point. Heckman remarks of Hartsock:

Like Mitchell, she argues that women must attack both patriarchy and capitalism to achieve liberation. (Malpas and Wake 92).

Hartsock's argument corresponds to the argument made by Juliet Mitchell in her dual-systems theory that women are oppressed by capitalism and patriarchy. Marxist feminists argue that the position of women in society is structurally different from that of men which results to sexual division of labour, creating gender inequality. Drabble unfolds the futility of the equality of sexes in the area of work that is advocated by the British Constitution in the 1960s. Emma with her prospective new job is thus confounded and she states:

I could hardly believe that marriage was going to deprive me of this too. It had already deprived me of so many things which I had childishly overvalued: my independence, my income, my twenty-two inch waist, my sleep, most of my friends who had deserted on account of David's insults, a whole string finite things, and many more indefinite attributes like hope and expectations. And now, just when I had got my future organized, and had glimpsed as it were the end of solitude, I had been pushed right back

to where I had started. There seemed to be no answer but stoicism, a philosophy which I find I can practice, but which I neither enjoy nor admire. (TGY 10).

At this juncture Drabble unfolds the conflict that marriage posits for the female gender. Through marriage, the male gender not only ascertains his status as a patriarch but he also obtains a wife who is an unpaid worker and reproducer. On the other hand, women are exploited by marriage as they initiate the status of the unpaid worker and reproducer. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Margaret Jackson in her critical essay, “Sex, Class and Hetero-Relations” comments on Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a leading American feminist and a major feminist theorist:

She believed that through marriage men had appropriated women’s resources, allowing women to retain and to sell only themselves – their bodies, their labour, their emotional resources. (Evans 7).

The woman therefore ceases to exist as an individual from the moment that she is married as she is tied to her husband whose identity is more important in a patriarchal society. Thus, the female has no identity in a patriarchal construct. She is identified by her father’s identity before her marriage and by her husband’s identity after her marriage. The female protest is thus annulled by male manipulation. Emma further discovers the inequality of gender in a country that adopts equality of sexes in its constitution for which she retreats to the female world of domesticity and motherhood while David strongly favours himself to work in his new job in order to control the financial condition of his home.

Drabble in *The Millstone* (TM) sharply observes the plight of a young academic single mother in the 1960s in England with respect to her socio-economic problem, during a time that

illegitimacy is a taboo. Rosamund Stacey is independent and brilliant, but she is also naïve and the choice that she has to make for herself and her baby is terrifying. Rosamund solves her economic problems by writing and publishing her articles. She shares her flat to a lodger who pays rent and baby-sits while Rosamund writes her articles. In the process of carrying an illegitimate child Rosamund discovers the facts of life:

The only curious feature in my case is that the facts that I now discovered were precisely the same facts that my admirable parents had always so firmly presented to our childish eyes: facts of inequality, of limitation, of separation, of the impossible, heartbreaking uneven hardship of the human lot. (TM 76-77).

Rosamund echoes the situation of the ‘facts’ of inequality that pre-dominate the English society of her time. These ‘facts’ are the elements that directly cause class and gender subordination and discrimination. In *Women’s Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett states:

Just as we cannot conceive of women’s liberation under the oppression of capitalism so we cannot conceive of a socialism whose principles of equality, freedom and dignity are vitiated by the familiar iniquities of gender. (Barrett 258-259).

Though Rosamund belongs to the English upper middle class, her pregnancy entails her to various visits to hospitals, clinics, shops and other places. She is thus thrown to a position wherein she is able to witness the differences existing among the different classes within the English society, and simultaneously these visits are eye openers for her. At this juncture, Rosamund understands that the facts of life conflict with the theorised ideology of freedom, equality and dignity. It is only in her state of pregnancy that Rosamund is able to understand the

social bias and prejudice directed to an illegitimate child bearer. In “Illegitimacy and Illegitimates in English History” Alan Macfarlane states:

The bastard like the prostitute, thief and beggar, belongs to the motley crowd of disreputable social types which society has generally resented, always endured. He is a living symbol of social irregularity. (Macfarlane).

The passage illustrates the English social notion on illegitimate children. Thus, social prejudice is directed towards the child even before its birth. *The Guardian* in “Illegitimacy: The Shameful Secret” states:

Our forebears placed great emphasis on the bonds of marriage, and those who deviated from this social norm faced condemnation from their community. Despite this powerful deterrent, many children were born outside of wedlock. (“Illegitimacy: The Shameful Secret,” *The Guardian*).

The passage reflects the patriarchal ideology on marriage as the social norm in the English society. The conflict between the established morality and violation against the set norms further impose the child bearer to confinements. Alan Macfarlane in “Illegitimacy and Illegitimates in English History” denotes:

Every lewd woman which shall have any bastard which may be chargeable to the parish, the justices of the peace shall commit such woman to the house of correction, to be punished and set on work, during the term of one whole year. (Macfarlane).

Rosamund as an educated woman realises how illegitimacy socially condemns and victimizes the woman and her child. She also reveals that the taboo of illegitimacy discriminates a woman and her child while the issue of the male victimizer remains silent. Further, Drabble in this text subtly



focuses on the unseen thread that connects the mother and the child and for which Rosamund does not allow her child to be placed for adoption even before the baby's birth.

Drabble in *The Millstone*, has also focused on the 1960s English sentiments in areas such as abortion, adoption, foster homes, and hospital rules and regulations that marginalizes women from their children. Jane Freedman comments on the 'Second Wave' feminists in *Feminism* and states:

They emphasized the way in which personal circumstances are structured by public factors. Women's lives are regulated and conditioned, for example, by the allocation of welfare benefits, by labour laws and the sexual division of labour, and by laws on rape, abortion, sexual harassment. (Freedman 29).

Simultaneously, the incidents that Drabble relates in order to focus on the mentioned issues, project the male supremacy that prevails in England during the time of writing the novel.

In *The Ice Age* (TIA), Drabble documents the effects and conditions of England during the oil crisis. A series of interlinking relationships depict the disappointed state of contemporary England. Drabble's focus on corrupt property developers, IRA bombs and broken marriages due to socio-economic reasons is another document of the English socio-economic and political issues of the time. Central to the novel is the issue of women as wageless work force in the family. Alison the protagonist tries to hold her family together in various ways:

She had also had to organize her domestic economy single-handed, and had long been in charge of mortgage, bills, visits to the accountant, for her husband Donnell was a spendthrift and had, in the early years, often been out of work. (TIA 36).

Alison's career progressively goes quite well when she gives birth to the sick child, but, Donnell's career faces problems for which he shows his resentment of his wife. Alison therefore decides to give up acting in order to nurse her sick child, and to simultaneously appease her disgruntled husband. Like the traditional good wife, Alison chooses to retire from work rather than to compete with her husband. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Adrienne Rich in "The Kingdom of The Fathers", comments:

De Beauvoir in 1949 still saw the liberation of women as but one of many liberations which would come about as the result of socialist revolution, in so far as socialism promised to do away with private property and the patriarchal family and to release women into economic equality with men. (Rich 97).

Simone de Bouvoir's comment on female liberation in the absence of social revolution seems to confirm Alison's plight. Alison does not explore the process of social liberation due to the fact that marriage has bound her to her husband and children, and she is no longer free to do what she likes. Thus, the male power subjects the female to an inferior role in society and the female is restricted to domestication, reproduction and wageless employment. "Margaret Drabble: The Original Angry Young Woman", states:

Drabble is initially ambivalent about using the term feminist, claiming that her only thought was to "reflect the female experience". "That's how life was," she says unapologetically. "It's realism, not feminism." Later, however, she does use the term. "I was surprised by how angry some of the middle stories were. They were quite feminist and I was a bit surprised because I hadn't thought they were. I thought that was what everybody

was thinking. And in fact, everybody was. Women were thinking like that; it wasn't just me. But I was surprised by how conspicuous it was."

("Margaret Drabble: The Original Angry Young Woman," *Independent*).

Margaret Drabble thus interweaves real life incidents in her writings in order to depict female subordination and marginalization that in turn portrays male dominance and superiority. As the inferior gender, Alison is a part of the exploited in the process of liberation and she has to deal with all the financial aspects of her family from the small sum that her husband provides her. In contrast to Alison's position as the exploited female, Donnell, her husband and the bread winner is a spendthrift who is often out of job. For Alison who is caught in such a situation, there seems to be no venue for socio-economic mobility until she divorces Donnell. Drabble further unfolds the female capacity to face unfamiliar situations with the incident of Alison's divorce and the eventful arrest of her daughter.

In *The Ice Age*, Drabble through Alison narrates the 1970s feminist thoughts related to social and economic conditions of the English middle class women and representation of women in literature. It is remarkable how she changes the traditional patriarchal notion of the silent, angelic and obedient woman dependent on her husband for mental sustenance and financial provision, to a woman who divorces her spendthrift husband in order to work and provide for herself and her children. In this text, it is Anthony Keating, the male protagonist who is fascinated by Alison's intellectual understanding of balance sheets, interest rates, investments and tax relief. Drabble elusively compares the difference between the traditional woman and the educated woman through the characters of Barbara; Anthony's ex-wife, and Alison respectively. Towards the end of the novel, it is not a woman in trouble who awaits the arrival of a man to set

her free, but, Anthony Keating who awaits the return of Alison to provide him mental security and financial aid.

Drabble's *The Radiant Way* (1987), *A Natural Curiosity* (1989) and *The Gates of Ivory* (1991) form a trilogy that describes the experiences of three friends. As each of the novel that form the trilogy is an independent text, this thesis will examine the first book of the trilogy *The Radiant Way* (TRW), wherein the novelist portrays the political upheavals, social unrest and economic situation of the female gender. The protagonists in this text represent the intellectually job qualified females. The novelist remarks:

Liz, Alix and Esther were not princesses. They were not beautiful, they were not rich. But they were young, and they had considerable wit. Their fate should, therefore, be in some sense at least exemplary: opportunity was certainly offered to them, they had choices, at eighteen the world opened for them and displayed its riches, the brave new world of Welfare State and County Scholarships, of equality for women, they were the elite, the chosen, the garlanded of the great social dream. Adventure and possibility lay before them, as they had not lain before Liz's sister Shirley, who married at nineteen and stayed on in Northam, or before Dora Sutcliffe who left school at fifteen and sold sweets in Woolworth's until she married Shirley's husband's brother Steve. (TRW 88).

Drabble in the guise of the three protagonists of the novel captures the sentiment of the feminists of the 1950s regarding education and scholarship provisions for the female gender made by the Welfare State and County Scholarships in England. The passage shows that the possibility of

further education with the prospect of educational scholarship was not availed to women before the 1950s in England. In *Women's Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett states:

The dominant tradition in Britain has sought to document empirically the ways in which educational opportunity, and hence social mobility, has depended upon social class. (Barrett 114).

The decade was therefore, a turning point for the English females with the desire to enhance their educational qualification, and at the same time to acquire social and economic status that is equal to the males within the social strata.

Equality for women that has been advocated by the British Constitution from the early 1950s in England was actualized through agencies such as the Welfare State and County Scholarships in the 1980s. Equality for women in this case refers to the elevation of women on equal status with the male gender in the area of education. Yet, the inequality that prevails within the family, gender division of labour, labour laws, unequal pay and welfare benefits mark the 1980's England. This gender role thus constructs gender difference and Marxist feminists argue that the difference between the male and female gender imposed by these three concepts lie in the economic perspective. Jane Freedman in *Feminism* states:

[I]t is no use if women achieve equal pay in the labour market if at the same time they are still carrying out the role of the unpaid carers at home; similarly, merely rewarding women's caring work in the home (usually through the provision of the state benefits) will not be sufficient if inequalities persist in paid employment. Yet again we see the need underlined by feminists to rethink the boundaries between the public and

the private and to reassess women's work across these boundaries. (Freedman 53).

The given passage echoes Marxist feminists' objection to gender inequality prevalent within society. It is this inequality that marginalizes the female gender and one that simultaneously forms two different classes between the two genders. In *The Radiant Way*, Drabble indicates how marriage elevates the female's social position and how divorce simultaneously reduces her to a lower level. Charles who divorces Liz still dominates her material world and supervises her through his solicitor:

He has five children of his own. Obscurely, unfairly, guiltily, he blames Liz. He tells his solicitor to tell Liz to sell the house. Liz, through her solicitor, refuses, or at least temporizes. Sometimes he telephones Liz directly at odd hours of day and night, for they are still on speaking terms, but she refuses to speak seriously, saying merely that she hasn't found a suitable little home in Kentish Town and is too busy to look, and any way, isn't it a bit short-sighted of him even to think of selling such a valuable property? She even has the cheek to mention Capital Gains Tax. (TRW 179-180).

Although Liz takes her time to lengthen her stay in the huge bourgeoisie home, ultimately she has to submit to Charles authority. In *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Nancy Hartmann in "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" states:

The material base of patriarchy, then does not rest solely on childrearing in the family, but on all the social structures that enable men to control women's labor. The aspects of social structures that perpetuate

patriarchy are theoretically identifiable, hence separable from their other aspects. (Nicholson 101-102).

Thus, material life that is determined by economic condition stands as an opposition between two different groups wherein either of the group remains as the dominant group and the other as the oppressed. The dominant group with its material position therefore stands as the ruling class or gender, and the oppressed class or gender struggles to change the existing relations thereby exposing the inhuman conditions created by the ruling class or gender. At this point, Charles takes the dominant role while Liz as the weaker gender will soon have to sell the house or move out of the house.

In *The Radiant Way*, Drabble depicts the chaotic social, economic and political condition of the 1980s English cultural scenario. It opened venues for women writers to critically express female thoughts, plights and social conditions experienced by women. Elaine Showalter in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, in her essay “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness” observes that:

English feminist criticism essentially Marxist, stresses oppression; (Showalter 249).

Oppression in this passage refers to the oppression imposed by patriarchy, the gender ruling class on the subordinate gender and class. It is due to this oppression that gender conflicts and struggles arise and Margaret Drabble’s novels subtly reflect the conflicts and struggles that women have to encounter in a world where men are the favoured gender. In *The Guardian*, in an interview with Lisa Allardice: “A Life in Writing: Margaret Drabble”, Drabble comments:

“Men and women are still fighting for precedence and knocking into one another and thoroughly annoying each other in the same way they always have.” (Allardice).

Marxist feminists believe that division of labour is imposed by societal norms that have been institutionalized within each culture. Drabble’s novels primarily deal with the oppression of the female gender by the ruling gender in the middle class English society.

*The Witch of Exmoor* (TWE) centers on family party game and an eccentric mother. Drabble in this text questions family relationship with respect to economic conditions. It is with subtle irony that Drabble reveals the strength of the protagonist Frieda Haxby, who works like a man to provide for her children in the absence of her husband. The focus is on family circle, children’s lack in understanding their mother’s needs and desires, a woman’s will and physical capability to work and toil like a man if given the chance and the patriarchal etiology that elevates man:

And they had all paused on the pavement, looking up at the brooding building, where Frieda had incarcerated herself, and worked and worked and worked, night after night for bread and butter and the enlightenment of the glory of mankind. (TWE 33).

Frieda remains steadfast during the time of her family crisis; her husband leaves the home and never returns. In the absence of her husband, she manages to build-up the family house where her children have grown up. She is unable to find the reason for the supremacy of the male gender. Drabble’s protagonist the eccentric mother Frieda works and toils, and as an eminent author she finally resides in a remote old hotel by the sea in order to isolate herself from her children and grandchildren and thereby to recapture her individual self. Frieda starts to pursue



her subject of interest only when her children have grown, lived in independent houses with their respective spouses and children of their own. From the sixteenth century Aemelia Lanyer to the eighteenth century Anne Finch, female writers advocate that women need mental exercise and space for their mental effort just as much as men do, and that women feel just as much as men feel. This sentiment is echoed by Charlotte Bronte in *Jane Eyre* that is directed at the mainstream English literary tradition dominated by centuries of literary masculinity. Feminists argue that it is only females who understand woman's life experiences and who can articulate about a woman's life. The way women perceive things is different from the male perspective and feminists express that, men and women have different notions of what is important. Deborah L. Madsen in her 'Preface' to the *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice* states:

Many texts by women express the same concerns as feminist theory: the unique experience of women in history; the notion of female consciousness; the definition of gender that limit and oppress; and the cause of women's liberation from those restrictions. (Madsen ix).

Through Frieda, Margaret Drabble reveals the capacity of a woman to encounter unforeseen and trying circumstances and to emerge as the victor. Frieda exposes the malady of a woman whose husband fails to return to his family. In *A Literature of Their Own*, Elaine Showalter states:

In trying to deal with this recognition of an on going struggle for personal and artistic autonomy, contemporary women writers have reasserted their continuity with the women of the past, through essays and criticism as well as through fiction. They use all the resources of the modern novel, including exploded chronology, dreams, myth, and stream-of-consciousness, but they have been profoundly influenced by the

nineteenth-century feminine literature, sometimes to the point of rewriting it. (Showalter 247).

Since the Women's Liberation Movement, more women writers began to clearly estimate themselves, and they have formed a female sub-culture which ascribes status, occupation, interaction, sexuality and motherhood to delve into the realms of female consciousness. Drabble depicts through Frieda the female consciousness and therefore Frieda is caught in the midst of mothering, building her family house and working to feed her children. Yet the lack of appreciation by the children for Frieda; their mother, seems to illustrate the social notion of a woman as a mother.

The stereotyping of female characters in male produced literatures is strongly opposed by feminists. Male written literatures present women as being ever dutiful or portray them as monsters, sirens, whereby women are created as individuals without identity, passion and mental capacity of their own. Women in male written literatures thus exist only in relation to the male protagonists. In *The Witch of Exmoor*, Drabble encapsulates in Frieda the loss of female identity due to marriage and childbearing. Yet, Frieda who works and toils in order to provide for her family emerges as a counter character of females depicted in male written literature and a counter character of the former Frieda. The novelist portrays the true identity of Frieda in the isolated area of Exmoor; the eminent writer. But, as a woman and a mother she is able to pursue her interest; writing, only when everything seems to be settled in her family. Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic* argue that male writers mould and indoctrinate female characters into the traditional women roles dictated by male dominated society:

...those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face both to lessen their dread of her "inconstancy" and by identifying her with the

“eternal types” they have themselves invented to possess her more thoroughly. (Gilbert & Gubar 17).

Liberty for women characters in male writing is thus impossible as women are oppressed by male factor and ideology. In phallogentric writing, the necessity of change in women; social, economical, political and other issues such as intellectuality that relates to the formation of ideology, do not occur in the female characters as men fail to explore the inner woman urges and feminine needs. In *The Witch of Exmoor*, Drabble plays with the ideology of writing that is ascribed to the male gender; Frieda writes and emerges as a prominent writer. Drabble further reverses the male concept of the weak female and depicts Frieda as a female who works like a man in order to provide for her family.

*The Peppered Moth* (TPM) is set in the early 1900s in Breaseborough, a town in southern Yorkshire coal belt in England. Drabble depicts the characters of three women representing three generations. Drabble’s character, Miss Heald who is forty-two years old in 1922, represent the early 1920’s empowered female situation in the area of work and salary. The following extract portrays Miss Heald as salaried woman:

She was happy single. She had a good job, and a position of power and influence. She had worked and traveled far to acquire superior qualifications, certificates and diplomas, and was in receipt of more than adequate income. Her salary had risen steadily from £135 a year in 1980 to more than £300 a year by 1920: she was not well paid as the male staff, naturally, but she had a higher salary than any of the other women teachers. (TPM 33).

Gender discrimination with respect to salary, in the early 1920s is highlighted in the passage cited, but Miss Heald does not grumble about her salary as she is one of the few who is better paid compared to the other female teachers. The character sketch of Miss Heald is the novelist's tool to throw light to the gender bias of the 1920s in relation to the male colleagues. Michele Barrett in *Women's Oppression Today* quotes John Westergaard and Harriet Resler and comments:

In 1971, for instance, women school teachers earned about one fifth less than men, clerical workers earned about a third less than men, while women manual workers got little more than half the comparable male wage. They remarked that 'sex inequality in pay ...reinforces class inequality: it strikes hardest at the lowest levels of the occupational hierarchy'. (Barrett 128).

In *The Peppered Moth*, Bessie Bawtry's character is based on Margaret Drabble's mother Kathleen Marie Bloor, who died in April 1984. Bessie Bawtry, born in 1912, represents the early 1930's, and her daughter Chrissie who is born in 1940, represents the 1960s, while Bessie's grand daughter Faro represents the late 1980s and 1990s. In the "Afterward" of *The Peppered Moth*, Drabble comments on her mother:

She was not funny. She was a highly intelligent, angry, deeply disappointed and manipulative woman. I am not sure if I have been able to find a tone in which to create or describe her. (TPM 367).

Drabble, with the use of the transcendence of three generations of female lineage is able to capture and postulate various issues that arise in feminist discourse from 1930-1990. Although similar questions related to family and traditions are posited by Bessie Bawtry and Faro, yet the

measures taken by the two females to formulate the answers are not the same. Drabble also briefly recaptures her Cambridge days through Bessie in *The Peppered Moth* and through Alix, Esther and Liz in *The Radiant Way*. In “A Life in Writing: Margaret Drabble”, Drabble comments to Lisa Allardice:

“I remember my first evening at Cambridge, people were talking about things that I didn’t know about, and I was quite well educated and not totally socially inept, but still I felt there was a whole world here, and my mother felt that so intensely she couldn’t get over it.” (Allardice).

Marxists are of the opinion that in literature, the socio-economic conditions of the writer directly determines the characteristics of the works of art. From his observation of Terry Eagleton’s *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Theory* (1976), Harry Blamires in his critical writing *A History of Literary Criticism* quotes:

...a literary text is not the ‘expression’ of ideology. It is the ‘production’ of ideology rather as the performance of the play is the production of the text. Literary texts do not produce historical reality, but they operate on ideology, and ideology relates individuals to history in various ways. (Blamires 372).

To the Marxist critics the text is the medium, where the written documents and prevalent ideas operate on each other. To expose gender issues and material oppression, one of the theoretical approaches of Western feminism since the 1930s is the revision of Marxist aesthetics and structuralism. Marxist feminists have focused both on the social and economic conditions as the factors of women’s inferiority and subordination within society and their argument lies in the

opposition between labour and capital that directly affects gender division of labour and thereby enforces gender inequality. In *A Literature of Their Own*, Showalter states:

The novels of the 1960s, particularly Doris Lessing's powerful *The Golden Notebook*, began to point out, in a variety of note of disillusionment and betrayal, the 'free women' were not so free after all. Lessing's free women are Marxists who think they understand how the oppression of women is connected to the class struggle, who have profession and children, and who lead independent lives; but they are fragmented and helpless creatures, still locked into dependency upon men. (Showalter 247).

In the select texts, with the exception of Emma in *The Garrick Year*, all the intelligent and educated protagonists attempt and struggle to free themselves from the traditional woman quality, while Emma chooses to remain as a wife. The experience of each female protagonist is different as Drabble poses different aspects of female discrimination to each protagonist.

In critical theory, Feminist Movement attempts to elevate women in the literary establishment and feminist writers seek liberation by constructing female framework for the analysis of women to counter the phallogentric writing tradition. Margaret Drabble's frame work is directed in the unpaid activities of the female juxtaposed to the work that the female has to perform as a wage earner or as a salaried woman.

The character of the protagonist Ailsa Kelman of *The Sea Lady* (TSL) is a leap from the other protagonists of the select texts. She is a flamboyant feminist celebrity who has solved and overcome most of her gender problems and has elevated herself to a level where she is at par

with her male colleagues. Ailsa traces her childhood and tells her old acquaintance Humphrey Clark about Peter her brother, who was called Tommy:

She held out her glass to a passing waiter for a refill, and continued riskily, teasingly, ‘Except that Tommy was older than me, and nastier. He bullied me, I didn’t bully him. In *The Shrimp and the Anemone*, it’s the other way round. Big sister bullies little brother. It wasn’t like that with us. Tommy was horrid to me, most of the time. He still is. If we had been twins, he would have devoured me in the womb. Like those uterine cannibals that Paul Burden has just described’. (TSL 16-17).

The remarkable thing about Ailsa is that she does not underestimate herself for the bullies that she receives from her brother, but she uses it as a turning point to build her gender immunity and defenses and she surfaces as a celebrity. The aspects of feminist criticism that has been denoted in this study is the development of new female characters based on the study of female experiences in contrast to the male idea of women characters and theories written by male writers. Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, delve into the past women writers and closely examine the nature of their writings. They have not failed to indicate Anne Finch’s complaint about the pen as an essentially male tool and also express that Mary Elizabeth Coleridge’s “The Other Side of the Mirror” depicts the woman poet as an enraged prisoner within her self. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar oppose the notion of literary theoreticians from Aristotle to Hopkins that consider the male gender as the generative power and the only legitimate power. Their argument stems from Anais Nin’s indication of patriarchal etiology that defines:

[A] solitary Father God as the only creator of all things, and the male metaphors of literary creation that depend upon such etiology, have long “confused” literary women, readers and writers alike. (Gilbert and Gubar 7).

Gilbert and Gubar opine that from Aristotle to Hopkins, the belief of male supremacy is strongly vested in the male writers’ mentality, and to which male writers reason as the cause that prevented many women from writing. Therefore, writing, reading and thinking are male characteristics for which they are alien to women.

Opposing the patriarchal etiology, Drabble creates a female character in *The Sea lady* who retains her female beauty to her added inner strength and intellect. The following extract shows how well Ailsa builds her gender immunity system:

Public occasions enthralled Ailsa Kelman. She loved their special effects, their choreography, their managed glamour, their moments of panic, their humiliations, their heterogeneity, their ephemeral and cynical extravagance. She rose to these occasions and blossomed in the surf of them. She was in her element here.

(TSL 5).

Although women of the 21<sup>st</sup>. Century have overcome various gender biases in the theoretical aspects pertaining to socio-economic and political areas, yet, they still have many more gender problems to resolve as gender conflict is deeply embedded in tradition, and tradition is deeply rooted in patriarchy. In *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams cites Marx and Engels’ work, *The German Ideology*:



The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the material relationships grasped as ideas. (Williams 58).

Marx and Engels attack their German contemporaries by asserting that only a few of the ruling populace; the bourgeoisie who form the superstructure, contribute to the formation of ideas for the land, while the mass; the proletariats who exert real labour; the economic base, remain unaware of the situation. Both Marx and Engels believe that mass consciousness is created through texts in which the writer participates only as the producer of cultural thoughts determined by the capitalists' ideas that control the economy and Jonathan Culler in *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, states:

For Marxism, texts belong to a superstructure determined by the economic base. (Culler 129).

It is due to this traditional male superiority and pride that even the empowered feminist celebrity Ailsa protects herself with her psychological and physical defenses:

You trailed the bait, and she came snapping. She courted attacks, taunts, embarrassments,... She needed notice. She needed attention. She would never be satisfied. Indifference was death to her. Celebrity was the breath of her life. She had invented herself, and reinvented herself, and reinvented herself yet again. Show girl, academic, trophy wife, media star, media whore, and in sum, a clever, clever girl. (TSL 13).

Drabble seems to silently suggest that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century educated female gender can aspire to be anything that she deems for herself while she battles with her male counterparts on her way towards attaining her goal. In *A Literature of Their Own*, Showalter states:

It is difficult to guess precisely how the female tradition will continue to develop in the English novel; Mortimer, Lessing, Drabble, Byatt, and Spark all seem to be moving into new phases in their writing. Feminine realism, feminist protest, and female self-analysis are combining in the context of twentieth-century social and political concern. (Showalter 249).

The crux of the matter as illustrated by Drabble lies in the fact that women must constantly 'invent' and 'reinvent' themselves in all spheres so as to emerge as winners in a male dominated world. Therefore, the expression of female thoughts and feelings leads to a search for language, style, structure and voice to express the raw intensity of female feelings and problems. Feminist criticism urges women to go beyond the boundaries of compromise, madness and death in textual female characters and in the female gender's daily life.

The select texts ranging from the year 1964 to 2006 document a series of gender issues pertaining to social, economical and political fields, and the changing scenario that is experienced by both the male and the female gender within the English society. Drabble in her novels explores the problems faced by women that are social, economical and political. The experience of motherhood and their co-relation to the present period from a woman's point of view is presented with its psychological and physical traumas in relation to the financial imbalances faced by the female protagonists.

Drabble efficiently captures the woman's will to change from the traditional female role models to the career oriented woman. Her female protagonists emerge from the English upper middle class society by virtue of their birth, or they emerge to that status by virtue of their educational qualification and hard work that ascribes them their social position. The women in distress are able to survive without male protection at the time of their troubles; illegitimate child

bearing, divorces, separation from husband, and work challenges. Drabble depicts her female characters as individuals capable of fending for themselves, providing for themselves financially and maintaining their own individuality in a changing world.

## **CHAPTER – II**

### **MAINSTREAM GENDER CONFLICT**

This chapter will deal with problems related to gender conflicts and struggles regarding the English middle class morality on issues pertaining to the social taboo of illegitimacy and divorce that subordinates the female gender. It will attempt to study the conflicts faced by the protagonists in the select texts from feminist perspective. Further, it will examine the conflicts on the issue of female economic dilemma, and the nature of the unpaid worker. It will also concentrate on the discourse of female education with special reference to the mainstream English middle class.

Margaret Drabble's protagonists are females from the English middle class who are in conflict with various issues related to the middle class morality. Jonathan Culler in *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* states:

... Althusser maps a Marxist account of the determination of the individual by the social onto psychoanalysis. The subject is an effect constituted in the processes of the unconscious, of discourse, and of the relatively autonomous practices that organise society. (Culler 129).

Individual psychology thus shaped by individuals within a social construct moulds and shapes the individual's ideology that further reflects on the society in order to maintain an organised social set-up. Each individual is therefore, bred, shaped and molded by the social psychology that one is born into. The English middle class that encompass a majority of the English populace is shaped and molded by the acceptable set of scruples that is reflected in the individuals belonging to the middle class.

In *The Millstone*, Rosamund seems to echo the novelist's views on the middle class morality as the 'English morality':

It is a morality, all right, a well established, traditional, English morality, moreover it is my morality, whether I like it or not. But there are things in me that cannot take it, and when they have to assert themselves the result is violence, screaming, ugliness, and Lord knows what yet to come. (TM 161).

Drabble through Rosamund, the protagonist, projects her views on the cold exterior politeness of the English middle class morality. Rosamund comments on her parents' sudden change of plan to visit India. She feels that this change of plan is to avoid the awkward situation presently imposed on them on the social front by her state of unwed pregnancy:

Such tact, such withdrawal, such avoidance. Such fear in causing pain, such willingness to receive and take pains. It is a morality, alright, a well established, traditional, English morality, moreover it is my morality, whether I like it or not. (TM 161).

Rosamund counters her middle class morality and scruples; maintenance of polite social front and the quiet withdrawal at a time when one needs a friend. Dick Protheroe who is a friend of Rosamund's parents and the baby's surgeon took it his duty to inform Rosamund's parents about the baby. The result of the information is a letter from Rosamund's father in the first week of December that tells her about their sudden change of plan to visit India. In "Guilt Trip", Adelle Waldman states:

*The Millstone* is about liberal guilt. It is perhaps one of the most written on the subject, full of the sly profundity that is sometimes the special strength of spare, comic novels. (Waldman).

Although Rosamund is unnerved by her parents' sudden change of plan at a time that they are about to return from Africa she determines and evaluates the logic of this change of plan and finally remarks:

They did not wish to cause me or themselves pain, embarrassment, or even mere inconvenience by their return, so they went to India instead. (TM 160).

It is clear that Rosamund is hurt by her parents' withdrawal when she faces a deplorable situation. She perceives that her parents are more concerned about themselves and the society that binds them. The social psychology imbibed by individuals living in a society is the reason that Rosamund is for the first time afraid to meet her wedded brother and sister. Consequently, she also delays in writing any letter to her parents whom she recounts as:

[E]xtraordinary blend of socialist principles and middle class scruples. (TM 31).

Rosamund's parents are presently attending to the socialist job of working in Africa. In "Guilt Trip", Adelle Waldman states:

Yet Drabble's novel is hardly a salvo against liberalism, compassion, or social conscience. It is something deeper, a wry and witty testament not only to the difficulties but, more damningly, to the absurdities of living according to principle, no matter how worthwhile the principle. (Waldman).

Unable to face the shame of their daughter who bears an illegitimate child, the visit to India is thus a welcome pretense on socialist ground for Rosamund's parents.

Drabble seems to suggest that the polite withdrawal of Rosamund's parents is a prevalent practice among the traditional middle class English society when an unwanted issue arises in a certain condition. The novelist also seems to suggest that under trying circumstances, every individual needs space for adjustments and recovery to which Rosamund comments:

And also I was glad that my parents went to India; "the physical comfort of their absence was greater to me than the mental disquiet of considering that they had taken so large a decision on my account". (TM 161).

