

**WOMEN RIGHTS: MYTH OR REALITY, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
GEORGE ELIOT'S *ADAM BEDE* AND TONI MORRISON'S *BELOVED***

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ABSTRACT: *This paper focuses on the rights denied to women in the works of George Eliot's Adam Bede and Toni Morrison's Beloved. Both the writers belong to different times and social strata. The significant portion of this paper is related with female rights, marriage and oppression of women in the society. The paper also deals with the modifications and the outlook of women characters as they stand against the rules and regulations persisting during those times. Both the writers have used their works as a device to announce their distresses in relation to the women roles and gender clashes in the social community. As educated and well read women, both George Eliot and Toni Morrison have shaped woman characters in order to confirm that women are also gifted with intelligence and wisdom and are capable of being sensible and sound. Eventually, this paper shows that both the writers courageously confront and defy the culture and civilization and stand up for women in relation to marriage, school, profession and dedicate themselves to writing profession from the viewpoint of women with an endeavour to reveal their place in the society by focusing on their shortcomings, judgment and attitude against the ruthless norms and culture of male dominated society.*

KEYWORDS: Female, Marriage, Women, Society, Profession

INTRODUCTION

George Eliot belonged to that period of the late 1820s. It was a period when England was going through social reformation. This was a period which paved the way for the political and social reformation. A Social Reform Bill act was passed in 1867 that had lead to a stir in the Victorian Society. A Great Reform Act had been passed in 1832 and during this time Eliot was writing *Middlemarch*. This particular age had encouraged the contemporary women writers to bring forth their feelings and ambitions. Their ambitions served as the conclusions of their works. Born and bred in Warwickshire in 1819, George Eliot in reality is known as Mary Anne Evans. As the Victorian Period did not permit women to be writers, she chose the name George Eliot to gain her position as a writer in the society. The urge to write and gain prominence made her decision to begin her career under the pseudonym George Eliot. Eliot's works usually focus on the women living in the rural areas whose rights are subdued and they are excessively immobilized to the situation where they are unable to assert their voice. Her characters are pragmatic as she elaborates the human characteristics flawlessly. Eliot's work is visibly founded on the Christian practice. Eliot concentrates on the stifling distresses that women suffer during their education and over the rights on property. Victorian society was rigid and biased is as against women and propagated an unbending, severe view concerning women. Victorian society was badly affected with chauvinism and restricted them from the liberty of employment. Employment among women resulted in mockery and insinuations. Their major occupation was considered to be household chores. Dinah Morris was a Methodist

preacher. Her preaching led to criticism in the society. Though people gathered but it was just pretence in order to admire her beauty rather than due to interest in preaching.

Plight of women in Adam Bede: Suzanne Graver in *George Eliot and Community: A Study in Social Theory and Fictional Form* believes that, “the transformation of pain into sympathy experienced by one person in response to another becomes an emblem for community” (281). George Eliot seems to sympathise with women in her novels. Further she has always believed “in the moral superiority of women” (228). She takes into consideration the very minute plight of women. But it is improper to say that she wholly capsizes the stereotype, rather she looks at the apprehensions and confrontation faced by women. There is a love triangle in the novel comprising of Hetty, Adam and Arthur. It is tough for a woman to choose between two men who serve as suitors to her at the same time. Hetty prefers Arthur over Adam which leads to her seeking a frantic method to fight their personal battles. These battles eventually lead to her death. Hetty and Arthur’s involvement in this misadventure eventually leads to an unwanted pregnancy that lead to Hetty’s criminal act of abandoning her infant in the woods after delivering it. The disparity among the sexes through the dissimilarity of the penalty, and suffering that Hetty received is compared to Arthur. Arthur due to his high status and class does not receive the censure and punishment Hetty does. Arthur is also an accomplice in this offence, yet he wasn’t penalised. Apart from representing the distinctive values of that time which dictated that women were to be answerable for moral and ethical misbehaviour while at the same time men were not held responsible for anything, *Adam Bede* bends far more on class category than the sexual category. In *Adam Bede*, Hetty Sorrel is ensnared by the local community’s outlook of marrying alongside the class. As Dror Wahrman tells us in *Imagining the Middle Class: The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840*, British society was “centred around a ‘middle class,’” because most simply put, “during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,

