readers. As Khuman articulates, “Social Realism is an approach in literature that attempts to describe life without idealization or romantic subjectivity. It gives the impression of “recording” or “reflecting” the actual way of life in a particular society”. (Khuman 78) Through her Indianized language Kapur emphatically presents the real India as perceived by the common man.

Deshpande and Kapur have preferred to use their own style of language, which integrates the idioms, metaphors and the vocabulary in order to make their characters very prominent. They have discussed the sensibilities of women with a daring portrayal of their strong defiance against patriarchal domination and a clarion call for the protection of their suffrage. The final chapter summarizes the feminine sensibilities of both the writers, Shashi Deshpande and Manju Kapur, as identified by the researcher.

**Chapter - VII**

**SUMMATION**

“The true meaning of feminism is this: to use your strong womanly image to gain strong results in society”. - Pamela Anderson

The place of women today is no longer an issue confined to the position of women within the family or their rights to equality with men in different aspects of social life. It is part of the total, far broader domain regarding the direction of
change that our society is taking such as economic, social, political, and the intellectual perception and an analysis of that process. It is chiefly in this context that the role of women is discussed profusely in the novels of Manju Kapur and Shashi Deshpande.

Deshpande’s contribution to the world of fiction dates back to the 70s and 80s. In her novels she has tried to project a realistic picture of the middle class educated women who are financially independent and who represent a larger part of the contemporary Indian society. Her novels deal with the problems of the adjustment and conflicts in the minds of female protagonists who ultimately submit to the traditional rules in the transitional society.

Kapur belongs to the class of Indian women writers, who live in India and write like Deshpande. The novelist showcases in her writings the realistic social, economic, and political conditions, which are very special to the Indian life and culture. The innumerable class, caste, ethnic, religious stratifications, which cannot be easily discerned, require a typical sensibility, the conditioning of collective consciousness and also the psychologically molded cognizance of the multiple indigenous influence of epics, folk tales etc. Conceivably an Indian sensibility in its true sense is accessible only to such Indian writers.
The notion that all women are meant to get married and be submissive to their husbands is vigorously challenged in the novels of Kapur. While Kapur’s first novel, *Difficult Daughters*, is a family saga which is set against the historical backdrop of partition, her second novel *A Married Woman* is a work of investigative reporting on the most controversial and political issue of the demolition of Babri Masjid and a woman’s obsession with love and lesbianism. In fact, Kapur was the first Indian woman novelist to have introduced the theme of lesbianism in her novels. The novel is a kind of narrative on a woman’s incompatible marriage and resultant frustration and the contemporary political turmoil in its historical context. Her third novel *Home* explores the intricate setting of the Indian family and reveals many issues that are deep rooted within the family like the revolt against the age-old traditions, quest for identity, the problems of marriage, and lastly the women’s struggle for her survival.

Kapur, in her novels, has tried to divulge the various ways in which patriarchy relegates woman to the periphery. In all her writings she has rendered the numerous schemes developed by the men to curb female freedom and independence. The discriminating patterns of education offered before the sons and the daughters are most baffling and education for a daughter is seen as an alternate option of marriage. A daughter is educated not to go out and take up a job. On the contrary, her education is a trap to hunt down a good husband and
become a perfect wife and daughter-in-law representing typical Indian womanhood. Thus, marriage is the ultimate institution where all women should enter after the successful completion of education.

In *Difficult Daughters* Virmati is found boasting before Ganga about the family trend of educating the girls. The limitation of women’s education is a curse and it is presented realistically when Virmati herself tries to go for higher studies. Her mother Kasturi regrets sending her to school which she feels has robbed Virmati of her reasons altogether. During the pre-independence time, a girl going to school had been a privilege, not to be abused by going against one’s parents. Bhagabat Nayak has befittingly remarked that “Kapur seems to give tribute to the country’s celebration of fifty years of Independence in her novel as her protagonist, Virmati is projected as a cult to impugn the set norms and taboos imposed on women in male dominated Indian society”. (Nayak198)