Rosamund is mentally distraught at her parents' unexpected gesture and decision, yet, she is brave and courageous enough to face the consequences on her own. She feels that their absence is in fact reassuring as she will not have to face crude parental remarks.

Since the social notion on unwed mothers and divorcees play an important role in the English social set-up, Rosamund is uncertain about her future, but she is certain of her determination to keep her baby and to make it her very own. Though Rosamund is born to the middle class economy, she is unable to afford the advertised help due to her financial constraint. Yet, she has to meet certain demands imposed on her educational status in order to conform to the middle class society. Thus, the course of the events shapes to meet her economic needs. Drabble's protagonist therefore goes beyond the boundary of madness and compromise:

I experienced the usual doubts about whether my child would like me, whether I would like my child, and so on, but simultaneously with these doubts I experienced absolute certainty. I knew for a fact that the child would be mine and that I would have it. (TM 89).

In the interview with Lisa Allardice for *The Guardian* Drabble comments:



*The Millstone* was my third novel and I wrote while I was expecting my third baby. Its subject not surprisingly, is maternity. There weren't many novels about maternity in those days, but I don't think I had any sense of entering forbidden or dangerous ground. It was about what was all around me, the daily lives of myself and my friends, the struggle to work and bring up children at the same time. (Allardice).

Although the novel partly reflects the life of the writer, it conveys the social notion on the issue of the unwed mother and her child.

In *The Ice Age*, Drabble reveals the tale of the protagonist Alison's divorce at the time that Alison meets Antony:

She, like Anthony, had an unsatisfactory and feckless spouse, an actor of pathologically jealous and pathologically unfaithful temperament: like Anthony, she had been through a process of slow disillusion with her past life. (TIA 35).

From the passage it is clear that Alison experienced hardships during her marriage with her husband that compels her to divorce her husband. Further, Drabble gives insight into the ways on how women often have to abandon their career and take the subordinate role as housekeeper. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Adrienne Rich in "The Kingdom of the Fathers" states:

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers: a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men – by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division

of labour, determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is subsumed under the male. (Evans 78).

In the case of Alison, she has to give up her career so as to remove herself from the competition in the theatre with her husband Donnell:

The career she had given up had been highly promising, established, even, rather than doubtful, and most of her theatrical friends thought she was mad, though they did not like to say so to her face, because of their diffidence in the view of her very evident tragedy: also, Alison's decision to stop acting removed a serious competitor from an overcrowded profession, and who could be unselfish enough to regret that? Nevertheless, behind her back, they speculated that it must have been some kind of guilt or self-punishment, rather than real goodness, that made her relinquish so bright a future for one of such hard and, in their eyes, unsatisfying work. (TIA 35).

Alison follows the age old traditional and social norms by submerging herself to domesticity in order to curb her husband's vile mood at her work place. As a close competitor of Donnell, Alison gives up her promising acting career in the theatre where Donnell is also one of the promising actors. Alison's submission to the social norms earns Donnell the name of being the bread winner and the male as the financial provider. Alison thereby aligns herself to the middle class morality as a mother and wife.

Simultaneously, Drabble gives the incident of the female who is willing to free herself from the traditional understanding of being a female. In *The Ice Age*, Maureen argues with her

mother who represents the male idea of traditional mother figure. Maureen's mother advises her daughter to get married and get her life settled to which Maureen replies:

...I'm young yet, who wants to get stuck with a lot of snotty kids, like our Mavis? I want to see bit of life: I don't want to waste myself like you did, Ma. (TIA 56).

Although Maureen's mother does not represent the traditional good, kind and loving mother figure, yet, she expresses the English traditional notion and the social psychology that a female should be married at a certain age. Drabble in *The Threepenny Review* on "On Marriage: Margaret Drabble" states:

I was one of the last of the Early Marriage Generation. It is hard to believe now that so many of us married so innocently, so young. We should have known better. In those days, women still married to get away from their mothers, because a career was not considered a good enough reason for leaving home. Careers were not taken seriously. Whereas a marriage, however implausible, had to be respected. ("On marriage: Margaret Drabble," *Three Penny Review*).

The traditional and moral notion that binds Drabble on the issue of marriage is reflected in the select texts and therefore Maureen's mother voices the English traditional notion on marriage. The protagonists; Emma, Alison, Liz and Alix marry at an early age to align themselves with the prevalent tradition, and like Rosamund, Maureen's conflict is related to the English moral code of early marriage that is voiced by the mother and objected by Maureen.

Drabble further points out the male weakness to sexually tempt the female in work places and it directly projects the male infidelity within the marriage bound. Though marriage is

honoured by the English society, the novelist indicates that infidelity does not bar the males within the social order. Regarding male infidelity she narrates the incident between Maureen and Derek:

...but their relationship made any personal remarks improper, and he had been making a few of late. About her wasting her life while Len was put away, a young woman like her, and about how his wife had started going to evening classes because she thought the children had destroyed her identity. Maureen knew where that kind of chat led, and indeed last Tuesday Derek had kissed her...and holding her against him at the same time, with a bit of pressing of the leg. (TIA 133).

Derek is a married man while Maureen is not married to Len. Yet, it is the married man Derek who persuades and entices Maureen into a sexual relationship.

Emma's friend Mary further depicts the middle class morality as she maintains her polite conversations with Pascal:

And when Pascal arrived Mary asked her many intelligent questions about where she came from, how she found England, and how she was getting on with the English language. Pascal was very pleased, as not many of our friends had the social composure to pay her the right kind of attention, and Mary's middle-class courtesy was exactly what she did not get enough of. (TGY 79-80).

Mary's middle class courtesy is deeply ingrained as she is born and bred in a middle class family. Mary's courtesy seems to be inborn compared to Emma's other friends in Hereford, and compared to Maureen, Derek and Len. The reason may lie in the fact that the other characters of

the select texts have arrived to the middle class by virtue of their hard work and by their financial status, and they still have a long way to refine themselves, in order to achieve the English middle class courtesy as their own morality.

In *The Millstone*, the protagonist Rosamund from an English middle class family commits the mistake of being pregnant but unwed in the 1960s London. She thereby breaks the social code as she commits the social taboo of bearing the child out of wedlock. Rosamund is amazed to find that she is pregnant on her first sexual encounter:

I was sure enough, having indeed a fool-proof case in favour of George's paternity, for he was the only man I had ever in my whole life slept with, and then only once. (TM 20).

In the interview with Lisa Allardice for *The Guardian*, Margaret Drabble states:

My publisher's reader (a man, and middle aged) queried the plot, on the grounds that it was almost impossible to get pregnant during the first act of intercourse. (Allardice).

The passage reflects the difference of opinion in the male and the female gender with regard to pregnancy.

The English social taboo seems to restrict only the female gender while the stigma and the taboo attached to illegitimacy and divorce do not seem to bind the male gender, as it binds the female gender. "The Adoption History: Illegitimacy" states:

As a label, illegitimacy described their collective status as outcasts who were legally and socially inferior to members of legitimate families headed by married couples. Unmarried birth parents and children suffered penalties ranging from confinements in isolated maternity homes and

dangerous baby farms to parental rejection and community disapproval. Before the 1960's, unmarried mothers were usually considered undeserving of the public benefits offered to impoverished widows and deserted wives. They were generally denied mother's pensions, which virtually all states granted beginning in 1910, and Aid to Dependent Children, a federal program created by the Social Security Act of 1935, (Divorced women and non-white women were also excluded.) To be illegitimate was to be shamed and shunned. ("The Adoption History: Illegitimacy," *The Adoption Project*).

The passage reflects on the social discrimination of the illegitimate child and the unwed mother in the US. In "Bastardy and Baby Farming in Victorian England", Dorothy L. Haller states:

Illegitimacy had always been stigmatized in English society. Since the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, negative attitude towards bastards was evident in legislation which denied them assistance from the poor rates. (Haller).

Further, Haller writes:

Unwed mothers and their infants were an affront to morality. They were spurned and ostracized both by the public relief and charitable institutions. Muller's Orphan Asylum in Bristol in 1836 refused illegitimate children; they accepted only "lawfully begotten" orphans. Children conceived in sin had no doubt inherited their parents' lack of moral character and would contaminate the minds and morals of legitimate children in their care. (Haller).

It is clear from the passage that illegitimacy and divorce are gender specific as per the English social notion on taboo. Prior to the 1960's England, only widows and deserted wives were allocated the English public benefits while the state neglected and refused to provide this benefit to unwed mothers. Thus illegitimate children were 'legally and socially inferior to members of legitimate families headed by married couples'. Therefore, Margaret Drabble in the select texts seems to highlight illegitimacy, divorce and early marriage as gender specific and that too, binding only the female gender.

It may be noted that in the 1960s England, the Law of Inheritance did not favour unwed mothers and their illegitimate children to inherit their father's properties. Regarding the inheritance of properties *The Guardian* reports of unwed mothers and their children in "Illegitimacy: The Shameful Secret":

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was illegal for illegitimate children to inherit, so among more prosperous families you may find that a trust was set up to care for his or her welfare. Most were not so fortunate. ("Illegitimacy: The Shameful Secret," *The Guardian*).

It may also be noted that in 'Bastardy and Baby Farming in Victorian England', Dorothy L. Haller gives insight to the social treatment incurred on illegitimate children and their mothers before the twentieth century in England. The Victorian principle on illegitimacy dominates the social notions of England, which is reflected even in the 1960's that Drabble illustrates through her male characters. Gender conflict that arises due to patriarchal ideology on the issue of inheritance is illustrated in *The Millstone*. Since illegitimate children and their mothers face further problems regarding inheritance, Rosamund's doctor Dick Protheroe, and her male friends Joe and Roger are concerned about her and have offered her some of their own suggestions.

Rosamund's friend Roger especially offers to marry her so as to solve the problem of illegitimacy for both Rosamund and her child. Roger suggests:

We could always get divorced more or less instantly. (TM 54).

The male idea of marriage as compensation for Rosamund and the baby is voiced by Roger, whereas Rosamund feels that marriage has no compensation. Roger's suggestion further clarifies that a child of a divorced parent is more acceptable and preferable by the English society rather than a child born out of wedlock. In *Women's Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett states:

The legislation on sex discrimination at work contains elements that are inexplicable except in terms of state support for an ideology of the family and women's primary allegiance to it. For example, although it is illegal for an employer in Britain to discriminate against a woman on the grounds of her being married, it is not illegal – for instance in respect of maternity leave - to discriminate against her on the grounds that she is not married. At the time when the legislation was being drafted, a case was made, and the government accepted it, that institutions might want to withhold maternity benefits from unmarried mothers. (Barrett 231-232).

The crux of the matter at this point lies in legitimacy and marriage that directly relates to divorce. Marriage will legitimize the baby and will enable it to bear the name of the father even after the parents' divorce. In a patriarchal set up, naming of the child consequently elevates the male gender while the female is submerged by the male identity. In *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*, Rob Lapsley in "Psychoanalytic Criticism" in agreement with Lacan states:



Such naming is no mere labeling. Rather it is an interpellation, a summon to the child to assume an identity not of its choosing, an identity which necessarily incarnates an ideal. (Malpas and Wake 75).

In the Lacanian theory, naming a child involves giving the child an identity which is not of the child's choice. The child thus has to assume his or her identity by the given name. Similarly, in the case of Rosamund, Roger wants to name her and the baby through marriage. The conflict of marriage at this point arises in the naming of the child; indicant of patriarchal dominance. Roger wants to give Rosamund and the child an identity; his identity, which will finally entrap Rosamund and the child to an identity that she and her child, may not be willing to actualize. Lapsley further states:

Such naming gives rise to a sense of alienation. Although there is no self prior to the subject's constitution within the signifying chain, prior to the conferral of an identity with its name, the subject feels that its true self has somehow been lost and betrayed. Hence subjects often protest at the identity assigned to them. (Malpas and Wake 75).

Therefore, the intelligent, educated and emancipated middle class protagonist refuses to be bound and entrapped by marriage to Roger. In *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*, Deborah L. Madsen points out:

The wife, however, finds herself in a condition akin to slavery in that she is bound by her entire person to the man she has married. (Madsen 69).

Rosamund further expresses her dislike to Roger's marriage proposal:

I think it's a ridiculous notion. But nice, just the same. (TM 54).

It is 'nice' because Roger is thoughtful about her. Rosamund's doctor Dick Protheroe suggests the name of an adoptive home for the baby while her friend Joe suggests that he lends her financial assistance for an abortion, and her male foreign students are sorry that she is pregnant.

Although Rosamund breaks the social code, she has to maintain a social front as she is still a part of the society that she lives in. Toril Moi in *What is a Woman?* explores the woman's will to change, which in phallogentric writing is sadly omitted. Toril Moi questions:

Am I not imprisoning myself in traditional disciplinary thinking? Have I no need to cross and breakup generic and disciplinary boundaries? (Moi 124).

At this juncture, Drabble through the protagonist Rosamund decides to 'breakup the generic and disciplinary boundaries' and Rosamund decides to have the illegitimate baby, face publicity, and in the consequence she meets the harsh ordeals and reality of living. Rosamund breaks the middle class moral code by deciding to be an independent mother, and she enters into an existence that she has never known. Her struggle involves completing her university thesis, earning her living by giving tuition to foreign students and awaiting the near delivery of her baby.

Drabble's protagonists are caught in the economic crisis that the female gender experiences under patriarchal dictates. *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader* states:

The work involved in the production of middle-class gentility...these duties and enforced compliance to acceptable bourgeois standards. While the more affluent middle-class women had working-class servants to perform the arduous physical tasks, there is some evidence that many were

nevertheless kept busy to a degree and extent that puts the lie to the popular image of the idle lady of leisure. (Eagleton 151-152).

Therefore, the 'production of middle class gentility' and 'acceptable bourgeois standard' entails middle class dependence on 'working-class servants to perform the arduous physical tasks'. The English middle class while establishing the middle class factors, standard and criteria has invariably created the necessity to obtain the aid of 'working-class servants' and has simultaneously established gender and class bias within the social set up. Unyielding to the English social psychology on the discourse of illegitimacy, Rosamund progresses towards her goal; keeping the baby in her custody as a single parent, completing her thesis and finding appropriate work to boost her talent and educational qualification thereby to solve her financial needs. Rosamund in her situation opposes the middle class morality that has created sexual division of labour which is further embraced as the English middle class tradition.

In her state of pregnancy Rosamund discovers that the 'Domestic Advertisements' in *The Times* papers are filled with:

[S]ocial connotations of phrases like mother's help, Au Pair girl, Nanny, Housekeeper. (TM 81).

The passage seems to clearly denote the necessity to procure workforce in order to maintain the English middle class bourgeois standard. Within the social context, work or labour allocated and favoured for the female gender is the work related to the domestic area, which is a prominent mark of gender division of labour. Marxist feminists also argue that the position of women is structurally different from that of men in a given social context resulting to sexual division of labour, which in turn produces gender inequality within society. In *Women's Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett states:

Consideration of empirical evidence of this kind is essential and suggests that we may usefully approach the argument that domestic labour – indeed the sexual division of labour generally – is required by ‘the logic of capitalism’ by developing an historical perspective. (Barrett 176).

During the stages of her pregnancy Rosamund discovers the facts of life and she finds that gender inequality is most prominent within class structure:

Facts of inequality, of limitation, of separation, of the impossible, heartbreaking uneven hardship of the human lot. (TM 77).

The facts of life that Rosamund discovers are much deeper than class factor. The facts are about gender inequality, gender limitation and gender separation within the class itself and about the economic hardships of females ignored by males.

Further, in the novel, gender inequality related to financial control is observed in a conversation between the protagonist Rosamund and the woman in the National Health Centre who talks about hospital restrictions. The woman states:

One doesn’t realize, she said. “The first time, I’d no idea. They wouldn’t let me in with the first child. I had to get my husband to write the letter.”

And that worked?

“Oh yes. My husband has some influence here, you see. I don’t know what one would do without a little influence.” (TM 153).

A question arises; “Why does the woman need a letter from her husband to visit her own child?” This incident reflects the prevalence of gender inequality; the male as the superior gender. Marxist feminists in favour of equal relationship consider the separation of ‘personal’ identity from ‘class’ identity as a factor of inequality in a given social construct. The inequality in the

present context refers to gender inequality with respect to socio-economic matters where the male gender controls the family finances as the paid worker. Deborah L. Madsen in *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice* states:

It is women's economic dependence inside marriage, the unpaid and so devalued work they perform in the home, that determines women's subordinate social status. (Madsen 86).

Thus, male gender as the generator of finances is preferred to the female and therefore the husband has more influence in the hospital. The woman; the mother of the child is thereby marginalised by the dictates of male dominance. The incident retold by the woman at the National Health Centre indicates that the woman is bound to her husband and requires her husband's letter as factual proof that she (the woman) is the child's mother and wife of the person writing the letter. The woman is deprived of her autonomous existence and she is therefore, submerged in her husband's identity just as the slave is bound to the master for ownership and identity.

Maureen's mother in *The Ice Age* takes the traditional mother role and her mother exasperatedly retorts:

You girls these days, its self self self, money money money.  
(TIA 56).

Maureen's mother objects to her daughter's aspiration to work and maintain a better lifestyle. This objection seems to affirm the social psychology that a woman must reside at home and work at home while a man must work to provide for his family. It is a difficult task for the mother to understand that her daughter is moving away from the existing tradition and social norms. Maureen's mother is unable to comprehend the logistics of Maureen being a wage earner.

Money is also secondary to the mother and she grumbles about Maureen's ambition to generate better income.

In the *Garrick Year*, Drabble denotes in the guise of her protagonist Emma Lawrence, how marriage exploits women and subordinates them to the whims of the male gender. The heated conversation between the husband David and Emma highlights the male subordination of the female gender in a wedded life:

‘You’re not in a position to complain,’ he said. It’s my lovely self that paid for those chops and that television and that dress you’re wearing and that roof over your head.’

‘ah well, said I, getting to my feet, perhaps that’s why I’m so keen on getting myself an independent income, so I can throw all this rubbish back on your charming face.’ (TGY 17).

Emma's husband David Evans, an actor, is given a theatre job in Hereford and he tries to manipulate Emma to move with him from London to Hereford. The passage shows how the male benefactor controls the female and how the female is tied to the male in a married life. Emma is angry as she has to leave London and further decline the job that she has been promised two months earlier. Emma states:

I had been promised a couple of months before a very pleasant job as a news reader and announcer by a television company which had decided, as such companies will, to have another attempt at the equality of the sexes by allowing women to announce serious events as well as forthcoming programmes: I was to have been a pioneer in this field, and I fully expected to succeed where others had failed. (TGY 10).

The argument between David and Emma arises due to male dominance: David the husband and the head of the family.

The job opportunity that Emma has eagerly awaited in London is sidelined by her husband as he is also presently offered a new job to act in a play in Hereford. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Margaret Jackson in her critical essay, "Sex, Class and Hetero-Relations" comments on Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a leading American feminist and a major feminist theorist:

Gilman argued that the relationship between the sexes was primarily an economic one, and that the basis of that relation was 'sex attraction'. She regarded marriage as the most degraded relationship in the animal kingdom. (Evans 7).

The woman therefore ceases to exist as an individual from the moment that she is married as she is tied to her husband whose identity is more important in a patriarchal society. In order to feed his male ego, maintain his superiority and dominance David decides to move to Hereford. Simultaneously, Emma and the children have to comply with the demands of David, and Emma's job opportunity remains subordinate to David's job opportunity.

Further, in *The Ice Age*, Margaret Drabble reveals how the male gender exploits the female gender in the work areas through the protagonist Alison Murray and one of her female characters Maureen Kirby who represent the 1960's. She depicts how females are exploited in work through Alison Murray who assumes a subordinate role and gives up her acting career in order to avoid the competition with her husband in the theatre:

She had done it because she did not want to compete with her husband Donnell. Competition had made him angry. So she had withdrawn, and he had still been angry. One cannot win.

(TIA 108).

Drabble further narrates:

She was an actress, but had abandoned the stage on the birth of her second daughter, who suffered quite seriously from cerebral palsy: she started to work for the Foundation of the Disabled Children, and devoted herself to fund-raising, appealing, visiting, talking on radio, television, to the press. She was sufficiently well known to be able to do this with some impact.

(TIA 35).

The two passages from *The Ice Age* on Alison Murray show how women often give in to male whims that in turn nourish the male ego that attributes patriarchal dictates. Thus Alison, taking the subordinate role of the traditional female helps the Foundation of the Disabled Children and withdraws from the career of her choice.

Drabble illustrates the female need to upgrade her economic status and through Maureen, she unfolds how the lesser educated females pursue salaried jobs in offices. The following passage reveals Maureen's early life:

So at the age of twenty she took a secretarial course. Secretaries were glamorous, thought Maureen. She had seen many sexy advertisements for them, and had read stories in which they married the boss, and had even seen rude pictures of them being groped by the boss....so she left boyfriend and saloon, learned shorthand and typing, started work in a



seedy solicitor's office, and found herself, somewhat to her own surprise, very good at the job. (TIA 54).

Maureen takes the secretarial training in order to work in an office that would provide her better salary. She is surprised by her own competency level and her good work. At this juncture, Drabble seems to project her view on female competency and at the same time she seems to expose male infidelity in work areas. In "Fiction, History and Philosophy: The Work of Margaret Drabble", Jane Duran states:

*The Ice Age* is remarkable for Drabble's refusal to acknowledge any one view of any class of Britons as paramount. Rather, she moves from class to class and individual to give us an account of how history is created by its participants. (Duran).

Though Maureen and her mother do not belong to the middle class Maureen's need to elevate her economic status signifies the female desire to have a career and a vertical growth in the social ladder. The office is thus, a training ground for Maureen as denoted:

She didn't stay long with the seedy solicitor, who sealed his own fate by groping her...but she recognized that if he did that, just like in the pictures, then so might someone better. So she worked hard, and after a couple of years' experience found herself with a very good post, as a secretary to a director of a company that sold air conditioners and ventilation... The pay was good, the work was interesting and involved quite a bit of travel and staying in smart hotels for sales conferences. It also involved quite a bit of groping, and much of the lighter side of business, for Stan, as he willingly admitted, was a dirty old man, who

didn't mind a little harmless fun, and didn't mind putting it in the way of his clients, either. (TIA 54-55).

Although Maureen is initially dismayed at this unexpected encounter, she takes this opportunity to upgrade her economic status. In two years' time she leaves the office with the experience to work as a secretary to the director of a company. Even in her new office Maureen finds that she has to bear the physical exploitation of Stan the director. Deborah L. Madsen in *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice* states:

In order to emphasise that it is the economic dependence of women as sexual class and not the circumstances, moral, personal and social, of particular women that causes them to turn to prostitution, of one sort or another, Goldman points to the diverse reasons why women become prostitutes: financial need, escape from an abusive home, physical disablement that excludes them from other forms of labour. (Madsen 68).

In this incident, Drabble's focus lies on gender exploitation on economic ground; Maureen's need to retain her job that provides her good pay. The female therefore succumbs to the needs of the male who dictates her and who is in a position to find a replacement if she quits her job. Thus Maureen remains quiet to keep her job, to get her pay and thereby, she has to submit to the sexual desires of the male who dictates her.

The novelist gives another instance of the male dominance of the female with respect to motherhood. In *The Millstone*, the exchange between Rosamund and the woman at the hospital reveals that the woman has to produce a letter from her husband in order to visit her child in the hospital. Rosamund is shocked to hear this strange confession from the woman as it is only when the husband's letter is produced at the gate that the woman is free to visit her child. Thus, being a

husband and having a husband creates the required influence in the hospital environment. Since Rosamund is unwed, she is unable to provide the required letter. This poses a problem for her and she starts having hysterics that enables her to visit her baby. In *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, Juliet Mitchell in “Feminity, Narrative and Psychoanalysis” states:

Hysteria is the woman’s simultaneous acceptance and refusal to the organization of sexuality under patriarchal capitalism. It is simultaneously what a woman can do both to the feminine and to refuse feminity, within patriarchal discourse. (Eagleton 155).

Rosamund’s concern therefore lies in what happens to those without influence and those who do not dare to have hysterics as she has done, but, at the same time who would like to visit their ailing children. The woman’s non-committal reply is:

.... “My concerns are my concerns, and that’s where it ends, I haven’t the energy to go worrying about other people’s children. They’re nothing to do with me. I only have enough time to worry about myself. If I didn’t put myself and mine first, they wouldn’t survive. So I put them first and the others can look after themselves.” (TM 156).

The woman’s reply reflects an institutionalised capitalist view of extracting the best for oneself from others while neglecting others’ needs. Marxist feminists in favour of equality strongly attack capitalism, women’s oppression and sexual division of labour within a social construct.

Jane Freedman in *Feminism* further argues that:

...Following from this it can be argued that feminists must tackle the problems of economic and of social policy as inextricably linked- it is no use if women achieve equal pay in the labour market if at the same time

they are still carrying out the role of unpaid carers at home; similarly, merely rewarding women's caring work in the home (usually through the provision of state benefits) will not be sufficient if inequalities persist in paid employment. Yet again we see the need underlined by feminists to rethink the boundaries between the public and the private and to reassess women's work across these boundaries. (Freedman 53).

Since Rosamund is an emancipated woman, she is unable to comprehend the depth of tradition and patriarchy that permeates within the society. At this point, the woman at the hospital represents a person influenced by tradition while Rosamund represents a female who distances herself from tradition.

Although in *The Ice Age*, money is secondary to Maureen's mother and she grumbles about Maureen's ambition to generate better income, it is for her financial benefit that Maureen works for Stan as his secretary and later for Len Wincobank. As Maureen works for Len, she moves into Len's flat to live with him although she does not marry him. It is probable that Maureen is living with Len in his flat so as to save her economic income while she can simultaneously enjoy her position as Len's secretary, have a shelter and spend her free time with Len. Adult male and female living together without being married to each other seem to be one of the growing trends in the early 1960s England, and the narrator in the fiction comments:

Nobody minded that kind of irregularity, in the swinging sixties.

(TIA 57).

Drabble thus projects the issue of the English youth of the 1960s who have distanced their notion from the age old tradition of marriage and have opted for live-in partners while searching for the

kind of job that suits them. This change in the idea of marriage is depicted by both Maureen and Len.

In Maureen and Len, Drabble depicts the sentiment of the 1960s youth to move up the social ladder and to acquire the middle class status:

Those were the days when it seemed that Len couldn't go wrong. Money for jam, money for old rope. He worked hard enough, and so did Maureen, but they were still surprised by their good luck. It's a joke, isn't it, Len would say, as deal succeeded deal. And it was. That was why they got on so well: born from the same kind of background, motivated by the same wish to get on, they understood one another perfectly, and they agreed that their success was, really, a bit of a giggle....over the joke of finding themselves drinking large drinks in four-star hotels, and driving a large car, and bouncing about in a large soft bed. (TIA 57-58).

Both Maureen and Len are willing to perform different kinds of work in order to enhance and generate their economic income and both of them work hard to reach their goal. From the extract, one can appreciate the hard work that pays to promote the social status of the two characters; an indication of the two characters' upward mobility in the social rung. In an interview for the *Believer*, Drabble comments to Lydia Perovic:

When I wrote *The Ice Age*, I thought it would all get better again. And then comes the nineties, and I realize that it isn't going to get better. It will get worse. Since I wrote that book, things have gotten worse, socio-economically. (Perovic).

Further, Drabble also seems to depict how the people of contemporary England in the 1960s go against tradition in the area of its economics. Drabble remarks on the British expansionist policy and comments on the British economy through the economist in the fiction and she narrates:

An economist who had just received a salary increase .... Man needs a prospect of increase. Only static, stagnant, hopeless communities can live without it. The poor must get rich, the rich must get richer.

(TIA 62-63).

The desire to acquire economic gains in the 1960s was a sentiment shared by different classes of the English society. The poor wanted to get rich and the rich wanted to get richer. The sentiment and desire to acquire economic gains was also strongly felt by the English female gender, especially by those that were educationally awakened on the issue of the female as paid workers, further motivated by feminist activists who demanded equal pay with the males. Through Alison, Drabble illustrates the female need for economic growth and the consequential participation in corrupt dealings:

Until she had met Anthony, she had never thought much about making money.... There had been nothing much that she had wanted: she ate well, she dressed well, what more could one want? She had never understood what it was that drove people on to want more: had not understood, that is, until she had met Anthony, and his new friends. And then, suddenly, the glamour of the whole business had enraptured her, as it had enraptured Anthony. She too had been thrilled, corrupted, by the prospect of large risks, large profits. The victor's crown of gold. How on earth had she and

Anthony, two perfectly unambitious, ordinary, middle-of-the-road people, got themselves caught up in such a ludicrous world? (TIA 111-112).

Alison is unable to comprehend the cause of her desire for the acquisition of wealth, and she is astonished at the turn of events in her life. Alison remains unaware of the reason for her desire to acquire more wealth and she remains a stunned spectator to the changing events in her life. Although it is probable that Alison too is caught by the economic sentiment of the age for which she wants to enhance her economic status, yet, Drabble seems to suggest that the desire for economic expansion lies more prominent in the male gender than in the female gender. Drabble further reveals Anthony's greed in *The Ice Age* and how he is later imprisoned for his evil deeds. As Maureen cuts Anthony's hair with a pair of kitchen scissors in order to make him look more presentable, she reveals the true Anthony and exposes him with all his latent desires:

She had shorn away his disguise: he had been pretending successfully, for years, to be a charming new man of the seventies, pleasant, informal, easy-going, but underneath all the time there had been this man of iron purpose, with a head like a rock, and a lowering brow. (TIA 115).

Further, Maureen uncovers Anthony's hidden looks that signifies male greed:

All he said was, 'it's a prison haircut you've given me in advance, duck.' And had poured himself another drink, and returned to the subject of the wickedness and folly of those bloody small-time fools who think they can make money out of shares without running risks, without imagination, without suffering for it, without sweating for it. (TIA 115-116).

At this juncture, Anthony seems to represent the capitalist's desire to acquire more wealth for economic growth. He describes himself as one of the 'bloody small time fools who think they

can make money out of shares without running risks, without imagination, without suffering for it, without sweating for it.’

Margaret Drabble in *The Radiant Way* illustrates male economic control between the husband and the wife. Liz’s marriage with Edgar breaks up after eight months. Drabble indicates the complication of university education that confronts Liz, the divorcee. Although Liz continues her university education as a married woman, she is unable to receive the university educational grants. The female is directly controlled by patriarchal dictates on her economic grants, and Liz has to be satisfied with the meager amount that Edgar is willing to give her. The female situation on the economic criteria that is opposed by Marxist feminists is reflected on Liz’s married life, and furthermore, after her separation with Edgar. Since there is no economic progress for the female within her marriage, Liz has to be satisfied with the meager allowance that Edgar provides her from his educational grants. Thus, Liz is bound by marriage in many ways and therefore, marriage does not seem to be the ultimate answer to solve the problem of the female gender as it is often idealized and projected by traditional beliefs and social norms. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Stephen Lawler in “Getting Out and Getting Away”, comments on her research of the working-class females who had elevated themselves to the middle class through marriage:

However, I was struck, during the course of research, by the centrality of class to these women’s lives, and by their expressions of anxiety, insecurity and pain around class.

The women traced their trajectories to the middle-class position through two main routes: education, and marriage to a middle class man.  
(Evans 320-321)



From the passage it is clear that the female can acquire her class by birth and by marriage while all along the female is subordinated to the working class. Marriage also positions the female to the status of the wife; the unpaid labourer. Lawler illustrates the acquisition of social class of the female gender; working class to middle class, yet she claims that the upward class mobility is, 'what might be claimed as cultural artefacts of class', and that the women participants for her research felt that the cultural artefacts were 'not necessarily linked with the possession of capital'. On the other hand, Drabble illustrates the dilemma of Liz the middle class woman married to a bourgeois man who is once more reduced to the working class when Charles her second husband divorces her. Liz the middle class female who has been elevated to the bourgeoisie class for twenty years by her second marriage finds that she is economically reduced by her divorce. The narrator's voice states:

And now Liz herself was suffering, and finding her glamour transformed into humiliation, if not in the public eye, then in her own. And it was true that all her riches, all her past investments, appeared not to avail her now: indeed, it appeared that some of them were not as solid as they had seemed, and might prove, like her marriage, illusory.

(TRW 129).

The passage illustrates Liz at the time of her divorce. She is humiliated as she has to step down from her pedestal of the bourgeoisie class to the working class whereby Liz is bereft of her wealth and glamour outside her marriage. In this instance, the female like the proletariat is under the subordination of the capitalist; the patriarch. Both Lawler and Drabble denote the temporal nature of class acquired by marriage and that the female is identified as a working class by her unpaid work.

