



**THE FEMALE IDENTITY AND SELF ASSERTION
IN MARGARET DRABBLE'S AND PENELOPE
LIVELY'S SELECTED NOVELS**

**2023
MASTER THESIS
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

Saja Hadib Mohsin ALDIHAYMAWEE

**Thesis Advisor
Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazila HEIDARZADEGAN**

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Saja Hadib Mohsin ALDIHAYMAWEE

Thesis Advisor

Assist.Prof.Dr. Nazila HEIDARZADEGAN

T.C.

Karabuk University

Institute of Graduate Programs

Department of English Language and Literature

Prepared as

Master Thesis

KARABUK

July 2023

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that in my opinion the thesis submitted by Saja Hadib Mohsin ALDIHAYMAWEE titled “THE FEMALE IDENTITY AND SELF ASSERTION IN MARGARET DRABBLE’S AND PENELOPE LIVELY’S SELECTED NOVELS” is fully adequate in scope and in quality as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazila HEIDARZADEGAN

Thesis Advisor, Department of English Language and Literature

This thesis is accepted by the examining committee with a unanimous vote in the Department of English Language and Literature as a Master of Arts thesis. July 21,2023

Examining Committee Members (Institutions)

Signature

Chairman : Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazila HEIDARZADEGAN (KBU)

Member : Prof. Dr.A. Serdar ÖZTÜRK (KBU)

Member : Assist. Prof. Dr. Zainab Abdullah HUSSEİN (TKU)

The degree of Master of Arts by the thesis submitted is approved by the Administrative Board of the Institute of Graduate Programs, Karabuk University.

Prof. Dr. Müslüm KUZU

Director of the Institute of Graduate Programs

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own work and all information included has been obtained and expounded in accordance with the academic rules and ethical policy specified by the institute. Besides, I declare that all the statements, results, materials, not original to this thesis have been cited and referenced literally.

Without being bound by a particular time, I accept all moral and legal consequences of any detection contrary to the aforementioned statement.

Name Surname: Saja ALDIHAYMAWEE

Signature :

FOREWORD

Without the blessing of the Allah and my family, no amount of study or learning would be possible on my part. Further, I want to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Assist. Prof. Dr. NAZILA HEIDARZADEGAN, for her upbeat disposition and constructive approach.

It was advantageous to have the option to take her notes on my thesis with him. I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the professors at Karabük University's English Language and Literature Department who taught me during the first year of my master's degree.

They were gracious enough to impart their knowledge and experience to us. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to everyone who has made a significant contribution to the completion of this study in any way.

ABSTRACT

Female identity and self-assertion appeared with the emergence of feminism and the origin of the first feminine movement. Women started claiming their rights to education, property, and politics with the advancement of the first, second, and third waves of feminism. The women desired to have their own identity and self-assertion. These desires have been portrayed in the novels of Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively. This study aims to explore or examine the role of women and their struggle for equality, safety, and identity in the selected novels; to investigate how females have been able to assert their identity and existence to earn their female identity; and to critically analyze Margaret Drabble's and Penelope Lively's struggle for female autonomy and individuality in their selected novels. For this purpose, a qualitative research design is selected in which feminist theory has been utilized as a research instrument for the purpose of research analysis.

Textual analysis is adopted as a research method. In the first chapter, the rise of the feminist movement, waves of feminism, the history of feminist literature, feminism in the UK and USA, and the literary approach towards Female identity and self-assertion, women's identity and self-assertion in second-wave feminism, feminist identity theory, feminist perspective on the self, Margaret Drabble's approach towards feminist literature, and Penelope Lively's approach towards feminist literature are explained.

The second chapter introduces the struggles of women against issues like violence, self-identity, and rights, and such issues were the main concerns of the second wave of feminism from the late 1960s to the 1980s, the years after the Second World War. Here, women returned to their roles as housewives and mothers, and men returned to their workplaces or were replaced by women in the defense forces. In addition, the chapter analyzes the female characters in *Moon Tiger* (1987) and *The Photograph* (2003) by Penelope Lively. The author portrayed the quest for identity and self-assertion by women in her writings, and the chapter highlights the biography of the author in terms of her works and personal life. The chapter also discusses the perspectives of other

feminist writers of second-wave feminism, like Simon Di Beauvoir. In the third chapter, textual analysis of *the Milestone* and *the Seven Sisters* is done. To conclude, the major focus is laid on women and their fights for their identity and self-assertion.

Keywords: Female Identity, Female Self-Assertion, Feminism.



ÖZET

Kadın kimliği ve kendini savunma, feminizmin ortaya çıkışı ve ilk kadınsı hareketin ortaya çıkmasıyla ortaya çıktı. Kadınlar, birinci, ikinci ve üçüncü feminizm dalgasının ilerlemesiyle eğitim, mülkiyet ve politika haklarını talep etmeye başladılar. Kadınlar kendi kimliklerine ve kendilerini savunmaya sahip olmak istiyorlardı. Bu arzular Margaret Drabble ve Penelope Lively'nin romanlarında tasvir edilmiştir. Bu çalışma, seçilen romanlarda kadınların rolünü ve eşitlik, güvenlik ve kimlik mücadelelerini araştırmayı veya incelemeyi, kadınların kadın kimliklerini kazanmak için kimliklerini ve varlıklarını nasıl ortaya koyabildiklerini araştırmayı ve Margaret Drabble ve Penelope Lively'nin seçilmiş romanlarında kadın özerkliği ve bireysellik mücadelesini eleştirel olarak analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Bu amaçla, feminist teorinin araştırma analizi amacıyla bir araştırma aracı olarak kullanıldığı nitel araştırma tasarımı seçilmiştir. Metinsel analiz araştırma yöntemi olarak benimsenmiştir. Birinci bölümde feminist hareketin yükselişi, feminizm dalgaları, feminist edebiyat tarihi, İngiltere ve ABD'de feminizm, kadın kimliği ve kendini iddia etmeye yönelik edebi yaklaşım, ikinci dalga feminizmde kadın kimliği ve kendini savunma, feminist kimlik teorisi, benliğe feminist bakış açısı, Margaret Drabble'ın feminist edebiyata yaklaşımı ve Penelope Lively'nin feminist edebiyata yaklaşımı anlatılmaktadır. İkinci bölüm, kadınların şiddet, öz-kimlik ve haklar gibi konulara karşı mücadelelerini tanıtıyor ve bu tür konular, 1960'ların sonlarından 1980'lere kadar ikinci dünya savaşından sonraki yıllarda feminizmin ikinci dalgasının ana kaygısıydı. Burada, kadınlar ev hanımı olarak rollerine geri döndüler ve anneler ve erkekler işyerlerine geri döndüler ya da savunma kuvvetlerindeki kadınlarla değiştirildiler.

Buna ek olarak, bölüm Moon Tiger (1987) ve Penelope Lively'nin The Photograph (2003) filmlerinin kadın karakterlerini analiz ediyor. Yazar, yazılarında kadınların kimlik ve kendini savunma arayışlarını tasvir etmiş, bu bölümde yazarın biyografisini eserleri ve kişisel yaşamı açısından vurgulamıştır. Bölüm ayrıca Simon Di Beauvoir gibi ikinci dalga feminizmin diğer feminist yazarlarının bakış açılarını da tartışıyor. Üçüncü bölümde, Milestone ve Yedi Kız Kardeş'in metinsel analizi yapılır.

Sonu olarak, ana odak noktası kadınlara ve onların kimlikleri ve kendilerini savunmaları iin verdikleri mcadelelere odaklanıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın Kimlięi, Kadın Kendini Savunma, Feminizm



ARCHIVE RECORD INFORMATION

Title of the Thesis	The Female Identity And Self Assertion In Margaret Drabble's And Penelope Lively's Selected Novels
Author of the Thesis	Saja Hadib Mohsin ALDIHAYMAWEE
Thesis Advisor	Assist. Prof. Dr. Nazila HEIDARZADEGAN
Status of the Thesis	Master
Date of the Thesis	21/07/2023
Field of the Thesis	English Language and Literature
Place of the Thesis	UNIKA/IGP
Total Page Number	69
Keywords	Female Identity, Female Self-Assertion, Feminism

ARŞİV KAYIT BİLGİLERİ (in Turkish)

Tezin Adı	Margaret Drabble'ın Ve Penelope Lively'nin Seçilmiş Romanlarındaki Kadın Kimliği Ve Kendini Kanıtama
Tezin Yazarı	Saja Hadib Mohsin ALDIHAYMAWEE
Tezin Danışmanı	Dr. Öğr. Üyesi. Nazila HEIDARZADEGAN
Tezin Derecesi	Yüksek Lisans
Tezin Tarihi	21/07/2023
Tezin Alanı	İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Tezin Yeri	KBU/LEE
Tezin Sayfa Sayısı	69
Anahtar Kelimeler	Kadın Kimliği, Kadın Kendini Savunma, Feminizm

SUBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The statement of this research is “The Female Identity and Self Assertion in Margaret Drabble's and Penelope Lively's Selected Novels”. Because of the patriarchal nature of English society, women have historically been portrayed in English literature as being subordinate to men. This is a direct result of the patriarchal structure of English society. It wasn't until the beginning of the 20th century that feminism began to gain traction that the feminine identity began to be accurately portrayed and evaluated. Women were met with fierce opposition, and their primary function was to be seen as the bearers of men's value. As a result of the development of feminism in the modern world, it is now vital to investigate the manner in which modern writers have portrayed women, both in terms of their identities and the roles they play in society, as a component of their efforts to assert themselves. Therefore, the statement of this thesis is something that should be studied from the above-mentioned perspective.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this thesis are given below:

1. to explore or examine the role of women and their struggle for equality, safety, and identity in the selected novels.
2. To investigate how females have been able to assert their identity and existence to earn their female identity.
3. To critically analyze Margaret Drabble’s and Penelope Lively’s struggle for female autonomy and individuality in their selected novels.

THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this research is to encourage females to be more self-assured and to take part in the various responsibilities that contemporary society has to offer. This study will investigate the fight that women have waged for their rights, including the right to an education, the right to own property, and the right to vote. It will also investigate how females have been able to assert their existence in order to earn their identities, as well as how feminine autonomy and individuality have been maintained in the literature that

has been chosen for this study. The one and only restriction of this study is that it concentrates solely on the female characters, an aspect of female identity and self-assertion that has been investigated by both of the authors who were chosen for this study.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

It is essential to have a discourse about the roles that women play in maintaining their identities and being confident in themselves because, before the advent of feminism, women were largely disregarded by male authors. The struggles of women can be traced all the way back to the beginning of feminist movements in the late 19th century. The primary objective of this research is to examine the ways in which female identity and self-assertion are shown in a selection of novels written by Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively. It is recognized that women play an important role in society, and this is taken into account. In addition to that, the purpose of this paper is to raise knowledge about how to empower women and, as a result, change the stereotypical perceptions of women that exist in society. The implementation of feminism into the selected novels has unearthed many previously concealed aspects of the roles and identities of women, which has resulted in this research being an important component of the field. Because the idea asserts that rather than being viewed as mere commodities, women should be regarded as beings, it follows that we ought to treat them as such. Given that the selected works engage in philosophical and fictional dialogue, feminism has its own significance due to the fact that it deals with underrepresented groups in society. In addition to this, feminism has contributed to a better understanding of the dynamics behind gender inequality in contemporary society. To summarize, the application of the analytical framework of feminism to the study of female characters in selected literature has resulted in a substantial contribution to the field of literary research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research is a critical analysis of the texts, reflecting the problem of female identity. With the assistance of various reading strategies, feminist theory has

been utilized as a research instrument for the purpose of research analysis. In order to learn about female identity and self-assertion, the method of textual analysis was utilized to investigate Margaret Drabble's *Mielstone* and *The Seven Sisters* and Penelope Lively's *Moon Tiger* and *The Photograph*. Both of these works were read in order. The textual analysis of the novels reveals how the female characters have maintained their identities in order to assert themselves.



1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Introduction

The topic of the self has been involved in feminist philosophy. On the other side, it is a non-subject, non-agent term that implies societal subordinates. Throughout history, women's self-hood has been systematically subordinated through the law. It is identified that in both cases, women have been differentiating based on these views. Western philosophy and US popular culture are derived from the masculine prototype. Feminists connected with that to resolve segregation. Economically, these advantages involve the men who have dominated the economic, social, and political power of media and scholarship. Responding to this state of conceptions, feminist philosophers work on the self in three main ways: critiques of dominant modern views of self-culture, feminist identities of reclamation, and conceptualization of the self as a dynamic individual consciousness desire.

Modern philosophers on the western side, extending the contemporary moral and political thought of self-ideas. It is an autonomous agent of the dominant culture of a society. The cultural norms and personal preferences to discover the critics' social and economic reasons. Some feminist philosophers change their own concepts of themselves, and others deal only with women's historical externals. The philosophical masculine over the feminine assumptions about the immunity of self to social concepts and the other reliability of reasons to solve the moral judgment. Several feminists argue for the ideal independence of a purified self. On the particular side, feminism concerns the term women's protest about the function of moral priority.