[. . .] an industrial revolution transformed Britain” (1). Nevertheless, as Wahrman aims at, Britain focusing on a class-based culture is in reality too complex: Consider the social process that transformed Britain between, say, the mid seventeenth and the mid nineteenth centuries One can readily acknowledge (and the present argument has no intention to the contrary) those long-term aspects of the transformation often associated with ‘bourgeois’ society that social historians have chronicled in detail: the emergence of the anonymous-exchange market, the development of the ‘bourgeois public sphere’ with its concomitant explosion of printed communication, the effects of agricultural improvement, spreading commercialization, accelerating urbanization and gradual industrialization.(6)

Gender Prejudice in Adam Bede: Gender prejudice is also a significant in *Adam Bede*. In her other work *Moods* the men and women characters are located in a similar mystery but the men constantly have more options as compared to women characters. This situation is

however similar in *Adam Bede*. Both Arthur Donnithorne and Hetty Sorrel both perform the same indiscretion; in reality, it was a misdemeanour in which both the characters had played equal parts, neither of them being more at fault than the other one. Nevertheless, the result is not entirely different for both of them. Hetty is familiar with her status that is completely destroyed and in an attempt to protect a bit of it, she flees away, believing that the act of suicide is better than admitting to her friends and family that she is pregnant with Arthur's child. In addition, Hetty is the one who has to face the penalty of the event and has to make all the decisions while Arthur is far-off, hence making him unaware of the reality. Unaided and afraid, she ultimately becomes, as Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar express her in *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, a "sorrow-crazed madwoman" (496), taking a decision that she feels repentant and that ultimately leads to her getting convicted for a murder. While Arthur Donnithorne on the other hand is free from any punishment, his only concern is to free Hetty from the death sentence. Hetty's association with the Poysers, Adam Bede, and Arthur as a matter of shame simply leads them all to flee the town. All the same, in comparison to consequences Hetty has to face, Arthur due to being a man goes scot-free. Including Adam, despite the fact that he blamed Arthur for doing this to Hetty from the very beginning eventually comes to a decision that he misbehaved with Arthur. After the trial Adam tells:

‘I’ve been a bit hard t’ everybody but *her*. I felt as if nobody pitied her enough – her suffering cut into me so; and when I thought the folks at the Farm were too hard with her, I said I’d never be hard to anybody myself again. But feeling overmuch about her has perhaps made me unfair to you. I’ve known what it is in my life to repent and feel it’s too late. I felt I’d been too harsh to my father when he was gone from me – I feel it now, when I think of him. I’ve no right to be hard towards them as have done wrong and repent.’ (490)

Adam declares that he forgave Arthur for the reason that Arthur has purportedly regretted his role in the whole episode. However, Hetty did the same, the Methodist preacher Dinah who had arrived to meet her in the prison and Dinah passes this information to Adam. As the genuine case with Eliot's aunt, Hetty informs Dinah and asks for pardon in the end of the novel, "Dinah, do you think God will take away that crying [the crying Hetty remembers from the baby] and the place in the wood, now I've told everything?" (475) and Dinah replies, "Let us pray, poor sinner. Let us fall on our knees again and pray to the God of all mercy" (475). Though Dinah pardons Hetty for her sin and allows her and Adam to continue their life together, Adam is unable to forgive her the same way. All the same, he seems to have no difficulty finding sympathy for Arthur.