Further, “Margaret Drabble’s *The Radiant Way*” by *Frisbee: A Book Journal* denotes:

Drabble explains that *The Radiant Way* was “A series that demonstrated eloquently, movingly, the evils that flow from a divisive class system from early selection from Britain’s unfortunate heritage of public schools and philistinism” (“Margaret Drabble’s *The Radiant Way*,” *Frisbee: A Book Journal*).

The novel affirms Drabble’s comment on the decisive class system for which Liz has married Charles, the established bourgeoisie. Drabble indicates marriage as a factor that subjugates the female of her career opportunity that could have established her in the middle class category independently. With her marriage Liz sinks to the working class as she assumes the role of the unpaid worker; domestication, reproduction and child care while Charles maintains his autonomy and distance. The patriarchal ideology that conditions the English social norm falls on Liz at the time of her divorce, and she has to patiently expect that Charles will make a decent divorce settlement. Liz represents the traditional female who depends on the male gender to provide her economic needs. Therefore, Liz is unable to envisage her future without Charles’s financial support. At this juncture, Liz fails to emerge as one of the new women as she submits to Charles to make her a decent settlement.

Margaret Drabble’s concern is focused on the the female education that is illustrated by her works. The female protagonist in *The Ice Age*, Alison Murray is in a way a combination of both the traditional and the contemporary female as she exposes the two qualities:

For Alison Murray, beauty had for years been her identity. She had no other. How could she ever make another, for the second half of her necessary life? (TIA 95).

Alison is worried about what she would do in five years' time when she has grown older. She is afraid that she will not be able to look at herself in the mirror. Drabble further remarks:

Alison Murray was not a very well-educated person, so she looked for the striking objects on display, rather than those of historical importance... (TIA 110).

On the other hand, Rosamund is determined to remain a single parent to the baby and she is undaunted by the English social psychology on the issue of illegitimate babies. As she has a commendable educational qualification and confidence in her talent Rosamund states:

Also, although I am different about the particulars of my qualifications I suppose I must have a rock-like confidence in my own talent, for I simply did not believe that the handicap of one small illegitimate baby would make a scrap of difference to my career: I was in such a strong position by nature that were a situation to arise in which there were any choice to make between me and another, I would win, through the evident superiority of my mind. (TM 125).

In *The Millstone*, the protagonist Rosamund who is in the process of completing her thesis is confident of her talent and comments that she would win if there was a contest between her and another person. Simultaneously, she is confident that her baby would not create any difference in her career. Rosamund's comments and confidence reveals the progression of the female gender towards emancipation. Maureen Kirby in *The Ice Age* is also determined to change her social status, but, unlike Rosamund, she belongs to the lower rung of the English society:

Maureen Kirby had been born in Attercliffe, Sheffield, in 1946, nine months after her father was demobbed. She was the youngest of six, and

slept three to a bed through most of her childhood. Her first idea of bettering herself was via hairdressing, the glamour of which appealed to her and most of her school friends, so she started cutting hair at the age of fifteen. She was quite happy for two or three years, cutting, shampooing, back combing,... in her cheap smart two-piece suits, with her brown bouffant hair. (TIA 54).

Although Maureen chooses to leave her education at the age of fifteen to work in a hair dressing saloon, in a couple of years she finds that the glamour as a hairdresser fades and further, she finds that her career does not give her the required fame that she has hoped to attain. The following passage focuses on Maureen's dejected state:

But even she could see she wasn't going to get anywhere, from the back saloon of Suzanne's. The area was going downhill, too,... But she could see there was no future in Suzanne's. The glamour was fading. (TIA 54).

The passage depicts the plight of young girls of the 1960s England who work at an early age in places that need female assistances and who in a few years time find that they are not able to reach their envisaged goals. In *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950s*, Stephanie Spencer states:

The vast majority of girls left school at 15 and, after, at most, a brief training period, entered employment only to leave once married. (Spencer).

The reason seems to lie in the fact that work and early marriage in the English society is gender constructed due to which the female soon leaves her education. The wage where the female work

force is concentrated is quite minimal in comparison to the wage that the male earns. In *Women's Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett states:

The distribution of women across particular occupations is extremely uneven: women comprise 64.8% of the education, health and welfare labour force, 73.4% of the clerical, 58.6% of selling, 75.5% of personal services (catering, hairdressing and so on). Furthermore, over 60% of the entire female workforce is concentrated in only ten occupations. (Barrett 156).

Thus, the glamour of hairdressing fades for Maureen and she attends the secretarial training.

Rosamund and Maureen denote the vast difference of educational qualifications between the middle class and the lower class English female gender. While Rosamund of *The Mill Stone* is in the process of completing her university thesis, Maureen Kirby of *The Ice Age* at the age of fifteen leaves her education to work as a hair dresser. Thus, the opinions of the two female characters differ; Maureen chooses the glamour and Rosamund opts for the academic work that is illustrated by the tuitions that she gives to her varied students and the thesis that she is about to complete. In "Women and Schooling – Spartacus Educational on Women and Schooling", John Simkin writes:

In her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* Mary Wollstonecraft attacked the educational restrictions that kept women in a "state of ignorance and dependent on men". Feminists in the 1880's agreed with Wollstonecraft that girls should have the same educational opportunities as boys. However this was very difficult as there were many schools in the country that provided a good academic education for girls. (Simkin).

Simkin further states that the first of the feminists in the 1880s who tried to improve girls' and women's educations were Marie Corbett, Louisa Martindale, Mary Francis Buss and Dorothea Beale. Education is gender specific and therefore work is gender constructed. Although many schools in England provided 'good academic education for girls', yet, it should be noted that all girls were not in a condition to attend such schools, as in the case of Maureen who belongs to the lower rung of the society, and that education was not free before the 1960s in England. Further, Richard Brown in "Looking at History: Educating Girls 1870-1914" illustrates the female literacy rates and the quality of female education in 1851 in England:

Female literacy rates in 1851 were still only 55% compared to nearly 70% for men. ...

The education of women was class-based as that of boys. Well to do girls were educated at home or in small academies in 1830. The academic content was low and, with the transformation of grammar schools, girls found themselves excluded from establishments they had attended in the eighteenth century. (Brown).

Margaret Drabble's views on female intelligence and the importance of female education are clearly depicted in the form of her protagonists. From the select texts, it is found that all her protagonists are educated and intelligent females belonging to the middle class English society. Through her female protagonists Drabble projects the female urge to elevate oneself in the realm of education and to hold a career that can procure class and salary to the female worker. Although most of her minor female characters belong to the working class, yet, these minor characters are females who are intelligent and ones who can tackle their jobs as per requisite.

Drabble's focus in *The Radiant Way*, is on the life of the three women who has attended university education, and the changes undergone by the women after their university education.

Drabble in the novel narrates about the female protagonists:

Liz, Alix and Esther all obtained places at the college of their choice, in Cambridge, and they were reunited, to gossip there and elsewhere over subsequent decades for their fortuitous friendship. (TRW 86).

The narrator comments:

Liz Ablewhite was offered, and graciously accepted, the Alethea Ward Scholarship in Natural Sciences (an annual college award specifically designated by Dr Ward, 1853-1935, for female students of medicine from the county of Yorkshire, her own home county), the goal towards which her mother had been directing her for the past ten years. (TRW 86).

The narrator further informs about Alix:

Alix was offered places at both colleges of her choice. Infact, she was offered a better deal (let us not go into too many historic technicalities) in Oxford, but she chose Cambridge because of Flora Piercy's eye-shadow, and because of Dr Leavis. (TRW 87).

And the narrator comments on the third protagonist of the novel:

Esther was also offered places at both universities, and chose Cambridge because it offered her a scholarship, and because her brother had been at King's, and because she heard an owl hoot thrice in the college garden when she retired to her narrow bed after the glass of wine with Flors

Piercy. This last explanation for her choice is the one she most frequently proffered. (TRW 87).

The three characters of *The Radiant Way* Liz, Alix and Esther, though they belong to the upper middle class by their birth, make their mark in the upper middle class English society through their education. Liz and Alix further seal their upper middle class status by their marriages to men belonging to the upper middle class. On the other hand, Esther seals her upper middle class status by working in a university.

The novelist also denotes that the emerging ideology on the female education was supported by many parents of intelligent female children. Bessie Bawtry, an intelligent girl in *The Peppered Moth* is keen on her education. Yet, her education is disrupted by the influenza pandemic as illustrated:

The influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 was responsible we are told for the highest mortality rate of any pandemic since the Black Death of the fourteenth century. (TPM 22).

Bessie's parents support their daughter's intelligence by paying attention to her education. With the help of one of Bessie's efficient school teacher Miss Heald, her parents hope that their daughter will one day have a place in higher education. Drabble's favour for good educational formative years for the female child is illustrated in Bessie's childhood education:

She had been introduced to English Language and Literature, Reading and Recitation, History, Geography, French, Arithmetic Algebra, Science, Scripture, Art, Needlework and Nature Study. Riches of learning spread themselves before her. (The subjects of Music and Laundry, although



listed as options upon her terminal report, do not seem to have engaged her scholarly attention....) (TPM 21).

After the influenza pandemic, as Bessie's health recovers, she returns to her books and studies for her examination and earns a Cambridge scholarship. Bessie Bawtry is ambitious and she is glad to leave her family and her small Yorkshire town in order to study in London. In *Women's Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett states:

Schools take children and drill them in the ruling ideology. Around the age of sixteen a huge mass are ejected, as workers or peasants; others continue to become the petty bourgeoisie; others proceed further to emerge as agents of exploitation, agents of repression or professional ideologists. (Barrett 116).

Bessie's move from Yorkshire to London on receiving her scholarship marks the transformation of a female from a small town girl to a city girl as she prepares herself to study her degree in Cambridge. Yet the elevation from a studious and an intelligent country girl to a city girl in Cambridge is but a tasking incident for young Bessie as she has to be thoroughly prepared in the subjects that deal with the following topics:

Bessie swots and revises. Shakespeare, Browning, and Keats, French verbs, Lamartine, Verlaine, General knowledge, The League of Nations, Universal Suffrage and the women's Vote. John Stuart Mill on Liberty, Ruskin on Manufacturing. Miss Heald ponders: perhaps a touch of the moderns? May one admit to reading D. H. Lawrence, Edith Sitwell. (TPM 71).

Bessie takes her degree, leaves Cambridge and she returns to Breaseborough in Yorkshire as it was difficult in her days to find jobs. Through her protagonists, Drabble cites incidents of the early twentieth century pertaining to female education and the particular work that is enforced on them. Michele Barrett in *Women's Oppression Today* states:

Furthermore, the girl who does decide to proceed to university in, say, an engineering subject, will find herself in a department dominated by men and an ethos of masculinity. Much of the pattern of subject stereotyping by sex, which results in girls going into arts and social science subjects and boys into science and technology, is established very firmly in terms of the teaching staff. (Barrett 144).

In *The Peppered Moth*, Bessie works as a teacher of Literature and it wins her an award that is recorded in the "*Breaseborough Times*":

The *Breaseborough Times* had reproduced it in full, with the headline 'High Literary Quality: Breaseborough Teacher Wins Award', and a photograph of pretty twenty-three-year-old Miss Bawtry. (TPM 12).

It is only a century later that Bessie is re-introduced in the novel, in the form of her emancipated granddaughter Faro; intelligent and well educated journalist who travels to Yorkshire.

In the *Witch of Exmoor*, Drabble's focus is on Frieda a well educated and an eminent writer. In order to pursue her writing Frieda isolates herself from her grown up children and grandchildren. Thus, Frieda resides in a remote broken down hotel by the sea to nurture her identity as a writer. She does not own a phone and does not want visitors to disturb her peaceful life. In the following passage, Gogo, one of Frieda's children describes Frieda's present state:

‘A society without human beings’, says Gogo, breaking her silence, is exactly what she seems to have designed for herself.’ (TWE 9).

Gogo questions Rosemary who has earlier visited her mother Frieda and the exchange between Gogo and Rosemary confirms the fact that Frieda indeed does not want any disturbance from her family members. Gogo asks Rosemary if their mother had wanted her (Rosemary) to enter the house to which Rosemary replies:

‘Not really. She kept out there in this terrible overgrown court-yard. Nettles everywhere. And it was pissing with rain. She had her back to the door as though she was guarding something. I had to say I was dying for a pee before she’d let me in. And then she said, why didn’t you stop a bit earlier and pee in the hedge?’ (TWE 10).

From the passage it is quite clear that Frieda does not want anyone to intrude into her life, not even anyone from her family. To Rosemary’s remarks Daniel comments that maybe Frieda does not want to see any of them and Rosemary replies:

‘Well,’ says Rosemary, with gravitas, ‘that would seem to be the message. She says she doesn’t want to see anyone. She says she’s too busy. I said busy doing what, and she said she was busy being a recluse. She said it was a full-time job.’ (TWE 11).

Frieda’s children who are adults with children of their own are unable to comprehend Frieda’s need to reside in isolation. Although Frieda claims that she has not been a good mother to her children, yet, as she grows older she feels the necessity to be alone. The idea of living in isolation seems to stem from the unpaid work that she has to voluntarily perform in the family home to satisfy her children and her grandchildren. Living in isolation also provides Frieda the

necessary time and space required for writing. In *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, Virginia Woolf in “A Room of One’s Own” Mary Eagleton illustrates:

If a woman wrote, she would have to write in the common sitting-room. And, as Miss Nightingale was so vehemently to complain, - ‘women never have an half hour...that they call their own’ – she was always interrupted. Still it would be easier to write prose and fiction there than to write poetry or a play. Less concentration is required. Jane Austin wrote like that to the end of her days. (Eagleton 145-146).

Contrary to the situation of the home where Frieda is the mother and the grandmother, living in isolation provides her the freedom to be herself; to express her thoughts in her writing, to eat and work at her own whims, and to have her own time for leisure. Through the protagonist Frieda, Drabble seems to suggest the necessity of utilizing education in the area of writing as suggested by Helene Cixous and various feminists. In *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, Mary Eagleton in “Women and Literary Production” states:

The catalogue of material problems is long – inequalities in the educational system, lack of privacy, responsibilities of child-bearing and rearing, domestic obligations – but equally decisive are the restrictions of family and social expectations. (Eagleton 66).

Further, Drabble’s focus on the importance of publishing the writings; economically productive, is in agreement with the Marxist feminist concern of production and its economics. In *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Geurin et al states:

Perhaps the most significant source of constructivist feminism is Marxism, especially its focus upon the relations between reading and other social

constructions. The establishment of so many women's study programs, cooperatives, bookstores, libraries, film boards, political caucuses and community groups attests to the activist orientation of feminism. (Guerin et al. 234).

Marxist feminists focus on the relation between reading and other social constructions and they consider the production of texts and publishing industries as factors of socio economic development.

The focus on *The Sea Lady* seems to lie in the capacity of the female gender to submerge herself in the kind of work that she loves. Drabble seems to take a detour in selecting her female protagonist. Drabble's choice of the tomboy Ailsa as the protagonist marks the difference of the novel from the other select texts and the reader is instantly aware that Ailsa is in constant competition with the boys during her childhood in order to assert her competency. Ailsa is an educated and an intellectual woman who is an academician, an actress and a social worker. The thrust of the argument at this point is the difference of character that shapes a female child during her childhood. In her childhood, Ailsa's close friends are her brother Tommy and the boys in her neighbourhood. She is therefore, a child who constantly competes with boys in different children's games, and at the same time she is accustomed to do the girlish chores to help her mother at home. The following extract depicts Ailsa as a child:

Ailsa Kelman, as a child, had played the old childhood games. She had joined the dots, and found the hidden shapes and faces. She had played Fives and Conkers and Battle Ships and Hangman. A combative child, she had liked competitive cut-throat games, and she liked to win. She had tried to beat her brother Tommy for years, and occasionally she

had succeeded. But she had also played girlish games, silly sappy shameful giggling girlish games. She had peeled the hard green cooking apple, and thrown the peel over her shoulder to see if it formed the initial letter of a sweetheart's name. (TSL 97).

Since Drabble in *The Sea Lady*, seems to highlight the female transition period in the English female education, her female protagonist Ailsa is also a character with transitional stages. Ailsa the intelligent girl child develops many male characteristics since she has only her brother Tommy and his friends as her childhood friends. Yet, this tomboy emerges as a beautiful intelligent woman who is well educated and one who is in the process of writing her thesis on social biology. The protagonist is the one who lives the stages of transition; who does not take teaching as her profession but diverts her skill on acting in the theatre in order to stay in the limelight for a while. Carol Dyhouse in *Policy Papers: History and Policy* states:

In 1939 women constituted less than a quarter of the university student population, a proportion which remained fairly stable until the late 1960s, when it began slowly to rise. The real turning point came in the 1970s, after which the growth in female participation seemed inexorable, although it has steadied in recent years. (Dyhouse).

In this educational transition period, many interested females continued their education in Cambridge and Oxford and Carol Dyhouse further states:

By 1963 nearly 70% of students were receiving grants almost wholly from public funds. Under these conditions the experience of 'going to university' was reshaped in important ways, not least because more young people could afford to choose universities away from home. Students at

Oxford and Cambridge secured what was in effect a double subsidy from public funds, since both university and their college fees were paid for them. (Dyhouse).

Ailsa is fortunate because in her time the educational changes further opened avenues and women could choose their preferences in various subjects that seemed to be experimented on the female gender. Drabble's protagonist thus prefers to study Sociobiology in lieu of the subjects offered to her female predecessors. Humphrey the male protagonist, in his old age reflects the changes in the field of education during his time; as a student and as a prominent marine biologist, and he recollects:

He thought of the incoming tide, and of the ebb and flow of schools and disciplines and reputations. He was old now, and he had seen them come and go. He had heard the complaints at High Table. The resisted rise of sociobiology, the waning of Belles-lettres and of literary criticism, the rise of deconstruction, the rise of literary theory, the decline of the Germanic languages, the spread of the Hispanic languages, the death of easel art, the fad for installations, the rise of women's studies, the rise of media studies, and of business studies, and of sports science, and of political correctness, and of academic servitude. He had been witness to the snapping and the snipping, the gossip and the grievances. He had seen it all, he had followed it all. (TSL, 149).

Through Humphrey, Drabble illustrates the changes in the field of education in England. She clearly remarks on her perspective of the female education that still lacks the subjects concerned with science.

Ailsa who is introduced as a mermaid to the reader in the beginning of the select text seems to be a notably famous person:

Ailsa's name was listed as a member of the company. There was a brief biography of each member, in alphabetical order. Ailsa Kelman in the travelling repertory, appeared as Marina in *Pericles, Prince of Tyre*, and as the Mermaid Princess in an adaptation of Hans Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, a work advertised as 'not suitable for young children'. (TSL 156).

While drinking in the bar after her performance, Ailsa in her second round of her drinks gives a clue about her other work to Sonia who tries to decry her in a concealed way:

Ailsa confided that she too had been writing a dissertation, when the roles of Marina and the Princess had beckoned her: she would return to it, she asserted, as soon as the season was over, and as soon as she could re-organise her funding. And what had been her subject, enquired Sonia with a very slight tone of patronage. Expressionist drama in France and Belgium, retorted Ailsa with panache. (TSL 158).

When the third round of drinks purchased by Ailsa follows, it reveals another side of Ailsa:

This round revealed that Ailsa had studied modern languages at Edinburgh, and had then spent a year or so of further post graduate study in Paris attached to the Institut Des Arts Dramatiques, where she had unfortunately made the acquaintance of Martin Pope. (TSL 159).



In *The Sea Lady*, it is through the undaunted Ailsa that Drabble depicts the various qualities embedded in a woman, and the female impulse to manifest those qualities at different stages of a woman's life. Michele Barrett in *Women's Oppression Today* states:

This area represents the primary site of relations between men and women, of the construction of gendered individuals, and is closely related to the organization of social production. The structure and ideology of the family in contemporary capitalism is surely the most salient issue for any Marxist feminist approach to address. (Barrett 186).

Drabble therefore, suggests that in order to amplify and actualize the female qualities, the female needs good education and intelligence in order to understand her own female nature, and to replace her female fears the female must be supported with intellectual strength and boldness thereby to gain her position in her competition with the male gender.

It is interesting to note that the female protagonist of each select text is an educated and an intelligent female character, yet, each female character differs from the others in the way that she utilizes her education and intelligence. The similarity in each female character lies in the need to change herself towards a better self thereby to enhance her female identity and maintain her own economic stability. It may further be noted that each protagonist and the minor female characters of the select texts are willing to undergo changes even if it affects the routine life of the females deemed by social notions. Thus, it may be concluded that in the select texts Margaret Drabble highlights patriarchy as one of the dominant factors that leads to the marginalization of women within a social context, and this subjugation in turn leads to female subordination in the area of female financial gains and female education.

Marxist Feminists who believe patriarchy and capitalism to be interchangeably related are of the opinion that the economic condition which is the main determinant of class and gender situate the males as the dominant gender and the females as the subordinate gender. Therefore, illegitimate children and their unwed mothers are the unfavoured class of the English society as the paternity that is supposed to dictate them is absent to the child and the unwed mother. The dominant male gender of the society dictates over this group and thus, prior to the late 1960s, the state benefits are not provided to the illegitimate children and their unwed mothers while widows and deserted wives are provided the state benefits in England. Further, the female education, social and economic depictions in the select texts prove that texts are records of the female conflicts and struggles in the 1960s England.

## **CHAPTER – III**

### **WOMEN AND THE MALE ABSENCE**

This chapter deals with the study of women wage earners and the struggles and conflicts imposed due to patriarchal dictates. It will discuss acceptance of the female gender by male co-workers in relation to the husband as a worker. It attempts to reveal women's psychology, maternity and sexual encounters. Through various discourses in the select novels and related theories it will attempt to expose how words like 'liberty' and 'freedom' are used as gender binding forces.

Through the preceding centuries, the female gender has been one of the most important work-force in the English society. Yet, the female gender is given no choice in the kind of work that she would like to perform as the female child is marginalized by the subjects that she is offered and the counseling that she is given. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan states:

Sometimes a girl wanted to take a hard subject, but was advised by a guidance counselor or teacher that it was a waste of time-as, for instance, the girl in a good Eastern high school who wanted to be an architect. Her counselor strongly advised her against applying for admission anywhere in architecture, on the grounds that women are rare in that profession, and she would never get in anyhow. She stubbornly applied to two universities who give degrees in architecture; both, to her amazement, accepted her. Then her counselor told her that even though she had been accepted, there was really no future for women in architecture; she would spend her life in a drafting room. She was advised to go to a junior college where the work would be much easier than in architecture and where she would learn all she needed to know when she married. (Fridan 242).

It is clear that social perception and social values accepted and practiced by a society creates differences and hegemony soon enters to mark the differences as the favoured and the less favoured. Thus, the female is not in a position to choose and she is simultaneously advised to attend a junior college that would teach her 'all that she needed to know when she married'. Social notions on marriage thus created by institutions manipulate and indoctrinate the female mindset for which marriage seems to be compulsory; to the female gender and to the parents. The female gender further faces subjugation in her work opportunity either from her senior male colleague or at home, from her own husband.

In the select texts, Drabble depicts married women living separate lives, life of divorcees and life of a single mother who bears an illegitimate child. The protagonists have to bear the brunt of social prejudice that stems from traditional norms and social values. In *The Ice Age*, Drabble depicts the instance of a woman who has to leave her job due to the competition that arises from her husband. Alison is not well educated yet she is a promising actress. She has to give up her career as an actress since she is a close competitor of her husband Donnell. When Alison faces the hardship of making the choice, she asks for her friend's advice:

That evening, she rang Maureen. For advice, for sympathy. It was not in Alison's nature to ask advice, and she was not a woman with women friends of her own age: her proud defence of Molly had isolated her, as had her beauty. No other women could like me, Alison had reasonably enough decided, at an early age: they would be sure to resent me. (As her sister Rosemary had done.) This was a realistic decision, for other women did resent Alison, but had not, in view of Molly's existence, and Alison's withdrawal from competition, been allowed the opportunity to express or

formulate their resentment: therefore they had resented her all the more, though they had been obliged to call her a perfect mother, a saint even, behind her back. It was not fair on them, or on her. But life is not fair. (TIA 228).

Although Alison's decision seems to be the best for a married woman Alison is unhappy and she feels that life is not fair; she sacrifices her work to make her husband happy. It is at this juncture that the male gender takes the role of the capitalist and Donnell makes her submit to his whims, arrogance and anger, and drives Alison out of her work place. The male thus assumes the role of the benefactor and the female submerges to role of the unpaid worker at home. On the other hand, Alison's home is peaceful in her husband's absence, and she devotes her time to being a good mother to her daughters. At home, Alison is free from her husband's arrogance and temperamental attitude.

Thus, hegemony arises between the two classes, in this instance the male and the female gender, whereby the proletariats; the females are controlled by the capitalists; the males. Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature* states:

Hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology', nor are its forms of control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipulation' or 'indoctrination'. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of values – constitutive and constituting – which they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. (Williams 110).

The dictated 'perception' develops into 'a lived system of values' and a chain reaction is formed as an individual's mental setup is affected by the conceived notions of the society to which one belongs. Although psychology is affected by conceived notions, the existence of a vast gap between the capitalist and the proletariat creates hegemony which in turn creates dependence. Simultaneously, dependence creates struggle which is a resistance against the existing hierarchy. *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Nancy Hartmann in "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" states:

First, early Marxists, including Marx, Engels, Kautsky, and Lenin, saw capitalism drawing all women into the wage labor force, and saw this process destroying the sexual division of labor. Second, contemporary Marxists have incorporated women into an analysis of everyday life in capitalism. In this view, all aspects of our lives are seen to reproduce the capitalist system and we are all workers in the system. And third, Marxist feminists have focused on housework and its relation to capital, some arguing that housework produces surplus value and that houseworkers work directly for capitalists. (Nicholson 98-99).

In *The Garrick Year*, Drabble narrates another incident where a woman has to leave a job that she is promised in order to appease her husband. David is an actor in the theatre and Emma is an educated woman who is promised a job in the BBC. Yet, David who has a small part in a play has to move from London to Hereford and Emma has to sacrifice her job in order to be with her husband. After her marriage, Emma like Alison is dominated by her husband. Even though she craves to work in a job that she thinks will suit her, she is unable to do what she wants. The

idea of the male benefactor and male superiority is at work and David succeeds to manipulate his wife to move with him to Hereford. At Hereford Emma is discontented and she remarks:

I hardly saw David in the last day or two before the opening. *The Clandestine Marriage* was to open on the Tuesday, and *The White Devil* on the following Friday. The proximity of the dates was causing much avoidable overwork, late night panic and confusion which everyone involved seemed to need and to enjoy. (TGY 95).

All that Emma gains in Hereford is boredom panic and confusion. She has lost her job and she has not made much use of her education as she takes the subordinate role. She stoops to the role of the unpaid worker and most of the times David does not seem to acknowledge her as his wife. Emma is thus a spectator in her husband's world. Although Emma is displeased with David, yet she is peaceful in her husband's absence. She seems to recover her smiles when her help Pascal is around. Yet, her longing to work as a paid employee is often reflected in her conversations.

In the case of David and Donnell, they remain unaware of their wives when work dictates them. The difference seems to lie in the male factor due to which David spends late nights away from his home while Emma experiences panic and fear, and Alison is often left alone at home. In, *The Feminist e Zine*, Martha E. Gimenez in "Marxist & Materialist Feminism" states:

Landry & Mac Lean, authors of *Materialist Feminisms* (1993), tell us that theirs is a book "about feminism and Marxism" in which they examine the debates between feminism and Marxism in the US and Britain and explore the implications of those debates for literary and cultural theory...it is the conclusion that the authors, aiming to demonstrate that materialism is not



an alias for Marxism outline the difference between Marxist Feminism and Material Feminism as follows:

“Marxist feminism holds class contradictions and class analysis central, and has tried various ways of working an analysis of gender oppression around this central contradiction and contradictions within gender ideology...we are arguing that materialist feminism should recognize as material other contradictions as well. (Gimenez).

Gimenez highlights Laundry & Mac Lean’s *Material Feminisms* that denotes that Marxist feminism has focused on many issues pertaining to class contradictions and gender oppression concerned with gender ideology. Marxist feminists therefore believe that in heterosexual relations, the oppressor takes the role of the capitalist and the one subjugated is marginalised just as the proletariat is marginalised by the capitalist.

In *The Sea Lady*, Margaret Drabble captures Ailsa Kelman as a child who grows up in a boys’ world. She has no female siblings and as her locality has no other girls of her age Ailsa has no choice but to make friends with the boys. As an intelligent child she plays and competes with her brother and his friends although she performs young girl’s chores at home while helping her mother. The intelligent Ailsa attends college and she receives her fame as an educated lady, and still pursues her further studies while she simultaneously performs in the theatre. Ailsa is able to pursue and attain her goals, yet she is like a child waiting for more:

Like a child, Ailsa Kelman still expects something new to happen every time she approaches the departure gate. She knows that the story is not over. (TSL 81).

It is a tough competition that Ailsa has to fight in order to win her fame. The competition that she endures as an adult reflects her formative years. Ailsa as a child refuses to be subjugated by her brother and his friends and this refusal towards subjugation is her deepest conflict. This conflict is directly interlinked with her social values. She tells Humphrey that she wants to give up the theatre as it is not good for her. She therefore depicts a female caught between tradition and progress. However, the toil for the female gender goes on and with every success Ailsa is aware that her story is not at an end. As a divorcee, she is free to choose her job and she exhibits her zeal in her job. Ailsa is unmatched in her work and the audience loves her. In the absence of a male counter part, Ailsa's female determination emerges and she captures her audience with her stage performances. Her freedom from male control may be credited as the factor that brings out the best in Ailsa.

In *The Witch of Exmoor*, Drabble narrates the incident of Frieda Haxby who is deserted by her husband. In order to make her ends meet and to feed her children, Frieda works like a man. Like Ailsa, Frieda is an intelligent and an educated woman. After her marriage, Frieda stays at home and attends to her children. When her husband finally deserts her she struggles all the more due to the presence of her mother:

Frieda had been a grim worker all her life, and she had been held in grim combat by Gladys. In Gladys's presence, Frieda was oddly subdued, reverting to a morbid attentive unwilling servitude that suggested what she had been like as a sulky, determined, ambitious child. Gladys Haxby had been a schoolmistress, and in her demanding and irksome company Frieda became once more a pupil, a listener, although she had nothing to learn and Gladys had nothing to say. Frieda, herself no mean talker, fell silent in

her mother's presence, as Gladys talked and talked, of nothing. Of herself, of nothing. An unchanging subjugation. (TWE 29).

The presence of her mother after her husband deserts her is no consolation for Frieda. Her determination and ambition is negated by the demanding and irritating presence of her mother to whom she remains a student. But, Frieda's determination takes her to a level where she submerges her difficulties. Since her husband has deserted her, Frieda is unbounded by patriarchy in her home, and with her new freedom, she is at liberty to work for herself and her family. She does not ask for any financial support, and she does not talk about the man who has deserted her. Although Frieda is well educated, her life is marred by her unfaithful husband who finally deserts her. She has lost her job opportunity due to her marriage and ultimately as her husband deserts her, she has to make her ends meet. Although Frieda seems to have had no economic progress during her marriage since the husband's financial provision remains untold by the narrator, yet, Frieda's socio-economic problems are more transparent when her husband leaves as she freely performs all the work unhidden, and simultaneously, she starts writing her articles for publication. Without the male dominance; the husband, Frieda's work is acknowledged due to which the misery of her socio economic condition seems to be magnified. Feminists therefore rise against various issues under patriarchal dictates; acceptance, acknowledgement, liberation, male questionings and socio-economic development of women.

In order to reconstruct the existing gender socio-economic problems, Marxist feminists have revised the Marxist aesthetics and structuralism. Jane Freedman in *Feminism* states:

Marxists and socialist feminists link gender inequality and women's oppression to the capitalist system of production and the division of labour consistent with this system;.... (Freedman 5).

The reason of argument lies in the belief that the ruling and dominant class is able to dominate over the working class as they can financially impose mass consent. Marxist feminists in favour of equality strongly attack capitalism, women's oppression, and sexual division of labour within a social construct. In *The Radiant Way*, Drabble gives the instance of a woman who is divorced by her second husband. Liz marries Charles who is a widower with three young boys. Yet, after twenty years of marriage Charles seeks to divorce his wife. Liz, the abject wife seeks sympathy from her friend Alix who is unable to provide her any comfort. Drabble narrates:

She might have expected more obvious sympathy from the more obviously tender-hearted Alix, but did not get it. Alix's response to Liz's new situation was complex, and she questioned herself about it, deciding that it was probably determined at least in part by her envy of Liz and Charles's wealth. She herself had had a hard time, had chosen, perhaps, a hard time, and was still not exactly affluent: she still had to count the change, to stand at bus stops in the rain, the worry about the mortgage, the gas bill. (TRW 127).