Kapur explores a totally different aspect of educating a girl in her next novel, *A Married Woman*. Like any other woman of her age Sita, Astha’s mother, believed in the old, traditional ways. She regularly prayed to God to marry off Astha to a good husband but Astha’s father believed in the “new”. He felt that his daughter’s future lay in her own hands, and these hands were to be strengthened by the number of books that passed through them. He always kept himself updated about Astha’s studies and didn’t want his daughter to be dissatisfied and
wasted like him. He always encouraged her about her potentials, her flair for painting and her way with the words; he insisted that with a bit of practice in mathematics, her weak point, she could sit for the competitive exams. This patriarch, being a bureaucrat himself, shrewdly camouflages his real intentions, while encouraging his daughter to study hard for he too never thought beyond the boundary of marriage.

*Kapur’s Home*, showcases the education of the daughters from another angle as Sona and Rupa are two sisters belonging to a middle-class family based in Meerut. When a marriage proposal came for Sona from the Banwari Lal Cloth Shop in Karol Bagh, her parents became apprehensive of the rich alliance. They dread marrying off their daughter to a business family but Sona’s attitude shocked her parents as well as the readers. As the boy had finished only high-school, she did not want to study any more, as she wanted to remain on the same level as her husband. The final destination of a daughter – whether educated or not – lies in marriage. This concept has been so much imbibed in the daughter right from her birth that she easily gives up her education the moment she gets a marriage proposal. Permitting education to mar the marriage has always been strictly denied. Even before her parents could say anything, Sona herself steps out of the educational system.
Nina in *The Immigrant* meets with the same fate with a little variation. She is an established lecturer of English in a respective college affiliated to Delhi University who lives with her widowed mother in Jangpura Extension in a rented flat. Inspite of penury, she leads an independent life. But with the addition of one more year to her age, she increases her mother’s apprehension as well. Her mother, Shanti, like any other Indian mother, with a marriageable daughter is always looking out for ways to find and fix a match for Nina. Thus in spite of being educated and independent, the prospect of marriage looms large on Nina and her mother. On the same scale, Alka, Nina’s sister-in-law, doesn’t feel like Nina. In spite of being educated, Alka makes it clear that marriage is the ultimate destiny in the life of a girl. When Nina suggests for higher education in Canada for both Ila and Ishaan, Alka declined the offer for Ila.

In *Custody*, Ishita’s pending job applications are brushed aside to reply to the good offer in the marriage front. Ishita’s aspirations with her BA and B.Ed degrees are at stake with the lucrative offers of a husband forthcoming and overshadowing her in totality. Even her parents feel that marriage is more important than any meagre job. For them, educational degrees and job prospects are an alternative when marriage failed to work which seemed to be a quiet auspicious thought to be nurtured. Adrienne Rich reflects that the patriarchal institution of motherhood is not the “human condition” any more than rape. The idealization of women as mothers, the romanticization of motherhood and the
attribution of normative quality to motherhood are seen to be dictated by patriarchal power relations. According to Adrienne Rich, “Motherhood is not only a core human relationship but a political institution, a keystone to the domination in every sphere of women by men”. (Rich 216) In this regard, Arpita Ghosh truly observes:

In all her novels Kapur highlights on how women in the Indian society are bereft of proper education in the name of tradition. Lack of education makes them dependable and vulnerable to both the inner world and the outer world. Through her novels Kapur raises the seminal issues of women in a very befitting manner and delineates the grim and pathetic reality of Indian women. She advocates the plausible reality that education brings dignity, honor and power. Hence progress and development of a society depends on the emancipation and empowerment of both the sexes. (Ghosh 21)

Kapur's novels acquire a significant new meaning when one reads from the point of view of crisscross dogmas of cultural critical thinking. Her novels furnish examples of a whole range of attitudes towards the import of tradition. However, she is very much aware of the fact that the women of India have indeed achieved their success in sixty years of Independence. Women under the patriarchal
pressure and control are subjected to much more burden and social ostracism. They are discriminated against and are treated with bias as they are often considered as weaker sex. The life women lived and struggled under the oppressive mechanism of a closed society are reflected in the novels of Kapur. Taking into account the complexity of life, different histories, cultures and dissimilar structures of values, the women's question, despite basic harmony needs to be tackled in relation to the socio-cultural situation. The impact of patriarchy on the Indian Society varies from the one in the West.