Adam gives the impression to be forgiving Arthur for his act with Hetty, but he is unable to pardon Hetty for murdering the infant as the infant was a completely innocent life extinguished. Although, Hetty was at fault, but Arthur was equally if not more responsible for persuading her to follow her desires and hopes, considering also the additional fact that Arthur being older needed to be have exercised restraint. If Arthur was not responsible for persuading

Hetty and looked for every chance to be with her alone, and Hetty would not have suffered at all. The event does take place though, and Hetty is blamed entirely for the act. She confesses to Dinah, that she did not have any intention of killing the infant, in fact, after considering a better option, had much more dreams for her baby. She tells Dinah,

‘I came to a place where there was lots of chips and turf, and I sat down on the trunk of a tree to think what I should do. And all of a sudden I saw a hole under the nut-tree, like a little grave. And it darted into me like lightning – I’d lay the baby there and cover it with the grass and the chips. I couldn’t kill it any other way. And I’d done it in a minute; and, oh, it cried so, Dinah – I *couldn’t* cover it quite up – I thought perhaps somebody ‘ud come and take care of it, and then it wouldn’t die. And I made haste out of the wood, but I could hear it crying all the while; and when I got out into the fields, it was as if I was held fast – I couldn’t go away, for all I wanted so to go. And I sat against the haystack to watch if anybody ‘ud come. I was very hungry, and I’d only a bit of bread left, but I couldn’t go away. And after ever such a while – hours and hours – the man came – him in a smock-frock, and he looked at me so, I was frightened, and I made haste and went on.’ (473)

Due to her failed attempt of suicide, she has no choice but to abandon the child. Hetty lives with the hope that her infant would be saved by somebody and it would be taken care of. A man passes by and she does see a hope for her infant. However, she flees early thinking that the man may discover “the baby and take it home.” She hoped that would happen as she explains to Dinah, “‘I thought that man in the smock-frock ‘ud see me and know I put the baby there’” (474). She leaves her child alone in the woods in an attempt to hide herself from the society. What happened was completely opposite and the infant dies on the spot due to lack of food and care. Like she further tells Dinah,

‘when I’d put it there, I thought I should like somebody to find it and save it from dying; but when I saw it was gone, I was struck like a stone, with fear. I never thought o’ stirring, I felt so weak. I knew I couldn’t run away, and everybody as saw me ‘ud know about the baby. My heart went to stone. I couldn’t wish or try for anything; it seemed like as if I should stay there forever, and nothing ‘ud ever change. But they came and took me away.’ (475)

Though Hetty had considered it necessary to liberate herself from the child. Hoping the best would happen, she returns to claim her infant. The reasonable postulation at this juncture is that the man had discovered the child and comforted him when he is alive. Still Hetty gets into a state of panic considering her child to be separated from her. Her fear and sorrow comes alive when she discovers that the child has died and she would now serve a death penalty. Hetty acts on the given occasions presented before her with ignorance of the probable result. Hetty wants her child to have a better future, at the same time she is unable to come out of her own predicament of being an unmarried single mother. Her dreams and desires become completely baseless and unsupported, unable to see her life like this; she leaves her newborn infant in the woods, with the hope that it would be taken care of.

The male characters in George Eliot's Novels symbolize diverse kinds of traits; nevertheless they wish to be in charge of their female equivalents. These Victorian men treat the women as granted. Through their relations with the women characters, the male characters scrutinize them as possessions of their own. Kay Young in *Imagining Minds. The Neuro-Aesthetics of Austen, Eliot, and Hardy* disputes that Eliot's main focus is on the consciousness of her characters concerning how they recognize other characters:

[f]or Eliot, looking to "see" the consciousness of another as a means of knowing another means seeing the other through the lens of the self. Seeing involves a negotiation between image and its analysis, an analysis based on the seer's past knowledge or experiences or desires. To see the other means always to know a "negotiated" other, or reflection of the self. (76)

The male characters take full use of the Victorian age by revealing themselves to be far more superior to the female characters. These male characters used the education of their background which was meant to be considered of a high status during the Victorian times. They utilize it to construct many parallel descriptions of their female counterparts and evaluate the outcome through their own eyes. But, as Young remarks that Eliot, thinks that the human consciousness above forced the roles that woman should play in a Victorian society.