Liz turns to Alix in her poignant hour, but Alix is incapable of being a sympathizer and a comforter as she still lives on a low financial budget and is over weighed by her own worries. At this juncture, Alix is more practical about economical living while Liz lives the bourgeoisie life. Though both Liz and Alix belong to the middle class, yet, the difference in the two women is marked by the life lived. Alix is tough and she is willing to work for her living while Liz takes the easy way by marrying for the second time. Liz thus enslaves herself to Charles, his three boys and her two children from Charles. She is caught unaware by Charles who wishes to divorce her. The patriarch Charles takes the role of the capitalist and submerges Liz who is quite

helpless after her twenty year's marriage with Charles. Male dominance works at this level and Liz has to submit herself to her male benefactor to ensure that Charles provides her an allowance after the divorce. Thus, the expectation of Charles's financial imposition makes it difficult for Liz to disobey him.

The social environment plays an important role in shaping the psychology of an individual. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. II*, Jacqueline Rose in "Femininity and its Discontents", states:

Secondly, the relationship between this rejection of psychoanalysis and a *dearth* within British intellectual culture of a Marxism which could both theorise and criticise capitalism as a social totality. The second point received the strongest criticism from within British Marxism itself, but what matters here is the fact that both Marxism and psychoanalysis were identified as forms of radical inquiry which were unassimilable to bourgeois norms. In the recent feminist discussion, however - notably in the pages of *feminist review*- Marxism and psychoanalysis tend to be posited as antagonistic; Marxism arrogating to itself the concept of political practice and social change, psychoanalysis being accused of inherent conservatism which rationalizes and perpetuates the subordination of women under capitalism, or else fails to engage with that subordination at the level of material life. (Evans 307-308).

Rose's statement illustrates Liz and other females under patriarchy; capitalism. Although Liz is dismayed at the initial stage of her divorce, towards the end of the select text, she is illustrated as

a happy woman who spends her time with her two best friends. Liz is now unbounded by male dominance as she leads an independent life, and she is a much happier person.

The female psychology is clearly highlighted in *The Witch of Exmoor*, Drabble relates the incident of Sonia an old lady who is emotionally broken. Patsy tries to soothe the old lady and she tells Sonia to ring her. It is here that one can realize the life of a working woman. Patsy is in a hurry as she has to get back to her work and on the way she has to pick up some neighbours. Yet, she takes the time to speak to the old woman and tells her that she would further speak to her about her prisoner:

‘Ring me,’ says Patsy, squeezing the thin, blue-veined, old lady’s hand. Sonia is not old, but she seems old. She has suffered too much and it has worn her out. Her suffering is not of the body, but of the mind. ‘Ring me. I must dash. I’ve got to pick up the Partingtons. I want to speak to you about my prisoner. Keep well, Sonia.’ (TWE 59-60).

It is remarkable how Drabble inserts minute details of a woman who cares for others. Patsy in her husband’s absence is able to be herself. Although she is in a hurry, she takes her time to soothe the old woman and in her exit note asks the old woman to take care of herself. In the absence of her dominating husband Patsy’s female self is reflected; caring, comforting, and soothing others when she is needed.

Further, Alison’s strength as a woman is illustrated after her divorce with Donnell. She stands firm as a mother even when her teenage daughter Jane runs away from her home and is imprisoned. Jane and her boyfriend are imprisoned on the issue of a road accident. At this distressing moment, Alison has to divide her attention between her sulky daughter Jane and her special child Molly. It is through Alison that Drabble depicts the capacity of the female gender to

tackle the problems that lies before her. The following passage illustrates how Alison handles her problems:

The British community of Walachia, such as it was, had made various offers of half-hearted hospitality, but Alison had declined them: she preferred to be independent, she did not like to be an encumbrance, and she did not want to have to talk when she had nothing to say. (TIA 91).

Although Alison is caught in a tight situation and is distressed, yet she refuses help. The reason that she prefers to be independent may be because she needs the space to think clearly. Alison seems to project the idea that one is able to think clearly and solve problems in the absence of others and she is not willing to talk on the topic that she has nothing to say. Further, Alison does not want to be an ‘encumbrance’ to the help that the British community of Walachia is willing to provide her. Alison’s firm resolve to be independent when she is confronted by a nerve wrecking situation shows the female strength and capacity.

Betty Friedan in *The Feminine Mystique* states:

Many psychologists, including Freud, have made the mistake of assuming from observations of women who did not have the education and freedom to play their full part in the world, that it was women’s essential nature to be passive, conformist, dependent, fearful, childlike – just as Aristotle, basing his picture of human nature on his own culture and particular period of time, made the mistake of assuming that just because a man was a slave, this was his essential nature and therefore “it was good for him to be a slave”. (Friedan 449-450).

Women's identity is then one that can easily be misunderstood and the female desire within the self is juxtaposed with the idea of the female created by social notions and determined by patriarchal ideology, just as the slave in his time is determined by the authoritative dictates of his society. The female bound by social notions is therefore at the mercy of the social order and she is thus silenced through the past centuries. She is incapacitated to express herself and this is the trajectory of feminists who believe that women must express themselves. Drabble in the select texts efficiently develops different female psychology and emotive situations. As a female writer Drabble is able to evoke empathy in the readers as she depicts various female issues that have not been described by male writers.

In *The Ice Age*, Drabble depicts the emotional plight of a young mother with a special child. Alison as a divorcee struggles to maintain her two children. The younger child Molly is a special child and needs more care while the elder child Jane is a wild teenager. Alison is shocked by the news of Jane's accident and she has to visit her sulky daughter who is jailed. Simultaneously, Alison has to think of Molly and attend to her needs. In such a circumstance, the mother is unable to manage her charged emotion and she breaks down. Drabble depicts the emotional state of Alison and the narrator's voice states:

She did not know to stop herself. She knew she was doing it, but she could not stop. She sat in a corner, her feet up in a large chair, alone, for Molly and Anthony had made their usual trip to the pub for juice and beer, and smoked, and worried. How could she so nag and sulk at him, and edge away from him in bed, when she had so longed to return, when she felt so tenderly towards him, with such love, such respect? (TIA 186).



In the passage, Drabble captures the essence of the female mindset who is agitated and at a losing end. Although Alison knows that Anthony is taking Molly for a walk and a treat, she is jealous of the fact that Anthony and Molly are so friendly with each other. At this point, when Alison is alone, the female self is disclosed: the female is hurt, angry, lonely, worried, and dejected and at the same time, she is passionate and aloof as she reconsiders her deplorable state.

Drabble depicts the psychology of the female child in *The Peppered Moth*, and she seems to suggest that females do have critical thinking capacity at an early stage. Bessie the intelligent child nearly dies of the Spanish flu in 1918. Drabble states that this influenza pandemic of 1918-1919 seems to be responsible for the highest mortality rate of any pandemic since the Black Death of the fourteenth century. As Bessie's health recovers she turns to be an extensive reader and at the age of nine, she reads books from the Morley Girls Library at her leisure time. Bessie finds the books as distasteful as Mr Beever's sermons. A particular book, *The Dairyman's Daughter; an Authentic Narrative from Real Life*, given to one of Bessie's aunt Selina highlights Bessie's childhood distaste:

But the text was excessively religious, and Bessie at once saw through its condescending equation of servile rustic poverty with virtue. She could not identify with the abject piety of its heroine Elizabeth, even though they shared a name, and the clergyman-narrator's profound self-satisfaction irritated her intensely. His praise of humble cottages seemed compromised by his delight in grand mansions and fair prospects. She could not have provided a Marxist critique of it at the age of nine, but she could and did react with honest indignation. Such stuff! She wondered what Great Aunt Selina had made of it. (TPM 19-20).

Bessie at the age of nine is most irritated by the clergyman's 'praise of humble cottages' while he seems to be in admiration of the 'grand mansions and fair prospects' of the affluent. Although she is unable to provide a clear answer to her dislike that seems to be directly related to the Marxist criticism on the capitalist and the proletariat, yet, Bessie seems to feel that the clergyman is quite hypocritical. In the passage, the clergyman seems to take the role of the church as an institution of propagation of thoughts that controls social notions.

Marxists believe that formal education exerts great pressure on the dynamic social practices. Institutions provide partial course that have selected choice of meanings, values and practices which comprise of the dominant ideology. Family as the smallest unit of the society teaches selective ideas and notions of the society either consciously or unconsciously, while education imparts particular selection of knowledge and skills related to learning and social relations from a wide range of choice. Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature* states:

Institutions such as churches are explicitly incorporative. Specific communities and specific places of work, exerting powerful and immediate pressures on the conditions of living and of making a living, teach, confirm and in most cases finally enforce selected meanings, values and activities. (Williams 118).

Churches therefore, act as educational platforms and through the 'incorporative' ideas they impart religious, moral, social and economic thoughts and inspirations. It is the specification of selected thoughts, meanings, values and activities; ideologies of the church, that distinguishes one church from another. The notions thus indoctrinated by the church turns to a dominant ideology and these ideologies seem to be enforced within a society as a social code. Bessie is thus in conflict with the clergyman's notions depicted in the book.

Simultaneously, marriage is one of the determinant factors that upholds and maintains the church ideologies. The female gender is then at the mercy of the dominant male; the benefactor. In the following passage Drabble in *The Radiant Way* narrates how Liz is humiliated by her separation from her first marriage:

Liz's marriage broke up after eight months. Edgar, chivalrously, moved out of the flat they rented in New Cross, though he could hardly afford to do so, and into a large shabby house in Greenwich which he shared with several old Cambridge friends. He was much happier there. He paid her a small allowance, as she, as a married woman, was no longer eligible for the grant that had supported her at university. Liz was humiliated by this, rather than enraged, but she knew that she had to qualify in order ever to be free and accepted the conditions. (TRW 100).

Through Liz's humiliation, Drabble seems to depict the psychological onslaught that the female experiences at the time of separation and divorce. Liz is psychologically shattered not because of her separation with Edgar, but, because of the new situation that she has to face. Prior to marrying Edgar, Liz has had the opportunity to receive the supporting educational grants from the university, yet, presently, as a separated married woman she is unqualified and therefore she is unable to avail the grants from the university. Subsequently, Liz has had to take the subordinate role and accept the 'small allowance' that Edgar is willing to pay her. Further, the enforced ideology on marriage, predominant as a social notion, restrains Liz and she avoids informing her mother about her separation:

She did not tell her mother that she and Edgar had separated. She continued her clinical training at St Michael's and qualified in 1959. In

1960, while she was doing six pre-registration months as house physician at St Michael's, she met Charles Headleand. Seven months later, after divorcing Edgar, she married Charles, a widower with three small boys. She was twenty-five, he thirty. She informed her mother after the event. (TRW 100-101).

Liz is able to complete her clinical training in the absence of the male; after her divorce. It is only after Liz divorces Edgar and marries Charles the widower that Liz is able to accept herself and that she is able to inform her mother about her second marriage. In an interview with Lydia Preovic for *Believer*, Margaret Drabble states:

The idea of inherited privilege is something that I think about a great deal.

And about social mobility, and the possibility of advancement. (Preovic).

Liz marries Charles the bourgeoisie to ensure the 'inherited privilege' that Drabble mentions. However, this marriage subjugates Liz to the role of the unpaid worker; caretaker of her three step sons with the addition of her own two sons from Charles. On the other hand, Liz's turn of events seems to arise from the traditional notion that females must be married at a certain age, and it may also be the reason that Liz does not disclose to her mother the fact of her separation with Edgar her first husband.

On the other hand, Rosamund determines to be a single mother. The protagonist in *The Millstone* is taken to the hospital at the last stage of her pregnancy. It is through Rosamund that Drabble depicts the sharp sense of female perception even in one of the most painful hours. Rosamund does not fail to mentally register that she is taken to the hospital from a good address; an address that she is not ashamed to disclose:

I was glad too to be going from so good an address. I felt that by it alone I had bought a little deference and, sure enough, at the bottom of the stairs one of the men turned to Lydia and said, "Would you like to come along, Miss, to see your friend in?" (TM 107).

The passage further highlights the idea of 'inherited privilege' that Drabble suggests and Rosamund is content to belong to the English middle class. Although she is about to give birth to an illegitimate baby, she is proud of her address. It is at this juncture that Rosamund tactfully and unconsciously exposes the advantage of belonging to the middle class.

The fear of disrupting the prevalent social notions seems to be in itself a female psychological trauma, and in the select texts Drabble gives insights to the different natures of female psychological fears. Alix is also not at liberty to disclose the fact she has had an unhappy marriage with Sebastian. She remains silent and avoids her friends and it is only when she is emotionally strong that she discloses about her unhappy marriage to Liz:

Alix admitted what Liz already knew, that she and Sebastian had been less than happy, that the idyll had been less golden than it looked. (TRW 101).

To her dismay Alix finds that her marriage is over too soon. Unlike Liz, Alix takes her time to heal her female mindset and she completes her university education in the absence of the dominating male; her late husband Sebastian. She finds a job that can financially help her to support her and to maintain her child. In *The Radiant Way*, Drabble narrates:

Alix Bowen was slower in the making. She put together slowly the bricks of her new self. She reconsidered, slowly, the privileges and disadvantages of her childhood, of the three years of Cambridge, of the brief interlude of

her marriage, of the streets of Islington where she pushed her pram. She dismantled, she rebuilt. (TRW 101-102).

As a widow, Alix has a strong determination to independently maintain herself and her child. She does not accept the help that Sebastian's mother is willing to provide. She is independent and hard working yet she experiences and shares the psychological trauma of many widows of the middle class English society. In the *Paris Review- The Art of Fiction No. 70*, an interview conducted by Barbara Milton, Margaret Drabble answers to the question of what makes her uneasy and she states:

What a difficult question. Money makes me uneasy. The fact that some people have more of it than others. There's and advert in the personal column of the *Times* in which a man says, "Will somebody please explain to me why some people are paid more than others. Does the fact that I get no replies mean that there is no answer?" I must write to him and say that I agree: There is no answer. (Milton).

Money that makes Drabble uneasy is thus a problem to Alix and her life progresses slowly as she faces financial constraints. With her determination, Alix is able to reach her goal; complete her education and find a suitable job. On the other hand, Liz's second marriage culminates in a divorce:

And now Liz herself was suffering, and finding her glamour transformed into humiliation, if not in the public eye, in her own. And it was true that all her riches, all her past investments, appeared not to avail her now: indeed, it appeared that some of them were not as solid as they had seemed, and might prove, like her marriage, illusory. (TRW 129).

As Drabble narrates Liz's life, she seems to suggest that wealth like marriage is temporal. The temporality of both wealth and marriage seems to be the focus of the capitalist; patriarchy, who consciously tries to maintain his dignity and superiority by consciously marginalizing and subordinating the proletariat; the female gender.

The idealized fairy tale happy hardworking mothers are absent in Drabble's works as they are replaced by realistic mothers who are often agitated by real life events: runaway daughter, illegitimate child, separated wives and divorcees. Margaret Drabble also depicts other female worries and agitations such as child birth, maternity, motherhood and various works that the female has to perform in the absence of the male gender.

The female gender is left to take sole charge of the household chores and to maintain her child rearing regime in the absence of the male patriarch. Although the work in the home ground is maintained by the female gender, yet she is silenced and marginalized in the presence of the male even in her restricted area; her home. The female is excluded to work in jobs that pay better income. In *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Heidi Hartmann in "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" states:

The material base upon which patriarchy rests lies most fundamentally in men's control over women's labor power. Men maintain this control by excluding women from access to some essential productive resources (in capitalist societies, for example, jobs that pay living wages) and by restricting women's sexuality. Monogamous heterosexual marriage is one relatively recent and efficient form that seems to allow men to control both these areas. Controlling women's access to resources and their sexuality, in turn, allows men to control women's labor power, both

for the purpose of serving men in many personal and sexual ways and for the purpose of rearing children. (Nicholson 101).

Male dominance over the female is therefore prominent even in the smallest unit of the society; the family, that begins with marriage. Child bearing thus turns to a controlling factor of the male dominance and supremacy as it disables the female to work for her wage during child bearing and child rearing. In the select texts, most of the female protagonists have to leave their education and jobs due to child bearing and child rearing. Further, child bearing and child rearing also turn into a process that restricts the female sexuality due to which the female submerges into her female self. Thus, weakened by childbirth and child rearing the female is side lined by the dominant male; the patriarch. The female is thus controlled by marriage that ultimately results in child birth and motherhood. Marxist feminist issue of equal opportunity is therefore conditioned and controlled by the dominant male in a patriarchal society through the female body.

Similarly, as commented by Hartmann, in *The Peppered Moth*, Bessie leaves her job with her first pregnancy. Drabble in this instance highlights the fact that within the marriage bound the female has to struggle in many ways during child bearing. Simultaneously, Drabble seems to denote that child bearing does not assure the birth of a child as in the case of Bessie:

We would not be asking these questions had all turned out well for Joe and Bessie. But all did not turn out well. We do not know the details of what went wrong.

Joe and Bessie married, and moved to Northam. Bessie had two miscarriages before being delivered of a healthy son, Robert. Three years later, war broke out. (TPM 123).



The preceding passage denotes how Bessie has to endure two miscarriages that also illustrates that Bessie's body has suffered immensely during her child bearing. It is only on her third child bearing that Bessie succeeds in delivering a baby boy. Although the female has to endure all the physical pains in the absence of the male gender towards the reproduction of manpower, she has to take the subservient role and submerge in the marginalized area of her home. Thus the pain of child bearing, child birth and child rearing is mostly the silent topic in male writings and it reflects traditional thinking and social values indoctrinated by the capitalist and patriarchal ideology.

*The Millstone* is the only novel in which Margaret Drabble gives a detailed description on pregnancy and child birth. In *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing*, Elaine Showalter states:

It is difficult to guess precisely how the female tradition will continue to develop in the English novel; Mortimer, Lessing, Drabble, Byatt and Spark all seem to be moving into new phases in their writing. Feminine realism, feminist protest and female self-analysis are combining in the context of twentieth-century social and political concern. (Showalter 249).

Showalter's discourse of 'female realism, feminist protests and female self-analysis' are illustrated by Drabble in this novel and in her other novels. In this novel, Drabble illustrates the female trauma and fear experienced before and after child birth. Though the protagonist Rosamund is unable to express her fears and trauma, she recaptures the essence:

I suppose the end of anyone's first pregnancy is frightening. I cannot quite remember how frightened I was, because it is one of the horrible tricks of nature to make one forget instantly after childbirth all that one had feared

and suffered, presumably so that one will carry on gaily with the next.  
(TM 102).

Rosamund is unable to recall her fears and the pains, yet the passage seems to denote that whatever fear and pain that she has felt is the felt experience of every female before child birth and one that is also experienced by Bessie during her two miscarriages and at the birth of her son.

The hospital ordeals that the exhausted pregnant female has to endure before child birth, is recollected by Rosamund in the following passage:

Then they took me off to another room and took away all my clothes and put me in a hospital nightgown and asked me how often my contractions were. When I told them, they said Nonsense, but when they investigated they naturally enough found me to be right. Then they did various other unpleasant and compulsory things, found me my book when I asked for it, and left me to it, telling me to ring if I wanted anything. I lay there on this hard high bed for half an hour, trying to read, and then I rang the bell and asked if they couldn't do something about it. Not yet, they said, and off they went. (TM 109-110).

At this poignant hour Rosamund is oppressed by her female body for the reproduction of another human body. It is her body that suffers the most and her body seeks to liberate the body that is within her; the baby that oppresses her. Germaine Greer in *The Whole Woman*, writes:

The battlefield where she fights for liberation. It is through her body that oppression works, reifying her. Her physicality a medium for others to work on; her job is to act as their viceroy, presenting her body for their

ministrations, and applying to her body the treatment that have been ordained. (Greer 106).

Thus, the female body that is ordained for child birth seeks its liberation either by miscarriage or by giving birth. Hence miscarriage turns to be a futile reproduction, and delivering a baby, preferably a male baby, ensures the continuity of patriarchy and the submergence of the female gender.

Margaret Drabble further cites the pain that the female has to endure before child birth. Rosamund in *The Millstone* states:

A quarter of an hour later about five nurses arrived with the pethidine, which they administered; .....(TM 110).

The pain reliever that Rosamund is given, lasts only for a short while and Rosamund recalls to have said:

“I think this drug thing must be wearing off,” I said mildly, “because it seems to be getting worse and worse, can you give me something else please, quick?”

“Oh no!” they said, “not yet, you’ve a long time to go yet, we have to leave something to give you later on.”

“Oh,” I said feebly, “what a pity.”

“Never mind,” they said, “you’re coming along nicely,” and they turned and went back to their row of seats outside and had just resumed their conversation, though in more muffled tones, when I heard myself start to moan rather violently, and they all came rushing back and within five minutes my child was born. (TM 112-113).

It is at this stage that Margaret Drabble encapsulates the procedure of child birth and the female experiences during child birth. Drabble's narration of child birth is realistic and she efficiently captures the nurses' performance during child birth. On the other hand, male authors marginalize the topic of child birth and the pains that women have to suffer during pregnancy. Patriarchal notion seems to take it for granted that females must suffer during pregnancy and child birth. The ordeals of pregnancy and child birth are therefore the unwritten topic in male writings. However, if the male authors were to write on such topics, it would fail to provide the essence of pregnancy and child birth as the male gender is inexperienced in this area. Further, the male is the absent gender during child birth since the maternity ward is attended by female attendants; the nurses.

Drabble highlights the consoling and soothing effect of the female gender when one is in pain. Rosamund who at this crucial moment experiences the most painful physical event of her life is comforted and encouraged by the nurse. Drabble through Rosamund further comments on the gravity and panic at child birth:

“That’s all right,” she kept saying, “that’s fine, you’re coming along fine. Oh, do try not to push.” (TM 113).

Although the nurse comforts and encourages Rosamund during the delivery of her baby, the protagonist is able to determine the anxiety in the nurse's voice. At this juncture, Drabble conveys through the nurse's anxiety the fatality that might ensue at child birth; the child and the mother, who are at the risk of losing their lives. Rosamund further recalls:

There was more panic in her smooth tones than in me; I felt all right now, I felt fine. The child was born in a great rush and hurry, quite uncontrolled and undelivered; they told me afterwards that they only just

caught her, and I felt her fall from me and instantly sat up and opened my eyes, and they said, "It's a girl, it's a lovely little girl." (TM 113).

After the birth of her baby, Rosamund is to an extent liberated as the child that has earlier oppressed her within her body, falls free from her. The sufferings of giving birth exhaust her and the nurses ask her to lie down. As she rests, Rosamund experiences a female emotion towards her child:

They told me to lie down again, and I lay down, asking if the baby was alright, expecting suddenly I don't know what, missing arms and fingers, and they said she was alright; so I lay there, happy that it was over, not expecting that they would let me see her, a strange loud sobbing cry. (TM 113).

Although the protagonist is exhausted, yet, she is curious to know if the child has any physical flaw. This seems to be the first initiative that Rosamund takes as the mother of the baby. Drabble through Rosamund further comments on the physical change of the female gender after child birth:

After the birth, the muscles of my belly snapped back into place without a mark, but some of the women looked as big as they had looked before. I am haunted even now by a memory of the way they walked, large and tied into shapeless dressing gowns, padding softly and stiffly, careful not to disturb the pain that still lay between the legs. (TM 122).

Rosamund is lucky that her enlarged belly recovers its normal size in a short while. As Rosamund recalls the female physical change after her baby is born, she recalls the sight of many women whose bodies do not recover their initial figure. The female body is therefore, as

Germaine Greer suggests in *The Whole Woman*, 'the battlefield where she fights for liberation'. Rosamund suffers the pain of bearing an illegitimate child during her pregnancy and her problems are not over with the birth of her child. As a matter of fact, her problems are multiplied after her child is born as social focus is directed on both the mother and the child.

Drabble's discourse in her works relates to motherhood and in *The Millstone* she explores and depicts with clarity, the processes that the female gender encounters and experiences during pregnancy and child birth and furthermore, the other select texts are informative of female experiences of motherhood. As a child bearer and as a mother, the female is unable to lead an autonomous life. It is therefore, that she assumes the role of the unfavoured gender and she is diminished to the margin while the male is focused at the center. Toril Moi in *What is a Woman?* comments and states of Nancy Chodorow's assumption on patriarchy:

Male science is structured on the male experience of separation and autonomy, which not only severs it from true communion with nature, but also leads it to adopt a language of conquest, power, and domination in its dealings with the world. This situation makes it harder for women to become scientists or intellectuals, since they will have to do violence to their female nature, their need for contact and communion, if they are to follow the paths of male science or male philosophy. The feminist solution is to work for a transformation of male science by demanding that the female virtues of empathy and understanding, often called 'female modes of knowing', be included in the scientific enterprise. Such an inclusion would also put an end to science as a domineering, power-mongering

enterprise. True science or true philosophy re-creates the lost unity between the knower and the known. (Moi 350-351).

The 'female modes of knowing' seems to be the very essence of motherhood. In the select texts, Drabble unfailingly provides illustrations of these female 'virtues of empathy and understanding' that seems to be absent in the male gender. In *The Millstone*, the young mother Rosamund is filled with passion for her new born baby:

She put her in my arms and I sat there looking at her, and her great wide blue eyes looked at me with seeming recognition, and what I felt it is pointless to try to describe. Love, I suppose one might call it, and the first of my life. (TM 114).

Rosamund as a mother is filled with love for her baby as she holds the baby for the first time. In *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing*, Elaine Showalter states:

Drabble is the novelist of maternity, as Charlotte was the novelist of the schoolroom. The interaction between mother and child, the love that comes unbidden like the operations of grace, is for Drabble the most instructive and surprising human relationship.

(Showalter 250).

As denoted by Showalter, Drabble depicts the bond between the mother and the child and Rosamund's life as a mother begins, and in a short while she nurtures the infant as informed by the nurses. Societal notion on illegitimacy does not much seem to bother her as she feeds the baby. Rosamund follows the traditional child care routine and she is afraid to disturb the sleeping baby:

I had been taught to get her out only at the correct intervals, and although I knew this method to be outdated, I did not like to break the rules. Also, the baby was asleep, and I did not see why I should wake her for my own comfort. (TM 123).

The mother is therefore, unable to separate herself from her baby to have an autonomous existence. Autonomy lies in the patriarch of the family and it is this autonomy that provides the male gender his superiority over the female gender. Although Rosamund does not have an autonomous existence yet she is unlike the traditional mother in the fact that she is a paid worker as she has to provide for herself and the baby. In her own means, Rosamund is liberated and free to make her own choice. Unlike the other protagonists of the select texts, she is at liberty to struggle against her conflicts. Simultaneously, she is also a scholar and a single mother who nurtures her baby. Rosamund therefore, breaks the traditional code as a single mother and as a financial provider. Thus, she is an independent woman unlike the dependent woman Emma, Bessie and Liz.

In *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Michele Barrett in her article, “Capitalism and Women’s Liberation” states:

The discussion throughout this book has emphasized the importance of ideology in the construction and reproduction of women’s oppression. A particular household organization and an ideology of familialism are central dimensions of women’s oppression in capitalism and it is only through an analysis of ideology that we can grasp the oppressive myth of an idealized natural ‘family’ to which all women must conform. (Nicholson 125).



In assuming an independent female status, Rosamund in her own terms, seems to break the chain of 'women's oppression' to some extent as she has no dominant male gender in the family that she has created; a single mother with her baby. She therefore, does not conform to the traditional notion of a natural 'family' due to the fact that the dominating male factor is absent in her life. Similarly, in *The Radiant Way*, Alix moves away from the traditional 'family' bind after the death of her husband Sebastian. Like Rosamund, Alix is an intelligent university educated woman and she finds that her financial provision has ended with the death of her husband Sebastian. To her dismay she realizes that she is without a job, and her problem is doubled as she has to take care of her young child. It is at this stage that the capitalist ideology intervenes in the guise of Sebastian's mother Deborah:

Sebastian's mother, Deborah, was the only person who seemed to suspect the disarray of Alix's emotions. She made friendly overtures, invited her to stay in their large, warm, scenic, colourful, untidy house in Sussex, told Alix to live for herself and look to the future, offered to look after the baby whenever Alix needed a break. She would willingly have engulfed the baby. Alix suspected this, and clung on to him the more tightly, rejecting Deborah's support, rejecting everything except a little money 'to see her through'. She was too fragile to form an alliance with large, strong, fully made Deborah. (TRW 99).

In Alix's emotive stage, Deborah persuades her to live with them in their large house and offers to help Alix. At this juncture Deborah seems to take the role of the female gender who works for the capitalist while Alix takes the role of the proletariat who is unable to provide for herself and

the baby. Alix is physically, emotionally and financially at her weakest, and like the proletariat she is uncertain of her future.

On the other hand, Deborah is physically, emotionally and financially on a strong position. Like the capitalist who persuades the proletariat with his financial influence Deborah persuades Alix to stay with them in the large house. Simultaneously, Deborah also seems to work for the continuity of patriarchy. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol IV*, Adrienne Rich in “The Kingdom of the Fathers” states:

Patriarchy depends on the mother to act as a conservative influence, imprinting future adults with patriarchal values even those early years when the mother-child relationship might seem most individual and private; it has also assured through ritual and tradition that the mother shall cease, at a certain point, to hold the child – in particular the son – in her orbit. Certainly it has created images of the archetypal Mother which reinforce the conservatism of motherhood and convert it to an energy for the renewal of male power. (Evans 82).

Had Alix not provided the male child, the story might have taken a different turn. But, like Rosamund, Alix is determined not to be caught in the traditional trap and she opts to lead an independent life. At the same time, she accepts the small provision from Deborah in order to maintain herself and her baby at the initial stage of her independent life. Alix at this point liberates herself from the patriarchal dictates by opting to live an independent life. Both Rosamund and Alix are yet unable to maintain their middle class requisite as they are independent of extra help; nanny, for their babies, due to their financial constraints.

In *The Garrick Year*, David provides Emma a home help who stays with them. Emma is able to maintain her middle class status with Pascal to help her at home and to look after the children. Emma does not face the problems that Rosamund and Alix have to encounter. She leads a different life and she is enslaved by David who feels that his job is more important than Emma's awaited BBC job as a news reader. Emma's freedom to make her choice is subjugated by her husband. The unhappy mother is thus entrapped by her marriage and she has to submit herself to her husband. In *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, Raman Selden et al. in "Feminist Theories", state:

Socialist/Marxist feminism was a powerful stand of the second wave during the late 1960s and 1970s, in Britain in particular. It sought to extend Marxism's analysis of class into a women's history of their material and economic oppression, and especially of how the family and women's domestic labour are constructed by and reproduce the sexual division of labour. Like other 'male' forms of history, Marxism had ignored much of women's experience and activity (one of Sheila Rowbotham's most influential books is entitled *Hidden from History*), and Marxist feminism's primary task was to open up the complex relations between gender and the economy. (Selden et al. 135).

As highlighted, David the patriarch of the family assumes the superior role and submerges Emma's job opportunity as the husband. Thus, the male controls his wife and in the outcome the female is subjugated to the margin with David at the center. Emma is under David's control due to her state of motherhood. David therefore takes the financial control of the family. David is

benevolent in his own way and allows her to keep Pascal as her home help and thereby, they unconsciously maintain their middle class necessity; the home help.

The idea of female sexuality is an area of interest for both the male and the female writers. In her works, Drabble provides insight to the female problems of sexuality within the English society. In *The Garrick Year*, the novelist clearly illustrates in Wyndham Farrar, that the acquisition of the middle class economical condition does not provide the middle class morality. Although Wyndham Farrar is financially in the middle class status; the stage manager of the theatre, his approach to the female gender seems to lack the middle class courtesy. Instead of politely asking Emma for the drawing pins that she has arranged on the notice board, he approaches her furtively from behind and he says:

‘Do you think I might disarrange your nice little pattern and have a couple of pins?’ and I turned round and saw that it was Wyndham Farrar with a piece of paper that he wanted to pin up.

‘I suppose so,’ I said, unpicking two and offering them to him.  
‘They are hardly mine to withhold.’

‘No, I didn’t think they would be,’ he said, taking the pins, but not doing anything more about it. (TGY 64).

Wyndham Farrar also exposes his male superiority and retorts to override Emma’s reply, and thereafter he flirts with Emma even though she reveals that she is David’s wife. The incident of Emma thus enticed by Wyndham in her husband’s absence seems to suggest that the female gender is always a prey to the male gender. Catharine A Mackinnon’s article, “Sexuality” in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, states:

A theory of sexuality becomes feminist methodologically, meaning feminists in the post-marxist sense, to the extent it treats sexuality as a social construct of male power: defined by man, forced on women, and constitutive of the meaning of gender. Such an approach centers feminism on the perspective of the subordination of women to men as it identifies sex- that is the sexuality of dominance and submission- as crucial, as fundamental, as on some level definitive, in that process. (Nicholson 159).