A major preoccupation in the recent writings of the Indian women has been a description of inner life and subtle interpersonal relationships. In a culture where individualism and protest have often remained alien ideas, and marital bliss and the woman's role at home is the central focus, it is interesting to see the emergence of not just an essential Indian sensibility but an expression of cultural displacement. Kapur has joined the growing number of women writers from India on whom the image of the suffering but stoic woman eventually breaking traditional boundaries has had a significant impact. Her first novel, *Difficult Daughters*, was set against the historical background of India's partition and shows what happens to a young woman who falls in love with a married man, a hitherto condemned passion in her narrow social circle. Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* is a feminist discourse not because she is a woman writing about
women but because, as Jaidev puts it she “has understood a woman both as a woman and as a person pressurized by all kinds of visible and invisible contexts”. (Jaidev 68) Kapur’s preoccupation with the female revolt against deep-rooted family values and the institution of marriage is followed through to her second novel, *A Married Woman*. In this novel, she crafts a beautiful, honest and seductive story of love and deep attachment, set at a time of political and religious disorder. The main ideas conceived in the novel are based on family life, sexual relationship, gender discrimination, socio-political upheaval and the desire for peaceful co-existence. The purpose of the novelist seems to be uni-dimensional with the idea of love that can really drive a woman into such a relationship.

In depicting the inner subtlety of a woman's mind, Kapur displays a mature understanding of the female psyche. Most of all, Kapur manages to blend the personal with the external she speaks as some-one who has lived through the unrest of the communal riots, which in some way affected the lives of all Indians.

Kapur's writings reveal the life of women, their struggle for basic rights, quest for identity and survival. With education they become aware of their self-reliance which is proved in concern with new women. Simon de Beauvior finds man–woman nexus quite unsymmetrical and uncomplimentary for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use
of man to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined criteria, without reciprocity. Kapur supported this idea that a woman is never regarded as an autonomous being since she has always been assigned a subordinate and relative position in our society. Man can think of himself without woman but she cannot think of herself without man and she is simply what man decrees as she appears essentially to the male as a sexual being. For him she is sex absolute sex, no less and she is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental inessential as opposed to the essential. (Beauvoir 54)

Deshpande not only articulates a thematic and technical maturity but also effectively communicates an intensely apprehended feminine sensibility. She has apparently injected a new consciousness, offering varied interpretation of imperishable Indian values as well as highlighting our cultural heritage and added a new depth and a new dimension to Indian English fiction.

An in-depth study of Deshpande’s novels shows her deep insight into the plight of Indian women, who feel very much shattered and enslaved in a patriarchal society. She analyses her women characters through their hopes, fears, ambitions and their frustrations. Her protagonists are well aware of their merits and limitations, but are clearly overpowered by the prevailing patriarchy. Women protagonists are victims of the prevalent uncultured gender prejudice,
primarily as daughters and later as wives. They are conscious of the great social disparity, yet they struggle against the oppressive social norms in their limited capacity as a wife.

In Deshpande’s Roots and Shadows and That Long Silence “The women protagonists achieve “personhood” yet do not negate, the family or the society. They go beyond what Elaine Showalter calls the “Female Phase” which is a phase of self-discovery, a turning inward freed from the dependence of opposition, a search for identity. They no doubt discover themselves but the quest does not end there. It could be observed that they are not feminists in the first stage but in the second. The second stage cannot be viewed in terms of women alone but also in terms of the separate personhood or equality with men. The second stage involves coming to new terms with the family, new terms with job and work. It is a kind of enlightened reintegration into the society where they find their own voices; no longer being “other directed”. (Showalter 13)

Deshpande’s works have drawn great critical attention and acclaim for their sensitive and realistic representation of the Indian middle-class women. Her sincere concern for women is reflected allover in her novels. Indu, in Roots and Shadows experiences great mental trauma in her childhood and in marriage due to her husband Jayant’s double standards. He is seemingly educated and liberal, but he is intolerant about any deviation on her part from the traditional role of a
wife. He is in no way different from the other uneducated and conservative Indian men while taking up the role of a husband.