According to Eliot the woman is seen as from the sexual point of view. She is seen as "the other" as Jacques Lacan believes in the following:

With regard to the agency of sexuality, all subjects are equal, from the child to the adult . . . they deal only with that part of sexuality that passes into the networks of the constitution of the subject, into the networks of the signifier . . . sexuality is realized only through the operation of the drives in so far as they are partial drives, partial with regard to the biological finality of sexuality. (176-177)

Lacan here refers to equality where the humans are treated as sexual objects. These sexual objects are not treated as human beings regardless of their age, identity etc. The woman is known to be as the “lesser” of the man. She is considered to be weaker than the man. She is known to lack the “phallus”. Here he refers to object and the subject. The male is known to be subject and female is known to be the object. The male or the subject is known to be in possession of the Phallus, determine the object’s lack as “the subject, in order to constitute itself, has separated itself off as organ. This serves as a symbol of the lack, that is to say of the phallus, not as much, but insofar as it is lacking. It must, therefore, be an object that is, firstly separable, and secondly, that has some relation to the lack” (103).

This discussion of *Adam Bede* above is significant because a modern day woman after the struggle of women rights today holds beside the right to vote and work, the right to birth control and abortion. There is no doubt in this narrative that women of that period were bereft of the essential equal rights of today. Looking at this story through the prism of women’s right it is seen that not only were these essential rights lacking but also a woman was hounded and ostracised by society at large. This led to Hetty to destroying her child and eventually her death in this sordid saga

Assuming the present rights were enjoyed by women of that date there would have been a communal cushion for Hetty to fall back upon and maybe this tragic narrative could have been avoided. The basic idea of Eliot in writing this particular story and similar works by other female authors is probably the fuel that fired the need for women’s rights in the West.

There are many confinements in the novel *Adam Bede*. Dinah earns great respect due to her religious sermons. She does not earn much respect as a woman than as a religious minister. Notably, the people in the town give her respect due to her preaching. In the middle of the novel, Dinah is seen as a stranger: “The stranger was struck with surprise as he saw her approach and mount the cart—surprise not so much at the feminine delicacy of her appearance, as at the total absence of self-consciousness in her demeanour” (29). This way, Dinah accomplishes in portraying an independent and self-reliant woman explained in *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* by Mary Wollstonecraft:

Contending for the rights of woman, my main argument is built on this simple principle, that if she be not prepared by education to become companion of man, she will stop the progress of knowledge and virtue; for truth must be common to all . . . (66)

In the opening of the *Adam Bede*, Eliot built the character of Adam to some extent his

exceptional judgment; he considers in the exterior look of things and examines them accurately as if a scientist is working on an experiment. Eliot also acts like an artist. prior to Adam’s encounter with Donnithorne and Hetty episode in the forest, Eliot portrays him as following:

Adam's perceptions were more at home with trees than-with other objects.

He kept them in his memory, as a painter does, with all the flecks and knots in their bark, all the curves and angles of their boughs; and had often calculated the height and contents of a trunk to a nicety, as he stood looking at it. (341)

However Adam is not confident of his accuracy as he diverts from things to living beings. Adam enlightens his mother of Dinah's beauty, "the figures tell us a fine deal, and we couldn't go far without'em, but they don't tell us about folks's feelings. It's a nicer job to calculate them" (185).

Eliot presents a straight explanation on the character of Adam explain the fact that he is an individual that is "happy in his inability to know the causes of things, preferring the things themselves"(557).

Self identification in Beloved: Prior to the civil war in America, black men and women were treated as possessions and had to go through demeaning injustice. These people had lost all their rights as human beings. Perhaps the major suffering was borne by the black women. Black society suffers a major problem of self identification. This problem could only be solved with the help of a community. The slaves in Afro-American countries were rather treated as objects and they are unable to build up their individuality of their own. These people are rather seen as non-existent. As Benjamin remarks, "In order to exist for one self, one has to exist for an other" (53). The black people especially women had to live for the white people.