Mackinnon theorizes that the theory of sexuality is the 'sexuality of dominance and submission'. Wyndham's retort to Emma in *The Garrick Year* therefore, subjects her to a subordinate role while he takes the dominant role. Wyndham forces his male sexuality on Emma and he further flirts with her:

You're not in my company, are you? I can hardly have engaged an actress looking like you without having noticed it.' (TGY 64).

It is at this point that the male gender entices the female by crediting her beauty. But, the female who is bound to her husband is not easily persuaded and Emma remarks:

'David Evans, my husband.'

'Oh,' he said. 'Oh yes. Really. David Evans. I didn't know he was married. He doesn't seem to be particularly married. Was I introduced to you? Come to think of it, I did know about David, he told me some long story about having a wife and a lot of kids to support when the subject of salary came up. But I didn't know he was married to anyone like you.' (TGY 65).

Emma reveals her identity as David's wife to which Wyndham comments that David does not seem to be 'particularly married'. Wyndham's comment once more reflects the notion that the male gender is not bound by his marriage while the female is bound by marriage and dominated by her husband.

In *The Radiant Way*, Liz divorces Edgar and later marries Charles to whom she is sexually attracted. Liz in her second marriage is bound to her husband and her three step sons. It is her sexuality that compels her to marry Charles. Consequently, her sexuality is an agent that interrupts her further studies:

Her second marriage somewhat disrupted her postgraduate career.

(TRW 101).

Liz's sexuality is further controlled by Charles who exerts his power over his wife Liz. As a married woman she has to obey and submit to her husband. Liz is not free to act on her own as her liberty is conditioned and dominated by her husband. In *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Heidi Hartmann in her article "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" writes:

The wage differential, then, will become increasingly necessary in perpetuating patriarchy, the male control of women's labor power. The wage differential will aid in defining women's work as secondary to men's at the same time it necessitates women's actual continued economic dependence on men. The sexual division of labor in the labor market and elsewhere should be understood as a manifestation of patriarchy which serves to perpetuate it. (Nicholson 108-109).

Charles controls Liz's sexuality and forces her to depend on him. It is this economic dependence within her marriage and within a patriarchal set up that interrupts Liz's education. Her education is secondary and therefore it is marginalized and consequently, Liz is marginalized to the domestic area. The sexual division of work within marriage binds Liz to the home ground. Thus, sexuality is an area where the female submits and the male dominates. Liz's total economic dependence on Charles is appalling and it is revealed when Charles divorces her. In *Paris Review- The Art of Fiction No. 70*, Margaret Drabble informs Barbara Milton:

And other people's misery makes me very uneasy. The injustices of life: that some people have such a terrible time- not necessarily even in material things, not even physically- but just psychologically, or in their personal lives. (Milton).

Drabble's deep concern with the female psychology is revealed in all the select texts and her protagonists Emma, Gladys, Frieda and Bessie reveal the female regret of losing their job. In *The Garrick Year*, Emma like Liz marries at an early age, and years later, when she meets her friend Mary Summers she is unable to think why she did not continue to pursue her education instead of marrying David. Emma narrates:

But I could not take it upon myself to explain why I had not bothered to go. It did cross my mind as we talked that our lives had turned out quite neatly upside down: she was to have had the early marriage and the children, I was to have had the independent and faintly intellectual career. I wondered what had turned us over: ourselves, the world, or accident. (TGY 76).

Like the other intelligent female protagonists, Emma is talented, well educated and she has a fair chance of pursuing an intellectual career. But, her female sexuality overrides her intellectuality and therefore she submerges to the background as the wife of David. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Nancy Chodorow “The Sexual Sociology of Adult Life” states:

The wife, accordingly, is viewed as deriving her status and class position mainly from her husband, even if she also is in the labour force and contributes to the maintenance of the family’s life style. She is seen as a representative of her family whereas husband is seen as an independent individual. (Evans 159).

As a married woman she is dominated by the male sexuality that marginalizes her female self. Liberty is out of the question for Emma as marriage submerges her.

In *The Guardian*, Lisa Allardice in “A Life in Writing: Margaret Drabble” comments on Drabble and states:

As with her novels, over the years, the characters get steadily older, each story capturing a different stage in a woman’s life, from youthful uncertainty, through the intensities of infidelity and marital disillusionment, to the freedom and regrets of maturity. “People age,” she says, “I’ve always been interested in what is happening to my contemporaries and what is still happening.”

(Allardice).

Margaret Drabble’s protagonist Ailsa in *The Sea Lady* is a marked contrast to Alison, Emma, Alix and Bessie. Ailsa the emancipated independent woman at sixty is still sexually attracted to



her ex-husband Humphrey Clark. In this novel, it is Ailsa who tempts and entices Humphrey. She lures Humphrey and he submits himself to Ailsa on occasions, but, Ailsa knows her position in the social structure, and if she is once more willing to have Humphrey as her husband, she would have to follow the social code of submission to the male gender. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Nancy Chodorow in “The Sexual Sociology of Adult Life” states:

Women’s work in the labor force tends to extend their housewife, wife, or mother roles and their concern with personal, affective ties (as secretaries, service workers, private household workers, nurses, teachers). (Evans 160).

In the following passage, Ailsa tries to win Humphrey’s affection by revealing that she is leaving her theatrical work:

‘I told you I was giving up the theatre, last time we met,’ she said.

‘And now I’m saying it to you again. This really is my last season.’

‘So, what next?’ he asked.

‘No,’ she said, as though he had contradicted her assertion. ‘That’s it. It’s bad for me, this show-biz lark. It’s exhibitionism. It’s bad for my character. Let’s not talk about it. What next for you? Are you still spending most of your time underwater?’ (TSL 176).

Although at this stage Ailsa is not controlled by Humphrey, who is still attracted to her, yet, the intelligent and educated woman is quite aware of her traditional notions and social values. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Nancy Chodorow states:

Women are located first in the sex-gender system, men first in the organization of production. (Evans 158).

Therefore, Ailsa also discloses to Humphrey that her present work is 'bad' for her character. She knows that she has to leave her exhibitionist show business, and in order to submit to the social order in the male-female relationship, the female's work is secondary to the male's work. The following passage exposes Ailsa's sexuality:

Posture, Ailsa, posture, said Ailsa Kelman to herself, as she straightened her shoulders, drew in another deep breath, and, upon cue, began to speak. Her strong, hoarse and husky voice, magnified to a trembling and intimate timbre of vibration by the microphone, loudly addressed the gathering. The audience relaxed, in comfortable (if in some quarters condescending) familiarity: they knew where they were going when they were led onwards by this siren-speaker. They felt safe with her expertise..... She summoned up bacteria and eubacteria ancient filaments from the Archaean age, and presented her audience with the accelerating intersexuality of fish. (TSL 3).

Drabble introduces Ailsa as a beautiful and intelligent woman dressed as a mermaid. She is appreciated by the audience who are awed by her beauty and talent. On stage, Ailsa is in her own element and she uses her female sexuality to provide sensuousness to the crowd. At the same time, she will have to control her sexuality if she marries Humphrey; submerge herself in Humphrey's identity, as the social value and traditional norms rest on patriarchy. Yet, it should be noted that Ailsa is at her strongest when she is on her own; in the absence of male dominance.

Margaret Drabble has illustrated many attributes of female qualities in the absence of their male counterparts, and her female protagonists are mostly intelligent and educated females who belong to the English middle class family. Drabble depicts the female physical and psychological strength in the absence of the male gender especially highlighting maternity and motherhood. Except for Rosamund who can make her own decision, the other protagonists are not at liberty to pursue their interests. Since they are presently bound by patriarchal dictates, the female protagonists are not free and they have to submerge under the male dictates. Drabble therefore, centers her focus on female independence; male absence, in the select texts. Her female protagonists like Rosamund, Alison, Bessie, Alix, and Ailsa are strong enough to lead their independent lives and they are strong enough to be emotional in their poignant hours. Drabble's female protagonists are caricatures of females that one might meet on the road while taking a walk and the life-like images that she depicts seems to confirm her varied interest in the female discourse.

## **CHAPTER – IV**

### **EMERGENCE OF THE NEW WOMAN IN THE MAINSTREAM**

This chapter is focused on the transformation of the female gender to the new woman identity that is a contrast to the traditional woman under a patriarchal social setup. Although traditional and patriarchal ideology has established the belief that the female as the weaker gender solely depends on the male gender, in the select texts Drabble illustrates the various ways that the male gender depends on the female. Therefore, the capability of women, and male dependency on women in a heterosexual relationship will be illustrated through the select novels and related theories. Margaret Drabble's protagonists are women who have struggled to overcome the female conflicts pertaining to marriage, social and economic issues that submerge their individual identities. It will also attempt to analyse the identity of the new woman in the mainstream; the English middle class through the protagonists of each select text.

Through her protagonists Drabble denotes various instances of male dependence on the female gender. In *The Witch of Exmoor*, Gladys Haxby an educated woman has to resign from her teaching job because of her marriage. Drabble informs the readers that the then English law did not allow married women to teach in schools, least of all when peace prevailed in the country:

Gladys Haxby had been obliged to give up her job when she was married. That was the law in those days. Married women did not teach in schools. Or not in peacetime.

Three bored women in one small cottage, making the worst of their lives, while Ernie Haxby worked in the fields or at the farm. (TWE, 115)

The English patriarchal concept of marriage and the socio-economic notions that bind the female gender through the past centuries are important areas in order to expose the new woman identity as marriage and socio-economic notions are the factors that bind the female to her husband. The

focus of Gladys's anger seems to be in her role as a domestic worker after she resigns from her teaching job. Gladys is not willing to accept her role as a domestic worker; unpaid worker and her two educated daughters nonetheless share the same sentiment: In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Margaret Jackson in "Sex, Class and Hetero-Relations" comments on the campaign launched on women's economic independence:

Barbara Bodichon, the main instigator of the first Married Women's Property Bill of 1856, simultaneously launched a campaign for women's economic independence, which incorporated a critique of marriage as an institution. (Evans 3-4).

The campaign mentioned does not seem to have much effect as the intelligent and well educated Bessie faces the same problem in *The Peppered Moth*; losing her teaching job after her marriage.

Bessie, of course, gave up her teaching career, as married women were obliged to do in those days. She said she regretted this, but she did not say it with much conviction. She was certainly glad to get out of Breaseborough at last. Perhaps she married Joe to get out of Breaseborough. (TPM 123).

Good education in Cambridge does not liberate Bessie to maintain her job after her marriage. The conflict especially in Gladys and Bessie lies in the fact that both the educated women lost their jobs due to their marriage. Although both of them prefer to teach they are marginalised to the area of domestication as the male is dependent on the female gender to provide him his daily needs and services and to rear the children.

In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. II*, Jacqueline Rose in “Femininity and its Discontents” quotes Nancy Chodorow’s, ‘The Reproduction of Mothering’:

‘Women’s mothering is one of the few universal and enduring elements of the sexual division of labour’. (Evans 310).

Thus, married women have to resign from their work as they are expected to provide the heir to the family as early as possible. Gladys, Bessie and Frieda do not depict the traditional loving mothers that are idealized in the English male written literature. They are mothers who are wary and bored of child care and domestication. In *The Witch of Exmoor*, Frieda reacts against the traditional notion of marriage and mothering that binds the female gender to her home, children and husband. She feels that she is a contrast to the traditional English maternal figure and Frieda states:

It was a mistake, having three children. It was a mistake having any. I can’t think why I did. I never really meant to. They just happened. I wouldn’t have called myself the maternal type. In fact I know I wasn’t. They were a problem. Think what I might have been, might have done, if I hadn’t been burdened. It’s a mystery. (TWE 247).

Frieda reflects her feelings and says that she could have been a different person had she not been ‘burdened’ by domestic work. Frieda’s expression seems to suggest that if a woman is not tied by marriage and domesticity, she might turn out to be quite someone else. Frieda is aware that marriage binds a woman to her husband and submerges her to the domestic area; a living proof in her educated mother Gladys Haxby, who has to leave her teaching job after her marriage.

Since there is no job opportunity for the educated woman; marriage binds her, Frieda toils in the fields and farm like Ernie, her father.

In *The Garrick Year*, Drabble gives an instance of an educated woman who is bound by marriage. The well educated Emma is quite naïve and she is not aware that marriage restricts a woman to her home and her husband:

‘Then you shouldn’t have married,’ said Wyndham. ‘People who get married give up the here and now for the sake of the hereafter, didn’t you know?’

‘No, I didn’t know.’

‘Well, you know now....’ (TGY 161).

It is Wyndham who echoes the English patriarchal traditional thought on the idea of marriage that befalls the female gender. Emma’s conflict is with her husband who gives priority to his work for which Emma has to leave London and her expected BBC job. Though Emma is confident that she is capable of doing justice to her expected job, she is subjugated by David’s dominance. Michael Anthony Corey in *Male Fraud: Understanding Sexual Harassment, Date Rape, and Other Forms of Male Hostility* states:

It is in this manner that males are conditioned early on to be extremely dependent on females. Somewhere between puberty and full adulthood, this dependency is unconsciously transferred from mother to girlfriend, and then later, when the male is ready for marriage, it is transferred from girlfriend to wife. (Corey 30)

David’s dependency on Emma is manifested in the form of male domination to the extent of forbidding Emma to have a career. Although David and Emma physically live in the same house,



yet, they are separated from each other by the work that David has to perform; the male depends on the female to perform domestic chores, child care, and socialization when David has his visitors at home.

In *The Witch of Exmoor*, marriage binds Frieda and Andrew, but, marriage is quite temporal as Andrew soon deserts his wife. Frieda states:

‘That was the end between me and Andrew, as she’d meant it to be. He ran off. He was always a coward. But sometimes I think it was nothing to do with Andrew at all. He was just piggy in the middle...’ (TWE, 249).

As an intelligent woman, Frieda does not question her malady. Simultaneously, Frieda does not seem to mind the fact that Andrew has left her. The reason seems to lie in the fact that the lazy man does not provide enough provision for Frieda and her children. Although tradition and social notions elevate the idea of marriage, it may be assumed that there are many cases of unhappy marriages as the husbands do not provide the required provision for the family. Since Frieda has worked hard during her marriage her work load does not seem to get tougher after Andrew leaves her; Frieda has earlier worked like a man and she continues to work like a man. Frieda’s capability and capacity to shoulder extra workload is further manifested when Andrew finally deserts her. In *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Heidi Hartmann in “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism” states:

Monogamous heterosexual marriage is one relatively recent and efficient form that seems to allow men to control both these areas. Controlling women’s access to resources and their sexuality, in turn, allows men to control women’s labor power, both for the purpose of serving men in

many personal and sexual ways and for the purpose of rearing children.  
(Nicholson 101).

Thus, the passage denotes the male control of women's labour power that is reflected in Freida, Bessie and Emma. Further, in *The Witch of Exmoor*, Patsy, the paid working mother is over weighed by her duties that are directly related to patriarchy; mothering, work, and her duty as a wife. She has to divide her attention to various matters:

In Meeting, Patsy makes a perfunctory attempt to free her mind from its terrestrial anxieties, fails, and then settles down to them, methodically, as the silent minutes pass, as motes turn in the shafts of light that fall through the plain windows of this square familiar building.

(TWE 58).

It is difficult for Patsy to distance herself from the various female activities. Unlike the male who can distance his thoughts from domestic work and child rearing, Patsy devotes her time for her children, she attends to her husband as a dutiful wife and she socializes while she must simultaneously perform her best in her work. The female is therefore over worked yet she manages to 'methodically' work out her plan during the meeting. In *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Michele Barrett in "Capitalism and Women's Liberation":

The liberation of women would require, first, a redivision of the labour and responsibilities of childcare. Whether privatized or collectivized, it would be mandatory that this be shared between men and women. Second, the actual or assumed dependence of women on a male wage (or capital) would need to be done away with. Third, the ideology of gender would need to be transformed. (Nicholson 127).

Through Patsy, Drabble highlights the capacity and the capability of the working mother who manages to cater to the needs at home and in her work place. Simultaneously, Drabble seems to denote the possibility of socio-economic progress for the female gender, although the female has to perform the extra work load. On the other hand, Barrett's suggestion of sharing responsibilities between men and women would liberate women to some extent regarding domestic area and child care routine.

Due to patriarchal ideology, it has been an established notion through the past centuries that the female gender depends on the support of the male gender on various issues; physical and psychological. Yet in practical circumstances, it often seems that this ideology takes a reversal role; the female gender often supports the male gender in times of troubles. The male written literature that depicts helpless females seems to be quite the opposite in reality. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Nancy Chodorow in "The Sexual Sociology of Adult Life" states:

Male denial of dependence and of attachment to women helps to guarantee both masculinity and performance in the world of work. (Evans 169).

Male dependence on women has been silenced by male writers and in the select texts Margaret Drabble illustrates instances where the male gender seeks the support of the female gender during crisis. In *The Garrick Year*, Wyndham who is afraid to reveal the news of the plane crash to his male colleagues discloses his fear to Emma:

‘You do know about her. She was on that plane that went down in the Atlantic last night.’

‘You’re not serious.’

‘Of course I’m serious.’

‘Is she dead then?’

‘I wish to God I knew. (TGY 98).

The fact that Wyndham does not inform his male colleagues about his dilemma seems to denote that he defends himself to uphold his male image. Although the female gender is assumed to be the weaker gender, Wyndham’s choice to confide in Emma shows the male dependency on the female to preserve his self esteem and confidence among his male colleagues. Wyndham faces a critical stage as Mrs von Blerke, the financial donor of Wyndham’s show, is on board the plane that has crashed. In his perplexed mood Wyndham Farrar is apprehensive and as the directing patriarch of the show he hopes that his plans would not be disrupted by Mrs von Berke’s accident. He therefore, takes emotional refuge in Emma and he reveals his emotional fear; the fear that his plans could fail. Thus, Wyndham tries to maintain his psychological balance by confiding to Emma.

In *The Sea Lady*, Drabble, further depicts how the male gender achieves psychological balance from the female gender. Ailsa’s second husband continues to adorn his home with pictures of Ailsa; posters of her shows, and shelves that contain the books that Ailsa has written. The following passage illustrates Ailsa’s second husband Martin Pope’s fascination of Ailsa even after their divorce:

There were photographs of Ailsa, continues Dame Mary relentlessly, and shelves of her books, and posters of her shows, and videos of her television programmes, and a whacking great oil painting of her, a really terrible likeness, stuck over the mantelpiece. And all along the corridor there were pictures of Ailsa with her baby on her knee. Taken by Lord Snowdon, if she remembers rightly. (TSL 307).

The passage further denotes male obsession of female beauty to feed the male ego. Martin Pope seems to draw his psychological balance from Ailsa's pictures, while Humphrey Clark, Ailsa's first husband is sexually obsessed by Ailsa's beauty. Ailsa is Martin Pope's ideal woman that Gilbert and Gubar denote in *The Madwoman in the Attic*:

The ideal woman that male authors dream of generating is always an angel, as Norman O. Brown's comment about Laura/poetry suggested. (Gilbert and Gubar 20).

Humphrey the intellectual gentleman illustrates the male sexual desire for the female gender. At this juncture, the sexual onslaught of the female is in the form of Humphrey's wild imaginations:

He would sit proudly watching her, thinking of the moment when he would have this lavishly broadcast and much duplicated and refracted woman to himself, in the flesh, alone. (TSL 183).

Humphrey's deepest desire seems to rest in the possession of Ailsa which is both at the physical and psychological levels. In *Women's Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett states:

The Madonna/whore dichotomy runs through western patriarchal culture as the means whereby men have sought to ensure both the sanctity and inheritance of their families and their extra-familial sexual pleasure. (Barrett 45).

Ailsa represents both the traditional and the contemporary woman; she is beautiful with a passion to dress for the occasion and simultaneously, she is well educated and independent. Humphrey the marine biologist therefore, depends on Ailsa to affirm his maleness, although Ailsa seems to be quite unaware of it.

Further, Humphrey feels that he lacks the eloquence of speech and therefore he depends on the female gender; Dame Mary, to help him on his first meeting of his first wife Ailsa, who still has the power to make him speechless. In this instance, Humphrey; the male depends on the female for his psychological comfort:

‘Poor Humphrey,’ says Dame Mary, with an extraordinary and slightly coarse giggle lurking playfully under her words, ‘he can’t talk, he’s struck dumb with the honour, he’s appointed me his spokesperson for the evening...’ Oh, she is a comfort to him, she is his protector, this motherly woman with orange hair, he is immensely grateful to her for taking him under her wing, and she stands staunchly by his side, small but loyal, as his first wife Ailsa Kelman makes her dangerous entrance, glittering in silver sequins, sailing through the room towards him, her head held high, her carriage straight (*posture, Ailsa, posture*), with her silver-bangled Athenian arms outstretched for him. (TSL 281).

The passage is a contrast to male written literature on the female gender. In male written literature, beautiful women are often enamored by male attributes and women are often caught speechless. Yet in the given context it is Humphrey who needs help and who is caught speechless by the sight of his beautiful, well educated and intelligent first wife. It is not the male who makes the ‘dangerous entrance’ to greet the other. It is the female in all her female self who greets Humphrey. At this juncture the role of the age old narration is reversed and the female is focused on the forefront. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Nancy Chodorow in “The Sexual Sociology of Adult Life” states:

An examination of the way that gender personality is expressed in adulthood reveals how women and men create, and are often committed to creating, the interpersonal relationships which underlie and reproduce the family structure that produced them. (Evans 169).

Humphrey takes comfort in the eloquence of Dame Mary who intervenes at the right moment to soothe Humphrey. Drabble thus overturns the traditional form of male writing; the beautiful damsel in distress saved by the gallant knight is replaced by the male in distress saved by the robust Dame Mary. Further, Humphrey's refuge in Dame Mary is akin to the mother child relationship with the mother figure as the comforter.

In *The Radiant Way*, Drabble illustrates the subordination of the female gender within marriage and the fatal doom for the female during the time of divorce. After being married for twenty years, Liz is divorced by her second husband Charles, and she is at a point where she can draw no conclusion by herself. She asks Alix to advise her and Alix in turn consults her husband Brian:

Alix, when consulted on this point by Liz, was particularly useless. She didn't even know what she ought to think. She in turn consulted Brian, who spoke up for Liz better than she could herself. 'Twenty years,' he said. 'Twenty years, she stuck it out with him, she brought up his children, she had two children with him, and she says she paid the grocery bills. Of course he ought to make her a decent settlement. What if she falls ill? What if she can't work?' (TRW 129).

Drabble through Brian seems to suggest that all males are not anti feminists and that there are many men who support the economic development of the female gender. Apart from the fact that

Liz has for twenty years maintained the domestic duties for Charles, Brian is annoyed that Liz has been paying the grocery bills through the twenty years of her married life. Brian is concerned that Charles should make Liz 'a decent settlement' that can guarantee her financial assistance even when she is faced with health problems. Marxist feminists in favour of female economic development refute to the patriarchal control of finances that ultimately results in male supremacy. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Margaret Jackson in her article, "Sex, Class and Hetero- Relations" cites Frances Power Cobbe and states:

She maintained that the relationship between husband and wife was that of master and slave, that marriage was a structure created by men for men, to give them absolute power over women; and that they exercised control in two ways- by purse or stick. (Evans 4).

The preceding passage highlights Frances Power Cobbe's argument on the issue of sexual economics of male power. The control of male economic power in the guise of Charles is magnified at the time of the couple's divorce; a time when the woman is at a loss on the economic ground. This issue activates Brian's anger towards Charles; the sole economic power of Charles over Liz. Brian is alert to the fact that Charles had depended on Liz for the past twenty years as a guardian angel to his children and to maintain his home. Yet at the time of divorce, male dependence on the female does not seem have much effect as the female has to bow to the whims of the male authority on the issue of financial provision. Thus, divorce makes Liz vulnerable even though Charles has made his profits during his dependence on Liz.

In *The Ice Age*, Anthony depends on Alison during his crisis. Although Anthony and Alison are not married, Anthony depends on Alison for moral and emotional support. Anthony is unable to control his own mood swings. Due to his economic greed Anthony will soon be



imprisoned and he is in an emotional strain. The emotional strength of the female is highlighted in the guise of Alison the protagonist:

Alison rang Anthony's solicitors, and her own, and inquired about the dissolving of partnerships. Anthony's behavior was so erratic that she could all too easily imagine him putting his signature to some vast new lunatic enterprise: and maybe this time no wealthy council would be there to bale him out. She was determined not to go through all that again: she had had enough. (TIA 224).

Anthony is unable to comprehend the fatality of his evil deeds and the procedure that should precede his trial. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Nancy Chodorow in "The Sexual Sociology of Adult Life" states:

Men continue to enforce the sexual division of spheres as a defense against powerlessness in the labor market. (Evans 169).

Alison's dependability is illustrated while Anthony remains irritable. She rings Anthony's solicitors and she proceeds with other necessary steps. In this instance, Anthony uses his irritability to force Alison to do the work for him. Since Anthony is about to face his trial, he is powerless. Alison is therefore, determined not to face the ordeal of bailing Anthony again as she has had enough.

Each of the select text is concerned with the importance of female education and reading habit. Margaret Drabble is deeply concerned with the female gender as a part of the reading public and her stress on the importance of female education is evident especially in the select texts. Each of the protagonists are well read and well educated with degrees from renowned universities. Drabble therefore seems to make a statement in her own way to suggest that reading

and good education are necessary criteria for the female gender in order to emerge as the new woman in the history of the female gender. Simultaneously, the novelist subtly suggests that the female needs to be moulded in order to achieve her necessary goal in her life's journey.

In *The Peppered Moth*, Bessie the fore runner of the new woman at the age of nine is filled with contempt with the Motley Girls Library books. Most of the books are Sunday school prizes that have been awarded to various Victorian Cudworths and Bawtrys for chapel attendance. The following extract shows young Bessie's contempt for the books that have been awarded to her aunts:

Most of these Bessie found as contemptible as Mr Beever's bathetic sermon. A characteristic example was *The Dairyman's Daughter; an Authentic Narrative from Real Life* by the late Rev. Legh Richmond, A.M., Rector of Turvey, Bedfordshire, reprinted by William Walker in Otley, which had been given to one of her Cudworth aunts, Selina, by Bessie's grandmother in 1861. (TPM 19).

Bessie is irritated that the book has been awarded to her Great Aunt Selina as a Sunday school prize. Bessie's contempt for the particular book lies in the fact that rustic poverty is compared to virtue:

But the text was excessively religious, and Bessie at once saw through its condescending equation of servile rustic poverty with virtue. She could not identify with the abject piety of its heroine Elizabeth, even though they shared a name, and the clergyman-narrator's profound self satisfaction irritated her intensely. His praise of the humble cottages seemed compromised by his delight in grand mansions and fair prospects. She

could not have provided a Marxist critique of it at the age of nine, but she could and did react with honest indignation. Such stuff! She wondered what great aunt Selina had made of it. (TPM 20).

Bessie as an intelligent child is able to comprehend to a certain extent that poverty and virtue are not truly interrelated. This observation shows that Bessie's intelligence is far above her age group. The trajectory of Drabble's discourse is on the ideology of hegemony; the relatedness of poverty and virtue that has been institutionalised by the capitalist in order to gain control of the proletariat. Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature* states:

For 'hegemony' is a concept which at once includes and goes beyond two powerful earlier concepts: that of 'culture' as a 'whole social process', in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of 'ideology', in any of its Marxist senses, in which a system of meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest. (Williams 108).

Young Bessie is irritated with the book as the clergyman praises the humble cottages while he is overwhelmed by the mansions of the wealthy. Raymond Williams in *Marxism and Literature* further states:

Cultural work and activity are not now, in any ordinary sense, a superstructure: not only because of the depth and thoroughness at which any cultural hegemony is lived, but because cultural tradition and practice are seen as much more than super structural expressions – reflections, mediations, or typifications – of a formed social and economic structure. On the contrary, they are among the basic processes of the formation itself and, further, related to a much wider area of reality than the abstractions of

‘social’ and ‘economic’ experience. People seeing themselves and each other in directly personal relationships; people seeing the natural world and themselves in it; ... (Williams 111).

The book awarded to Great Aunt Selina is a representation of male dictate over the female as the male written book proposes guidelines on female moral values. Bessie is unable to identify herself with the heroine Elizabeth’s goodness. In *The Madwoman in the Attic*, Gilbert and Gubar state:

Of course, from the eighteenth century on, conduct books for ladies had proliferated, and joining young girls to submissiveness, modesty, selflessness; reminding all women that they should be angelic. (Gilbert and Gubar 23).

Gilbert and Gubar also denote:

In short, like Goethe’s Makarie, Honoria has no story except a sort of anti-story of selfless innocence based on the notion that “Man must be pleased; but him to please / is woman’s pleasure. (Gilbert and Gubar 23).

Thus, it may be assumed that the female child is molded from a very young age to fit her role in the pattern that society dictates the female gender. Bessie’s irritation with the heroine, the clergyman and the social moral depicted in the book shows Bessie’s female conflict at a very young age.

Paid work is an important issue to Drabble’s female protagonists, due to which the tradition of marriage and its package of unpaid worker is a constant conflict. Reading from the formative year marks the protagonists of the select texts for which most of the female protagonists of the select texts are university educated in various streams of higher education.

Drabble's maternal and educated skills seem to instinctively note the importance of the child's formative years in the area of education, and the time and space required to study. The following passage from *The Peppered Moth* depicts Bessie as she prepares to sit for her Cambridge entrance:

Did she have time enough for study? inquired Mrs Barron. Oh yes, said Bessie, her parents were very understanding. She had her own little corner, her own worktable. She had plenty of encouragement at home, said shy, hard-working, pretty, tender little Bessie Bawtry. (TPM 47-48).

Provision of the required time, space and encouragement is difficult for a working class family and this seems to be the reason that Drabble's female protagonists hail from middle class families. Bessie's father is an electrical engineer in Breaseborough, the coal belt of South Yorkshire. Through the protagonist Bessie, Drabble denotes the importance of time, space and encouragement in a child's education. Since Bessie the intelligent girl is provided with the necessary time, space and encouragement by her enthusiastic parents, she matriculates with distinction in the early twentieth century and in the preceding passage she attempts to sit for her Cambridge entrance. Drabble's protagonist Bessie is favoured with the opportunity of education by her supportive parents. The authorial conflict at this juncture is on the traditional male writers whose educational preference is bestowed on the male child; boys in the study and family library while girls are trained by their mothers in domestic work. The intelligent Bessie is therefore, in the process of being molded to be the fore runner of the new woman, a contrast to the women characters in male writings.

Marxist feminists correlate the importance of reading and social realities. In *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*. Deborah L. Madsen in “Gender and Work: Marxist Feminism and Charlotte Perkins Gilman”, denotes:

In terms of literary theorizing, Marxist feminists focus upon the relationship between reading and social realities. Art, including literature, is seen to be prescribed by the forms of economic production. The conditions of the production of literary texts are determined by the economics of publishing and distribution, marketing and profit-making. Marxist feminists question the effect of gender on the manner in which authorship is received and canons are formed. Textual meanings are assumed to be produced by their socio-economic context and the ideology of the reader rather than existing in some transcendent apolitical realm. (Madsen 66-67).

To the Marxist feminist, social realities are more important than the idealized world. The world of the living directly indicates the necessary economic involvement of the person. Therefore, reading directly relates to the social reality of economics. Madsen’s focus on the production of literary texts directly involves economics; an area that does not involve the traditional female gender. Further, the economics involved at this level is the economics of publishing, distribution, marketing, and profit-making that are all parts of the social realities that writers have to estimate which in turn is directly related to the reading public. In order to align the female gender as a majority of the reading public, it is necessary that the female must be provided with good education so as to comprehend the meaning of what she has had read. The trajectory of this discourse lies in the importance given to female education by Margaret Drabble. Since the

archetypal women in male writings are depicted with male idea of female qualities, such female protagonists are often naïve, beautiful, dutiful and they often possess the good mother qualities, yet, often bereft of higher education and mostly dependent on marriage and marginalised to the area of child rearing and domestication.

Drabble's female protagonists on the other hand are well educated, intelligent, efficient, psychologically strong, and they mostly favour independence. Although Bessie belongs to a middle class family, she needs financial support to help her through her university days. She therefore, applies for the County Major Scholarship. Bessie receives her scholarship, but, she has her own problems as she has to live on the meager amount of her scholarship. Drabble in the following passage illustrates the vast difference within the English middle class:

There were some anxieties and hesitations. She worried about money. Although she took care of every penny, she had at once realized- indeed, from the time of her first interview had foreknown- that she would be on a smaller allowance than most of her fellow students. Most of them were the daughters of barristers, of headmasters, of civil servants and farmers, of local government officers, of archdeacons and doctors and architects. (TPM 104).