This necessity of re-conceptualizing the self in these two aspects to connect with the features of the self that have been traditionally attached to the social situation. It is the ability to reform the structure of cultural norms. The moral subject must have the capacity for acknowledgment. In this self-independency, there is a risk of gender divisions between men and women, and this could be controversial. The women, as victims of their families, have been challenged with responsibility and further modes of development. It is relatively attached, with some important features that improve the self-dependency and ethics of care.

Many feminist philosophers argue that it is a mistake that is rationally essential to the self and the transparency of independent desires. Taking these approaches, it maintains and gradually develops the consciousness and unconsciousness gender framework. Over the past several years, it has increasingly advanced the self-hood movement to the operators as an immediate factor of determination. International theories capture the formation site as conditioned by the subordinate social groups. Some feminists are comfortable rejecting the unity of self altogether and suggesting the dissolution of personal identity. These theories of multiplication resonate with other connections. This identity is not in contrast with the primary orientation around gender divisions.

Through the overall discussion, it can be assumed that the concepts of female identity and self-assertion are not relatively new. Both concepts have been effectively embedded within the vast feminist philosophy and perspective, containing the theoretical approach to the self and identity of women. The feminist theoretical assessment also presented an elaborate view of how, within the feminist perspective, through various stages, the concept of self and female identity has strengthened. Through the evaluation of the literary approach to feminism, it can be stated that literature has been used as a significant method for presenting the ideologies of feminism. Through various literature, the feminist perspectives and struggles of women in acquiring their identity are effectively presented. The analysis also helped identify the feminist styles of Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively within their works of literature. Further, through evaluating the identity theory and feminist perspective of self, a more profound insight into female identity and self-assertion has been retained.

Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively are both important contemporary writers who have generated significant thought for women's rights and women's identity within their works. In this study, through the analysis of the selected works of Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively, the conceptual thoughts about female identity and self-assertion will be evaluated. This study will also focus on the relevant theory of feminism, which provides effective consideration of the female identity and self, to critically evaluate the approaches of the authors within their feminist writing.

1.2. The Rise of The Feminism Movement

The term feminism was first coined in 1837 by French philosopher Charles Fourier (Vashishtha, 2019). Feminism has been observed as a belief that is concerned with the economic, political, and cultural equality of women. The overall history of feminism comprises the significant movements and ideologies that have been crafted upon the beliefs of equal rights for women. In the modern context, the term feminism has evolved and can be defined as a belief that considers equal rights and opportunity for every gender. But the foundational concept of feminism remains women's empowerment through respecting their identity, experiences, knowledge, and strengths. In this context, the concepts of self and identity have been a constant part of feminist philosophy. mostly because the feminist perspective questioned personal identity, body, sociality, etc. Through Simone De Beauvoir's comment within *The Second Sex* (1949), which suggests "He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other", the need for women's identity and self-assertion can be acknowledged (Marcus, 2020). This conceptual belief in feminism becomes more important as women have always been identified as the opposite or inferior version of men, not having their own identity or place within society. Literature has always been a significant way of presenting the feminist perspective, thoughts, and ideologies. Within this spectrum, Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792) has been identified as the first literary work of feminist philosophy (Šijaković, 2020).

In order to understand the ideologies of self and identity incorporated within the feminist literature. The main conceptions and approaches of feminism must be considered. All the movements that were generated to acquire women's rights must be considered significant feminist movements. The modern western history of feminism comprises four waves, which have been identified as the first wave of feminism, the second wave of feminism, the third wave of feminism, and the fourth wave of feminism. These stages are categorized based on the different approaches of feminist movements within the different time frames concerned with acquiring social, economic, and political rights for women.

But before these stages, the stages of early feminism were also very significant. Renaissance feminism, the 18th century, the age of enlightenment, educational reform,

and women's campaigns in the 19th century laid the foundations for the first wave of feminism.

It has been identified that all the waves of feminism have been interwoven into the concepts of civil rights, women's rights, and social justice movements. What is more significant is that these waves were attributed to their consideration of rights within the socio-economic structure and law (Graff et al., 2019). Feminist critics identify that the progression of the waves of feminism is not linear, and each wave also considers many differences. This leads to the assertion that these continuous waves simply suggest a changed perspective among the different generations of women.

1.3. Waves of Feminism

The first wave of feminism can be identified through the 19th-century suffrage movements of women and their approaches towards acquiring women's right to vote. On this spectrum, the first wave of feminism has been identified as ending with the 1920s' Nineteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. In this amendment, the white women of the United States were granted the right to vote. But the approach of the first wave was limited to white women. For this reason, many scholars claim that the first wave of feminism discriminated against and excluded women of color. And after 40 years, when the first wave ended, women of color were granted the right to vote through the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (Kasper, 2019).

The second wave of feminism can be identified approximately from the early 1960s to the late 1980s. In this scope, the approach to the self and identity of women can be identified. Within the second wave, the feminists questioned the sexist and politicized power structures that affected the personal lives of women (Molony, 2017). Within the second wave, the issues concerning women's equal rights in payment, domestic violence, reproductive rights, and female sexuality were addressed. Through the law and court orders, many of these issues were resolved within the second wave. Also, within the second wave, an approach to proving racial equality has been observed. But still, it remained one of the second concerns rather than gender equality. For this reason, though gender discrimination decreased, the class discrimination situation remained the same (Spencer-Wood, 2017).

The third wave of feminism was Integrated in the mid-1990s. This wave was able to address the limitations of the second wave and generated significant concern about redefining femininity among different classes, races, and sexual orientations (Thorpe et al., 2017). In this wave, various stereotypes were broken and new approaches to feminism were taken. The most significant approach of the third wave is that it sometimes rejected the word feminism itself. And after this from 2012, the approach of the fourth wave has been identified, which has focused on utilizing the new technological innovation as a method of movements for the rights of every gender, race, and identity (Blevins, 2018).

Following this movement's approach, feminists in every movement and era wanted to acquire their right to own identity from patriarchal society. For this reason, the consideration of self within the feminist movements has been considered the traditional feminine contribution and has provided ways through which women can generate new gateways to create their own identity and diminish the oppressive practices and norms of society.

1.4. History of Feminist Literature

Following the significant movements of feminism within the western world, literature has played a significant role in approaching the ideologies of women's rights, self-assertion, and identity. Though significant works of literature, operative theories of feminism have also been incorporated within the vast feminist philosophy. It is needless to state that the feminist literature is vast and considered very significant by writers both male and female who, through fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry, reinforced the feminist objectives and safeguarded the political, social, and economic rights of women (Cooke, 2021). In this context, Simone de Beauvoir has been recognized as one of the most significant feminist authors and icons. Many scholars assert that she did not only write books about feminism but also created the foundation that encourages the overall feminist movement. As a radical feminist, she presented many significant conceptual elements within feminist philosophy that remain relevant. Her significant writings, including *The Second Sex* and *Feminine Mystique*, have remained among the most celebrated works of feminism. According to Beauvoir's Gender Theory, "Social

discrimination produces in women moral and intellectual effects so profound that they appear to be caused by nature" (De-Beauvoir, 1956, p. 18). This suggests that one does not become a woman by birth but rather by becoming a woman. This generated some significant thought about female identity, which later became the foundation of the gender equality movements, which are still very relevant in the modern world. Simone de Beauvoir also said that women, like men, are capable of making choices. And for this reason, women can evolve from their current status and thus lead themselves towards taking responsibility for themselves and acquiring freedom (Sandford, 2017).

Following this ideology, various important authors contributed to feminist literature. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), Virginia Woolf (1882–1945), and Sylvia Plath (1932–1963) are some of the other feminist authors who have generated some significant works of feminism. Later, Bell Hooks (1952–2021), Doris Lessing (1919–2013), Angela Carter (1940–1999), and Ursula K. Le Guin (1929–2018) were some other noteworthy writers who paved the way for feminist literature. But within the second-wave writers, some of the most important names were Betty Friedan (1921–2006) and Shulamith Firestone (1945–2012), who were very important (Prasad et al., 2020). Within England, as feminist writers, the names of Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively were also very significant. But before even the second wave started, the questions of female identity and self were always important approaches within the writings of the significant authors.

A book entitled *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, written by Mary Wollstonecraft, can be identified as one of the first works of feminist literature. Which is also recognized as the first unambiguous work of English literature, Mary Wollstonecraft is called the founding mother of British feminism (Cobb, 2021). It can be considered that within the authors of the early stages of feminism, a significant approach to recognition can be observed. For example, Virginia Woolf, through her novel *The Room of One's Own*, questioned how the talents of women are constantly being wasted. Moreover, her other writings, including *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), and *Orlando* (1928), are some other important feminist works that are still cherished by scholars (Black, 2019). Later, many other important writers also contributed to effective feminist perspectives along with the various movements. And

within feminist works, including fiction, some important approaches towards addressing the right to female identity in a patriarchal society can be observed.

1.5. Feminism In UK And USA

Following the literary approach of significant authors towards feminist ideologies over the several phases of feminism within the western world, a significant impact of feminism can be noticed. Many studies identify that within the western world, significant change can be observed through the feminism movement. Both in the USA and the UK, feminist approaches have helped address women's suffrage within society (Peters, 2018). Also, feminist approaches have helped in the process of generating significant opportunities for women, including education, equal pay, individual decision-making, etc.

Within the USA, the feminism movements have been significantly divided into non-linear waves of feminism that effectively molded society. But within the UK, it can be identified that through various acts and social reforms, feminist movements are approached. It needs to be focused on that through the writing of Mary Wollstonecraft, within the UK, the foundation of feministic ideologies was integrated (Jeffreys, 2018). Within the 19th century, an approach towards restoring social, political, and economic rights was implemented in the UK. In the UK, the first significant movement for British women's suffrage can be dated to 1850 within the Langham Palace Circle. This organized movement was led by Barbara Bodichon. This was mainly initiated by them to effectively raise their voice for female rights in education, law, marriage, and other areas. It can be asserted that within the UK, literary works consisting of feminist philosophy were identified as having an immense impact on social norms. Within the years 1900–1950, the women's suffrage movements were also very significant within the UK, just like in the USA. In this aspect, social and electoral reforms were integrated within the UK. Also, within the period of the 1950s to the 21st century, many acts implemented social and economic rights for women. In this context, the Equal Pay Act of 1970, the Sex Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Abortion Act were some of the significant contributions to women's rights activities within the UK (Jolly, 2019). It can be identified that within the activities related to women's rights that are mainly

concentrated in the UK, significant approaches to establishing women's identity are very prominent.

Within both the UK and USA, a very poignant socialist approach towards feminism is also identified. In this context, within various significant European countries, a mainstream feminist and a Marxist feminist can be observed. But within the UK and USA, this social approach has helped the various movements address both sides of social and radical feminism (Moghadam, 2019).

Overall, the feminist approach in both the USA and UK has followed the same non-linear form and helped establish cultural, political, and economic rights for women. Focusing on this connotation, it needs to be addressed that Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively are both British authors, and within their writhing, a significant impact of the movements can be observed. Whereas some selected writings of Penelope Lively were addressed as having efficient elements of feminist perspectives. Margaret Drabble has been recognized as one of the most feminist authors among contemporary British writers. It can be noted that both of the authors have been critically acclaimed for their representation of identity and self-ideologies. But most importantly, it can be identified that Margaret Drabble has effectively presented the problems of contemporary society through her identity, which also guides her creative identity. Within the writings of Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively, the notion of questioning the discrimination of women within society can be identified. And for this, the writings have been able to raise concerns about the restrictions that women face in acquiring their freedom, which is their birthright.

These ideologies can be effectively synchronized with the contemporary feminist approaches that are taking place in the western world. And for this reason, understanding the underlying theories and approaches of contemporary times becomes very significant. Moreover, through the analysis, it can be stated that within the foundational thoughts of feminism, the concepts of self and identity are very relevant. And this has encouraged many contemporary writers, including Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively, to integrate their implication of female identity and self-assertion perspectives within their writing.

1.6. The Literary Approach Towards Female Identity and Self Assertion

The scholars have identified that the word identity is paradoxical. The word identifies can either attribute the meaning of similarity or distinctiveness when applied to women. *Reinventing Womanhood*, written by Carolyn Heilbrun, suggests some significant confusion related to female identity and literature. The work points out that most successful women are male-identified, as women take on the identity of men (Miller, 2019). And the writer further attributes that women never meet the self, as women never go through an identity crisis. Within the book, Carolyn Heilbrun states that “the price of wifehood is abandonment of self “(p. 103, 178). In this 1979 book, the author also criticized the representation of women within literature, mainly fiction. She points out that finding women’s identities has been more complicated in fiction than in real life. This book has been very significant in finding out the actual considerations about the concepts of identity or self, or, to put it more effectively, “women’s self-identity” (Hoberman, 2019). Following this assessment, it can be concluded that within the time of movements, through questioning the gender norms that eventually diminished women, feminists focused on the significant identity of women. This can be further analyzed by examining how the feminist authors of that time did not think of identity as a name or surname. But the thought of identity was considered as the position of women within society within politics and economy. It needs to be identified that within the western world, mainly within the second wave, concerns of self and identity were most prominent, which helped the movement generate much more focus on acquiring the rights of women.