Beloved has been Toni Morrison's most receptive work till now. It has studied the suffering of black slaves especially female black slaves. Aggression against the Afro-American women is an overpowering theme in the works of Toni Morrison. Morrison explores this violence and aggression towards these women. She studies the ways in which women endured the tyranny of the white man. Compared to black males, black woman slaves suffered more. They were doubly repressed and oppressed than the black males. They too had to put up with the burden of their emasculation of their men from the white people. Their children had to undergo abuse in their own houses and neighbourhood as well. The characters in Morrison works are quite accurate to life regarding the feelings of the coloured slaves who come face to face with the unsympathetic and unkind realism of the racism. The mothers in her novels are not passive though they suffer a lot. Morrison demonstrates mother's roles as resource less, women who manage their lives with the lack of patriarchy in the family. These women end up being responsible for the continued existence of their families. Questions regarding a women's accomplishment are raised. Trudier Harris in *Fiction and Folklore* puts forward a question, "Must all women be subsumed under some community standards, or ostracized if they do not adhere to such standards." (188).

Morrison's exploration of motherhood point towards the fact that mothers don't pursue standardized and homogenous rules and regulations and particular limitations; in its place, they are alert of the elementary opposition of racial parenthood. Patricia Hill Collins in her work *Black Feminist Thought, Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment:*

African-American communities value motherhood, but the Black mothers' ability to cope with race, class, and gender oppression should not be confused with transcending those conditions. Black motherhood can be rewarding, but it can also exact high personal cost. The range of Black

women's reactions to motherhood and the ambivalence that many Black women feel about mothering reflect motherhood's contradictory nature. (133)

The disintegration of Sethe's character commences with the arrival of the character Schoolteacher and his nephews. Halle her husband has left and she deems him to be no more. Halle failed as a husband as he was unable to protect Sethe when she was being raped by the nephews of the Schoolteacher. In that period, the Blacks have always been considered as secondary to the Whites. The Schoolteacher goes on to diminishing Sethe and the other Black Women. He makes a division between the blacks and the whites, by tagging the black people as low-grade ones. Blacks are treated as sub-humans, rather as animals. The Schoolteacher keeps them under experimentation by treating them as animals.

Further slavery leads to bloodshed, degradation and a feeling of supremacy among white people. Of course the whites while debasing themselves bring out the real character kindness of the slaves regardless of the ruling race causing unrelenting pain and inhuman suffering. The blacks are looked upon as naive stock of animals for trials. Despite the fact that the white people's conviction in their own supremacy allows them to facilitate their authority on the blacks as mediocre, Morrison turns round this cycle by showing the perception of the black community and at last, portrays the white community as merciless and brutal. Morrison in her novels confers on the central voice of the community. As mentioned in *Twentieth Century Literature* by Kimberly Chabot Davis, "I am simply trying to recreate something that defines what makes a book 'black'" (427). The Schoolteacher comes into view at The Sweet Home Plantation after the demise of Mr. Garner, in a way to assist Mrs. Garner. Sethe is completely obliterated after the arrival of Schoolteacher and his nephews. Sethe is the only black woman between all the other six black men. It is through the character of Sethe, the notion of blackness is portrayed. As Rafael Perez-Torres says, "Sethe's body is violated: once when its nutrient is stolen, then again when torn open by a whip. Just like the page of Schoolteacher's notebook, Sethe is divided and marked, inscribed with the discourse of slavery and violation" (696).

Black women are depicted through Sethe as determined and competent enough to provide their family a fine life and also protect them from dreadful vagaries of slavery. Sethe endeavours to flee for Ohio. She is successful in sending her three children in front of her. Regardless of the impression of the chokeberry tree behind her back, as Alice Walker in *In Search of My Mother's Garden* has observed that she is, "able to deliver Denver with the help of a white girl, Amy Denver. After that she crosses the Ohio River and enters the free state Ohio. Sethe wants her children to be free. She refuses to accept the 'silent second class status'" (121). Sethe fights back to protect her children from an evident violent future. But her happiness is short lived as; she is unable to stay enough time with her children and mother-in-law due to the Schoolteacher's arrival at Ohio. Her repressive state as a slave woman leads her to kill her own infant, Beloved. A child is considered to be very significant for its mother. But Sethe is deprived of that chance, she is unable to spend time with her children and mother. Barbara Shapiro states that:

For, Morrison's characters African-Americans in a racist, slave society, there is no reliable other to recognize and affirm their existence. The

mother, child's first vital other, is made unreliable or unavailable by a slave system which either separates her from her child or so enervates and depletes her that she has no self with which confer recognition. (194)

The memorable words of an ex-slave and a campaigner of women's rights Sojourner Truth remind the reader of the horrible mistakes in the history. Her bold significant question was "Ain't I a woman?" It was asked at a women's gathering in 1851 in Ohio. Her words convey the feelings of millions of Afro-American women who had been bound to inquire about their position in the society. Her voice had influenced the gathering at the protests as she continued further:

Look at me! Look at my arm! I have ploughed
and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head
me! And ain't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as
much as a man- when I could get it - and bear the lash as well!
And ain't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen
most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's
grief, none but Jesus heard me! And ain't I a woman? (32)

At first these women inquire on the subject of their status and identity, secondly they are inquiring about the social rights that are being denied to them. These women were regarded as the "Other" by the whites. These women just existed like shadows to the white people. Sojourner Truth had laboured hard to construct harvest. She also gave birth to a child which had not been an easy task for her. As Bell Hooks in *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* says that, a black woman was just a "breed[er]"(39), however Sojourner sustained her mother status. Ruth Robbins in *Literary Feminisms* observes that, Sojourner Truth, "appealed to her maternity as the sign of her womanhood." (196) As long as she could see her worth as a mother she could consider herself as a woman. Hooks remarks, "the lot of the black slave woman would always be harsher, more brutal than that of the black male slave" (43), the reason being her suffering. Her body was not considered to be her own, including her reproductive system. Her children were meant to be somewhere else. These slave women were expected to give birth regularly despite their bodies being completely worn out.

Feminism stresses on the Christianity's formation of motherliness that cemented the approach for man to be in command of the woman's womb. Julia Kristeva in *The Kristeva Reader* puts forward the concept of motherhood in Christianity as "a conspicuous sign of the *jouissance* of the female (or maternal) body, a pleasure that must at all costs be repressed: the function of procreation must be kept strictly subordinated to the rule of the Father's name". (138) While the experiences of both white and black women, of being dominant and powerless can be correlated with the past. Sojourner Truth, has observed that the black mother was always treated as the "Other" and white mother was seen as a natural being or human. However in the novel *Beloved* Sethe's children live a restricted life under the reign of the Schoolteacher despite having a real father Halle. Black slave women often lost their rights as mothers when their own children were sold by the whites.

According to the psychoanalytic viewpoint, the relationship between the mother and the child, especially in the earlier stages, shapes a child's personality and further establishes his aptitude to create other relationships.

The greatest fact about *Beloved* is the struggles of a black slave who was both a female and coloured. Bereft of all the women rights, she actually being a slave had no basic human rights. Her struggle to escape to Ohio and protect her children is a struggle for a person to exist in dignified humane surroundings. If one looks at the Afro-American women in the United States, they are making far less than their white counterparts. A coloured woman today makes sixty-six percent of the amount paid to the men. Surprisingly in the general quality index Yemen is the worst country in the world vis-a-vis when it comes to women. The top five countries for women are Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland and Finland. It is an astonishing fact that America is as low as thirty- seven in this list. For Sethe to seek work to support her family is something one consider a very bold act for a woman already in disgrace in the society. One is surprised that even today in America which considers itself a leading nation, one finds that in a 1996 study twenty-five percent of the women had been raped or physically assaulted by a partner in his lifetime. Even today each year one million women are assaulted by an intimate partner. It is seen that women earn twenty percent less than men for the same jobs in America presently. After years of this battle for women's rights men still consider an unwanted pregnancy as a problem of the female partner. The responsibility of the child-care, domestic work and caring for the elder still falls on the woman of the home, despite the fact that women themselves are working. Married mothers put on average of fifteen minutes on housework while married working fathers just fourteen minutes. They spend more time on their children than the fathers do.