Though Bessie's parents have given her the moral support and encouragement towards her education, they are unable to provide her any financial assistance and she has to survive on her scholarship. Bessie is on a tight budget compared to her friends and this seems to state the fact that she does not belong to the upper middle class section of the English society. She is constantly 'worried about money', and she economizes on her scholarship. The economics of

financial support seems to be one of Bessie's thrust and determination towards the completion of her university education; to have a career as paid worker after the completion of her education.

In *The Garrick Year*, Emma and her college friend Mary talk about the past and the future that they had envisaged. The present that confronts them is a contrast to both the women:

... When we reopened conversation we talk about what we had each done since we had left school: how she had gone to London University, not that she particularly wanted to at first, but because her father had insisted, and had got a good degree in History and had then done a Diploma of Education and taught for a year or two in a good girls' boarding school in the north of England; how I had gone to Italy, and lived in London, and done nothing at all. I did not dare to tell her about my aspirations towards glossy photographs and television screens. (TGY 75).

Emma the more intelligent of the two women had been expected by Mary to have had continued her university education; remained independent with an intellectual career, while Mary was expected to have had an early marriage and children. The present is a stark turn of events as Emma is a married woman with two children and Mary Summers is independent and has an intellectual career. Although Emma is intelligent and educated, she is bound by the traditional norms and social notions on marriage. In *Women's Oppression Today*, Michele Barrett states:

Many Marxist feminists, on the contrary, have argued implicitly or explicitly that the labour of childcare understood in terms of capital's long-term needs for future labour power, constitutes the more intractable aspect of women's oppression. (Barrett 175).



Thus, Emma's dream of independence is marginalised by her early marriage and child care, and marriage further marginalises her career option. Emma is an instance of a woman with the chance of independence and a bright prospect of a good career, but, who eventually ushers her own fall in the form of marriage.

Margaret Drabble captures variants of female characters in each of the select text and in *The Witch of Exmoor*, Frieda interestingly evokes both pity and humor. The change of Frieda's personality after her mother's death; her recent freedom, is a marked transformation as Frieda is at present a different person. She is no longer over shadowed by her mother's domination and therefore, Frieda is at liberty to do what she likes:

About two years ago Frieda, who had never smoked, or at least not to their knowledge, took up cigarettes. She was seen puffing away, and seen not only by them. She appeared, cigarette in hand, in public, on platforms, in photographs. (TWE 26).

The significant change in Frieda's attitude is a change from traditional notions and social norms and her smoking seems to signify her reaction against the inequality between the male and the female gender. She abides by the rules of tradition till her mother's last breath and reacts against the traditional norms with the death of her mother. To those who favour tradition, Frieda's smoking in public places is not normal as the word normal is deeply rooted in tradition. The trajectory of Frieda's smoking seems to be an expression of her liberty and independence. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol.-II*, Jacqueline Rose in "Femininity and its Discontents", states:

To return to the relationship between Marxism and psychoanalysis with which I started, I think it is relevant that the most systematic attack

we have had on the hierarchies and organization of the male Left gives to women the privilege of the personal in a way which divests it (has to divest it) of complexity at exactly this level of the conflicts and discontinuities of psychic life. Like many feminists, the slogan 'the personal political' has been central to my own political development; just as I see the question of sexuality, as a political issue which *exceeds* the province of Marxism ('economic', 'ideological' or whatever), as one of the most important defining characteristics of feminism itself. (Evans 318-319).

From the passage it may be assumed that the established traditional hierarchy; supremacy of the patriarch and the supremacy of the matriarch in the absence of the patriarch are topics of conflict for the marginalised. Hierarchy subordinates the other due to which the conflict arises. The male and female interpellation in economic and ideological ground that is established by tradition and social norms hinders the female to establish her own identity. It is at this point that Frieda starts smoking in public places and asserts her identity:

She took up smoking, and she also took up the opera. In her earlier life she had shown little interest in music, but in her last year in London she was to be seen at the Royal Opera House, at the Coliseum, sometimes alone, sometimes with a motley and expensive entourage. (TWE 26).

Frieda assumes a new identity in the absence of her dominating mother who has had to her last days, maintained the patriarchal ideology of female conduct. Frieda therefore, takes up smoking and attends the opera with the kind of friends that interests her. At this stage, she is more independent and more determined to be a new person as the chord that has tied her to the

traditional norms and social notions can no longer obstruct her. She defies patriarchal ideology by assuming an anti traditional female attitude and she enjoys her new life. Educated and intelligent Frieda is therefore a conflict to the established traditional notion of feminine qualities as she liberates herself from traditional, patriarchal and economic norms.

In *The Millstone* and *The Radiant Way*, Drabble's protagonists Rosamund and Alix have socialist parents of the upper middle class English society. In their later stage both Rosamund and Alix are able to sympathize and empathize with the working class. The reason seems to lie in the fact that both the protagonists are unconsciously molded in the socialist ideology that is directly linked to the working class. The following extract denotes Alix's mentality as a child on the socialist thought:

A rum evolution, Alix had often thought, though it had not seemed strange at the time: what had then seemed strange, in her girlhood, had been her parents' quaint socialist ideals, which had caused her such embarrassment, and, partly because of that embarrassment, had inspired in her such undeviating loyalty. 'I say, does your Dad *really* vote labour?' had been one of the politer questions addressed to her at elections and other periods of heightened political interest. 'My Dad's a Socialist,' Alix would mumble in reply, aged eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, thinking that the word 'Socialist' sounded more acceptable, more intellectual, than the dreadful word 'Labour' with its connotations of manual toil and prison routine. (TRW 79-80).

Children of the middle class family seem to have more ideas on contemporary issues pertaining to various topics that even extend to political topics. The preceding passage illustrates young

Alix who is confronted with political questions. In her social setting, Alix is mentally molded from the age of eleven, to the idea of social acceptability and her child's mindset forms the acceptable answers to the questions. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol.-II*, Jacqueline Rose "Femininity and its Discontents", states:

Although there are obvious differences between these two readings of psychoanalysis, they nonetheless share an emphasis on the social change of women, or the distribution of roles for women, across cultures... (Evans 310).

Jacqueline Rose's statement on female sexuality in connection to psychoanalysis seems to denote Alix's capability to live her present widow life. It seems that her psyche at work during her childhood is manifested at a later stage. Although Alix is not involved in politics, the social thoughts that she encounters in the form of political questions in her childhood seems to guide her in her adult life. Since Sebastian's death she has to adjust herself to the lower middle class category as she refuses financial aid from Sebastian's mother. Though she lives an independent life, she is in the process of finding a suitable paid job. Alix also has to take care of her small child and she is determined to complete her university education. The following passage from *The Radiant Way* shows Alix as an adult who is able to adjust herself to her social surroundings:

Gradually her fears of the rough and the unmannerly faded, her expectations of the world adjusted. As a child, she had always had a secret yearning to enter the other city, the unknown city beyond and within the suburbs, where nobody, middle-class folklore declared, read books or washed or cooked proper meals. She had sometimes, even as a child, wondered if it could be as fearful as its reputation. She disliked fear.

Particularly she disliked being made to feel fear of her fellow men and women. Now she lived with these people, and was no longer afraid, for they were like herself in more ways than they were unlike herself. She faded into the background. (TRW 103-104).

Alix widowed with a small child and in financial disposition braves her social surroundings as she resides among the working class. She defeats her childhood fear of the working class by living with them, and she finds that they are not as frightful as it has often been asserted by the middle class adults in her childhood. The psychological fear created to young children on the issue of the English class structure seems to rest on the socio-economic notion, and on the determination to maintain one's own class. Alix therefore struggles to maintain her middle class status by pursuing her university education on her meager economic condition:

She had to find her own way, in the damp, in the shadows, by the light of forty-watt bulbs, in the solitary evenings. She would not visit her own family, except as a formality, and then as briefly as decency permitted. Their pity, their concern, rubbed her raw. (TRW 99).

In her lean period, Alix prefers to struggle and lead an independent life while she prepares herself to acquire the mainstream identity; the English middle class identity as one of the new women. She thus resists visiting her family to strengthen her female psyche and to overcome their pity. Alix's struggle and resistance for help paves her path to emerge as one of the new women in the select texts.

Margaret Drabble captures variants of female personalities in the select texts and in *The Ice Age* Drabble seems to assert the idea that the female gender is not as delicate as depicted in male written literature. Alison the divorcee is not well educated but her competency to face

trying situations is remarkable and realistic. She is in sole charge of her special child Molly and Jane; her wild teenage daughter. Though Anthony and Alison are unmarried, Anthony depends on Alison to take care of his various official problems. Alison also braves the unknown Baltic to visit Jane at the time of Jane's imprisonment. When Alison returns to her home, she finds that the corrupt Anthony is in deeper trouble that will soon result in Anthony's imprisonment. The supposed delicate and weak female who needs male protection; male ideology, in this instance protects Anthony, but she is thoroughly exhausted with the outcome of her work. The following extract denotes Alison's exhaustion:

‘I don't know what to think any more,’ said Alison, forlornly. ‘I'm thoroughly confused.’

‘I'm sure we all are. There's nothing so wrong with that.’

‘And I'm so tired, too. I think I must go to bed, Anthony. I've not been feeling well.’ She rose to her feet. ‘But I do think it's a bit awful of you, Anthony, to knock other places down, and that nice Mr Boot from the sweet factory, and drive them out, and put up all those great blocks, and then come and sit up here in this- this Pevsner Ancient Monument, and say you like it. Of course you like it. But it just isn't consistent of you, is it?’  
(TIA 176).

Since Alison's thoughts are continuously overrun by socially conflicting actions of her dear ones; Jane and Anthony, and her special child Molly, Alison is mentally exhausted and she is unable to think. The female is at the end of her tether and it is at this juncture that Alison questions Anthony's credibility as a person; as a man. The conflict at this stage is that the lesser educated female struggles and tries every possible means to overcome her difficulties while the

educated but corrupt Anthony either moodily sulks or exhibits his temper in public. Drabble does not fail to capture the comic reality of the given situation when Alison tells Anthony, ‘...and say you like it.’ In *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Nancy C. M. Hartsock in “The Feminist Standpoint” denotes:

Women’s lives, like men’s, are structured by social relations which manifest the experience of dominant gender and class. The ability to go beneath the surface of appearances to reveal the real but concealed social relations requires both theoretical and political activity. Feminist theorists must demand that feminist theorizing be grounded in women’s material activity and must as well be a part of the political struggle necessary to develop areas of social life modeled on this activity. (Nicholson 234).

Simultaneously, Alison’s statement seems to refer to the patriarchal ideology of male supremacy and the capitalist attitude towards the proletariat in times of crisis. At this juncture, Alison is unafraid of living an independent life during Anthony’s imprisonment and it marks Alison’s journey towards being one of the new women.

Drabble’s central thrust in the select texts and in her other works lies on the credibility of the female gender that is often marginalised in male written literature and subjugated by patriarchal ideology. The protagonists in the select texts, with the exception of Emma in *The Garrick Year*, finally emerge as the new women by shedding the traditional woman quality ascribed to the female gender; patriarchal ideology, and taking up either independent roles or pursuing profitable careers. The protagonists overcome the female subjugation that are in the form of patriarchal dictates, matriarchal authority, traditional norms, social notions, economic status and heterosexual relationships. The emancipated protagonists who emerge as the new

women are therefore well educated university graduates who are career oriented and independent in their own way. The middle class protagonists elevate themselves in the social ladder not by virtue of their birth, but by virtue of their hard work and determination. They assume their social positions as their independent selves.

In *The Witch of Exmoor*, Drabble illustrates that it is not only patriarchy that controls and dominates the home. Frieda is in constant fear of her mother Gladys; as her school teacher and as her mother. Frieda's father Ernie is a mild tempered and a hard working man who works in the fields and farm due to which he is mostly absent in his home. In Ernie's absence the teacher and mother dominates the house and the focus at this juncture is Frieda's fear of her mother. The following extract depicts Frieda's deep dislike for her mother, sister and her husband:

She came to dread her mother, and to hate her sister. She came to hate her husband, but that, she believes, is a common story. (TWE 135).

Frieda's dread of her mother seems to be correlated to Adrienne Rich's feminist discourse on patriarchal ideology. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol-IV*, Adrienne Rich in "The Kingdom of the Fathers" states:

Power is a primal word and a primal relationship under patriarchy. Through control of the mother, the man assures himself of possession of his children; through control of his children he insures the disposition of his patrimony and the safe passage of his soul after death. It would seem therefore that from very ancient times the identity, the very personality, of the man depends on power, and on power in a certain, specific sense: that of *power over others*, beginning with a woman and her children. (Evans 84).



The mother's control of her children is therefore a system of distribution of patriarchal power within the family unit. As a mild man, Ernie is free from Frieda's focus of her fear, but, the mother Gladys, who favours her first born Everhilda and bullies Frieda, is the focus of Frieda's fear. Further, Frieda is earlier bound by her marriage and her children and she is unable to pursue her dream; writing. When Andrew deserts Frieda she is still bound by her young children and her dominating mother. She is enslaved by domestic work, child care and her demanding mother. There seems to be no outlet for Frieda who tries to manage the family on her small income. The following passage illustrates Frieda's freedom with the death of her mother Gladys:

Then Gladys died, and Frieda was set free. This was Gogo's theory. It was the headiness of freedom in her sixties, the late liberation from the guilt of the tedious and armchair-bound old bloodsucker, that had sent her spinning off into space and seventeenth-century Sweden. It must have been on Gladys's death that Frieda had started her last disastrous literary enterprise. None of them had known what she was plotting, for she never talked about her work in advance; ever a solitary worker, she had hidden her typewriter from prying children's eyes, and in later years, when there were none to pry, she had become secretive – and, if questioned, obscure and misleading. (TWE 29).

Though Frieda is in her sixties, she enjoys her new found freedom and progressively proceeds to do the things that stimulate her physical activities and her thoughts. Since her dependants; husband and mother do not exist anymore and since her children have all grown up, she is now in a position and capacity to enjoy her time as she prefers. Although some of her children still

live with her, Frieda maintains her independence by being secretive, obscure and misleading.

The following passage illustrates Frieda's emancipated life:

Sexual passion dies, that is well known, but so do all other affections. Frieda Haxby tells herself that she does not care for her children, or her grandchildren; she has outgrown them, as years ago she grew out of her love for her mother and her sister... (TWE 155).

Thus, transformed Frieda assumes the role of the new woman as a confident and an independent person and she devotes her time to her writing. In *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory* Susan Heckman in "Feminism" states:

In the twentieth century a number of feminists used Marx's theories to formulate a Marxist/socialist feminism. Juliet Mitchell developed 'dual-systems theory': the position that women are oppressed not only by capitalism, as Engels had argued, but by patriarchy as well. Dual-systems theorists concluded that the liberation of women requires the dismantling of both of these structures. (Malpas and Wake 92).

As denoted by Juliet Mitchell's 'dual-systems theory' and other Dual-systems theorists, the emancipated women who have achieved their independent status and have emerged as the new women seem to cross the patriarchal border and the capitalist domain even though they still have to live in a society that is built on capitalism and patriarchal ideology.

In *The Peppered Moth*, Drabble further seems to suggest that for the female gender it is easier to give wholehearted work participation when one is educated, intelligent and independent. Miss Heald refutes to the idea of marriage for various reasons as illustrated in the given passage:

What would she want with a man? If she married, she would have to give up her job. That was then the rule. She was happier teaching. She enjoyed the respect of a town where the members of the middle class could be numbered in named dozens. She was independent. The daughter of a Unitarian minister who had warmly supported in her career, she had a strong sense of mission and was fulfilling it. She was not lonely. She shared a home with Miss Haworth, who taught Latin, and had a First Class Honours degree from Leeds. On their joint incomes they lived comfortably and companionably. What more could they want? (TPM 33-34).

Miss Heald opposes the idea of marriage as the English law does not permit the married woman to work as paid employee. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, Margaret Jackson “Sex, Class and Hetero- Relations” cites Cicely Hamilton and states:

In addition to the economic pressures which forced most women to marry there was another compelling social pressure: ‘a fear of spinsterhood with its accompaniments, scorn and confession of failure in your trade’. How many children, she wondered, were born each year merely because their mothers were afraid of being called old maids? (Evans 8).

The educated woman Miss Heald is content to be a teacher who belongs to the English middle class. Drabble seems to consent to the Marxist feminists ideology that is in favour of gainful employment for the female gender. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies Vol. IV*, citing Cicely Hamilton, Margaret Jackson states:

She argued that man's motive in concentrating all woman's energy on the trade of marriage was to deny it any other outlet, and that his persistent refusal to allow women new spheres of activity was rooted in the knowledge that 'economic independence would bring with it the power of refusal'. (Evans 7).

Further in *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies: Vol IV*, Helene Cixous in "The Laugh of The Medusa", states:

Nearly the entire history of writing is confounded with the history of reason, of which it is at once the effect, the support, and one of the privileged alibis. It has been one with the phallogocentric tradition. It is indeed that same self-admiring, self-stimulating, self-congratulatory phallogocentrism. (Evans 115).

Miss Heald's life seems to illustrate that independence does not result in loneliness; an objection to the idea of marriage. Further, Miss Heald shares a home with Miss Haworth; a teacher, and they live on their joint incomes; a conflict to heterosexual relationship. Comparatively, Miss Heald and Miss Haworth who live together on their joint incomes seem to stand a better chance on the economic level to that of the heterosexual relationship where the male dominates the finances.

In *The Sea Lady*, Ailsa remains single after her second divorce. She dismantles the oppression of capitalism by establishing herself in a favourable socio-economic status and she dismantles patriarchy by living independently. Ailsa emerges as a new woman but the new woman quality in her is quite different from Frieda, Alix and Esther's new woman quality. Ailsa is a woman with the capacity of multi-tasking; performing in the theater, writing a book and

completing her thesis. Drabble depicts her as an extraordinarily beautiful woman who is still fancied by both her ex-husbands. In the following passage Drabble describes the beautiful emancipated woman:

She was boldly dressed, for a woman in her sixties, but she came of a bold generation, and she seemed confident that the shadowy shoals of her cohort were gathered around her in massed support as she flaunted herself upon the podium. (TSL 1).

Drabble's argument in this context seems to lie in the male ideology of naïve beautiful women who need male protection. In *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, Cheri Register in "American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction" states:

Feminists often emphasise that they are not simply seeking more room for women in the present social order. They want a new social order founded on 'humanistic' values, some of which are traditionally 'female' and not respected in contemporary society. (Eagleton 237).

Drabble through Ailsa builds 'a new social order' as the protagonist is neither naïve nor does she need male protection. She is independent and fends for herself. She is confident and she loves her work. Ailsa informs Humphrey her first husband that she will soon be given an honorary degree:

'In a couple of days,' she said, throwing him a sprat, 'I'm going up north to get an honorary degree, at the University of Ormemouth. That's the next excitement.' (TSL 15).

As a confident woman Ailsa is not discouraged by Humphrey's questions on the honorary degree that she will soon receive:

‘Do you mean why am I going, or do you mean why am I getting the honorary degree?’

‘Whichever. Both.’

‘I’m going because we used to spend our summer holidays near there, and the degree is for my contributions to culture.’

‘Culture?’

He let the word float questioningly in the air between them. A little sadly, it floated: waterlogged, submerging, a small paper boat too fragile to carry any cargo.

‘Culture,’ she repeated. (TSL 15).

At this moment, it is the male; Humphrey, who is intimidated by the female. The woman in the given context is buoyant while the male submerges in her intellect and beauty. Humphrey is further amazed to find Ailsa’s name in the programme that he is attending in Orne-mouth:

Ailsa’s name was listed as a member of the company. There was a brief biography of each member, in alphabetical order. Ailsa Kelman, in the travelling repertory, appeared as Marina in *Percicles, Prince of Tyre*, and as the Mermaid Princess in an adaptation of Hans Andersen’s *The Little Mermaid*, a work advertised as ‘not suitable for young children’. (TSL 156).

Thus, Ailsa utilizes her isolation from the male gender to emerge as the confident, beautiful and efficient woman who has the unusual capacity of multi-tasking. In *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*, Cheri Register in “American Feminist Literary Criticism: A Bibliographical Introduction” states:

Literature should show women involved in activities that are not traditionally 'feminine', to speed the dissolution of rigid sex roles. It is not enough, however, to simply place a female character in a new occupation, with no corresponding change in her personality and behavior. (Eagleton 238).

Ailsa is not the helpless female that is so often depicted in male written literature. She emerges as the new woman; an independent woman who pursues the career that she loves, and simultaneously she is a blessing to the society. Drabble depicts in Ailsa a realistic character sketch of a female with various female attributes.

Margaret Drabble's protagonists; Frieda, Rosamund, Alix, Esther and Ailsa seem to expose their best work performances in the absence of the male gender as they lead their independent lives. This independent female life in a heterosexual society is against the patriarchal ideology and spinsters are often mocked and degraded in male written literature and in the social circle. On the other hand, Drabble's female characters: Miss Heald in *The Peppered Moth* and Esther in *The Radiant Way*, who are spinsters have remarkable personalities with compassion to help others when the need arises. They are not the poor uncharitable spinsters that one comes across in male written literature under the patriarchal order. In the select texts female isolation marks the female transformation just as the male isolation often produces good poetry and fictions. Thus, isolation in the select texts seems to run parallel to the male isolation that produces good male written literature. In *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*, Deborah L. Madsen in "Gender and Consciousness: Psychoanalytic Feminism and Kate Chopin", states:

Masculinity and femininity are represented in the narrative in terms of the experience of, and attitudes towards, solitude, isolation and

death. These experiences are also charged with meaning in terms of the Oedipal stage of psychological gender development. Solitude is represented in two distinct ways: as resignation which is hostile and masculine; and solitude as defiance which is welcoming and feminine. The sea is variously described as symbolising these two aspects of solitude. (Madsen 116).

From the preceding passage it may be assumed that most of Drabble's protagonists in the select texts favour solitude and isolation as the means of defiance against patriarchy. In the following extract from *The Witch of Exmoor*, solitude seems to be a welcome release for Frieda Haxby:

It is raining on Exmoor. Frieda Haxby Palmer sits in one of the many derelict rooms that look towards the sea, and listens to the rain on the roof. (TWE 64).

From the commotion of her family home where her children and grandchildren depend on her; the binds of patriarchy, Exmoor is a welcome release where she rejuvenates her female self. Frieda enjoys her independent isolated life and she uses her freedom to do what she desires. Her activity in Exmoor is absent of familial control; child care and exhaustion from domestic work. The emancipated Frieda passes her time relaxing; listening to the rain and taking her daily walk, and she does not miss anybody:

She does not miss London. She does not miss company. She has had too much company. Her early years had been too thin and clear, too static, too flat, and to escape them she had thrown herself into turbulence, as soon as her children released her- and somewhat sooner, in their view. Her middle age had been restless, it had whirled her from project to



project, from continent to continent, from bed to bed. Now she wished to be alone. (TWE 72).

Since Frieda has had too much company during her time in London, she resides in Exmoor to enjoy her independence and solitude. It is only in her old age that Frieda is able to enjoy her own space that she has needed for so long. Terry Zeally, the person who is sent to Exmoor to make Frieda sign the important document from Cate Crowe is shocked that Frieda the old woman lives all by herself in Exmoor:

Why had Mrs Haxby Palmer (he'd got that right, for a start, which was improbable) decided to settle in this part of the world? What had first brought her here? Had she intended to stay? What were her connections? (TWE 175).

Zeally's question seems to be a universal male question on female independence and isolation. In *Feminist literary Theory: A Reader*, Sarah LeFanu in "In the Chinks of the World Machine: Feminism and Science Fiction" states:

One of our culture's most intense myths, the ideal of an individual who is brave and complete in isolation, is for men only. Women are grounded, enmeshed in civilization, in social connection, in family and in love (a condition a feminist culture might well define as desirable) while all our culture's rich myths of individualism are essentially closed to them. (Eagleton 197).

But, the important thrust at this juncture is the necessity of space in a woman's life and Frieda obtains her space by isolating herself in Exmoor. Thus, Frieda the woman who worked 'like a man' in her younger days lives like a man in isolation in her old age. Frieda, with the death of

her mother, gains her confidence that sets her free from her traditional bondage. The emancipated Frieda emerges as the new woman as she attains her independence, achieves economic growth, and starts publishing her books.

Drabble describes through Rosamund, the silent topic in male writings that is directly related to the human endurance of pain. Rosamund who lives an independent life does not seek the help of her friends. The helpless female of male written literature juxtaposed to Rosamund's situation reveals that the female gender is not as fragile as she is depicted in male written literature. Through Rosamund, Drabble depicts female strength, endurance, and independence, even in case of emergency. Rosamund as an independent woman has to suffer the pains of absent relatives and friends and she has to struggle to endure her emotional pain. Rosamund is determined to have her illegitimate child in *The Millstone* and the following passage expresses the independent Rosamund's endurance and capability to take care of herself even in her poignant hour.

On my last, ninth evening, however, she could not make it; she rang during the afternoon to leave message, and I thought that I would not mind, but when the visiting time came and the shuffling, silent husbands arrived, I drew my flimsy curtain and turned my head into the pillow and wept. I kept telling myself as I wept that it was nothing, just reaction, that magic excuse for all affliction, and it probably was too, but none the less painful for that. (TM 123).

Since Rosamund is in the process of emerging as the new woman she is still unable to control her emotions. Rosamund's transformation as the new woman is amazing and she remarks:

And here I must make clear that had I not been who I am, and born and reared as I was, I would probably never have dared: I only thought I could get away with it, to put it briefly, because those ambulance men collected me from a good address, and not from a bed-sister in Tottenham or from a basement in ever-weeping Paddington. So, in a way, I was cashing in on the foibles of a society which I have always distrusted; by pretending to be above its strictures, I was merely turning its anomalies to my own use. (TM 124).

From Rosamund's suggestion it may be assumed that in order to evolve as the new woman, the female must be daring enough to do what she wants, and to achieve her goal she must belong to a certain class in the social structure. Rosamund seems to suggest the middle class as a class that is qualified to provide the required courage to the female gender in order to pursue her interest.

Gender division that is prominent in the English society is a practice of the patriarchal ideology within the society and more strictures are levied on the mother and the child. A single mother is not availed the State provision and welfare benefits. *The Guardian*, regarding the illegitimate child, in "Illegitimacy: The Shameful Secret" states:

Before the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was illegal for illegitimate children to inherit, so among more prosperous families you may find that a trust was set up to care for his or her welfare. ("Illegitimacy: The Shameful Secret," *The Guardian*).

Rosamund's illegitimate child bearing and child birth are social taboos and the child care that she provides to her child, instead of giving up the child to a baby home or placing the baby for adoption, is further a counteract against the English social norms; female oppression under

patriarchy. The *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*: “Bastardy – Levels of Illegitimacy, Legal Status, Population Policies” states:

In many European countries, particularly Catholic ones, illegitimate births were first and foremost a matter for the church. The church and charitable institutions established several large ORPHANAGES in major cities, especially in southern Europe. (“Bastardy – Levels of Illegitimacy, Legal Status, Population Policies,” *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*).

Presently, Rosamund feels that she is privileged to belong to the middle class and she asserts that she has utilized the social privilege of the middle class that she has earlier disapproved. She also restates the fact that the middle class is an advantage to her, especially in connection to her illegitimate child bearing:

I would not recommend my course of action to anyone with a shade less advantage in the world than myself. Though recommendation in such cases is luckily likely to have no effect whatsoever. (TM 124).

Thus, Rosamund dares to have the illegitimate child and she is not ashamed to mention her address to the ambulance men. She also seems to comparatively suggest that Tottenham and Paddington where the working class abound would have been a less suitable address for the ambulance men to collect her from. In “The Truth About Lies: *The Millstone*”, Jim Murdoch comments:

Clare Tomalin wrote that Drabble “is one of the few modern novelists who has actually changed government policy, by what she wrote in *The Millstone* about visiting children in hospital”. Now thanks in part to

Drabble, mothers will never have to scream like Rosamund in order to see their babies. (Murdoch).

Rosamund is determined to keep her child and maintain her middle class identity and she continues writing her thesis even after she has her baby. Rosamund who has been striving and struggling to maintain a single parent identity emerges as one of the new women as she is independent, courageous, confident and determined to keep her baby as a refutation to the English patriarchal ideology and social notions. She also generates her financial provision by giving tuition to foreign students.

Margaret Drabble seems to disagree with the existing patriarchal ideology of male access to knowledge, autonomy, separation and distance. Her female protagonists are therefore, intelligent and educated and they maintain their autonomy, distance and separation. The following extract from *The Radiant Way* illustrates Esther's independent life:

Esther, unmarried, appeared happy. She pursued her studies. She planned a thesis on the works of Carlo Crivelli, so briefly mentioned in 1894 by Berenson, so little mentioned since. She did not expect to see much of Liz and Alix, who had married and made their own lives after another pattern. She had a flat in Camden Town. She continued to go out to dinner with academics, to receive the hard-drinking architect. (TRW 100).

The female living in isolation; independent, seems to develop more growth in her female self. As depicted by Margaret Drabble, the independent female Esther is happy in her unmarried status and she emerges as the new woman as she is independent and educated and she has a good job to finance her. Regarding the male autonomy Toril Moi in *What is a Woman?* states:

Having divided the world, patriarchal ideology genders the two halves. Nature, objectified and oppressed, is female, whereas knowledge is characterized as male:

...the characterization of both the scientific mind and its modes of access to knowledge as masculine is indeed significant. Masculine here connotes, as it so often does, autonomy, separation and distance. It connotes a radical rejection of any commingling of subject and object, which are, it now appears, quite consistently identified as male and female. (Moi 349).

The conflict in Drabble's protagonists arises due to female oppression and marginalization. Although oppressed, Drabble's protagonists struggle for their liberation in various ways. Unlike Frieda of *The Witch of Exmoor* who disapproves visitors in her independent life, Esther continues to meet her academic friends for dinner. Although Esther loves company, she distances herself from her close friends Liz and Alix as they are married and are dominated by the male gender.

Independent life is the turning point in Alix's life. Alix, a previous resident of Leeds, Sussex, Cambridge, Provence and Tuscany; where the English middle class abounds, presently resides in Islington among the working class with her tight budget; marking exam papers:

At the end of Alix's road was a little patch of grass, on the corner in front of the launderette and the pub. A small patch, smelling of dog shit, in a heavily built-up area. On it was a bench, and on the bench sat, in fair weather and sometimes in foul, a row of strange-complexioned men, not all... 'Come and sit down for a minute, darling,' they would wheedle. And

sometimes Alix sat down with them, in the feeble London sunshine, to pass the time of day. To pass the time of day. 'It's a grand day,' they would say, when it was. She would agree. Idle, derelict, washed-up, full, as often as not, with a deep, deep sentimentality, a strange despairing optimistic emotion, which would flow from them... They rarely seemed drunk to Alix. They were past drunkenness, washed up on some far beach of harmless universal being, ground down to the bedrock of being, unstruggling, undemanding, unresentful. Dirty, ragged, high-smelling, communing with the Lord. They told her not to worry, the worst would not happen. (TRW 104-105).

In Alix's childhood, the middle class declared that in Islington people neither washed clothes nor cooked proper meals and that nobody read books. The vast difference between the English middle class and the working class is a glaring contrast and the notion projected to the child of the middle class family that causes the child to abhor the working class, seems to be the capitalist propaganda of maintaining the class structure. As Alix starts living with the folks in Islington, she finds that she has more similarities with the people of Islington and she overcomes her fear of the working class. These folks are friendly and they often console her. They represent people who are not bound by the English middle class morality. As Alix sits and spends her time with the street folks of Islington she gradually understands them. Thus, it is Alex's independent life that gives her empathy for the working class as she lives in their locality on her tight budget and interacts with them.

Alix, the middle class woman with her low economic budget, financially assumes the working class limitation and therefore she is the link between the middle class and the working

class. Alix conquers her fear of the unknown; life of the working class and since she has conquered her fear, she stays with the working class and simultaneously maintains her rapport with her middle class friends:

She made more acceptable friends among her colleagues at the College of Further Education. (TRW 105).

Alix evolves as one of the new women in the select texts as she conquers her fear, completes her university education, lives independently, and finally overcomes her financial crisis by teaching in a women's prison. Living with the working class enables her to understand human hardships and she is able to empathize with the poverty of the working class. Alix later marries Brian, and the compatibility between the couple seems to be exemplary as their marriage is based on friendship and respect of equality.

In the select texts, Alix and Brian are the sole married couple who are compatible and exemplary as the male does not dominate the female, and the relationship is based on equal status as both of them belong to the English middle class and both Alix and Brian generate their own financial incomes. Marriage such as Alix and Brian's is unique as marriage within the English society is based on patriarchal ideology.