Following this, the two authors, including Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively, also presented some effective works that also considered the themes of self and identity. Through the effective analysis of their approach towards feministic literature, how both of the authors presented the concepts of self-assertion and female density can be evaluated more effectively. In this context, within the following sections, the approaches of both authors, Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively, towards feminist literature will be critically analyzed.

1.7. The Feminist Identity Theory: Women's Identity and Self-Assertion in Second-Wave Feminism

It has been identified earlier that within the first wave of feminism, the approaches and outcomes were very limited. But within the second wave of feminism, the feminist slants attained a more global exposure. In both the USA and the UK, an effective notion of gaining equal rights for women has been observed. This also led to the effective presentation of the themes of women's identity and self-assertion. According to important, well-cited studies, the second wave of feminism most prominently founded the basis for ideas of self and identity within western culture.

In this context, the feminist identity theory is very relevant, which will provide effective notions about how the selected works of Margaret Drabble and Penelope Lively have effectively portrayed the concepts related to female identity and self-assertion. The feminist identity theory evolves from Nancy Downing and Kristin Roush's model of feminist development theory. This has been asserted within their article, "From Passive Acceptance to Active Commitment: A Model of Feminist Identity Development for Women." This theory has also evolved from the "Black Identity Development Theory of 1971 (Davis et al., 2019). In 1985, the model of Nancy Downing and Kristin Roush suggested that the feminist identity develops through mainly five stages. These stages are passive acceptance, revelations, emanation, synthesis, and active commitment.

Within the passive acceptance stage, women systemically accept the traditional gender roles and norms as there is no effective presence of awareness about gender discrimination. Following this, in the revelation stage, the women face some kind of crisis or problem that encourages them to break out of the critical gender roles. In the third stage, an intimate connection with the women as a community can be observed within the female. In the synthesis, stage women tend to generate some significant attributes considering their own identity (Rodriguez & Lehman, 2017). And in the last stage, these attributes are utilized within positive social movements. Through the stages, Downing and Roush effectively explained how feminist identity is generated among women.

This can be effectively connected to the previously asserted observation of feminist author Carolyn Heilbrun, who suggested that women cannot acquire their identities because they do not face any identity crises. Though later, the model of feminist identity has been effectively utilized by psychoanalytic approaches, But it can also be seen as one of the most important approaches to understanding the identity of women and how it is developed. Following this, the second wave of feminism has also presented some significant conceptualizations about self that are eminently connected with female identity. As women have always been considered the lesser version of men, the idea of self that has been generated within a global culture is based on the masculine prototype. And for this reason, feminists have argued that the concept of self is not a metaphysical issue but rather an issue of ethical, political, and social concern.

1.8. Margaret Drabble's Approach Towards Feminist Literature

Margaret Drabble has been identified as one of the most significant feminist writers in England. Through her novel, she has questioned the contemporary struggles of women within British society. One of the most notable examples of British feminists' work is Margaret Drabble's (Fraser, 2017). It has emerged as a feminist philosophy manifesto. The author has done a better job than feminists in the past of presenting thoughts and bringing up issues relating to women and our culture. She described how appealingly limited female freedom is. The strong women who serve as role models for other women fight for their rights. As a woman, a role model, a mother, and a working woman, she defines the impacts of social work on women workers. For all the women, she raised her voice against social dominance for women (Nhengu, 2019). Margaret Drabble works for constitutions and against the stereotype of gender discrimination at the time of her motherhood. Drabble edited some of her books in 1985 and 2000.

Her review of feminism and the academic criteria seems to believe that a feminist highlights their issues in society, where they belong. Her study of research highlights the value of the socio-economic impact of female identity. Both reviews by academic critics agree that the feminist novel She would refer to herself as a novelist in her nineteenth-century novel, "Conclusive Conduction," for the readers. The theories of feminists tend to focus on the highest quality of published editions. It is designed by the

community as a source of feminism. The Millstone presents a visionary stage of the patriarchy system (Farris & Rottenberg, 2017).

Margaret Drabble began writing after graduating from the University of Cambridge, and she uses her personal identity and the issues with the society she lives in to confront them in her writings. The central character and the other circumstances are shown in this situation, and stress is a necessary condition for their growth and development. Drabble was connected with individuals' attempts to define self-study as well as being interested in social changes (Tan, 2021). She wrote about the tradition of such authors as Henry James, Eliot, and Bennett. Drabble's recent novels included the part about the woman unsure of her life direction after graduation or dropping out of university. She studied the relationship between a man and a woman who had children before becoming famous. In addition to her novels, Drabble wrote about several books on the general subjects of literature. She also wrote many journals, articles, and screenplays. *A Summer Birdcage* was first published in 1963 and explains that women's educational opinions were expanding and they were becoming more active in the workforce. Although *The Radiant Way*, Margaret Drabble's tenth book, has almost solely been discussed from the perspective of feminist critique, the author's use of spatial narrative voices to vary the experiences of women is noteworthy. This is usually conducted on female characters and the progress of feminine critics. Drabble frequently stops time to allow for comparable story events to occur in a new setting. Drabble explains the feminist plot through the variety of female experiences (Akardi, 2017). The characters created by Margaret Drabble draw attention to the different social norms that apply to men and women, which place additional limitations on women's liberties. This stereotype approaches; do not hesitate with the prospect of their express opposition to any forms of gender discrimination. Some argue for discourses of equality rather than women's empowerment. Equality simply classifies the gender binary system. In this sense, the initial stage of gender equalization is accessed through political, cultural, social, and economic institutions. It is the main democratic problem of the initial stage, which is 'social changes in society. Other innovations Drabble considered the community's choice regarding the characters' reformation Characters in drabbles are steadfast in their fight against reforming the obvious social, material, and moral issues facing women. But fulfilling women's rights is constrained by the reasonable scale of this issue. It's interesting to note that Margaret Drabble was drawn to the issue of

women's roles in society frequently before the feminist movement became concerned with this issue. When she first started writing about the women's movement, there was no feminist criticism. One of M. Drabb's earliest works to adhere to the exceptional role of these developed and consistent feminist beliefs is her novel *Millstone*, which is regarded as one of her best works. This decision, which could be made more easily under the current situation, was seen as a challenge to society.

1.9. Penelope Lively's Approach Towards Feminist Literature

Penelope Lively is also considered one of the most significant writers of feminist philosophy. But within her works, a more poignant approach than in traditional feminist literature can be observed. Penelope Elizabeth Lively was born on March 17, 1933 in Cairo as Penelope Elizabeth Lively. She was sent to school in England at the age of 12 years old, and she graduated from St. Anne's College in 1956 with a degree in English literature. She started homeschooling at the age of twelve and learned from various books sent to her from England. She recalls making the move to the United States from Egypt (McLeod, 2017). She and her family are still in England, where her husband is a professor of political science at the University of West Warwick, and their two children were born there. After finishing Penelope's first novel at the age of 26, her son Adam went on to publish a second novel. Josephine, her daughter, studied at the London Philharmonic Orchestra. When the academics were integrated by her links to the history of experimental techniques. Since Lively cares deeply about women's and other underrepresented groups, she is at the forefront of feminist and postmodern fiction discussions. In this book, Mary Hurley Moran examines Lively's place in the Western women's writing tradition. In the early British feminist traditions, feminism was informed by a recent philosophical interest in the relationship between language and power, as represented in Derrida and the French feminists' work. From a neglected novel for adults, she loved the children's collection forms. Lively also chose the relevant ideas of her novel to transform. I also wrote the novel about sexuality and women's rights. In the life of every writer, there is a moment when they are asked to recommend their publisher. Some of the recommended books are very meaningful and important to those who have always been a source of great ideological humor (Venell, 2021). She started publishing millions of her books in her late 30s. The reader was exposed to a style of

modern writing through the voices and thoughts of these female characters. Other contemporary literary fictions and the cultural effects of novel forms have been telling a story about the history of those appearances. Being a woman, she was entered into the old age of contemporary fiction. As well, those titles deserve to be the better form of transformation, which is considered by a well-known writer. The other journalists compare this fact in a commercial and political influencer review (Novellis, 2018). It is offered to the readers that international perspectives are dealing with critical analysis, and critical events also turn into the movement of the feminist structure in society.

Lively's initial survey of picture book writing was inspired by her interest in English history. When she wrote *The Road to Litchfield* in the mid-1970s, she was making the transition from writing for children to writing for adults (Faris, 2019). As a result, she has been largely unavailable for children's literature due to a lack of inspiration and a lack of ideas for adult writing. Publishers of literary biographies both published on the article forum. The information was gathered from modern writers for initiative purposes. Penelope Lively has written a lot of books, novels, and screenplays, especially since the early 1990s, when academics started taking notice of her historical connections and experimental storytelling technical ideas (Einarsen, 2019). That was both a subtitle and an introduction. Due to Lively's deep concentration on women and other underprivileged groups, she is the master of discussions about feminist parties and postmodern fictional articles. By comparing Lively to Margaret Atwood and Margaret Drabble, author Mary Hurley Moran explores the place of British feminists Doris Lessing and Marilyn French in Western women's writing traditions (Mosmann, 2018). On the other side of history, since Derrida and the French feminists' work on the novel *Moon Tiger* was published in 1987, there has been a flurry of scholarship on Lively's life as an emotional historian who works against a patriarchal model, as opposed to her male colleagues' research (90). Surprisingly, the British author has been paid for this work with increasing importance since 1987. All of them are very sophisticated works of literature she has produced with the concern of philosophical and psychological efforts. *Moon Tiger* Lively has also made a place for her in the women's movement's formation. Her traditional role on career-moving steps that she unconditionally felt with the social culture experiments There was an argument between French feminists and American and British feminists who have adopted more complex theoretical reviews (Kim, 2020). They argue for patriarchal values, which are deeply concerned with all

signs and structure-formed challenges. It is concerned with the subjective nature of different experiences.

In Lively's novels, the aging protagonists present the complexity of feminine concepts. Being a woman and entering old age is a contemporary presentation of the recent study (Smolko et al., 2018). The domestic part of those affecting theories is that they are continuously achieving essentially outside of the domestic space. Following the act of social strategy, it is efficient to work collaboratively on these public concepts (Abd El Aziz, 2018). Although British writer Penelope Lively has had to define the mode of female aging complexity for the last few years, when she almost gets there, define the female characters in different ways. She applies the transformation theory to a female character during the course of her writing career. The women in this study are aware of both societal expectations and the physical indicators of aging (Leonidas & Santos, 2020). They make the decision at a pivotal point in their lives since it is more comfortable for the older protagonists. With contemporary efforts, they have provided a particular social atmosphere in both their professional and personal lives. Women considered their aging protagonists in accordance with their present appearance (Bonasera, 2019). This process involves introspection about past, present, and future opportunities. By integrating into these crucial phases, as they have done throughout their lives, they will accept aging.

The elderly protagonists of Lively's four novels tell their own stories (Ramadhan, 2018). The female protagonists' aging appearance challenges the constricting idea of commitment to the elderly body and, consequently, to the social and cultural connotations associated with old age. In these novels, there is a discussion about life after aging and its weaknesses. It has to be overcome by the resistance of realistic characterization. It has a strong description of mental and physical health status, the other perspective of boundaries between young and old, and reality belonging to it. Personal narrative fictionalizes the whole characteristics of the female aging protagonist. That term surrounded them as subjected tools. By the end of this theory, social judgment becomes restricted to the stereotypical image.

2. THE FEMALE IDENTITY AND SELF-ASSERTION IN MOON TIGER AND THE PHOTOGRAPH BY PENELOPE LIVELY

2.1. A Review of Penelope Lively's Life and Works

This chapter introduces the struggles of women against issues like violence, self-identity, and rights. Such issues were the main concerns of the second wave of feminism from the late 1960s to the 1980s, the years after the Second World War. Here, women returned to their roles as housewives and mothers, and men returned to their workplaces or were replaced by women in the defense forces.

The chapter analyzes the female characters in *Moon Tiger* (1987) and *The Photograph* (2003) by Penelope Lively. The author portrayed the quest for identity and self-assertion by women in her writings, and the chapter highlights the biography of the author in terms of her works and personal life. The chapter also discusses the perspectives of other feminist writers of second-wave feminism, like Simon Di Beauvoir.