The female protagonists in the novels of Deshpande and Kapur stand apart from their counterparts in the writings of many contemporary women writers. Sandwiched between tradition and modernity, illusion and reality and the mask and the face, they lead a life of restlessness. Progressing along the axis of delimiting restrictions, self-analysis, protest and self-discovery, they try to create both physical as well as psychological space for themselves to grow on their own. Like the archetypal New-Woman, Kapur’s and Deshpande’s protagonists are all educated, proactive and progressive, moving on undaunted. Transgressing the socially conditioned boundaries of the body, they frankly and frequently enter into a dialogic relationship with their bodies, both within and without; represent values, beliefs and ideas which are modern and stand in contradistinction with the traditional ones. Being the representatives of the new generation of self-actualizing women, they seek to probe new ways of dealing with their problems, instead of running away from them and realizing that the solutions lie within themselves. They have a balanced, practical approach to their problems.

The New Woman is primarily characterized by the spirit of rebelliousness, visibly exercising its influence on all relationships. This spirit is manifested through diverse means and modes. A woman’s rejection of her assigned role
inside the family and society, refusal to follow the traditional paths, inherent revulsion to the idealism associated with normal physical functions of the body such as menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth which often act as catalysts for sexual colonialism, aversion to the practice of favoring the male child over and above the girl child and disrespect for the social taboos concerning the human body are some of the challenging issues that Deshpande picks up to show how the New Woman conducts herself. Abilash Nayak rightly observes: “Deshpande’s protagonists employ it as one of the ways to liberation, to establish independent identity and ‘break up of shackles that chain women’s creativity and individual talent’”. (Nayak 3) as is presented in the novels Roots and Shadows, That Long Silence, The Binding Vine, Small Remedies and A Matter of Time.

The female characters look at sex without a spiritual and emotional base from a different perspective and see absolutely no difference between rape and this kind of forced physical relationship. Gender discrimination is another ailment that women in most traditional societies are subjected to. In The Binding Vine, Urmila remembers Kishore’s father who never looks at his daughter Vanaa even though she tries her best to draw his attention, only because Kishore was there. Urmi strongly scoffs at the women who silently tolerate the torture inflicted upon them by their partners. She appeals to Vanaa to assert herself and stop crawling
before her husband so that he does not go on bulldozing her. She becomes furious when she comes to know that Vanaa wasn’t given a choice before the medical termination of her pregnancy, though she wanted to have a son. As a woman aware of the new responsibilities in changing times, Urmi speaks highly in favor of the freedom of choice for woman but she, nevertheless, knows well that for a girl marriage is a kind of indemnity which provides her security and safeguards her from other people.

_The Dark Holds no Terrors_, deals with the effects of troubled marriage. Saru is a ‘two in one woman’, who in the day time is a successful doctor and at night a terrified trapped animal in the hands of her husband, Manohar. Saru is not happy in his company and is unable to bear the sexual sadism of her husband and problems ensue because of her outsized ego and innate love for power over other. She defies traditional code at the slightest threat to her importance as that is what she missed and craved for in her mother's house. She is a broad minded woman and realizes that economic independence alone could be an insurance against subordination or suppression. Her husband is not an ordinary male chauvinist as he does not favor treating his wife as an equal and as a person. In Deshpande’s _Writing From the Margin_ she reflects, “when women undertake their journey in pursuit of self-knowledge, they do not start light, we are already burdened with a baggage that has been given to us. The fact is that we don’t start
with a picture of ourselves on a clean slate. Inscribed on it already are things told to us by others that determine our behavior, ideas, expectations and dreams”.