As the protagonists of the select texts, excepting Emma of *The Garrick Year*, finally emerge with their new women identities, and Alison of *The Ice Age* is in the process of being a new woman, Margaret Drabble seems to posit her reaction on the patriarchal ideology of writing that is ascribed to the male gender. Simultaneously, she seems to consent to the idea of female writing and publication. In *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies, Vol-IV*, Helene Cixous in "The Laugh of the Medusa" states:



Nearly the entire history of writing is confounded with the history of reason, of which it is at once the effect, the support, and one of the privileged alibis. It has been one with the phallogocentric tradition. It is indeed that same self-admiring, self-stimulating, self-congratulatory phallogocentrism. (Evans 115).

Thus, writing is a male tradition, due to which female writers of the past have had to assume male pseudonyms in order to publish their written works. Margaret Drabble's female protagonists are therefore in the process of writing: Rosamund, Ailsa, Esther and Alix are in the process of writing their thesis, Faro writes for a famous magazine and Frieda who is already an established writer and who has published some of her works is still in the process of writing her memoirs for publication. Marxist feminists focus on the relation between reading and other social constructions; Women's Studies Programmes, Cooperatives, bookstores, libraries, film boards, political groups, community groups and feminist activist orientation programmes have been established as a result of Marxist feminist reactions.

Drabble's writings seem to incorporate the Marxist feminist ideology on the importance of writing and publishing that is directly related to the socio-economics of a society. The following passage from *The Sea Lady* highlights Ailsa as a writer:

Ailsa Kelman, scholar and feminist, is celebrated for her pioneering studies of gender and for her gift for lucid and dramatic exposition. Born in Bonsett, County Durham, she is renowned around the world for her courageous explorations of women's achievements, ambitions and limitations. Her classic works include her ground-breaking study of the artist Eloise van Dieman and her analysis of the Bohemian

space occupied by the artist's model (both male and female) in fact and in fiction, but she is known to a much wider public for her television presentations of the paradoxes and mixed messages of everyday domestic life and sexual deviance. The University of Orne-mouth is proud to recognize her unique achievements as a cultural historian in an area that she has made her own, but into which she has welcomed many of her admirers. (TSL 258).

The new woman Ailsa is a contrast to the male depiction of the female gender. She is deeply conscious of the world's events: events that have shaped her new life and her published writings are related to the nascent and current topics. Ailsa also presents television shows that are quite paradoxical ranging from 'domestic life to sexual deviance'. She thereby, contributes to the socio-economic area through her published works and her television shows. Ailsa is therefore a contradiction to the naïve, speechless and beautiful female that is often depicted in male written literature. Juxtaposed to the male ideology of the female gender Ailsa is efficient and she delivers her speech flawlessly. Humphrey, Ailsa's first husband is still mesmerized by Ailsa's beauty and her personality, and his attention is focused on the new Ailsa:

He had seen her thinking. He had seen her struggle, and then he had seen her thoughts dart free from her, like silver minnows. Her thoughts were free and fast and fluid, and found their own way into the current of the mainstream. (TSL 256).

At this juncture, Drabble seems to depict female consciousness that seems to cover a wide range in a single moment. The fluidity of Ailsa's thoughts seems to directly lead her mind to issues that are related to contemporary issues in the mainstream. Ailsa the protagonist is independent and

she achieves the mainstream identity; the middle class identity on the socio-economic level, and she is at par with the male gender.

Margaret Drabble deals with the issue of publication that is denied to the female by the male writers. Through her protagonists in *The Sea Lady* and *The Witch of Exmoor*, Drabble focuses on the importance of publishing written texts and in each of the select texts she cites instances of both fictitious and historical female writers who have published their writings. She seems to support the Marxist feminists who are concerned with production and its economics and who consider the production of texts and publishing industries as factors of socio-economic development. In *A Hand Book of Critical Approaches to Literature*, Guerin et al. states:

The establishment of so many women's studies programs, cooperatives, bookstores, libraries, filmboards, political caucuses, and community groups attests to the activist orientation of feminism. (Guerin et al. 234).

Further, Drabble seems to highlight the fact that a writer's work does not always meet the writer's and the reader's expectations. In *The Witch of Exmoor*, prior to her publication, Frieda is aware that her present work does not measure to the level of her first work:

She had, before publication, conceded that she had departed from her usual arena to write a historical novel - but that statement, surprising enough in itself, had prepared nobody for the vast, incoherent over-researched baroque monstrosity of her *Queen Christina*. Her children had found it almost embarrassingly unreadable (although Gogo declared it had some good passages), and the reviews had been appalled and appalling. How could Frieda Haxby, social analyst, prophet, sage and sybil, and

author of that perennial and influential classic *The Matriarchy of War*—how could Frieda Haxby have written such tosh? (TWE 29-30).

Since Frieda's first publication was appreciated by the reading public her children are ashamed of her second publication that is overtly criticized by the critics. But, Frieda is resolute as she believes that she has not betrayed anybody in her writings. Frieda's book *The Matriarchy of War* written at a younger age seems to be more relevant to the current issue while *Queen Christina*, written as Frieda almost reaches the age of sixty seems to be outdated. According to *The Eagleton Reader*, time factor manifests itself in two ways; the time of literary work and the time of human body. *The Eagleton Reader*, further states:

Texts persist as well as mutate, strike correspondences as well as enforce differences, constellate distinct historical moments as well as measure their mutual estrangement. (Reagan 252).

Although the two time factors do not correspond as human life is limited to a short span of time yet the current writer is able to 'strike correspondences' and perceive the 'differences' with the texts of the past era. This may be the reason that Frieda's children and the reading public are unable to appreciate *Queen Christina* as it correlates to a particular time in history to which Frieda is able to interact as a writer. Further, in her old age Frieda attempts to write her memoirs and in the process she tries to retrieve her parents' marriage certificate; a proof of her ancestral identity. The following passage depicts Frieda in the process of writing her memoirs:

Of course she is writing her memoirs. All her friends are writing their memoirs. At her age there is nothing much left to write, or so she might tell herself.... She is here to summon her mother, her father, her sister, her husband from their graves and from their hiding places. As the Witch

Endor raised Samuel to terrify Saul, so she, the Witch of Exmoor, will raise Gladys Haxby, Ernest Haxby, Hilda Haxby, Andrew Palmer. (TWE 66).

Frieda who emerges as a new woman is not ashamed to write her memoirs that will appropriately narrate the truth of her family lineage; an edict to which she is not the creator but the producer of the book. In *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*, Showalter in "Toward a Feminist Poetic" states:

Marxist aesthetics offers a "science of the text," in which the author becomes not the creator but the producer of a text whose components are historically and economically determined. (Showalter 139).

Marxist feminist opine that the production of the text is thus historically and economically determined. Taking Showalter a bit further, it may be assumed that the protagonists of the select texts are themselves the texts and that they are not the creators of their persons; their body, but, the producers of who they finally are; their social status. Thus it may further be assumed that Frieda is determined to retrieve her parents' marriage certificate as a historical proof, in order to write her memoirs and she is also determined to enclose all her family details in her memoirs in order to establish her present female identity. However, the following passage from *The Witch of Exmoor* suggests that Frieda's memoirs will meet her children's disapproval:

Her nice clean ambitious well-educated offspring will be appalled by their hideous ancestry. (TWE 66).

Through Frieda, Drabble focuses her discourse on the English middle class morality that discriminates the working class; Frieda's working class lineage with historical evidence of her convict ancestors. Her children who are bound by the middle class morality will be shocked at

their ancestry that has for a long time been silenced. Since Frieda has conquered her fear of the public opinion during her lean days when she worked like a man in the fields, she is ready to face any form of criticism. Frieda therefore emerges as a new woman who is independent, unafraid, and economically blest by her publication. She also finally contests to the patriarchal ideology of male autonomy, separation and distance as she distances herself from her family circle and resides in the secluded area of Exmoor where she proceeds to write her memoirs and enjoy her freedom.

Drabble's female protagonists Rosamund; *The Millstone*, Frieda; *The Witch of Exmoor*, Ailsa; *The Sea Lady*, Faro; *The Peppered Moth*, Alix and Esther; *The Radiant Way*, thus emerge as the new women not by virtue of their birth or marriage, but, by virtue of their hard work, struggles and determination. They have acquired their individual middle class identity; the mainstream identity and in the process the protagonists have overcome various gender conflicts pertaining to patriarchal ideology, traditional beliefs, social values and economic norms. The protagonists with the exception of Frieda have established themselves in the middle class by virtue of their education that has enabled them to establish themselves as university academicians; Alix and Esther, university researchers; Faro, Rosamund and Ailsa, while Frieda is an established writer who is renowned for her publication.

Drabble's protagonists are economically independent as they generate their own sources of incomes; paid working women and writers. Since they have struggled for their economic survival their empathy lies with the working class from which they have emerged as the new women. The new women are not dependent females who can easily lose their identities and sink to the working class; death of their husbands, male separations or divorces, as in the case of Liz Headleand. The new woman identity will remain with each of the new woman protagonist as

each protagonist has independently achieved and acquired her identity that will not be annulled by death, separation or divorce. Thus, the middle class; the mainstream identity is the issue of conflict and struggle for the female gender in order to be acknowledged as an independent individual. Drabble through her protagonists seems to suggest that these struggles and conflicts should not be the end of the feminine self.

**CHAPTER –V**

**CONCLUSION**



The study of the select texts affirms that Margaret Drabble's protagonists; Rosamund, Frieda, Alix, Esther, Ailsa and Faro have overcome the gender conflicts and struggles and that they have attained their individual mainstream identities; middle class identity, not by virtue of their birth, but independently, by virtue of their hard work and determination. Each of the mentioned protagonists has a career of her own or is in the process of locating a career of her choice and they are at par with their male friends. Margaret Drabble's works embody a critique of the English culture that has placed her amongst one of the most eminent female writers. Her works occupy an important place in contemporary literary culture that encompasses an international readership. Drabble's novels display a synthesis of the past and the current in the female discourse and she has received acclaim from both academic and broadsheet critics. Wolfgang Iser in *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*, states:

The repertoire of a literary text does not consist solely of social and cultural norms; it also incorporates elements and, indeed, whole traditions of past literature that are mixed together with these norms, it may even be said that the proportions of this mixture form the basis of the differences between literary genres. (Iser 79).

Drabble's novels focus on the life of women caught in their daily lives with the desire for change in the areas pertaining to tradition, patriarchy, and socio-economics concerned with the female gender. The necessity of change is central in all her novels and her protagonists are therefore, either in a process of change or they emerge from the process as new beings that are sharp contrasts to their old selves. In each of the select texts, Drabble posits a new situation for her protagonists and in "Interview of Margaret Drabble", conducted by Barbara Milton for the *Paris Review – The Art of Fiction No. 70*, Drabble expresses:

I don't think it's to teach, but I don't think it's simply to entertain, either. It's to explore new territory. To extend one's knowledge of the world. And to illumine what one sees in it. That's a fairly moral concept, isn't it? (Milton).

Drabble's novels are therefore sources that provide knowledge of the English culture and with each novel Drabble explores a new territory where each female protagonist is caught in a conflict against patriarchal domination, traditional bindings and socio-economic problems. Her educated and intelligent protagonists strive towards female social change to liberate their female selves.

"*The Sea Lady* by Margaret Drabble" a book review by Peter J Condradi denotes:

Drabble evokes England from the distant 1940s to the present, with a witty eye for unexpected detail. (Condradi).

Condradi's comment is true to each of Margaret Drabble's novels as they document the English middle class female social issues; illegitimacy, divorce, separation, marriage, and remarriage, from the 1940s to the present day. Female economic dissatisfaction due to unpaid domestic work, child care and mothering that she illustrates convey an overview of the English female social and economic unrest especially since the 1940s to the present. Simultaneously, the resonance of female education in the select texts connotes the necessity and importance of female education.

Regarding the characters of the novel Drabble comments to Barbara Milton:

I think we have a very small area of free choice. (Milton).

The limitation of free choice in Drabble's novels results in female characters; mother figures in conflict with child care and domestication, and females who are in perpetual conflict and struggle with the world they live in. Drabble's protagonists represent the English middle class

educated females who are caught in the tedium of female activities wherein the female performs her work as the unpaid worker and from which the protagonists try to liberate themselves.

In *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, Michele Barrett in “Capitalism and Women’s Liberation”:

These divisions are systematically embedded in the structure and texture of capitalist social relations in Britain and they play an important part in the political and ideological stability of this society. They are constitutive of our subjectivity as well as, in part, of capitalist political and cultural hegemony. They are interwoven into a fundamental relationship between the wage-labour system and the organization of domestic life and it is impossible to imagine that they could be extracted from the relations of production and reproduction of capitalism without a massive transformation of those relations taking place. (Nicholson 127).

The conflicts in Drabble’s novels are on issues pertaining to the gender division of work that is embedded in the English patriarchal structure and closely interlinked with capitalism, and the social and traditional notions that marginalizes the female gender. Each of the protagonists reacts against this patriarchal dictate that is in the form of male subordination at home and in work allocation and work areas. The protagonists struggle to overcome their conflicts that are deeply embedded in the English culture with the English middle class as the stronghold of patriarchy that monopolizes and dominates the English society.

In *The Garrick Year*, the educated Emma constantly grumbles and complains about her life. David asserts his male power over Emma and forbids her to work as the BBC announcer. David’s action is the result of his desire to continue his job as an actor and to move from London

to Hereford. The couple's argument over Emma's envisaged job is the turning point of Emma's conflict and the male dictate submerges her to the role of the unpaid domestic worker. As a married woman Emma unwillingly submits to her role of the traditional wife since she is aware that she can have an economically productive career. "*The Garrick Year* – Margaret Drabble" in *Stuck in a Book* states:

Emma is one of those miserable people who moans all the time about *everything*, but does nothing to change her life. She has no paid employment, and whines about looking after their two children – which would be fair enough, if she didn't have a full-time, live-in nanny. Quite what she does with her day is unclear, but later she manages to fill the hours by thoughtlessly embarking on an affair with the producer of the theatre. ("The Garrick Year – Margaret Drabble," *Stuck in a Book*)

In agreement with *Stuck in a Book*, similar assumption on Emma has been commented by Kimberly Richardson in her "Book Review – *The Garrick Year* by Margaret Drabble" for *The Nocturnal Aesthetic*. Kimberly Richardson states:

As much as I liked reading *The Garrick Year*, I was very put off by Emma and her lack of actually making a chance in her life. It seemed as though she wanted to complain and nothing else. And, while she did have an affair, it seemed as though she merely went through the motions and said what needed to be said for the sake of expelling oxygen from her mouth. In short, I disliked Emma immensely and yet I wanted to know more about her. (Richardson).

Refuting to the two statements, this study finds that Emma's complaints and moans are expressions of her desire to have a career. The live-in nanny that David provides Emma is only a signifier of the couple's middle class status and it provides no satisfaction to Emma who longs to hold a career that justifies her educational qualification. She is stuck in traditional and social mire where the male gender dominates even the educated females. Emma who is still entrapped by traditional dictates under patriarchy is in a process where she can find no solution. She has to reluctantly compromise and submit herself to David who controls the financial position in the family. Her thoughtless affair with Wyndham is only a means to reduce her boredom from the tedium of being the wife in David's constant absence from his home since his affair with the actress Sophy Brent. Emma is deeply rooted in the English tradition especially regarding marriage and she does not enjoy her elusive affair. She longs for a career and she therefore, represents the educated middle class female who longs to liberate herself from the patriarchal dictates that binds married women, and subjugates the female in the socio economic sphere. In the select texts, Emma is the sole major protagonist who is not liberated from traditional and social bindings imposed on women.

Drabble through Rosamund illustrates the English middle class morality; the English mainstream morality in *The Millstone*. In "Guilt Trip", *New Republic*, Adelle Waldman states:

In addition to her upper-middle-class accent and her upper-middle-class manners, Rosamund's parents instilled in her a deep reservoir of social guilt. This isn't the ordinary class guilt known to well-heeled liberals everywhere, which can be offset easily enough by the occasional check to a favoured charity. (Waldman).

Rosamund's conflict against the English middle class morality lies in the social taboo that she has committed; illegitimacy, that is not solely a disgrace to the middle class but to the English society on the whole. The social corrective measure for illegitimacy is advised to Rosamund by different characters in the novel. Dr. Moffatt is the first person who suggests to Rosamund the possibility of keeping the child in an adoptive home. Rosamund's friend Joe is determined that Rosamund should not have the illegitimate child and he offers to help her:

“You can't,” he said, after another few yards of silence. “You just can't. I forbid you. It'll ruin your life. If you want some money I'll lend you some. How much do you want? A hundred? Two hundred? How much do you need?” (TM 47).

Joe's suggestion is to abort the child as it would maim Rosamund's name. He further tells Rosamund:

You won't be able to keep it, though. They won't let you keep it. So you'll go and get yourself all upset about nothing, the whole thing'll be a complete waste of time and emotion. (TM 47).

On the other hand, Rosamund's friend Roger suggests marriage. The various suggestions offered to Rosamund are the corrective measures on illegitimacy, and the means to uphold the English middle class morality that is considered exemplary for polite and intellectual society. The marriage that Roger offers is to legitimize the child with a father's name and Roger suggests the divorce as an option after the child is born. Rosamund's conflict is therefore a conflict on the social taboo that binds the female gender and her child in a patriarchal society. In “*The Millstone* – The Crucial 1960s Feminist Novel”, Tessa Hadley states:

Rosamund's adventure is pregnancy and motherhood, and her freedom is the option, new and still tentative in the 1960s, to become a single parent without stigma. (Hadley).

Drabble's support of the feminist issues in this novel lies in the social taboo that is directed to the female gender. The protagonist struggles to keep the baby although the stigma is attached to her and the baby. Unlike Emma, Rosamund strives to keep the baby as a single mother, and the difference in the two protagonists lies in Rosamund's determination to be different.

Margaret Drabble's deep social awareness unfolds as Joe further comments on illegitimacy when he visits Rosamund in the hospital:

"I [Rosamund] feel well, I said, "but it wouldn't be worth doing it all over again just to feel well."

"Just one more," said Joe. "You're allowed two, you know."

"What do you mean, allowed two? By whom? Allowed by whom?"

"Oh, by authority. The BBC lets you have two before they sack you. So does the Civil Service. It's the orthodox number two."

"Illegitimate ones, you mean?"

"Naturally. You can have as many as you like of the other ones, until they interfere with your efficiency." (TM 118).

Drabble's focus on the BBC and the Civil Service at this juncture relates to the work allotment that is gender biased and the male gender as the head of the staff who proposes and legalizes the rules. Michele Barrett in *Women's Oppression Today* comments:

In most British universities, colleges and polytechnics, for instance, the principal, senior staff and technical and portering staff are male, with

female employees located in junior teaching and research positions and in secretarial, catering and cleaning work. (Barrett 144).

Thus, illegitimacy binds the female gender in two forms: as a single mother who has committed a social taboo and as a woman who is directly under the dictates of capitalism in her economic progression. Further, the unmarried mother is not permitted to receive the state provision and economic support granted to a poor but legitimate child, and the illegitimate child has to face penalization from inheritance of the family property.

Drabble's protagonist Rosamund is not discouraged by the English middle class social norms and she struggles to overcome her conflicts by keeping the baby as a single mother, tutoring students as her financial source and completing her thesis. It is her conscious determination and zeal that marks her as an emancipated woman. Rosamund thus establishes her identity not by virtue of her birth but as a single woman with a good educational qualification who can take care of herself and her child by earning her financial income.

In an interview with Barbara Milton, Drabble comments that the newspapers provided her the main source for *The Ice Age*, and the Balkan state was an added fictitious place as she did not want to deal with real politics. In "Interview of Margaret Drabble" *Paris Review – The Art of Fiction No. 70*, Drabble informs Barbara Milton that it was her talk with her Lebanese friend that gave her the idea of projecting England's problems in the novel:

It was talking to him that made me feel I ought to put England's problems into some larger context. (Milton).

Although the first reading of the novel suggests a political inclination, the underlying theme that runs throughout the novels supports the present study that is focused on the female gender; female subordination and mothering. The narrator of the novel comments that when Molly the



sick child with cerebral palsy was born, Alison's career was in progress while Donnell was not doing too well. Alison abandons her acting in order to remove herself as Donnell's competitor. The Marxist feminist conflict on the issue of female economic progress is denoted by Drabble in the husband and wife relationship. Donnell monopolizes the economic advancement both within the family and at the work area. He subjugates his wife Alison and she has to leave her job in order to create a congenial atmosphere at home.

Drabble further encapsulates the psychological trauma of a mother whose adolescent daughter is imprisoned for causing accident. Alison is caught in a tight situation and she is exasperated as she receives the news of Jane's imprisonment. As a divorcee, Alison faces a hard time and when she is almost settled in her new life as a single parent, she encounters the emotional strains of Jane's imprisonment. Drabble illustrates the problems of mothering that is manifested through Alison as she flies to the Balkan to visit her wild teenage daughter while Donnell the father is absorbed in spending his time and money on male necessities; entertainments.

The novelist further illustrates the female protagonist who is in sole charge of her two children. Although Alison still helps Donnell to maintain his financial accounts, Donnell solely depends on Alison to seek Jane in the prison. The trajectory of Drabble's thematic lies in the male oppression of the female gender that is denoted by the protagonist Alison. Donnell does not offer his help for either of his children; the sick child Molly and Jane. In *Women's Oppression Today*, the intricate imposition of patriarchy that is interlinked to capitalism is stated by Barrett:

Most men benefit from the material advantage of having women undertake various servicing roles, care of relatives and so on. (Barrett 216).

Barrett further states:

An analysis that stresses state regulation of wifedom is forced into the absurdity of seeing childcare as work undertaken by the wife for the husband (the children being 'his' rather than hers); ...to reduce the oppressive daily routine of servicing and caring for men to a supposedly essential need of capitalism, (Barrett 243).

Child care that falls under the work assigned to the female gender is objected by Donnell who refrains from it even at the most distressing time. In an undertone Drabble denotes the determination of the female gender through Alison that is magnified as she struggles to liberate herself from the conflicts that confront her. Alison's strength as a woman is illustrated after her divorce with Donnell. She stands firm as a mother even when her teenage daughter Jane runs away from her home and is imprisoned. At this distressing moment, Alison has to divide her attention between her sulky daughter Jane and her special child Molly. It is through Alison that Drabble depicts the capacity of the female gender to tackle the problems that lies before her. The following passage illustrates how Alison handles her problems:

The British community of Walachia, such as it was, had made various offers of half-hearted hospitality, but Alison had declined them: she preferred to be independent, she did not like to be an encumbrance, and she did not want to have to talk when she had nothing to say. (TIA 91).

Although Alison is caught in a tight situation and is distressed, yet she refuses help. The reason that she prefers to be independent may lie in the fact that she needs the space to think clearly. Drabble illustrates the idea that the female is able to think clearly and solve problems in the absence of others. Further, Alison does not want to be an 'encumbrance' to the help that the

British community of Walachia is willing to provide her. In her present situation she is unable to control her emotions and she is incapable of understanding herself.

Alison leaves Molly to Anthony's care, and on her return from the Balkans Alison finds to her dismay that her troubles are not over as Anthony is faced with a crisis that needs her help. Since it is almost Christmas, Alison thinks of her first born Jane who is still imprisoned in the Balkans. She is unable to stop the flow of her thoughts that torments her, and Alison finally recovers from her inner turmoil as she thinks of Molly who needs her special attention. Her firm resolve to be independent when she is confronted by a nerve wrecking situation shows the female strength and capacity to encounter difficulties and solve them. At the end of the novel, she is not afraid to live an independent life and she is in a process of liberation as an independent woman.

In *The Radiant Way*, Margaret Drabble shows her intellectual caliber and her knowledge and interest in varied fields. "Margaret Drabble's *The Radiant Way*", *Frisbee: A Book Journal* denotes:

Drabble is a thorough, intellectual researcher. She has obviously read the history, political science, and sociology. Not to mention, she has had rich experiences. She obviously knows so many kinds of people. ("Margaret Drabble's *The Radiant Way*," *Frisbee: A book Journal*).

Drabble cites the social and political unrest of England in the 1980s and "Margaret Drabble's *The Radiant Way*", *Frisbee: A Book Journal* further denotes:

But the novel is not just about the characters' relationships and work: it is also about politics. Drabble documents the vicissitudes of the 1980s in England under a conservative government, the intersections of different

classes and kinship networks, demonstrates the urgent need for adult education at both at colleges and prisons, highlights Thatcher's budget cuts and analyses their effects on unemployment and mental health, charts the downward mobility of the post-industrial society and the growing violence in London. ((“Margaret Drabble's *The Radiant Way*,” *Frisbee: A book Journal*).

Drabble reflects on Thatcher's budget cuts through Brian who supports the Labour Party. The mild tempered man suggestively tells his wife Alix that he might soon be out of work and that he might need Alix's support. Unlike other male genders of the select texts, Brian is not ashamed to suggest that he might have to financially depend on Alix some day:

‘I may be out of work soon myself,’ said Brian. ‘If they make many more cuts. Then you can support me.’ (TRW 129).

Brian is nonchalant about disclosing the fact to Alix, and she is also quite offhand about his statement. Brian and Alix as husband and wife seem to be quite civil and casual with each other and they seem to enjoy each other's company. Drabble suggests through Brian and Alix, the importance of friendship between married couple, and Brian further encourages Alix to continue meeting her friends.

Margaret Drabble has not failed to depict helpful, understanding, considerate and caring male characters. The male characters of the following texts are those who do not try to possess, dominate, oppress or subjugate the female protagonists: Rosamund's friend Roger; *The Millstone*, Ailsa's first husband Humphrey; *The Sea Lady*, Frieda's father Ernie; *The Witch of Exmoor*, Bessie's husband Joe; *The Peppered Moth*, and Alix's second husband Brian; *The*

*Radiant Way*, and they are remarkable men who respectfully treat the female gender. The narrator's voice in *The Radiant Way* comments:

In 1968, Alix married Brian Bowen, one-time beater of circular saws in Northam, now lecturer in Adult Education and novelist. ...she continued to see Liz and Esther regularly, having recognized the importance of friendship. Brian encouraged this: it would not have crossed his mind to do anything other. Unlike Charles Headleand, Brian was a good man, and instantly recognizable as a good man. (TRW 105).

When Alix marries Brian she has already emerged as the new woman and Brian's goodness enables Alix to pursue her career and to be financially independent within her marriage. Further, Brian does not dominate Alix with his knowledge and male supremacy as their marriage is deeply founded on the importance of friendship and understanding. Thus, Alix efficiently maintains her new woman identity even within her married life.

In *The New Criterion Vol. 6*, in a review, "No Way Out: *The Radiant Way* by Margaret Drabble", Donna Refkind states:

As a result, there is a patchwork quality to the narrative as it shifts from one character's preoccupations to another's, with no one event or idea given pre-eminence over the others. ("No Way Out: *The Radiant way*," *The New Criterion*).

Drabble's flexibility of moving from one incident to another without any conclusion to the prior incident denotes her skill in writing. Although Drabble's sympathy lies with the female gender, still, she manages to focus on issues where the female provokes her own fall by exploiting her husband. In Liz's turn of events, her friends Alix and Esther are incapable of sympathizing with

her on the issue of her divorce. The female solidarity is broken as her friends consider her to have deceived her husband on many occasions. The independent and emancipated women Alix and Esther, who have in many ways crossed the traditional and socio-economic boundaries, are in a state of shock that Liz can be so deceitful within her marriage. Alix and Esther therefore blame Liz who is still under the patriarchal order and male domination; marriage, and the two friends feel that Liz herself is the agent of her own fall. Drabble seems to suggest through Alix and Esther that if a female is married, she should abide by the rules of marriage as far as practicable.

Alix and Esther's resentment of Liz's conduct towards her husband Charles seems to stem from the understanding of the workings of both the patriarchal order and the capitalist dictates. Since Liz is not a free woman she has crossed her marriage boundary by exploiting Charles, and the male gender; the patriarch and the capitalist, rebels and divorces Liz. Consequently Liz faces her economic loss as she has been a dependent of Charles for twenty years. Due to her marriage to Charles, Liz has lost her job opportunity and since she has not utilized her university degree for twenty years, there seems to be no hope for Liz but to expect that Charles provides her a decent divorce settlement; the rule of the capitalist and the patriarch, in a heterosexual relationship.

Unlike Liz and Alix, Esther completely rejects the patriarchal structure by not getting married. She remains single and she has her own career. Esther is therefore, economically independent, and she is at liberty to explore her whims as she does not have a condescending male who guards her movements. Esther is a decent, polite and a sociable person. Although Alix is married to Brian, she is economically independent as she has her own part-time career and the relationship between Alix and Brian is a friendly and a compatible one. They respect each other

and they are deeply concerned about each others friends. In *The Radiant Way* both Alix and Esther emerge as the new women although Esther remains single and Alix marries for the second time. It seems that the female is at her strongest and in her most efficient state when she leads an isolated life; Esther lives on her own and establishes her career, and Alix refuses to remarry for a long time during which she establishes herself in her career.

Geoff Wisner in “England in the Mire: Review of *The Witch of Exmoor* by Margaret Drabble”, comments:

*The Witch of Exmoor*, Margaret Drabble’s newest novel, takes place in an England marked by self-interest, hypocrisy, environmental destruction, and a general unwillingness to do anything about it. The greed and random violence that shocked the characters of Drabble’s earlier novel, *The Radiant Way*, are now accepted elements of everyday life. (Wisner).

Frieda who has struggled throughout her life tries to identify the cause of her constant conflicts and hardships. Frieda tries to locate her ancestral roots through birth and death certificates and Frieda searches for her parents’ marriage certificate. This search seems to highlight the importance of marriage that provides the facts of a person’s hereditary identity:

Her own former life lies around her in untidy profusion. She must make a thorough search, one of these days, for her parents’ marriage certificate. She is sure she had seen it once, amidst the debris she had carried with her from the cottage after her mother’s death. She had made only the most desultory attempt to trace her own ancestry through birth and death certificates at St Catherine’s House on the Aldwych.... (TWE 74).

Certificates such as marriage, birth and death certificates are tell-tale signs to Frieda who at present tries to relocate her identity that she has lost due to her marriage with Andrew. She seems to be in a flux since her mother's death and she intends to redeem herself as a woman who is unbound by tradition. Her mother Gladys represents the English tradition; a tradition that has bound Frieda to her duties in the area of domestication and child rearing. Geoff Wisner in "England in the Mire: Review of *The Witch of Exmoor* by Margaret Drabble" states:

Margaret Drabble is an ambitious writer, and her novels offer such a sweeping, detailed, and convincing picture of the contemporary world that it is tempting to compare her vision of our time to one's own. (Wisner).

Simultaneously, through Frieda, Drabble indicates her experience as a writer and her connection to various female writers. The narrator states:

The critics were delighted, and outdid one another in insults. 'Once seen as Britain's answer to Simone de Beauvoir, Frieda Haxby has revealed herself as the heir to Barbara Cartland, ... Frieda, like George Eliot in *Romola*, ...interesting corresponding with de Bouvoir, ... She could write about what she liked. Thus, reasonably, she replied to her interviewers. Her appearance of calm and unruffled detachment did nothing to pacify them. She seemed quite unaware of the nature of the atrocity she was alleged to have committed. She had betrayed nobody. If others had false expectation, if others had waited for answers that she could not or would not give-that was their problem, not hers. They had been misreading her all along. (TWE 30-31).



Margaret Drabble's contemporary world is a world inclusive of women writers and Frieda the eminent writer in the novel is Drabble's symbol that focuses on the importance of female writings and publications that are economically productive. Through Frieda, Drabble reacts against the idea of writing that is attributed to the male gender, and Drabble provides a detail of eminent female writers of different literary genres. Drabble also seems to denote that all writings do not meet the assumed expectations of the writer and the readers.

In "*The Witch of Exmoor*, by Margaret Drabble", Anna Mundow states:

Comic irony – what V.S. Pritchett called the “most militant and graceful gift” – is rare in contemporary fiction, perhaps because it appeals to the head, not the heart, and because it is a difficult balancing act. To succeed, it must repel sentiments without sacrificing compassion. In *The Witch of Exmoor*, Margaret Drabble gets the balance just right and proves herself a master of the art. (Mundow).

It is interesting to note that through the comic irony in the novel, Margaret Drabble manages to capture the one of the most important issue of the feminist discourse; the necessity of space and the freedom to express female desire. Frieda invites her children and grand children to tea at Exmoor, and stifled by social notions on the middle class ethics, Frieda decides to wear her blue gown for tea. The narrator expresses:

The truth was that, confronted with Frieda in a ball gown, they had been disabled. She had taken the initiative. How to assess what she was upto? She had looked well, but was it natural to lose so much weight so quickly? (TWE 110).