Moon Tiger starts with Claudia dying from cancer and recollecting the memories where she restricts herself from stereotypical gender roles and stands up for herself. Here, vibrant depictions in a variety of ways show how Lively uses the character Claudia to challenge patriarchal beliefs and demonstrate that achieving female liberty requires more than merely copying male behaviors. Claudia is, in fact, an existential hero trying to carve out a life in accordance with her own heartfelt values. *The photograph* starts with Glyn, who finds a snapshot where he caught his wife cheating on him. He was filled with anger and anxiety. Basically, the novel plots the story of Glyn and his wife, Kath, who commit suicide and die. In the story, lively enlightens the way Kath behaves to prove her identity through the narration of the events by Glyn.

The writings and portrayals of women in *Moon Tiger* and *The Photograph* of Lively give motivation to women to struggle with identity and self-assertion. Both novels discuss the relationships of women with their husbands, lovers, and children and are influenced by the flow of time and, consequently, by their experiences in their perception of the world.

She is a British author who has written a number of books that have won awards and collections of short stories that appeal to both adults and children. It is more common to refer to her as Penelope Lively, despite the fact that her full name is Dame Penelope Margaret Lively. She was nominated to win “the Booker Prize” not once but twice in 1977 for her novel *The Road to Lichfield*. Lively was born in Cairo, Egypt, in 1933. She moved to London when she was 12 years old, after the breakup of her parents’ marriage, after having spent her childhood life in Egypt. The majority of her short stories focused on the significance of remembering the past and maintaining history. She received her college education from Oxford’s College of St. Anne’s in 1954. Since early life, literature has been her own fascination, as she enjoyed reading and writing very much during the early periods of her childhood (Koch, 2014).

Lively had read the Bible and studied Greek mythology since she was very young. She had already indulged in an intensive discussion over Thackeray and Dickens with her nanny in primary school in Egypt. She has also extended her reading by making her way through her parents’ library. Slowly and gradually, her passion for reading became a passion for writing, and she was constantly feeling a strong urge to write. This time also, she was highly supported and encouraged by the educational program attended by her and her nanny. As a result, she started her literary career by rewriting some stories that she had already read. In this manner, she began her literary career by constructing and creating her own stories from the already-written ones. Although her fascination did not get enough scope during her life at boarding school in England, it did get enough scope during her time at Oxford University (Koch, 2014).

Her first book was dedicated to children named *Astercote*, was published in 1970. This novel follows a plotline in which some modern English villagers fear a resurgence of a medieval plague. After this novel, she has written 20 more novels for children, all of which are set in rural England. Furthermore, her first novel for adults, *The Road to Lichfield* (1977), revolves around shifting perspectives when the truths embedded in the past change when viewed from a modern perspective. This novel reflects the author’s interest in history. Some other novels written by Lively for adults are *Treasures of Time*, published in 1979; *Judgement Day* (1980); *Moon Tiger* (1987); *Passing On* (1989); *City of the Mind* (1991); *Cleopatra’s Sister* (1993); and many more. (McCarthy, 2018).

The Treasures of Time has won the British National Book Award, and *Moon Tiger* has won the Booker Prize, based on the author's partly recollections of Egypt. Another novel, *Heat Wave*, published in 1996, tells the story of a disintegrating marriage. *Spiderweb*, published in 1998, presents the story of an anthropologist who is reflecting on her past. Finally, in 2003, another novel by Lively came out, known as *The Photograph*. This novel is about a man who makes an investigation into his wife's infidelity posthumously (Renk, 2011).

Furthermore, on the one hand, Lively's *Oleander, Jacaran Stories*, published in 1994, is a memoir that presents the childhood Lively spent in Egypt. On the other hand, *Making It Up*, published in 2005, is termed an "anti-memoir" as it presents a series of narratives drawn from her life based on her perspective. Another novel, *Life in the Garden*, published in 2017, is categorized as a horticultural memoir. During this time, other novels written by her included *Consequences* (2007) and *Family Album* (2009). In addition, in 2012, Penelope Lively was made Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (Lu, 1999).

Penelope Lively concentrates her writing on the lives of female protagonists whose lives have been shaped by particular historical and cultural events in the majority of her novels. She featured protagonists in four novels that were released between 1987 and 2004 who were middle-aged or older. The readers are exposed to a variety of realities through the voices and points of view of these female protagonists, who are in their fifties or older in a modern culture. Some researchers, like Susan Sontag and Simone de Beauvoir, draw attention to the double standard of aging. Such critics have confirmed that society penalized women more harshly when they manifested visual symptoms of aging relative to men. In works produced by Penelope Lively, the stereotypical image of female aging is pervasive to a more significant extent. When the entire world has indulged itself in supporting the double standard of aging regarding women, she has provided center stage to female aging protagonists (Oró-Piqueras, 2016).

The novel proves to be the ideal medium or instrument for the majority of women writers, including Penelope Lively, to identify and construct a specific female identity. Women's history has never been chronicled from their perspective. History has always favored wealthy individuals or those in power. The novels written from women's

perspectives have started filling the age-old wide gaps by helping shed light on the past of females. Generally, all the novels written by Penelope Lively present the author's fascination with history. Themes such as memory, connection between past and present, history, and historiography are prominent in her works. In addition to this, the preoccupation with the connection between past and present and history and historiography is connected with the years spent by Lively in Egypt. Egypt is described as a complicated place where the integration of both modern and ancient times can be seen and where past and present are easily integrated. However, the fascination of Lively with history did not stem only from her childhood years spent in Egypt but also from the turbulences of World War Two which has left a vast and brutal effect on history and her personal memory. Both she and her parents have witnessed the expansion of the war into the Egyptian desert. Therefore, history and feminism have always played a crucial role in her literary career.

2.2. The Female Identity and Self Assertion in *Moon Tiger*

In *Moon Tiger*, Penelope Lively was able to connect to feminist thought by creating liberated female characters. In the early days of the second wave of feminism, between the 1960s and the early 1970s, feminist novels often featured liberated female heroines breaking out of traditional roles or enlightened readers by revealing the negative effects of patriarchal society (Moran, 1990). Feminism entails rejecting inferiority and pursuing acknowledgment. It aims to instill in women a sense of themselves as deserving, useful, and valuable members of society (Chukwuma, 1990, p. ix). According to Beauvoir, a woman's gender serves as the background against which her speaking acts stand out. Beauvoir expresses her rejection of the Cartesian division of the body and mind:

It turns out . that the first thing Beauvoir has to say about herself is that she is a woman. This means that unlike Descartes Beauvoir begins or call themselves, women (Moi, 2001, p.194).

In *Moon Tiger*, Penelope Lively mounts a similar subversive attack on established assumptions about reality. Claudia, dying from cancer at seventy, lies in her hospital bed. Although the nurses treat her as half-mad, as she mutters to herself, her internal voice glitters with humor and insight, as she informs us she will participate in "writing a history of the world... and in the process, my own" (Lively, 1987, p.1). Born

in 1910, Claudia came of age at a time when the majority of women still clung to the Victorian notion of the "angel in the house." Early feminists liked Claudia because she exemplified the sort of independent woman that early feminists valued (Moran, 1990 p. 89). Claudia entered the world of men and succeeded there. On the simplest level, she demonstrates this ambition by her refusal to adopt either of the two images available to women of her era: on the one hand, that of the self-effacing wife or secretary; on the other, that of the "dried-up" (Lively, 1987, p. 5), "severely clothed" (Lively, 1987, p. 148), imitation male career woman. Instead, she flaunts a colorful, sexy wardrobe and makes the most of her red-haired, green-eyed beauty.

Moon Tiger is an elegant portrayal of a female who has proven her self-assertion or the professional woman who challenged the rules individually but, precisely because she was so successful at doing so, never made common cause with others of her sex. Claudia is explicit about her politics on this matter:

I was thirty-eight when Lisa was born, and doing nicely. Two books under my belt, some controversial journalism, and a reputation for saved my life. If I had been a man I might well have died in the war (Lively, 1987, p.22).

Raschke (1995) and Moran (1990) perceive this fictional mix of autobiography and history, with its interweaving of public and private, as an assertion of feminist historiography. The defiantly subjective authority of Claudia's account is the stylistic corollary of her pioneering status as a woman war correspondent in the Second World War and then a professional historian. Always determinedly feminine in glamour, heels, and sexuality, she claims to have it all, refusing to choose between desire and achievement, love and work. An unmarried and largely uninterested mother, she candidly admits, "I was not conventional in conventional sense" (Lively, 1987, p. 48). The self-consciousness of this rejection of conventional women's roles is underlined by Claudia's triumphant comparisons between herself and her stupid sister-in-law, who consoles herself with overeating for her unhappy marriage and failure to get her English, upper-middle-class house in order. She also compares herself with her mother, who spent her time reading the West Dorset Gazette and Country Life and worrying about her floribunda roses after her husband was killed in the First World War. As Claudia perceives it, "History killed Father" (Lively, 1987, p. 13), and Mother therefore "retired from history" (Lively, 1987, p. 13). In this sense, being a war widow seems merely to exaggerate the secluded but suffocating private sphere of the middle-class woman. By

contrast, a war historian and correspondent asserts her right not only to participate but to define history. Like Liza, she is aware that history is written by the one with the loudest voice. Unlike Liza, she is able to speak loudly without the aid of a narrator.

Raschke also points out that in the midst of her deconstruction of time and place, Claudia herself seems 'completely composed' and enjoying her own performance in a text that abounds with theatrical metaphors. Rather than a post-modern aestheticizing of the everyday that Raschke identifies, I would argue that it is the formalizing of a disengagement from the politics of individualism that is ostensibly in question.

Obviously, Claudia Hampton is a good example of a feminist. In an era when women are typically expected to stay at home and experience what Debrah Raschke fittingly refers to as the "mother-madonna-angel-in-the-house syndrome" (Raschke, 1995, p. 119). Claudia is a courageous, powerful, and independent lady who has struggled her whole life to discover and eventually choose the route that is best for her. On the other hand, she immediately begins to challenge the norms and restrictions that society has imposed on her in the belief that they are suitable for members of the feminine sex. She opposes both the traditional role of women as well as the standards and concepts of femininity that are embedded in patriarchal society. Without ever being married, she dares to have numerous affairs and sexual liberation:

Claudia, like her writing, is unorthodox. Adventurous, witty, and a bit arrogant, but fully, playfully disregarding the confines that usually mark women's roles (Raschke, 1995, p.115).

Claudia frequently ignores Lisa, as Raschke points out in the above passage, proving that she rejects the assumption maintained by society that women are mothers by default or by biological need. She might even be denying that she has children at all. As a natural result of this, Lisa ignores Claudia on a regular basis, and if Claudia wishes to continue her career, Lisa sends Claudia to reside with her grandmother. After Claudia rejected Jasper's marriage offers, she intended to bring up their daughter on her own. However, when Claudia's daughter turned out to be quite different from Claudia's ideal kid, she neglected her responsibilities as a mother. It is believed that Claudia, Lisa's mother, gave birth to her daughter out of complete and utter selfishness in an attempt to see herself reincarnated in the child:

She was a disappointment to me. And I, presumably, to her. I looked for my clothes-shopping sherry-drinking figure like the mothers of her school friends. [...] She began to bore me. And I sensed her disapproval (Lively, 1987, p.51-52).

In the novel, Lisa's character is different from that of her mother, Claudia. She thinks that her mother should be like the mothers of her schoolmates. She did not meet the expectations of her mother, and Claudia gets bored of it as she wants her life without limits and regulations. She is an outspoken woman and wants her daughter to be like her.

Lively can be criticized for the novel's and her own disinterest in social justice problems, like Renk's views on the novels of Moon Tiger as a demonstration of "imperial nostalgia" that "continues the legacy of imperialism... and continues to represent and codify colonial relationships" (Renk, 2011, p. 218).

Renk relates the moon tiger to imperial feminism to endure the practice of feminism and organize relationships.

Diana Wallace offers a more accurate meaning of "historical romances" by focusing on the significance of combining distance with truth and emphasizing that there are still persistent issues with the subgenre, "the centralization is pushed into the background" (Wallace, 2004, p. 153–154). This is easily applicable to Moon Tiger because, despite the fact that Claudia's work and narration deal extensively with battles, conflicts, and general history, she connects it all to her domain, where she "has the last say." The right of the historian (Lively, 1987, p.6) Even yet, Miss Hampton is not a helpless heroine in need of saving; rather, "Miss Hampton has a way with her" (Lively, 1987, p. 98). Claudia uses her femininity and attractiveness as tools to gain the upper hand over the men she hangs out with. In other words, even though the character is a woman and the book's main themes are love and family, these factors alone, if such gendering is even possible, do not allow the book to be categorized as merely a novel for women. The most important aspects of Moon Tiger's storyline and organization center on Claudia's interactions with the men in her life, especially Tom, and make it evident that the book is a historical romance. Unquestionably important historical events like the Second World War, yet as Moran states, "What is more lasting for her than the public experience is the personal and spiritual experience of Claudia's life" (Moran, 1990, p. 92). Claudia does not risk current events and is not Lively's surrogate, despite the fact that her hospital bed is set in the late 1980s. She might voice some of her thoughts, but she has a strong personality of her own, was born 23 years earlier, and has had a very different life. Furthermore, Lively is perhaps a little more humble than "by far the best, the most astute, the least deceivable" (Lively, 1987, p. 91–92). Claudia

considers herself a woman in her professional life. This is how she chooses to assert herself.