(Deshpande 87)

Deshpande reacts against the traditional concept of society that the single purpose of a woman is to please the elders and especially the male ones. Through her characters the novelist wants to project the postmodern dilemma of a woman who strongly resents the onslaught on her individuality and identity. The antagonism is faced mainly from two persons: Saru's mother and Manohar, Saru's husband. Both of them represent the values and norms established by the patriarchal society. She wants to be a strong woman in all the three angles, biological, psychological and social in the end of the novel. She identifies herself with the roles fulfilled and decides to cut off the traditional bonds of marriage and home and walks into the wide world.

Like Virmati, Saru also strives to break the tradition and wishes to be the modern woman. She confronts reality with brave compromises of her heart to live at her will. Deshpande depicts how Saru experiences undefeatable shock when her professional success had cast a shadow on her married life, and how courageously she faces the situation and audaciously accepts unaided the challenges imposed on her by her protégé’s plight. Deshpande brings the present day condition of an Indian woman before the readers, through the character of
Saru, who experiences trauma differently from birth. As a child she was humiliated and neglected by her parents and family members. Probably the ill-treatment of her family members had forced Saru to seek consolation, love and care from Manu seeking to be modern, but remaining orthodox. After marriage also she had the same experience as she was refused freedom to breathe the scent of Independence. Deshpande discusses the blatant gender discrimination shown by parents towards their daughters, and their deep desire to have a male child. Every parent in India longs to have a male child as their heir, because they believe only he would help them in their later life, but the existing reality is far from that belief. Manu vents his frustration on Saru in the form of sexual sadism, which has been vividly portrayed in the novel.

The narrative is fabricated at two levels in That Long Silence. The first one represents the inner world of Jaya's consciousness reflecting her discontent of personal life and on the other, Deshpande reflects on the various dimensions of the problems of women in the traditional society of India. Mohan, the husband of Jaya is an engineer by profession whose concern is basically with the externals such as money, status and material comforts.

Indu in Roots and Shadows, wants to be independent of every restriction for having born in an orthodox family such freedom is denied to her. Her family is a joint family and it was maintained and controlled by an old aunt, a widow
without a child. At the time of her death, she leaves her money and family to Indu who is basically rebellious in nature. She leaves her home for study in the big city when she is a teenager and Deshpande pictures the agony and suffocation experienced by Indu in a male dominated and tradition-bound society. Indu lands herself in great mental upset when she refuses to play the straight jacketed role of a wife, imposed upon her by the society. To her great disappointment, the man after her heart, whom she has married, turns out to be no different from the less educated and very conservative Indian men. She is even more saddened when she understands that she herself has all along been involuntarily aping the role of the ideal, tradition-bound Indian wife. In her search for her own identity she even gets into an extra marital affair, and finally she realizes that it is possible to exercise autonomy within the parameters of marriage.

The main character of That long Silence, like every other Indian woman within the patriarchal system, suppresses her own likes and dislikes, as she plays a secondary note during crucial times. Deshpande reveals the consciousness of Jaya through an exposition of her mind in the process of thinking, feeling and reaching to the stimuli of the moment and situation. In doing so, she goes on to affirm the feminine psyche of the protagonist, all ready to break away from the
stronghold of the quandary of the social fabric rooted in patriarchy, which repels as it attracts. The dejections and disappointments of unrequited selfhood, the illusions of and pining for love and the yearnings for companionship make up the stream of Jaya`s consciousness. Women themselves have allowed discrimination instead of bargaining for partnership.