Frieda further appalls them by smoking a cigarette, throwing it on the floor and stubbing it out on the floorboards with her high-heeled damante slippers. Frieda's daughter Grace who is called Gogo is upset:

Gogo had recognized the dress of midnight blue. Was it madness, to wear an evening dress at tea-time? (TWE 110).

Gogo's thoughts focus on the middle class ideal of specification of dress code that pertains to a particular time for the English middle class. Although Frieda breaks the middle class social notion on dress code, she clarifies herself and states that the expensive dress is out of fashion and that she wears it at home. Thus, Drabble wittily breaks the social notions and codifications by creating the comic irony. Further, the narrator's voice focuses on the idea of inheritance that brings chaos:

She is sick of everything and everyone, herself included, herself above all, and she can't see herself embarking on any new ventures after this. After this, she'll let others inherit the chaos. (TWE 67).

Frieda's rich middle class children are not particularly fond of their mother as she had not been the ideal mother due to the effort that she had to make to finance them during their childhood. She had neglected them, yet her efforts had paid as her publications had accumulated her wealth. Marxist feminist views on the importance of female writing and publication are embodied by Frieda and the capitalist view on the acquisition of wealth is illustrated by Frieda's children who are curious to know how Frieda divides her property amongst them. Presently, Frieda is weary of her routine life and in her old age she decides to live an independent life in Exmoor where she plans to write her memoir.

Drabble's novel *The Peppered Moth* illustrates another case of unhappy marriage but unlike the protagonists of *The Garrick Year* and *The Ice Age*, Bessie reacts to her subjugation with her obstinate nature and contempt that results in the couple's unhappy marriage. It is at this point that Bessie sidelines the traditional patriarchal norms and creates the conflict in her married life. Bessie is therefore, not a traditional female figure as depicted in male writings and she represents the female desire to work as a paid employee and not as dictated to the females by either traditional patriarchal norms or by social values. Drabble's focus is on the inability of the educated female to earn her salary as a married woman. Like the Marxist feminists in favour of economic productivity Bessie is in constant conflict with her unpaid situation. Although Joe is a kind man, yet, they adhere to the English social and traditional norms that bind them as married couple and it consequently subjugates Bessie to their home where she is thoroughly bored, and there is no choice for her. She is emotional and she feels neglected and abandoned. As an educated woman she feels that she cannot blame Joe for leaving her alone in the lonely council house.

The thrust of the mitochondrial DNA that Margaret Drabble utilizes acts as the fulcrum of the novel. As a female writer Drabble is deeply concerned to illustrate the importance of the female gender that has been marginalised and dominated by patriarchy. In the "Unnatural Selection" Daphne Merkin states:

*The Peppered Moth* is one of the more absorbing novels I have read in a long time, both for its sheer storytelling ability and for its powers of imaginative conjecture. It demonstrates a humanist's obsession with the real-life implications of scientific concepts (Drabble's central conceit is the notion of mitochondrial DNA or matrilineal descent),... (Merkin).

Drabble's focus on the DNA as the matrilineal descent; a nascent theory during the time of Drabble's writing therefore, stresses on the importance of the female towards reproduction and childcare where the male takes the latent role. From the onset of the novel, Drabble's focus is on Bessie, Chrissie and Faro; the three generations of women. Further, as suggested by the title of the novel, *The Peppered Moth*, the transcendence of the three generations of women is like the metamorphosis of the moth that takes different stages; pupa, larva, and the moth. Similarly, in the stages of Drabble's story, each female protagonist represents a stage, and Faro finally emerges as the emancipated woman. In the "Origin of the Species: Margaret Drabble's *The Peppered Moth*", Kelly McWilliams writes:

Drabble uses the peppered moth as a lesson in natural selection as an animal that has evolved (or more precisely, appeared to evolve) over a number of years, in answer to changing physical conditions. (McWilliams).

The moth therefore signifies the process of the female evolution from the traditional bindings to the emancipated woman of the present day. Therefore, the lives of the protagonists comparatively differ from each other. The liberated Faro is a sharp contrast to her grandmother Bessie and her mother Chrissie. Faro's friend Sebastian depends on her to bring light into his dark world. Sebastian tries to emotionally entrap Faro to be with him. The narrator of the text remarks:

He is trying to pin her down to another meeting, and she is trying to avoid one. She is straining at the leash, as usual. Seb is her clog and her dependent and she is sick to death of him. He has gone dead, like a spent match, the grey coke, like clinker. He is a dead weight, pulling at her like

an old sick dog. And he's only twenty-nine. But Faro is strong enough for two. She'll drag him along a bit longer. (TPM 250).

Unlike the traditional female, Faro seems to perceive what might happen to her if Sebastian ever ties her down. In fact, Faro is displeased with Sebastian, but, she knows that she is strong enough to simultaneously handle two problematic persons like Sebastian. The intelligent Faro knows that it is she who holds the leash and not Sebastian. She takes her time as she knows that she can release the leash at her own will when the need to release arises. At this juncture, Drabble reverses the role of the female gender and the male is bound by the confident female protagonist.

The following extract from *The Sea Lady*, depicts Ailsa the emancipated woman of sixty as she presents the award winning book to the audience:

The winning book was about fish, and to present it, she appeared to have dressed herself as a mermaid, in silver sequined scales. Her bodice was close-fitting, and the metallic skirt clung to her solid hips before it flared out below the knees, concealing what might once have been her tail.

(TSL 1).

Ailsa's dress code contradicts to the dress code of the traditional English middle class woman; woman of dignity. Ailsa represents the fashionable woman of the twenty-first century in every way. In *The Guardian*, Ursula K. Le Guin in "Mermaid on Dry Land" writes:

Each of Margaret Drabble's novels has been an accurate, honest record of its time, in the idiom of its time, and yet she has never been truly fashionable. A sharp critical intellect keeps her keenly aware of trend, and she's never bucked it; but the qualities for which I value her fiction could

not be satisfactorily called modernist, nor are they postmodern now. (Le Guin).

As denoted by Ursula K. Le Guin, Drabble shows her keen awareness of the changing trends in the female fashion world. Therefore, Ailsa is dressed to expose her sensuousness and to capture the crowd with her intellect that is in the body of the female; a counter act on male intellect.

Drabble further comments:

Her evening bag was a sensuous little folly made of a kind of fine dull pewter-coloured chain mail. Its texture of soft silky metallic links was a joy to her fingers. It was a fetish bag. She had bought it in Scarborough, and she had owned it for thirty-odd years. She had never possessed a dress that became it as well as the dress she wore this night. Her little bag was a comfort to her, in her peacefully celibate late incarnation. (TSL 6).

Ailsa's dress seems to be a symbol of her educational qualification and intellect that befits her; the female gender. In each of the select texts Drabble illustrates the importance of female education and Ailsa is the female protagonist who has surpassed the other protagonists in her educational qualification and female liberty.

In *The Guardian*, Ursula K. Le Guin in "Mermaid on Dry Land" states:

A compelling narrative impetus, essentially straight forward though entertainingly subtle; a moral burden, clear though mostly unstated; acute and amusing observation of society, gender, manners, fashions; strongly individual characters, whose character is probably their destiny. (Le Guin).

Ailsa's character sketch in every sense contradicts to the characters of the other protagonists of the select texts. Since her childhood, Ailsa has been in constant competition with her brother and

the other boys in her locality. She is sportive, intelligent and simultaneously, a woman in every sense. As commented by Ursula K. Le Guin, Ailsa's character is shaped by her past and her character is indeed her destiny. Through Ailsa, Drabble seems to suggest that the female gender is as efficient and as capable as the male if she is given the opportunity to attempt her goal. The fish and the mermaid further seem to suggest the elusiveness of the intelligent, educated, independent and empowered female that Ailsa represents. The mainstream identity that is an area of contention for the female gender is thus achieved by determined and courageous protagonists while the less determined protagonist; Emma and Bessie remain stuck in the traditional mire dictated by patriarchy. On the other hand, Alison is in the process of emerging as a new woman as she determines to start a new way of living and live an independent life whilst Rosamund, Frieda, Faro, Alix, Esther and Ailsa achieve the mainstream identity with their earnest zeal and effort and therefore they emerge as the new women in the mainstream where their intellectual competition is at par with the male gender and they generate their own sources of incomes.

Margaret Drabble's select novels and her other novels are etched in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorianism and the 20<sup>th</sup> century feminist waves and Nicci Gerrard in "Drabble and Strife" states:

Her heart seems to lie with the past. As early as 1967, she was saying: 'I'd rather be at the end of a dying tradition, which I admire, than at the beginning of a tradition which I deplore'. (Gerrard).

Drabble's thematics in the select novels that lie in gender conflict and struggle due to gender inequality still persist in the 21<sup>st</sup> century feminist issue although in a wider perspective. "Gender Inequality in the Domestic and Occupational Divisions of Labor" states:

Equal status for women of all races, classes, sexualities and abilities – in the 21<sup>st</sup> century these feminist claims for equality are generally accepted as reasonable principles in western society; yet the contradiction between this principle of equality and the demonstrable inequalities between the sexes that still exist exposes the continuing dominance of male privilege and values throughout society (patriarchy). (“Gender Inequality in the Domestic and Occupational Divisions of Labor”).

Although the new women amongst the protagonists of the select texts have overcome their barriers of conflicts in their struggles as they establish their personal identities in the middle class representing the new women in the existing English society, yet a majority of the females of the 21<sup>st</sup> century English middle class still seem to be bound by the unseen thread of patriarchal dictates like the protagonists who fail to acquire the new woman identity. In *Dialnet*, Celia M. Wallhead, in “Changes in Ideology in Margaret Drabble’s Fiction” states:

The great scope covered by Drabble’s fictional works enables us to appreciate how the roles of women have changed, and how the middle-class educated women has pondered her situation and shifted in order to locate herself in a correct and comfortable position not only on a national but a global scale. (Wallhead).

Further, in agreement with Wallhead, gender conflict and struggle does not solely exist in the English middle class society as it is a global experience of women of each class within patriarchal social context.

In conclusion, the research that is focused on gender conflict and struggle toward mainstream identity resonates in each of the select texts, and the mainstream identity is achieved



by the new women protagonists that connotes that Margaret Drabble favours the socio-economic progress of the female gender. Each of the new women dissolves her conflicts and struggles through determination and conscious effort whereby she achieves the mainstream identity: elevating herself in the area of educational qualification and generating her own income. Drabble's novels depict the female trauma of illegitimacy and explores the problems that ensues illegitimacy. Through her novels, Drabble reflects on the importance of mothers and the link between the mother and the child as a bond that cannot be distanced by the mother. Motherhood plays an important role in each of the select texts for which few of the protagonists are unable to achieve their goal and they sink to male subordination. Drabble portrays the problems of sexuality and male dependency that hinders the female life towards her progress.

The study ascertains that each of Drabble's intelligent and educated protagonists achieve the new woman identity by the character's reaction to her situational conflicts and struggles that confronts her. It also ascertains that the select texts remarkably denote the female caliber on multitasking as each of the new women protagonists are in the process of working on more than two differing tasks, for instance, Rosamund the single parent nurtures her baby, gives tuition and works towards the completion of her thesis. The research confirms that the new woman is more adaptable to new situations and that she is more capable to deal with matters that need immediate attention. It thereby proves that the female needs her own space to think in order to develop her female identity. Marxist feminist issue on the economic progress of the female gender and the importance of female education for female economic productivity is deeply embedded throughout the select texts. Consequently, each protagonist evolves from her former identity and crosses the female boundary; male supremacy and dominance, female subordination and marginalization that predominates Drabble's works. The study also reflects that the mainstream

identity of each protagonist lies within the individual female self as it is not an identity that she acquires by virtue of her birth or by her marriage, but it is achieved by virtue of hard work, determination and zeal. It will therefore, be an identity that will remain with the protagonist; the female gender, throughout her lifetime.

The research therefore finds that the new woman can act as a bridge between the upper class and the lower class as she is in a position to empathize with the working class due to her lived life during her struggle: a middle class woman as a working class woman under patriarchal dictate: unpaid worker, and later as a divorcee; Alison of *The Ice Age*, Liz of *The Radiant Way*, and as a widow; Alix of *The Radiant Way*, who are bereft of financial sources of incomes due to their marriages that have submerged them to the level of wives and domestication. Since they have physically and psychologically experienced the life of the working class in order to elevate and emancipate their female selves, and as each of them has finally evolved as the new woman by establishing herself in the upper middle class status, it is expected that such a woman can act as a negotiator between the upper class and the working class in order to promote the female struggle towards a comprehensive female development in terms of economics and education. In conclusion, it is ascertained that the select texts and other works of Margaret Drabble definitely provide an excellent collection of varied perspectives for future research.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### PRIMARY SOURCES

Drabble, Margaret. *The Garrick Year*. London: Penguin Books, 1964. Print.

---. *The Ice Age*. London: Penguin Books, 1977. Print.

---. *The Millstone*. (1965). New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998. Print.

---. *The Peppered Moth*. (2001). New York: Harcourt Inc., 2002. Print.

---. *The Radiant Way*. Toronto: Colins, 1987. Print.

---. *The Sea Lady*. U.S.A.: Harcourt Inc., 2006. Print.

---. *The Witch of Exmoor*. (1996). U.S.A.: Harcourt Brace, 1998. Print.

---. *A Summer Bird Cage*. London: Penguin Books, 1963. Print.

---. *A Natural Curiosity*. London: Penguin Books, 1989. Print.

---. *The Gates of Ivory*. London: Penguin Books, 1991. Print.

---. *The Waterfall*. London: Penguin Books, 1969. Print.

## SECONDARY SOURCES

- Barrett, Michele. *Women's Oppression Today: The Marxist Feminist Encounter*, 1980.  
London: Verso, 1988. Print.
- Baron, Robert A. Donne Byrne and Nyla R Branscombe (eds). *Social Psychology*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. India:  
Prentice Hall, 2008 Print.
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.  
Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007. Print.
- Belenky, Mary Field, Blythe Mc Vicker, Nancy Rule Goldberger and Jill Mattuck Tarule.  
*Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of the Self, Voice, and Mind*. U.S.A.:  
Basic Books, 1997. Print.
- Blamires, Harry. *A History of Literary Criticism*. 1991. New Delhi: Macmillan Press Ltd., 2007.  
Print.
- Bowie, Malcolm. *Lacan*. London: Fontana Press, 1991. Print.
- Brinzendine, Louann. *The Female Brian*. New York: Random House Inc., 2006. Print.
- Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of  
Gender*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1978. Print.
- Chomsky, Naom. *Class Warfare*. London: Pluto Press, 2010. Print.
- Corey, Michael Anthony. *Male Fraud: Understanding Sexual Harassment, Date Rape, and  
Other Forms of Male Hostility*. Nashville, Tennessee: Winston-Derek Publication, 1992.  
Print.
- Cuddon, J. A. *Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*. India: Thompson Press, 1998.  
Print.

- Culler, Jonathan. *Literary Theory: a very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000. Print.
- Daiches, David. *Critical Approaches to Literature*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London and New York: Longman, 1985. Print.
- Das, Bijay Kumar. *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2012. Print.
- Das, Krishan and Deepchand Patra. *History of Literary Criticism*. New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers, 2009. Print.
- De Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. Trans. Ed. H.M. Parshley. New York: Vintage Books, 1989. Print.
- Drabble, Margaret (ed). *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. India: Oxford University Press, 2005. Print.
- Eagleton, Mary (ed). *Feminist Literary Theory: A Reader*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. U.K.: Blackwell Publishers Ltd., 1997. Print.
- . *Working with Feminist Criticism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996. Print.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. India: Daoba, 2000. Print.
- . *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory*. London: Verso, 1976. Print.
- . *Marxism and Literary Criticism*. London: Methuen. 1976. Print
- Ellison, Julie. *Delicate Subjects: Romanticism, Gender, and the Ethics of Understanding*. New York: Cornell University press, 1990. Print.
- Evans, Mary (ed). *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Vol.II. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

- . *Feminism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*. Vol.IV. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.
- Firestone, Shulamith. *The Dialectic of Sex*. London: Women's Press, 1979. Print.
- Freedman, Jane. *Feminism*. New Delhi: Viva Books, 2002. Print.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company Ltd., 2001. Print.
- Gamble, Sarah (ed). *The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Post Feminism*. London: Routledge, 2001. Print.
- Gardiner, Frances (ed) *Sex Equality Policy in Western Europe*. London: Routledge, 1997. Print.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar (eds). *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2000. Print.
- Greer, Germaine. *The Whole Woman*. London: Transworld Publishers Ltd., 1999. Print.
- Guerin, Wilfred L., Earle Labor, Lee Morgan, Jeanne C. Reesman and John R. Willingham. A *Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006. Print.
- Habib, M. A. R. *A History of Literary criticism: From Plato to the Present*. U.K.: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. Print.
- Irigaray, Luce. *This Sex Which is Not One*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985. Print.
- Iser, Wolfgang. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978. Print.
- Jacobus, Mary. (ed). *Women Writing and Writing About Women*. London: Croom Helm, 1978. Print.
- . *Reading Women: Essays in Feminist criticism*. London: Methuen, 1986. Print.

- Kaelble, Hartmut. *The European Way: European Societies in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2003. Print.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Revolution in Poetic Language*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1984. Print.
- Kocka, Jurgen. *Industrial Culture and Bourgeois Society: Business, Labour and Bureaucracy*. New York, Oxford: Berghahn. 1999. Print.
- Loutfi, Martha Fertherolf (ed). *Women, Gender and Work: What is Equality and How do We Get There?*. 1<sup>st</sup> Indian Ed. New Delhi: Rawat Publications, 2002. Print.
- Madsen, Deborah L. *Feminist Theory and Literary Practice*. London: Pluto Press, 2000. Print.
- Malpas, Simon and Paul Wake (ed). *The Routledge Companion to Critical Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.
- Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000. Print.
- Moi, Toril. *What is a Woman?*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 1999. Print.
- Nagarajan, M.S. *English Literary Criticism: An Introductory History*. Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan Pvt. Ltd., 2013. Print.
- Nicholson, Linda (ed). *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*. New York and London: Routledge, 2010. Print.
- Regan, Stephen (ed). *The Eagleton Reader*. U.K.: Blackwell Publishers, 1998. Print.
- Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. New York: Norton, 1976. Print.
- Sartre, Jean Paul. *What is Literature?* Trans. Bernard Frechtman. London and New York: Routledge, 2001. Print.
- Seldan, Raman, Peter Widdowson, Peter Brooker (eds). *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. India: Anubha Printers, 2006. Print.

Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of their Own: From Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing*. U.K.:

Virago, 2009. Print.

---. *Women's Liberation and Literature*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977. Print.

Showalter, Elaine (ed). *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*.

New York: Pantheon Books, 1985. Print.

Shukla, Bhasker A. (ed). *Feminism and The Second Wave*. Jaipur: Book Enclave, 2007. Print.

Tapaswi, Suhasini. *Feminine Sensibility in the Novels of Margaret Drabble: An Interpretation and Evaluation*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2004. Print.

Vice, Sue (ed). *Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reader*. U.K.: Polity Press, 1996. Print.

Waugh, Patricia (ed). *An Oxford Guide: Literary Theory and Criticism*. New York: Oxford

University Press, 2007. Print.

Williams, Raymond. *Marxism and Literature*. London: Oxford University Press, 1978. Print.

---. *Culture and Society*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1958. Print.

Wolstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, London: Everyman. 1<sup>st</sup> Pub. 1792.

Print.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985. Print.

---. *Women and Writing*. London: The Women's Press. 1979. Print.



### JOURNAL, PERIODICALS AND ELECTRONIC SOURCES

- Allardice, Lisa. "A Life in Writing: Margaret Drabble". *The Guardian*. 17<sup>th</sup> June 2011. Web 12<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2013. <[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)>
- Atkinson, Kathryn. "Margaret Drabble, *The Peppered Moth*". Web 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015. <[www.unc.edu](http://www.unc.edu)>
- Balmuth, Miriam. "Female Education in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Century England: Influences, Attitudes and Trends". *Canadian Woman Studies/Les Cahiers De La Femme*. Vol. 9. No. 3 and 4. 1988. pp. 17-20. Web 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012. <[cws.journals.yorku.ca](http://cws.journals.yorku.ca)>
- "Bastardy: Levels of Illegitimacy, Legal Status, Population Policies". *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society*. pp. 1-4. Web 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013. <[www.faqs.org](http://www.faqs.org)>
- Bennett, Catherine. Review on "The Millstone by Margaret Drabble". *The Guardian: Fiction the Classic Corner*. 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2014. Web 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015. <[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)>
- Brown, Richard. "Looking at History: Educating Girls 1870-1914". 13<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2011. Web 12<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2014. <[richardjohnbr.blogspot.in](http://richardjohnbr.blogspot.in)>
- Campbell, Jane. Review on Nora Foster Stovel's "Margaret Drabble: Symbolic Moralists". *The International Fiction Review* 17.1 (1990). Web 12<sup>th</sup> August 2014 <<http://journals.lib.unb.ca>>
- Charles, Ron. "Time and Tides: *The Sea Lady* by Margaret Drabble". *The Washington Post*. 13<sup>th</sup> May 2007. Web 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2012. <[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)>
- Conradi, Peter J. Reviews "The Sea Lady, by Margaret Drabble: A Fishy Tale of a Feminist Icon". *Independent*. 11<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2006. Web 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012 <[www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)>

Domenico, Desirae M. and Karen H. Jones. "Career Aspirations of Women in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century".

*Journal of Career and Technical Education*. Fall. 2006. pp. 1-7. Web 19<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2012.

<[www.wellesleyresearchcenter.org](http://www.wellesleyresearchcenter.org)>

Drabble, Margaret. "The Writing Life: Margaret Drabble". *The Washington Post*. 20<sup>th</sup> Sept.

2009. Web 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015. <[www.washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com)>

Duran, Jane. "Fiction, History and Philosophy: The Work of Margaret Drabble". *Literature and Aesthetics* 16. 2<sup>nd</sup> Dec. 2006. pp. 36-44. Web 12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2011.

<[openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au](http://openjournals.library.usyd.edu.au)>

Dyhouse, Carol. *Policy Papers: History and Policy*. 1<sup>st</sup> August 2007. Web 21<sup>st</sup> February 2011.

<[www.historyandpolicy.org](http://www.historyandpolicy.org)>

Fuller, Margaret. "Woman in the Nineteenth Century: Part 1". *American Transcendentalism*

*Web*. Web 6<sup>th</sup> May 2010. <[transcendentalism-legacy.tamu.edu](http://transcendentalism-legacy.tamu.edu)>

"Gender Inequality in the Domestic and Occupational Divisions of Labor". 123Helpme.com. 13<sup>th</sup>

Nov 2015. Web. 18<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2015. <<http://www.123HelpMe.com/viewasp?id=669733>>

Gerrard, Nicci. "Drabble and Strife". *The Observer: Reference and Languages*. 25<sup>th</sup> September

2000. Web 18<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2015. <[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)>

Gilbert, Helen. "The Revolutionary Harmony of Marxism and feminism". *Freedom Socialist:*

*Voice of Revolutionary Feminism*, December 2011. Web 26<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2015.

<[www.socialism.com](http://www.socialism.com)>

Gimenez, Martha E. "Marxist and Materialist Feminism". *The Feminist e Zine*. 1998. Web 30<sup>th</sup>

Aug 2012. <[www.feministezine.com](http://www.feministezine.com)>

- Gray, Paul. "To See You Again", *The Sea Lady: A Late Romance by Margaret Drabble*". *The New York Times: Sunday Book Review*. 27<sup>th</sup> May 2007. Web 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2012.  
<mobile.nytimes.com>
- Hadley, Tessa. *The Millstone-The Crucial 1960s Feminist Novel*". *The Guardian*. 15<sup>th</sup> May 2015. Web 9<sup>th</sup> July 2015. <[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)>
- Haller, Dorothy. "Bastardy and Baby Farming in Victorian England". 1989-1990. Web 14<sup>th</sup> April 2014. <[www.loyno.edu](http://www.loyno.edu)>
- "Illegitimacy: the Shameful Secret". *The Guardian*. pp. 1-4. 14<sup>th</sup> April 2007. Web 8<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2014.  
<[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)>
- Keating, Jenny. "Struggle for Identity: Issue Underlying the Enactment of the 1926 Adoption of Children Act". *University of Sussex Journal of Contemporary History*, 3 (2001), pp. 1-9.  
Web 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015. <[www.sussex.ac.uk](http://www.sussex.ac.uk)>
- Khattak, Shamaas Gul. "Feminism in Education: Historical and Contemporary Issues of Gender Inequality in Higher Education". *Quarterly Papers in Education and Lifelong Learning: An International Journal*. Vol 5. Nos 1 – 2, 18<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2011 pp67-81. Web 25<sup>th</sup> June 2012.  
<[www.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.mdx.ac.uk)>
- Le Guin, Ursula K. Reviews, "Mermaid on Dry Land: *The Sea Lady* by Margaret Drabble". *The Guardian*. 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2006. Web 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2012. <[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)>
- Lin, Lidan. "Spatial Narrative and Post Feminist Fiction: Margaret Drabble's *The Radiant way*". *English Studies*. Vol. 86. No. 1/2. February 2005, pp. 51-70. U.S.A.: Taylor and Francis Ltd. Web 15<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2012. <opus.ipfw.edu>
- Lovell, Lin. "The British Suffragette Movement: The History of Feminist Thought". Bristol: CESR. July 2012. Web 17<sup>th</sup> May 2014. <[lin.lovell@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:lin.lovell@uwe.ac.uk)>

- Macfarlane, Alan. "Illegitimacy and Illegitimates in English History". *Bastardy and its Comparative History*, pp. 71-85. 1980. Web 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2013. <[www.alanmacfarlane.com](http://www.alanmacfarlane.com)>
- Mac Kinnon, Catherine A. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory". *Signs*, Vol. 7, No. 3, *Feminist Theory*, (Spring, 1982), pp. 515-544. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. *JSTOR*. Web 20<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2015. <[www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)>
- Maldonado, Solangel. "Illegitimate Harm, Law, Stigma, and Discrimination Against Nonmarital Children". *Florida Law Review*, Vol. 63. 2<sup>nd</sup> Aug. 2013. pp. 1-51. Florida: UF Law Scholarship Repository, <<http://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/flr>>
- Mantel, Hilary. "England, Whose England?". "The New York Review". 23<sup>rd</sup> Nov 1989. Web 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2010. <[www.nybooks.com](http://www.nybooks.com)>
- "Margaret Drabble". *World Literature*. September 14. 2009. Web.12<sup>th</sup> August 2014 <[schoolbag.info](http://schoolbag.info)>
- "Margaret Drabble's *The Radiant Way*". *Frisbee: A Book Journal*. 28<sup>th</sup> March 2012. Web 12<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2013. <<http://frisbeebookjournal.wordpress.com>>
- Mc William, Kelly."Origin of the Species: Margaret Drabble's *The Peppered Moth*". *M/C Reviews*. 27<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2001 Web 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015. <[reviews.media-culture.org.au](http://reviews.media-culture.org.au)>
- Merkin, Daphne. Reviews "*The Peppered Moth* by Margaret Drabble: Unnatural Selection". *The New York Times*. 6<sup>th</sup> May 2001. Web 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015. <<http://www.nytimes.com>>
- Milton, Barbara. "Interview of Margaret Drabble". *Paris Review – The Art of Fiction No. 70*, August 19. 2014. Web.12<sup>th</sup> August 2014 <[www.theparisreview.org](http://www.theparisreview.org)>
- Mundow, Anna: "*The Witch of Exmoor* by Margaret Drabble". New York: Harcourt Brace, September 21. 1997. Web 16<sup>th</sup> Feb. 2010 <[www.articles.latimes.com](http://www.articles.latimes.com)>
- Murdoch, Jim. "The Truth About lies: *The Millstone*". 15<sup>th</sup> June 2014. Web 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015.

<jim-murdoch.blogspot.in>

“On Marriage: Margaret Drabble”. *The Threepenny Review*. Fall 2001. Web 21<sup>st</sup> Aug. 2013.

<[www.threepennyreview](http://www.threepennyreview.com)>

Perovic, Lydia. “Margaret Drabble”. *Believer*. Web 7<sup>th</sup> Oct. 2014. <[www.believermag.com](http://www.believermag.com)>

Pyre, Claudine. “Three Interviews With Margaret Drabble”. *Creoles* 21. (2011), pp. 121-130.

Web 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012. <[www.cercles.com](http://www.cercles.com)>

Richardson, Kimberly. “Book Review- *The Garrick Year* by Margaret Drabble”. *The Nocturnal Aesthetic*. 11<sup>th</sup> Jan 2014. Web 24<sup>th</sup> March 2014. <nocaesthetic.blogspot.com>

Rifkind, Donna. “No Way Out: A Review of *The Radiant Way* By Margaret Drabble”. *The New Criterion*, Vol. 6. Nov. 1987. pp. 70. Web 12<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2013. <[www.newcriterion.com](http://www.newcriterion.com)>

Robinson, Marilynne. “Growing Up Thankless: *The Radiant Way* by Margaret Drabble”. *The New York Times*. 1<sup>st</sup> Nov. 1987. Web 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012. <<http://www.nytimes.com>>

Rose, Ellen Cronan. “The Sexual Politics of Narration: Margaret Drabble’s Feminist Fiction”. *Studies in the Novel*. Vol. 20. No. 1. (Spring 1988). pp. 86-99. JSTOR. Web 20<sup>th</sup> 2015.

<[www.jstor.org](http://www.jstor.org)>

Seal, Rebecca. “They Must Go Down to the Sea again: *The Sea Lady* by Margaret Drabble”.

“The Observer” . 6<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2006. Web 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2012. <[www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com)>

Simkin, John. “Women and Schooling”. *Spartacus Educational*. Sept. 1997. Web 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

<[www.spartacus-educational.com](http://www.spartacus-educational.com)>

Spencer, Stephanie. *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950s*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005. Web 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015. <[www.history.ac.uk](http://www.history.ac.uk)>

Stiver, Irene P. “The Meanings of “Dependency” in Female-Male Relationships”. 1984. pp. 1-2.

Web 19<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2012. <[www.wellesleyresearchcenter.org](http://www.wellesleyresearchcenter.org)>

Thane, Pat. "Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century in England". *Women's History Review* Vol. 20. 4<sup>th</sup> April. 2013, pp. 1-20. London: Routledge, Web 12<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

<[www.estadoysociedad.org](http://www.estadoysociedad.org)>

"The Adoption History Illegitimacy". *The Adoption History Project*. Web 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013.

<[pages.uoregon.edu](http://pages.uoregon.edu)>

"The Garrick Year by Margaret Drabble". *Stuck in a Book*. 30<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2012. Web 12<sup>th</sup> Aug. 2013.

<[stuck-in-a-book.blogspot.com](http://stuck-in-a-book.blogspot.com)>

*The Garrick Year* by Margaret Drabble. Book Review: *Kirkus Review*. Web 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

<<https://www.kirkusreviews.com>>

"The Original Angry Young Woman". *Independent*. 3<sup>rd</sup> July. 2011. Web 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013.

<[www.independent.co.uk](http://www.independent.co.uk)>

"The Peppered Moth: Margaret Drabble, Author". *Publishers Weekly: Fiction Book Review*.

Web 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015. <[www.publishersweekly.com](http://www.publishersweekly.com)>

"The Wisdom of Book: *The Ice Age* by Margaret Drabble". *Kirkus Reviews*. 17<sup>th</sup> Oct. 1977.

Web 15<sup>th</sup> June 2015. <[www.kirkusreviews.com](http://www.kirkusreviews.com)>

*The Witch of Exmoor* by Margaret Drabble. *Kirkus Reviews*. New York: Harcourt, 20<sup>th</sup> May

2010. Web 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011 <<https://www.kirkusreviews.com>>

Waldman, Adelle. "Guilt Trip: Review on Margaret Drabble's *The Millstone*". *New Republic:*

*Lost and Found*. 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011. Web 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015. <[newrepublic.com](http://newrepublic.com)>

Wallhead, Celia M. "Changes in Ideology in Margaret Drabble's Fiction". *Dialnet*. Web 12<sup>th</sup> august 2014. <[dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo](http://dialnet.unirioja.es/descarga/articulo)>

Wisner, Geoff. "England in the Mire: Review of *The Witch of Exmoor* by Margaret Drabble".

*Boston Book Review*. Web 27<sup>th</sup> March 2012. <[www.geoffwisner.com](http://www.geoffwisner.com)>

“Writers Biography: Margaret Drabble”. *British Council Literature*. 2001. Web 2<sup>nd</sup> Nov. 2010.

<[literature.britishcouncil.org](http://literature.britishcouncil.org)>

Wood, James. “While England Sinks: *The Witch of Exmoor*” .*The New York Times*. October 19,

1997. Web 11<sup>th</sup> May. 2011 <<http://www.nytimes.com>>