Claudia clarifies her viewpoint, which is that history is not a dry subject that has no application to modern life. The way she views "the whole triumphant murderous unstoppable chute" (Lively, 1987, p. 4), which is the history of mankind, will be illustrated in the next chapters. As Claudia notes, this is a crucial issue as "it enlarges me; it also resounds within that experience" (Lively, 1987, p. 159).

Because Claudia has such a strong feeling of independence, she is able to gain self-assertion by comparing herself to men like Gordon, who, in her mind, are less independent than she is; "sharp, clever women... would never do as permanencies" (Lively, 1987, p. 24). This is quite clear when he visits her in the hospital since he is only allowed to approach her because she isn't "like dauntless, quarrelsome, unquenchable Claudia" (Lively, 1987, p. 164). She briefly loses her imposing status as a powerful woman, and "when he sees that she is crying, the old proximity is there; it's years ago again." (Lively, 1987, p. 164). Though as a self-made lady, outside of that little occurrence, there is no way that Claudia could be the girl who danced for hours with him, "further from him than anyone else... [although] he wishes it were otherwise" (Lively, 1987, p. 165). In order for Claudia to keep her independence, she has had to go against the traditions and conventions of the patriarchal system that she lives in, such as the marriage institution, the idea that women should sacrifice themselves in the home, and the idea that women should be submissive in general. She has also expressed the same type of displeasure with the idea of religion as an open religious skeptic, exhibiting "God the Father that she feels toward men who have gotten ahead in their professions simply because of their sex" (Moran, 1990, p. 90). Her strong female voice, which deviates from the "archetypal chronicler" (Lively, 1987, p. 5) trend, is necessary for the historiography of male leaders and autocrats. For the sake of their own emotional stability, men like Jasper and Gordon need the presence of women like Claudia in their lives. Claudia took a stand against the thinking of Western civilization, which is based on the belief that only men can fully and accurately comprehend reality. Male historians claim they can write about the past in an objective manner because they believe their perceptions are accurate. Of course, Claudia is aware that this premise is untrue (Moran, 1990). Hernando Cortez, whom Claudia described as the historical character who might

be said to have influenced Claudia most violently, was "brave, charismatic, obstinate, and apparently indestructible... greedy, fanatical, and unimaginative" (Lively, 1987, p. 154).

Moon Tiger often investigates a variety of gender-related subjects, including but not limited to marriage life; motherhood as the prospect of a successful career for women; and female engagement in life events. These kinds of concepts are still common in feminist novels, which often feature a woman on a quest for herself. Given that women make up the majority of the population, it is clear that identification, especially a female identity, is a major concern in this work, which is influenced by a variety of contexts, from the personal to the social, historical, and ideological (Wojcik-Andrews, 1995).

Claudia is aware that in order to actualize her distinct identity and self-assertion, she must at least partially move it beyond such a sense of self, which has the possibility of boosting her identity and assertion. In order for Claudia to fully realize her separate identity, she must, at least in part, go past this sense of self-in-relationship. In addition, for Claudia to come to a complete understanding of her own identity, she has to go beyond the concept of "self-in-relationship". She further strives to avoid being defined by the stereotypes that are held about women in her time and society because she feels that they can be limiting in terms of how she defines herself. Being a mother, historian, writer, or lover is insufficient for Claudia. Instead, she aspires to be many Claudias, or a "myriad Claudias" (Lively, 1987, p. 5). Other people have similar images as she has in her mind: Jasper and Tom have different opinions of Claudia, just as Lisa's is not the same as Laszlo's. Although there is no one Claudia, she has a disjointed identity. Her multiple identities also enable her to avoid the fixed identities that patriarchal societies have designed to trap women into.

In fact, Claudia must ask herself during her search for identification whether there can ever be a complete person, a united identity, in such a dispersed environment. She admits the answer only at the end of her life. Because of how fragmented her identity is, she is a complete individual: "All I can think, when I hear your voice, is that the past is true, which both appalls the world's. Because unless I am a part of everything, I am nothing" (Lively, 1987, p. 207).

The manner in which Claudia narrates her life events is comprised of numerous voices, ideas, and viewpoints, emphasizing this deconstruction of an identity. History and a woman's personal history (her road to self-definition) cannot be recounted in a linear or chronological fashion. It is possible to see Claudia's account of her life as a feminist critique of male, patriarchal storytelling tendencies. By rejecting conventional discourse with her kaleidoscopic approach to historical narration, she develops a feminine counterpoint to masculine historiography. Since Claudia thinks that retelling history chronologically or linearly is distinctly male, she avoids doing so. She believes that a linear conception of time (the arrow of time) is improper for understanding the experiences of women because it is associated with men and patriarchy. As a result, *Moon Tiger* adheres to the tradition of women's autobiography. Early autobiographies by women already show authors who don't adhere to the objective as well as the disjunctive or discontinuous narrative structures preferred by men, frequently disrupting the chronological order with flashbacks, anecdotes, and character portraits (Jelinek, 2004). Claudia Hampton's decision to use a number of different voices to tell the story must also be considered a feminist device since it brings focus to the specific female self-separation and the perception of identity that women encounter whenever it comes to the formation of their selfhood. Claudia Hampton is aware of the inclination that many women have, which is to define who they are based on the relationships that they have with other people. The feminist implications of the novel are outlined in an essay by Debrah Raschke: "*Moon Tiger* thus not only provides a space for structures that have made such an exclusion possible" (Raschke, 1995, p. 117).

Claudia Hampton, who is currently constrained to a bed due to terminal cancer, remembers vividly the occurrences in her life in "reflections and memories" (Moran, 1990, page 91), supplying the *Moon Tiger* reader with a reminder of her personal development and her search for identity during periods of uncertainty. Because it is the only way to come up with one-of-a-kind identities, memory reveals the crucial relevance it has for establishing human identity. This is due to the fact that unique identities can only be created by personal memories. The quest of this female protagonist, who travels across the universe to finally create her own position and to find herself as she explores the universe, is a component of traditional masculine culture.

The beginning of Claudia's global history occurs at the conclusion of her life, when it is assumed that her trip is complete. Claudia's search has entailed multiple trips, which has not always been easy for a woman, considering that she was reared in an era in which society did not expect women to fly and travel the globe. Claudia is confined to one location, similar to women of centuries past, and the only part of her that is free to explore the outside world is her intellect. She is essentially constrained to the feminine and private realms of existence once more as a result. As a result, Moon Tiger appears to subvert both male and feminine tropes. Eventually, Claudia disapproves of typical gender norms that might limit her. She thereby removes herself from roles that limit or even define her as a wife or mother. Claudia opposes a classic or prototypical feminine identity, which patriarchal culture considers not only acceptable but also desirable for women. Instead, she finds personal satisfaction in her profession as a historian, which contributes to the formation of her distinctive personality and the final gain of identity and self-assertion.

2.3. The Female Identity and Self Assertion *The Photograph*

The Photograph by Penelope Lively is a verbatim and pictorial palimpsest of a woman whose demise took place well before the time period of this novel. By using a single image of Kath, her main character, and reconstructed memories of her that are communicated through the internal monologues of other characters, Lively creates an intriguing portrait of her. In a lot of Lively's literature, both living and non-living things elicit memories and serve as a sort of Proustian bridge, connecting the present and past. In *The Photograph*, a startling photograph shatters preconceived notions about the main character, upsetting memories and shattering preconceived notions of who she is. Characters are confused and doubt their knowledge of the past, which they consider to be the foundation for their current conceptions of who they are.

The character of Kath, and more particularly, the memory of Kath as she is thought about and revisited by her family and friends within the frame of this photograph, serves as the central theme of the novel. Glyn, Kath's husband, is a well-known professor at a London university who specializes in landscape history. He comes across a huge envelope that belonged to his late wife while looking for some academic

papers in an abandoned cupboard one afternoon. His wife passed away before the story began. Several random papers and another envelope with the note "DON'T OPEN—DESTROY" were contained in the envelope with the label "Keep!" written by Kath (Lively, 2003, p. 3). When Glyn discovers an image of a group of people in which his wife and her brother-in-law are holding hands with their backs to the photographer, he disregards Kath's written instructions. Their hands are hidden from everyone save the photographer and the ultimate viewers of this shot; this touch seems stealthy and private, more like a short embrace than a sign of friendliness. The nature of their embrace and the identification of the brother-in-law are both confirmed by a folded note that was provided with the photo. "I can't resist sending you this," the note reads. negative, supposedly destroyed It is definitively written in her brother-in-law's Nick's handwriting reads, "Blessings, my love" (Lively, 2003, p. 4). Glyn challenges his wife's loyalty to him right away, wondering if she had a history of being disloyal to him and when she might have had an affair with Nick. These worries influenced his choice to ask Kath's sister, Elaine, if she was aware of the relationship or of Kath's potential for adultery. As a result of these disclosures, Elaine and Nick break up; Nick then moves in with his daughter, severely upsetting the family's dynamic. Through the lens of this image, each character questions what they know about Kath's life and discusses the potential repercussions of Kath and Nick's adultery. The characters gradually come to terms with how little they actually understand about Kath or their relationships with her. Elaine, Gyn, and Kath's friend Oliver Watson, who took this photo, eventually turn to Kath's close friend Mary Pakard for assistance. These conversations with Mary help Kath understand the circumstances behind her suicide, help her reconcile her memories with reality, and finally enable Kath to replace the cabinet's picture.

In Glyn's writing, Kath is portrayed as a beautiful woman who looks like her mother and is boundless to do anything of her choice. Here Glyn points out that "she was a startlingly attractive woman. Not a conventional beauty, but... tilted when she smiled" (Lively, 2003, p. 10). Lively portrays the beauty of Kath in that she is attractive, and her looks are hypnotic. Lively is praised for her features, and her green eyes can attract anybody if noticed. She attracts not only men but also women and children (Lively, 2003). However, Penelope also represents Kath as an unrestricted woman. Glyn points out:

Kath did not work. Kath was not fettered by obligation, by responsibility, by having to be in a certain place at a particular time, by having to do things she might not especially wish to do. In the mind's eye, Kath is forever breezing down the street, smiling, traveling light, while all around her is perforce and necessity: the postman dealing out mail, door-to-door, the van driver heaving cartons into the corner shop, the patrolling traffic warden, the gang busy with hydraulic drills and JCB, the estate agents displayed at their desks, the driver of the taxi panting at the lights. All except Kath, who is bound for some destination of her choice, to do something she prefers to do (Lively, 2003, p.8).

The above passage depicts that Kath was free of obligations and responsibilities even though she did not work and was also not restricted from doing anything. Here, Glyn thinks she has no bounds, yet she betrayed him. Even when Kath was working, it didn't look like she was. Here, Glyn said that

Feminism passed her by. Women's rights meant nothing to her because she had them anyway. Nothing had ever been denied to her because she was a woman. Being a woman enabled her to sail through life, setting her own course, following mood and fancy (Lively, 2003, p.9).

She chose to work according to her mood and fantasy during those brief intervals when she was employed, whether for pay or not. Helping out in an art gallery or craft store, getting engaged in a music festival, or conducting photo research for a publisher suddenly sounded interesting or enjoyable. And somehow, Kath was gone when the excitement and amusement died down. She had simply vanished from one day to the next, possibly with a hazy apology grin, but possibly not (Lively, 2003). Glyn also depicts that "but not every woman can do that, thinks Glyn... And why could Kath do it?" (Lively, 2003, p.10). Though he depicts Kath as somebody anybody can attract with her attractive features, as explained above, he was also attracted to her (Lively, 2003). Lively expresses it from the eyes of Glyn: "He sees her. He could not take his eyes off them once, and they surge again, full frontal, at this moment" (Lively, 2003, p. 10).

Glyn is still searching through the cupboard, but given how cloudy his thoughts are, he runs the risk of missing the offprint if it comes his way. He realizes that even though these concepts are nothing new, what just happened has some sort of impact on everything. Everything has taken a turn due to the illness and fever he is currently experiencing. Kath is both who she has always been and someone new. She caught his attention since he is now considering her differently (Lively, 2003).