Jaya herself contributed to her victimization and so she had to fight her own battle and workout her own salvation. In consequence of this experience, she felt it was necessary to break the silence to stamp her identity. From then onwards, Jaya lived in her real identity, without sacrificing individuality and she would compromise with things and matters not with her life. She abandoned ‘seta’ for the newspaper column, and that symbolized giving up her traditional model role of a wife. She would write what she wants and might not find answers from her own life since that was her emancipation. That Long Silence is beautifully summed up thus by Jasbir Jain:

The novel which is more a woman’s novel than any other novel of Deshpande’s and which is full of minute details of everyday life, the hopes and dreams and the insignificant happenings end on a positive note. The crisis has forced a whole lot of rethinking. And there is a hope for a new beginning. Jaya has recovered her lost self
and along with that her capacity to dream. She has decided to get rid of the silence which women have lived with her ages. (Jain 20)

_A Matter of Time_ exposes how Sumi, a deserted wife is dauntless in her adversity in the way she evolves herself from utter desolation and bitterness, which was in line with the visible chains of patriarchal pressure and other family responsibilities. It records how Sumi has reached a stage of self-sufficiency and self-fulfilment with courage, dignity, responsibility and independent spirit, even after being deserted by her husband.

Madhu, in _Small Remedies_ adopts the same means of liberation. This novel is an embodiment of changing ideologies in the society seen through the changing role of woman. All of them represent the modern woman who does not believe that women are inferior beings who must remain passive and submissive. These characters along with feminine qualities are also invested with the conventionally considered unfeminine qualities like courage, independence, intellectual energy, rationality and ambition. They are autonomous and self-determining women who struggle to obtain selfhood by dissolving their pessimism, inculcating the strength to survive with dignity and analyzing their problems rationally. They refuse to surrender before anxieties, indoctrination, social conditioning and resultant oppression. They are aware of the injustices heaped on them; they display a determination to face the riddles of life boldly
and examples of such women are Madhu, SavitriBai and Munni. *Small Remedies* is thus a sensitive portrayal of women in a transitional phase. The characters offer us a glimpse of the divided self of women when they are confronted with the opposing forces of tradition and modernity in their quest for self-identity. Deshpande in the article *Why I am a Feminist* declares, “A world without frightened, dependent, trapped, frustrated women is a better world for all of us to live in”. (Deshpande 85)

The study of the novels of Deshpande and Kapur reveals that almost all their protagonists undergo great suffering in marriage, and are humiliated by men in the society. Both of them are feminist writers with great humanistic outlook and expose the evils of the patriarchal family set-up in their novels. On a close study of their novels, their genuine concern for women is evident as their protagonists are acutely aware of their smothered and fettered existence in an orthodox male dominated society, caught between tradition and modernity and go in search of identity within marriage.

An in-depth analysis of the female characters of Kapur and Deshpande shows the trajectory of the physical, intellectual and psychological growth of the New Woman through their constant resistance, struggle and success. The apparent failures at different phases of their lives do not jeopardize their inherent strength; on the contrary they awaken their superior selves and provide
them the impetus to look forward for newer ways of living their lives. Notwithstanding their improved socio-economic position they always try their best to maintain a balanced social relationship. From the predicament of their troubles and tribulations, they always rise victorious, not vanquished, rejuvenated, and not subjugated. Deshpande, unlike the feminists, doesn’t make her characters all time rebels against patriarchic hegemony. She allows them grow with their renewed knowledge of their own selves, that is the world they live in.

Deshpande is very much influenced with the psycho analytical characters of Virginia Woolf. She reveals the subconscious and unconscious psyche of her characters. Her female protagonists are sensitive, self-conscious, brilliant and creative and they revolt against the traditional parental family and run away from the suffocated atmosphere of the narrow minded society.

Deshpande consistently explores the nature of the female world and reconstructs the suppressed records of female experience. She constructs contexts, representing different facets of the trapped female psyche, and attempts to transcend its boundaries. Deshpande defines woman as a subject in her own right. Both Indu and Jaya strive for and obtain a certain autonomy for they have realized their immense potentialities for action and self-actualization.
Their return home is not defeatism but the triumph of the independence of women. They learn to live in society and their perception is best expressed in the words of Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One’s Own*: “There is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind”. (Woolf 121) Knowing that their mind and vision cannot be denied to them and knowing that they thus achieved self-realization and found their voice. They return to society or become a part of it. Michael Rosenthal’s statement on Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Ramsay and Lily can be extended to include Indu and Jaya as well:

> What unites...them, despite their vast personal differences, however, is their mutual reverence for life and their desire to make something ordered and whole out of the flux around them.