Dorothea Mbalia in *Toni Morrison's Developing Class Consciousness* portrays *Beloved* as the "personification of individual needs and desires." (90) She disputes the fact that Paul D's existence "sets in motion the necessary purgative confrontation between Sethe, *Beloved* and the Cincinnati African community" (91). Hence the resistance in the novel turns out to be the community's resistance for consistency and harmony in the facade of an individual's personal requirement. In the novel she comments that, "Life is hell but togetherness, shared experience, and brotherly/sisterly love help the characters to survive, If not to forge better lives for themselves." (91) The women characters tend to stand with each other rather than the men characters

Gerda Lerner discusses the importance of examination of experience of women. She remarks: "Woman have been left out of history not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular , but because we have considered history only in male- centred terms" (39).

Adam Bede is an example where the narrative of the story could take a radical change if women rights existed. Hetty, a vivacious girl who did not find an adequate cushion to fall back upon when she became a victim of a misadventure. Awareness of women's rights could have easily helped her to find her feet rather than wandering and stumbling around and eventually commit a crime in fear and frustration.

Sethe, in the novel *Beloved*, is an inspiration to every modern woman on the struggle of a female to protect and improve her progeny and dignity. She probably signifies the emotional reaction to suppression of females all over the world. One is an awe of her strength, reactions

to her situations and her will to move on. This is no run of the mill story; it is in fact about female strength and survival.

DISCUSSION

Elaine Showalter has discovered numerous problems in the literature. She believes that the literature is also biased like men. Its main focus is on the men thinking. Literature does not think from the women's point of view. Women's thoughts are not given any importance. Elaine Showalter disputes regarding the structure of facts and knowledge that form the base of distinct woman's experience. An inventor of knowledge should be a woman Showalter has made use of the term Gynocriticism to name this particular knowledge. at the same time explaining its features, she remarks, "Its subjects are the history, styles, themes, genres, and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution and laws of a female literary tradition." (310)

In her work *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness*, Showalter further explains that, "the program of gynocritics is to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories" (131).

METHOD

Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak argues in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" She writes down, in *An Introduction to Companion to Postcolonial Studies* that "Can the Subaltern Speak? is about agency: institutionally validated action and unless validated by dominant forms of knowledge and politics, resistance could not be recognized (heard) as such" (xx).

She has used the term "Subaltern" for referring to some groups that are known as "subject of hegemony of ruling class." She has asked questions in her important article "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988), regarding the subaltern studies and the postcolonial feminist theory She deems over the fact that "in the context of colonial production and male dominance, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow" (150). Hence she disputes that the power of colonialism quiets the subaltern by demonstrating them as if they have no role to play in the colonial discourse. She further talks about the "subaltern in general, and the historically muted subject of the subaltern women in particular, was inevitably consigned to be either misunderstood or misrepresented through the self-interest of those with the power to represent" (150) The main aim of this paper is to discuss the marginalization of women and their rights. One is able to discuss her individuality in the subaltern and the marginalized groups. Also in her essay, in her essay "Three Women Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" (1986), she has criticized the many feminists for abandoning women of the Third World countries She criticizes them for getting fixated on the fact that the women characters fearlessly strengthen their prejudice.

CONCLUSION

These particular works can be looked into movement of society towards women's rights. It is agreed today that there is a great need for women to find their rightful place and move forward shoulder to shoulder with men in society. The world wide scenario is that even today seventy percent of the females in the world are uneducated. Like pointed before working women make less than men and also their employment is insecure, part time and temporary. Unfortunately domestic violence is still very common worldwide. In these modern days. The general feeling is that besides the right to vote and education, and equal opportunities of employment, women also need the right to have reproduction and abortion. This is considered very important because the brunt and the hardships in bearing a child are born basically by the female. Though the world has come a long way from the periods depicted by these works it is very essential to further address the women's rights movement because it is still seen that in some parts of the world, it is still a myth and not a practicing reality.

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