In the novel, Lively partially makes use of these techniques. She specifically favors simple clauses and alternates between simple and sophisticated phrases while slipping in information that is ultimately vital to the plot but may not seem relevant at the time of reading. Glyn is unable to understand the truth raised; she used metanarrative

to allude to the potential interpretation of the story (Lively, 2003). In other words, he is blind to the side tale that has emerged alongside his story and perspective.

He is at the scene of the photograph. He does not need the thing itself, he knows his own is fatally distorted. ... there is a lethal spin imposed by the photograph and that scribbled note (Lively, 2003, p.18).

Glyn tries to comprehend the missed potential in his own life as he sees himself through Kath. The sentence above illustrates what may be a common and almost insignificant incident in life. In essence, the book is a choral biography; individual incidents are simply repetitions of events that happen against the protagonists' volition and beyond their comprehension. They only have a small part of the narrative. The image shakes up preconceived notions and forces everyone to re-examine their knowledge of themselves, Kath, and their interactions with her. According to this viewpoint, Glyn must experience pain when networking because his compulsive desire is backed by words that shorten time and keep him in permanent agony. In the scenario below, feeling and perception reach a peak that verbs describe as a state of anguish. The novel's main theme of knowledge is also foregrounded by the change in tense and aspect. "He has reviewed the years with Kath and has found small comfort. Now, all I need to know is if she knew. Back then. If she has known since". (Lively, 2003, p. 21). The protagonist's own research follows Kath's steps. She first manifests as an impenetrable kid, then as a flamboyant female, and eventually as a sensual and vibrant woman and wife. Despite hiding resentment and a persistent sense of being missed, she intrigues everyone. Here, Lively points out:

He has lived with these ghosts for years—they were tamed, under control—but now things have shifted; he summons her up in anger and frustration. There she is, as ever; but unreachable in a different way (Lively, 2003, p.19).

Glyn thinks about the moments he spends with his wife now that he is frustrated and angry with her new betrayal character but she is unreachable to him. The bits and pieces that her friends and family bring to her persona help to create and reassemble Kath's complex identity, which is then renewed by the photograph.

Mary Packard is the only one who can shed light on key aspects of his wife's life, so Glyn goes to her to conclude the investigations. The lady alone is aware of Kath's pain, including her unfulfilled desire for a kid, her second miscarriage, and her feeling of solitude. Kath commits suicide due to her overwhelming despondency and isolation (Lively, 2003).

Finally, the husband discovers a melancholic and gloomy woman whom he has never met before. The past/present contrast is reinforced, and the man's guilt and cruelty are substantiated by the verbal time shifting:

Mary talks about a Kath whom ... miscarriage. The second non-baby. The first one wasn't yours. Way back, that was. When she was in her twenties. She told me about it once in an offhand way - that way that always set alarms bells ringing (Lively, 2003, p.174-175).

The intense emotional suffering it was causing Kath, her husband's lack of interest, and her sense of isolation drove her into Nick's arms. Her brother-in-law, with whom she had a covert relationship, was open to the woman's incessant need for affection and provided assurance from Glyn. The actions of the lovers are captured through photography. Although it can only represent Kath as carefree and walking with Nick, it cannot reveal the true nature of Kath, which makes it an unreliable indicator of treachery.

The photograph is archived at the book's conclusion, and visual understanding is given a new purpose. A novel method of thinking that is unable to help Glyn transcend his selfishness and self-centered perspective on life. It is no accident that Glyn chooses to keep the picture in the cabinet, fostering his sorrow rather than a rich memory of his wife. The image will remain there as a reminder of death.

That photograph is back in the landing cupboard. Glyn does not wish or intend to look at it again. He might as well destroy it, but the destruction of archival material offends his deepest instinct. Let it lie there. ... But every now and then this detachment fails him. He is flung inexorably into contemplation of the other things. That day, above all. The day he returned in the evening to this new Kath. And of living without her, in a fresh sharp deprivation (Lively, 2003, p.184-185).

Glyn realizes the mistake of not having quality time with his wife and what he has lost through Kath's suicide. After knowing the truth, he finds himself a different person when he returns to the house. He discovers a new way to live with Kath's new personality, but there isn't a new way to live without her.

A network of linkages that further construct a sequence of connections that change the context of any occurrence then energizes the anamnestic procedure of characters like Glyn. Personal experience, emotional states, and environmental factors all affect how these relationships alter. Resurfacing in the present are misunderstandings, regret, anger, guilt, and happy and painful memories. This will create a complex textual fantasy in which the newly discovered Kath serves as a point of intersection for contrasts and confluences.

Penelope Lively has inimitably spotlighted the issue of women's identity and self-assertion. The uniqueness of Penelope's writings is that she does not focus on violence, safety, or protection rights; she writes about the relationships of female characters with their lover, husband, and children. Like Claudia's relationship with her lover (Tom) and her daughter (Lisa) and Kath's relationship with her husband (Glyn). Both women's characters are different in their own way, as Claudia lives her life fearlessly and full of freedom, while Kath has a lack of love in her life, which she wants from her husband. However, her husband portrays her identity beautifully and presents a new Kath. In creating a hybrid genre—a cross between history and fiction—she has rejected not only the conventions of history but also those of the realistic novel. Like her refusal to allow an authoritative point of view, her doing away with the plot is an act of defiance.

3. THE FEMALE IDENTITY AND SELF-ASSERTION IN *THE MILLSTONE* AND *THE SEVEN SISTERS* BY MARGARET DRABBLE

3.1. Margaret Drabble's Life and Works

Margaret Drabble is one of the female writers who raised their voices for female identity, female self-assertion, and the role of women in society. She was born in 1939 “in the industrial city of Sheffield, Yorkshire, England” (Diyaie & Taher, 2015, p. 1185). “She was the second daughter of John Frederick Drabble and Kathleen Marie Bloor” (Anderton, 1994, p. 178). She spent her childhood in the midst of the turmoil of the Second World War. She grew up in a community that both mirrored the dismantling of traditional norms and the strength of established practices or powers. She made the choice, similar to that of many contemporary authors, to advocate for the liberty and autonomy of women. Her writings shed light on the constraints that place a woman in a confined space and cause her to experience mental, spiritual, and emotional retardation. She criticizes the crippling destructive factors that have crept into the cracks of modern societies in terms of defining the status, rights, and roles of women. That’s why her “first three novels—*A Summer Bird-Cage* (1963), *The Garrick Year* (1964), and *The Milestone* (1965)—may be read as a translation into fictional form of Part-II of *The Second Sex*” (Rose & Drabble, 1980, p. 81). These novels trace the conventional course of a woman’s life in a male-dominated culture. She has written many great novels, among which “her fifth novel, *The Waterfall* (1969), is the most female of all her novels” (Rose & Drabble, 1980, p. 81). According to Drabble’s own words, “I wrote about the marriage where you couldn’t have a job” (Poland, 1975, p. 262). In light of these words, the theme of most of her novels is feminism because she is known “as a writer of women’s rights” (Diyaie & Taher, 2015, p. 1186).

According to Sabah Diyaie and Jamila Taher, “*The Millstone* is a logical exploration and search for solutions” (2015, p. 1185). The narrative of *The Millstone* follows Rosamund Stacey, a reticent but gorgeous female Cambridge graduate who lives in London during the 1960s. The setting of the novel is London. She is a university kid from London who is now focusing her doctoral dissertation on Elizabethan poetry. She

lives by herself in the apartment that her parents used to occupy before they moved to Africa to participate in a charitable endeavor there. Her father is a professor of economics, and he and Rosamund's mother have moved there to work for a newly created institution. Because of a chance meeting with a young guy that she does not much care for, Rosamund winds up being a single parent to her child. She does not particularly care for him. She has made up her mind to reach the point of emotional development on her own terms. In addition, *The Millstone* pays close attention to problems including class division, poverty, and the shortcomings of the National Health Service. However, it focuses on the private experience of a heroine who battled against the issues in her society and numerous attacks to achieve a balanced autonomy for herself. She was eventually helped, to her astonishment, but was also hindered by the unanticipated birth of a daughter (Stevenson, 1993, p. 107).

The novel *The Seven Sisters* was published in 2002 (Miho, 2008, p. 48). Candida Wilton, the main character in the novel *The Seven Sisters*, is a lady in her late forties. Soon after receiving her diploma, she married an Englishman by the name of Andrew and started their married life together. She has been a housewife her entire life and has not worked for a very long time, so she has only experienced that role in her life. She is a mother and a wife, but she chooses to maintain a certain amount of emotional separation from both her spouse and her kids. Andrew suffers from feelings of isolation and longs for her affection. On the other hand, she does not show any signs of devotion to him. In the end, he finds love with another lady, and Candida is left with no choice but to terminate their marriage. This book tells the story of how Candida rebuilds her life when her marriage ends and searches for her own kind of happiness. It would appear, based on what we know so far, that it is concerned with the same subject matter as some of Drabble's earlier novels. However, it is not a straightforward novel at all. *The Seven Sisters* is told from a third-person perspective throughout its tale. According to Drabble, in the earliest years of her writing career, "I could not stand reading works that purposefully confused their readers. I aim to be lucid" (Miho, 2008, p. 47). She loathed intricate novels, such as experimental ones, and as a result, she has written a large number of novels that are relatively straightforward and have found their inspiration in everyday life. Taking into consideration what she has said, it would appear that Drabble has some motivation for using a variety of different narrative techniques in *The Seven Sisters* (Miho, 2008, p. 47).

3.2. The Female Identity and Self Assertion in *Milestone*

The story is told in the first person, from Rosamund's point of view, using an intimate and subjective style. "The first-person narration reveals Drabble's naturalist-realist method" (Diyaie & Taher, 2015, p. 1186). To provide just one example, her realistic approach to the craft of fiction writing is on full display in her description of the delivery process. Rosamund symbolizes Drabble; therefore, she acts as if she were more than just a fictitious member. She, like Drabble, has an intricate bond with her sister. Women's empowerment is her central subject as a writer. Her mind's eye recounts everything that occurred to her and everyone she met during her pregnancy and its aftermath. Through her first-person narration, Margaret Drabble talks about female identity and her self-assertion to prove her characters' decisions right (Ford, 2004, p. 64).

Rosamund, the protagonist of the novel *Milestone*, is in her mid-20s and has never been sexually active. Her status as a single mother with a successful job seems to place her squarely in the company of current feminist archetypes such as Bernard Shaw's ladies who desire children but no spouse. The *Milestone's* central premise is a deft reworking of "The Scarlet Letter" by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The heroines in both stories experience the consequences of their actions, making them "moral tales." In contrast, Rosamund's "sin" is decidedly modern in flavor: "My crime was my suspicion, my fear, and my apprehensive terror of the very... upon my bosom, but the A stood for abstinence, not adultery" (Drabble, 1966, pp. 21–22).

It is possible that the illegitimate child or society itself are the millstones in this situation. Both of them present significant difficulties. As a result, this book takes a close look at the challenges and problems that women encounter, as well as the internal struggle that arises for them when they must decide whether to comply with the social order or follow their own inclinations. According to Jita Allan (1995), in *Milestone*, the main character is wrapped up in the emerging ideology of single parenthood in the metaphor of concealment, which doubles the burden of the female identity.

The sexual revolution of the 1960s was a watershed moment in women's history, and as a result, most of them desired unrestricted sexual expression. This was not possible, however, since they had not broken free of the mental constraints imposed by

their Victorian upbringing. "The novel reveals theconcerning marriage and illegitimacy" (Diyai & Taher, 2015, p. 1187). Margaret Drabble begins the novel with a scene in which an unmarried couple is threatened when they are denied the hotel room they have requested because it is accidentally revealed that they are not married.

Aside from Rosamund, several female characters in the novel share her clinging to the conventional Victorian view of Britain in the 1960s. Beatrice, Rosamund's sister, is a decent mother and wife who has a conventional family life with her spouse and three children. Victorian class bias and morality have shackled her. As with Drabble, Rosamund's connection with her sister is significant and nuanced. Rosamund informs her sister Beatrice, in a letter, of her pregnancy. Beatrice urges Rosamund to have an abortion out of fear that "through no fault of its illegitimacy all its life" (Drabble, 1966, p. 90). The fact that her sister is a wife and a mother who is fundamentally unhappy has led some to conclude that Rosamund chooses to raise her children alone on purpose. As a kind of defiance against her sister's predicament, she has chosen to spend the rest of her life alone and childless. She doesn't want her life to mirror her own, which is a married one filled with misery. Her mother, a strong feminist, is another source of motivation for Rosamund.

Rosamund wanted freedom and self-fulfillment too much to follow the bias of a man. Therefore, she aspires to follow her mother's liberal and feminist teachings. Nichole Suzanne Bokor notes that Rosamund evaluates the destiny of married women by analyzing her sister's circumstances, which may be an attempt to make up for Beatrice's inability to meet the unsaid expectations of their socially conscious, feminist mother. Her desire not to marry is influenced not just by her dread of closeness but also by her desire to maintain her own identity and autonomy. Drabble uses the protagonist's unplanned pregnancy as a crisis to help her character deal with the guilt she feels for living a self-centered life and the anger she feels for upholding her parents' ideal of an independent, empowered woman (1998, p. 72). Moreover, Rosamund adopts courting behavior to fulfill her desire to be freed from the male-dominated society and to assert herself over them. For this purpose, she claims,

My system worked well for about a year, and while it lasted, it was most satisfactory; I look back on it now as on some distant romantic idyll. What happened was this: "I went out with two people at once, one Joe Hurt, the other Roger Anderson (Drabble, 1966, p. 19).

Under the influence of the sexual freedom movement of the 1960s, Hamish, a student at Cambridge University, becomes the object of Rosamund's infidelity. The kids checked into a hotel, just like their predecessors had done. "In those days, at that age, such things seemed possible and permissible," she reflects (Drabble, 1966, p. 7). Despite this, there was no sexual liaison between them; they just "liked each other's company" (Drabble, 1966, p. 7). Ellen Cronan Rose claims that Rosamund was unable to love or commit to another person. She prefers a "cold" approach (Drabble, 1966, p. 30). Rosamund, however, came to her senses after some time and recognized that she had been misguided regarding this type of relationship, which is not based on sexuality (Cronan, 1980, p. 15). Moreover, she didn't understand the planning for the entire year when Hamish and she loved each other for an entire year without having sexual relations. The truth is that the Hamish pattern was to be continuously repeated, with growing rapidity and a lack of depth, until the notion of love ceased in me nearly the day it had begun (Drabble, 1966, p. 7). Rosamund does so because of her oppression against the male attitude, which Simon de Beauvoir (1956, p. 416) has pointed out in her book *The Second Sex* as: Women are integrated into households where dads and brothers are the dominant figures as slaves or vassals; it is the men's group that enables each of its members to find fulfillment as a husband and father. Thus, Rosamund chooses her ways to liberate herself from male dominance in order to gain her own identity.

When Margaret Drabble talks about the male characters, they are shown as mere puppets in her hands. She gives the female characters no authority to assert themselves. For example, there are only two male characters that appear in the novel: Rosamund's father, who is depicted as "shadowy and unimportant" (Diyai & Taher, 2015, p. 1190), and her lover, George Mathews, who is depicted as "a man much susceptible to the tender emotions of pity and sorrow, I suspected" (Drabble, 1966, p. 24). Feminism seeks female freedom from male dominance. Similarly, Rosamund also experiences a male-dominated society. She is a strong, self-assured woman who rejects the idea of having a man accompany her home at that hour out of shame at the stigmatized image of a woman who requires a man to do so. But George is certain, and they stroll along hand in hand. Then, "we sank gently together... I thought he would expect no more from me" (Drabble, 1966, p. 29). Too embarrassed to tell George she loves him, Rosamund lets him slip away from her life. George, the novel's main male character, is little defined. We first see him in the book's prologue and last in its epilogue (Hanford, 2008).

The way Rosamund describes George makes it seem like he was made to meet her standards. In this passage, she emphasizes the central tenet of her bond with George: The entire fragile artificial system collapsed because of George (Drabble, 1966, p. 21). To be sure, it's not conceivable to label this oneness as a relationship since it's not a two-way street. The two sides aren't talking to each other. George also remains silent, despite the fact that she clearly wants him to stay. With that, he exits from her life: "Though he was the one thing I wanted to keep... and I might have had him, but I said nothing. And he said nothing (Drabble, 1966, p. 31). Upon learning of her pregnancy, she initially considers having an abortion, but she decides against it because of the high cost. Rosamund is a lady of action, but she is powerless over the course of things. Despite her dire circumstances, she decides to alter her mind and have a child on her own. Rosamund rejects both abortion and marriage, which may give her pregnancy legal standing. But Joe wants to support Rosamund when she declares that she is pregnant and intends to give birth. He believes he has the right to order her to terminate her pregnancy since he believes it is harmful to have a child outside of marriage. Drabble rejects the patriarchal environment in which they live's concept that women can only become respectable by having men in their lives (Diyaie & Taher, 2015, p. 1191).

When Rosamund is confronted with the realities of human suffering, she is profoundly shaken. Her belief that life is unjust is reflected in her words: "It is unfair on everyone. Those who, like my [Fabian Socialist] parents, attempt to level it out are doomed to failure" (Drabble, 1966, pp. 93–94). The "variety of human misery that presented itself almost reduced her to tears" (Drabble, 1966, p. 64). It's as if she's waiting for some link to be revealed to her that would make sense of disconnections while having no proof that such a link exists. This is a feeling shared by the other women, but unlike them, she never actually achieves it. There were times during my pregnancy when I had a strange and muddled feeling that God had sent me this child to help me see a different order of things than the one I was used to (Drabble, 1966, p. 75).

Drabble tries to accept women's evolving place in contemporary culture. Her interest in the woman's life is deep, wide, and meaningful. There's a sense of building tension in the last scene as the audience waits to see if Rosamund reveals to George that Octavia is indeed his daughter. But because of her own internal monologue, she gives up on the concept in the end. She refuses to have kids for any reason. The importance of

George in Rosamund's life is permanently diminished. Rosamund's love for her child is unparalleled. The love she feels for her child as a mother is greater than any other love she has ever experienced. At home, he's suddenly the unwelcome one. "I'm afraid I have to leave you now; I have to get to work at an ungodly hour" (Drabble, 1966, p. 172).

The tried-and-true narrative mechanics of fate versus free will versus character versus chance are what drive Drabble's novels, and she frequently alludes to Thomas Hardy, the king of coincidence. The horrible ironies and accidents of life that appear to indicate such a divinity have a profound effect on Drabble, and she is aware of them. Drabble's personal views on free will and divine intervention are reflected in Rosamund's "I thought for some time about..." such as "Killed While Adjusting Safety Belt" or "Collapsed Night Before Wedding" (Drabble, 1966, p. 75–6).

Rosamund betrays the fundamental ambivalence of her attitude toward her own female identity by coveting mature femininity (as evidenced here by the capacity for childbearing) enviously and at the same time with complete contempt, babies being a punishment visited upon women for their "crime," i.e., being born women. She acts in ways that reflect her desire to be both like and unlike her mother: she will "think like a man" in her studies, she will suppress her feelings in her adult relationships, and she will generally identify with her own misconception of male manners, all the while pushing her female needs into the shadows. Despite her efforts to stifle them, the latter insist on being heard (Spitzer, 1978, p. 233). Rosamund gives her pregnancy the significance of revealing a scheme of things far apart from academic enthusiasms, social conscience, etiolated, ill-defined emotional connections, and the exercise of free choice, as she sees it. She understands that she has been residing on a single level for far too long. She does not elaborate on the physical importance of the pregnancy, though. Her discussion of free choice may be interpreted as an attempt to exert dominion over or go against nature. Having a baby is a symbol of surrendering one's will and embracing procreation and loss of control (Spitzer, 1978, p. 239).

Rosamund's core conviction is that she is not like other women. As was previously said, her insistence on maintaining a clear distinction between her cerebral, (in her perception) masculine personality and her female body, sexuality, and identity has caused her to feel torn in two. Others have also noticed her capacity to split herself in two. Libby's assessment of Rosamund's ability to do all of the academic work she had

planned to do on the day she finds out she is pregnant, for example, is terrifying. Valerie Myer's assessment that, despite her academic successes and her drive, Rosamund is "a miserable failure, a severed head" is consistent with this perspective on Rosamund's inability to establish an integrated self. On the evening of her botched abortion, we saw her explain that she had been denying her gender and that she avoided thinking about it on a "day-to-day" basis. However, she had to drink heavily first. To the same extent, it requires Joe's prodding for Rosamund to become exceedingly protective about her desire to become pregnant, a desire that is quite normal for a woman but which Rosamund views with great skepticism. (Many of us have likely been provoked into such defensiveness by exactly such male chauvinistic behavior; Rosamund's comments are still illuminating.) She responds, "I can't think of anything that has ever crossed my mind less," when Joe asks whether she wants to start a family. The whole idea of having a child makes me feel numb and chilly. We all know this isn't true because she's already confessed, when inebriated, that the thought of having a baby is appealing. All women desire babies, Joe insists, because it gives them a sense of purpose. Rosamund's radicalism and weak resistance eventually reveal her. The woman responds, "Not at all; there is nothing else I would rather hear. She gives up the fight, telling herself, in some twisted and painful way, that she is rather pleased with my apparent fertility. This most natural function of female sexuality has become perverse and painful owing to her unresolved internal struggle, which she only dimly realizes as she wishes to connect with her mother while fighting against being like her at all costs.

3.3. The Female Identity and Self Assertion in *The Seven Sisters*

Through the eyes of its female protagonists, the novel probes the meaning of identity. The novel deepens our sense of foreboding about women: where they stand in society, how much they are expected to conform to the norms of the culture and community to which they belong, and to what degree they are free to be themselves. The Seven Sisters to present and defend her feminism-related opinions and positions. A true event in her life was divorcing her first spouse. For her, this was a pleasurable deed. Marja Anderton has paraphrased Drabble as saying, "Personally, I despise being bound to anybody or anything. If I have to answer to someone, I get quite irritated (Anderton, 1994, p. 180). Having her ties knotted signifies she is in a committed relationship with

and lives with her spouse. When she remarries, she doesn't try to get her new husband to move in with her. Once more, she makes the claim that "there was no way that I could have justified bringing in a second spouse to live here. There was no way I wanted the kids to feel like we were intruding on their privacy (Anderton, 1994, p. 180). This reveals her strong sense of feminine identity and confidence in her own opinions. In the same way, she endows Candida with the qualities she covets in the novel *The Seven Sisters*. Because of this, Candida says, "Nobody could guess at the comfort I could be feeling." When I finally understood that I wouldn't have to spend the rest of my life with Andrew, I felt an overwhelming sense of freedom that I didn't share with anyone. No one knew how much I enjoyed seeing him look so bad in public (Drabble, 2003, p. 19). A woman's right to be seen and heard without the need for male validation is blatantly evident here. Candida expresses her thoughts about her status in married life and her decision to assign herself (self-assertion) a new role. She says that they used to fall in love very often at the beginning of their marriage, but she never really warmed up to it. Never in her life had she had an orgasmic climax. Physically, she was all alone. Initially, she had optimism, but over time, that hope began to dwindle. Not that she would have refused, what with being such a wonderful wife and all, but she tried her best to avoid it. With time, her husband, Andrew, lost interest in her, and his attentions became rare. Naturally, she found this to be a source of relief (Drabble, 2003, pp. 278–279). So, in her own words,

I withdrew my wifely support from my husband... I moved out of my husband's bed and said that I preferred to sleep alone. I made the excuse that this was because I slept so badly (Drabble, 2003, p. 74).

Simon De-Beauvoir talks about the rights of women when their husbands cheat them, saying, "Polygamy has always been more family and obtaining a separation or divorce" (De-Beauvoir, 1956, p. 417). In light of these sayings, Candida acts accordingly to obtain her self-assertion to part ways with her husband. In addition, talking about the identity of women and their self-assertion, Simon De-Beauvoir argues that a woman who marries acquires some legal protections against the whims of her husband by entering into a marriage contract; however, by doing so, she also accepts the role of being her husband's vassal. He is in charge of the partnership's business operations and also acts as the entity's representative in public. She marries into his family and is now considered "half" of his identity because she takes on his surname and identifies as a

follower of his religion as well as a member of his socioeconomic status and social group. She follows him wherever he is employed; she makes a break with her past by associating herself with the world of her husband; she gives him her entire existence, including her virginity and strict fidelity; and she allows him to choose every move that they make together. As a single woman, she gives up some of the legal protections she would otherwise have (De-Beauvoir, 1956, pp. 418–419). For example, Candida and Andrew marry each other, but Candida has never enjoyed the identity that Simone de Beauvoir describes in her book *The Second Sex*. Candida says in the novel,

Andrew and I were never effusive with one another. We did not indulge in displays of endearment. I find such manners false. ... But maybe this was what Andrew always wanted. Maybe he always wanted what I never gave and could never have given. Maybe it is because of my shortcomings that all these rank weeds grew (Drabble, 2003, p. 49).

This proves that Candida has failed to experience her status in marriage life, and thus she asserts some role to confine her existence, which proves her self-assertion as well.

One of the most intriguing aspects of feminist literature is its focus on achieving independence from masculine authority. Every woman, no matter what period or place she lives in, has a deep-seated need to pursue her own path in life. The patriarchal society marginalizes her experiences and, in doing so, stifles her actual identity. The only way to restore respect for men's roles in society and discover who she is and what she has lost is to confront male-dominated cultural norms. As a means to achieving self-empowerment, women have an urgent need to create a new cultural environment that undermines their gender stereotypes. Theoretically, some of Butler's findings can be useful in helping women challenge harmful gender norms. There is no such thing as an innately masculine or feminine trait, as Butler explains in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1999). These ideas are nothing more than culturally repeated rituals that are always evolving. Both the dominant culture and its detractors lose whatever ground they may have had on the issue of "naturalized" or "essentialist" gender identities when parody and drag acts are involved. As Butler puts it, "in copying gender, drag indirectly discloses the imitative aspect of gender" (Butler, 1988, p. 175). This means that being both a "masculine" female and a "feminine" male is not only possible but also explicitly acknowledged. *The Seven Sisters* reflects these theoretical

realizations as well (2002). Candida, who had recently gone through a divorce, vowed, "I must remodel my body and my spirit" (Drabble, 2003, p. 19). "No one knew the elation I felt when I learned I wouldn't have to spend the rest of my life with Andrew. Candida says, "No one knew about the hidden joy" (Drabble, 2003, p. 19). To boost her self-esteem, she enrolled in Virgil's night classes, started going to the gym regularly, and started playing the lottery. As a result of her husband's hegemony, she has been unable to fully express her desires until now. To top it all off, Candida assembled a band of seven sisters to travel the globe. She felt most comfortable talking to other ladies in the group who could relate to what she was going through.

Candida was so forthright and confident that she even criticized her husband. She admitted to herself that she truly despised her spouse. She explained in depth why she was frustrated with him. For example, once her husband harshly reprimanded her in front of the dinner guests for making Hungarian Goulash by stating, "Well, sweetheart, that's not exactly one of your finest, is it? (...) It was "just a little bit on the unpleasant side, I'm afraid," so she put all the flesh to one side (Drabble, 2003, p. 84). Candida says, "I was angry, and I died a bit inside at the same time." The betrayal was something I didn't think I deserved (Drabble, 2003, p. 85). Candida in this episode blames her husband for his treatment of her. Candida also claimed that Andrew "alienated" and "seduced" their girls and "stole their hearts" (Drabble, 2003, p. 20). Her narratives also include the question, "Did I desire children?" I have no idea. When they were little, I loved them in an automatic, biological way, and it hurts that they have abandoned me for their father. The fact that he made them choose sides was not their fault, but in my more traditional view, they should have remained faithful to their mom (Drabble, 2003, p. 35). Candida also made an effort to forget her husband and children. But it was hard for her to put them out of her mind. As much as possible, she tried to put them out of her mind. She says, "I am pleased today," before leaving for Italy (Drabble, 2003, p. 161). She called her spouse before leaving on her trip and tried to explain her actions to him. "I am not a monster," she insists. As much as I may want to, I cannot bring myself to completely separate from my loved ones. It's just that, now that biology has done its best and worst, I feel like it's time to rethink my role in the family and how we should relate to one another (Drabble, 2003, p. 160).

Another female protagonist is Julia. Her parents never placed any restrictions on Julia. What she wanted to do, she did (Drabble, 2003, p. 31). She defied the expectations placed on women by being as independent as a bird. She had complete independence and could do whatever she pleased. In contrast to the usual woman, she had no problem talking openly about her sexuality with her friends. On this point, though, she had a terrible reputation. She aspired to be an author and was very driven toward that goal. As Candida puts it, "I don't know where she got her confidence or her views. That was not an environment that encouraged her type of curiosity or risk-taking (Drabble, 2003, p. 28). However, the public mostly ignored her efforts. She laments that invitations to art shows, readings, and other cultural events elude her. "No one ever considers me a serious writer" (Drabble, 2003, p. 92). She said that society as a whole was treating her like garbage. She cries out, "I'm tired of being disrespected. Men look down on strong females like myself (Drabble, 2003, p. 92). Nonetheless, she did not care and instead followed her own desires. These archetypes lend credence to Butler's notion of gender as malleable.

To conclude, it has been found that Margaret Drabble has adopted the naturalist-realist method to present her feminist point of view. For this purpose, she has chosen a subjective style. For example, the protagonist of the novel *Milestone*, Rosamund, symbolizes Margaret Drabble herself. In both of her novels, the central subject matter is women's empowerment, female identity, and self-assertion, to prove her female characters are real feminists. The story depicts the feminists' issues with evolving social structures caused by class-based determinism and discrimination based on marital status and paternity. For example, when Rosamund is pregnant, she faces social pressure to abort her child. However, she stands firm against them in order to assert her own will to bear children as a single mother. Beatrice, Rosamund's sister, calls her child an illegitimate one. She has decided to spend the rest of her life childless and alone as a kind of protest against her sister's plight. She hopes her daughter will avoid her own unhappy marriage. Her mother, a ferocious feminist, also serves as an inspiration for Rosamund. She desired freedom and self-actualization far too much to be swayed by a man's bias. She hopes to become a liberal feminist like her mother.

According to Simon de Beauvoir, each man in a male-dominated culture or society reaches his full potential as a husband and father, and women are accepted as

slaves or vassals into the homes of their fathers and brothers. When Rosamund wants to break out of the male-dominated culture and establish herself, she begins to choose her own ways to liberate herself from male dominance in order to gain her own identity. Feminism seeks female freedom from male dominance. Similarly, she emerges as a strong, confident woman who rejects the thought of being accompanied by men. Rosamund refuses to accept either option that would make her pregnancy legal, including getting married. Joe is willing to lend a hand when Rosamund reveals she is expecting a child and is set on giving birth. As he sees it, having a child outside of wedlock is damaging, so he believes he has the authority to order an abortion for her. Drabble attacks patriarchal society's view that having a man in one's life is necessary for a woman to be respected.

The story of the novel *Seven Sisters* explores the concept of individuality through the perspectives of its main female characters. Candida is the one who confronts a male-dominated society with the ways she has adopted to free herself. She abandons her husbands, for example, in order to gain her feminine identity as a respectable member of society. She feels confident in her actions. Polygamy, according to Simone de Beauvoir, has always been less tolerated in terms of women's rights. A man may sleep with prostitutes, but he must respect the rights of his legitimate wife. When their husbands cheat on them, women have the right to go back to their families and obtain a separation or divorce. Candida does so when she finds that her husband is maltreating her. Candida withdraws her wifely support for her husband.

CONCLUSION

The major focus of this thesis is on women and their fights for equality, safety, and identity. From the late 1960s through the 1980s, a new generation of feminists emerged in the decades after World War II. In the first chapter, it has been shown that Margaret Drabble has used the naturalist-realist approach to convey her feminist viewpoint in her novels *The Milestone* (1995) and *The Seven Sisters* (2003). She has intentionally adopted a mostly subjective tone for her novels. *Women in Penelope Lively's Moon Tiger* (1987) and *The Photograph* (2003) are discussed in depth in the second chapter. This chapter emphasizes the author's life and works while also discussing the author's portrayal of women's struggles for identity and assertiveness in her literature. Other second-wave feminist authors, such as Simone de Beauvoir, are also discussed in this chapter for their opinions.

The Milestone's protagonist Rosamund and *The Seven Sisters'* Candida are strong advocates for women's rights and authentic feminists because they are not afraid to stand up for what they believe in and use their voices to make their own decisions. Both narratives illustrate the difficulties faced by feminists in adapting to changing social structures due to factors such as class-based determinism and discrimination based on marriage and parental status. Rosamund, for one, is subject to peer pressure that leads her to question whether or not she should continue with her pregnancy. The desire to have children as a single mother, however, compels her to take a position against them. As a kind of protest against her sister's suffering, she has resolved to spend the rest of her life childless and alone. She wishes her daughter would learn from her mistakes and never get married. Rosamund also finds inspiration in her mother's fierce feminist example. She cared about independence and growth too much to let a man's prejudice change her mind. Like her mother, she aspires to be a liberal feminist.

Simon de Beauvoir argues that in a patriarchal society, males achieve their full potential as husbands and dads, while women are relegated to the role of servants or vassals inside the households of their male relatives. As Rosamund seeks to carve out a place for herself outside of the male-dominated culture, she makes conscious decisions to free herself from male tyranny. Feminism advocates for the emancipation of women from patriarchal society. She also comes across as a strong, self-assured woman who has no desire to be around men. Rosamund is unable to accept any of the two options

that would validate her pregnancy and allow her to continue with her life unhindered: getting married or not. When Rosamund announces she is pregnant and is determined to have the baby soon, Joe is ready to help. Having a kid outside of marriage is harmful in his eyes, so he thinks he has the right to demand that she get an abortion. Drabble critiques the patriarchal belief that women only deserve respect if they have a male by their side.

The Seven Sisters delves into the topic of uniqueness from the female protagonists' points of view. Candida is the one to challenge the male-dominated culture with her liberating practices. For instance, she divorces her spouses so that she can establish her dignity as a woman in the community. She has faith in what she is doing. According to Simon De Beauvoir, polygamy has always been frowned upon from a feminist perspective. While it's legal for a guy to have sex with prostitutes, he still has responsibilities to his lawful wife. Women who are cheated on by their spouses have the legal right to return home and file for divorce or separation. Candida does this after discovering her husband's mistreatment of her. Candida no longer stands by her husband like a wife should. In this way, she affirms her self-identity and self-assertion.

In the beginning of *The Moon Tiger*, Claudia is dying from cancer, and she is thinking back on times when she stood up for herself and refused to conform to gender norms. Here, Lively employs Claudia in a number of dynamic ways to question patriarchal assumptions and show that obtaining female freedom involves more than just emulating masculine behaviors in order to succeed. In reality, Claudia is an existential hero who is forging her own path in life in accordance with her deepest beliefs. In the beginning of *The Photograph*, Glyn discovers a picture of his adulterous wife. Anger and worry overwhelmed him. The novel's premise centers on Glyn and his wife, Kath, who both end up killing themselves. Glyn's vivid recounting of the events in the narrative sheds light on the methods Kath employs to establish her credibility. Female readers will find inspiration in the stories and characters of *Moon Tiger* and *The Photograph* of Lively, both of which center on strong, independent women. time and, by extension, life experience, shape the perspectives of the female protagonists in both works, which explore the dynamics between wives, girlfriends, and mothers.

Helen Chukwuma argues that feminism entails rejecting feelings of inferiority and instead working to achieve prominence. The book aims to instill in women a belief

in their own value as individuals who can make a difference in the world. Claudia successfully navigated the male-dominated society of Moon Tiger. The most basic way she shows her desire is by rejecting the two stereotypes that women of her day were expected to fit into: the role of the submissive housewife or secretary, or the role of the shriveled, overdressed "male impersonator" in the workplace. Instead, she makes the most of her red hair and green eyes with colorful, seductive clothing. Claudia is trying to distinguish herself by challenging the status quo that favors men.

Claudia's smug comparisons of herself to her dimwitted sister-in-law, who eats to forget about her unhappy marriage and her inability to get her English, upper-middle-class house in order, highlight the self-awareness of this rejection of conventional women's duties. She also draws parallels to her mother, who, after her husband was killed in World War I, became preoccupied with tending to her floribunda roses while reading the *West Dorset Gazette and Country Life*. Claudia Hampton is a strong representation of a modern day feminist. In a time when moms are stereotypically expected to be the primary caregivers at home, a new phenomenon known as "mother Madonna angel in the house" is emerging. Claudia is a strong, fearless, and self-reliant woman who has fought hard all her life to find and follow the path she knows is right for her. On the other hand, she doesn't waste any time in questioning the gendered norms and limits society has deemed appropriate for women. She is strongly opposed to patriarchal society's notions of femininity and the conventional role of women.

Generally, Claudia frowns upon conventional gender roles that might restrict her. This frees her from the confines of traditional gender roles, such as wife and mother. Claudia disagrees with the traditional or idealized portrayal of women in patriarchal societies. Instead, her career as a historian provides her with a sense of purpose and meaning, which aids in the development of her unique identity and the eventual development of her identity.

Penelope Lively has done remarkable work bringing attention to the struggle for female autonomy and individuality. Penelope's works stand out because, unlike most others, she does not centre her stories around issues of violence, safety, or protective rights for women, but rather on the relationships these fictional women have with their partners, spouses, and children. Similar to how Claudia and Tom are like mother and daughter, and how Kath and her husband are like best friends (Glyn). The two women

couldn't be more different in personality; Claudia lives life to the fullest without fear or restraint, while Kath desperately seeks the affection she believes her husband should give her. Her identity, however, is well portrayed by her husband, who has shown a new Kath. She has defied both historical and realistic book standards by forging a new genre that combines elements of both. Her decision to eliminate the storyline was an act of disobedience, much like her reluctance to acknowledge a superior viewpoint.



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CURRICULUM VITAE

Her name is Saja Hadib Mohsin ALDIHAYMAWEE. Her primary and elementary education in Iraq. She completed her undergraduate studies at Al-Qadisiya University in the College of Education Department of English in 2015 Al-Qadisiya - Iraq. Then She started her master's degree in arts Department of English Language and Literature at Karabük University.