(Rosenthal 76)

In *Binding Vine*, two forms of gender violence are juxtaposed in the case of Kalpana and Mira. If Kalpana lying in an unconscious state represents the silenced subaltern, writing itself becomes a mode of resistance in Mira’s poems and diaries. Urmila’s account of the incident of Kalpana’s rape is loaded with ideological undertones. Shakutai’s insistence that the police should not be informed as it will lead to Kalpana’s disgrace and exposure is, in reality, an
exposure of the societal attitude toward the rape victim and the patriarchal ideology that rape disgraces the victim rather than the culprit.

* A Matter of Time * resists patriarchy through positioning the three female characters in disadvantageous circumstances. Sumi and her three daughters return to the house owned by her mother Kalyani after she was deserted by her husband Gopal. Sumi accepts Gopal’s decision placidly not because she lacks the courage to counter him but because she knows the futility of remonstration. As against Sumi’s controlled approach, Kalyani’s strategy of defiance is far more formidable in its impenetrable silence. She is the victim of the power game and she has endured the anguish of rejection. First, Manorama, her mother, rejected her mentally for being born a girl-child and she had adopted the strategy of resisting her mother’s dominance by her stoic silence. Secondly, Shripati, her husband ceased all forms of communication with her ever since his only son was lost on the Bombay Railway station and he blamed his wife for the loss.

Kalyani and her husband decided to lead separate lives for the last thirty-four years by maintaining a stoic silence in their relationship. Silence can be an influential tool of resistance when it practices a lack of participation in the social power relations. It works as an operation of power rather than helplessness. As it withholding communication, it produces a kind of awe and becomes a potent tool of resistance. Arundhati, the grand-daughter, voices her resistance more
vociferously than the others. Her father’s desertion brings with it social stigma and myriad unanswerable questions. She is piqued with her mother for not taking a stand against Gopal. In Aru’s resistance there is the younger generation’s impatience and restlessness to obtain justice. Not only their mother Sumi but also even her grandmother comes under scathing censure. Aru and her sisters cannot take in their grandmother’s docile attitude and refusal to explain the circumstances under which her son was lost. Though the three women are victims of patriarchal dominance, they reclaim their identity by their acts of resistance.

Deshpande’s novel Moving On also projects the protagonist Manjari as a woman who resists the patriarchal ideology and tries to live her life on her own terms. She displays enormous courage and steadfastness in her decision to give up studying medicine to marry Shyam, and again during such trying moments when it is revealed that her sister Malu is made pregnant by her husband. When Malu dies after giving birth to Sachi, followed by Shyam’s suicide, Manjari faces a painful period of struggle and strain. Estranged from family, she grapples with innumerable difficulties to support herself and to survive with her baby son. She turns down to marry Raja because she thinks that marriage without the foundation of love and only as a means of social security for a single woman is not acceptable to her. Manjari’s struggle for freedom and for being autonomous
is theoretically a challenge to patriarchy, not confronting it headlong but in
discovering one’s own strength as a woman. In her conversation with Gita
Viswanath, Deshpande opines, “we are shaped by our childhood and our
parents”. (Viswanath 229)

The novels of Kapur and Deshpande sympathetically record the lives of
such women as one of their themes for they have endeavored to transmit the
basic anxiety, loneliness and helplessness of their situation. They sensitively
emphasize that the existence of women is confined within the domesticity and
how all forms of oppression perpetuated on her are convincingly rationalized
generating a closed-mind syndrome.

Deshpande’s simple yet powerful prose reads like a grandmother’s tale
that pierces deep into the heart. At one point, the use of omniscient narration
teases the reader as the speaker forces events but is not to share until time and
plot unfolds it. The underlying theme in Deshpande's novels is human
relationships especially the ones that exist between father and daughter,
husband and wife, between mother and daughter. In all relationships, the
women occupy the central stage and significantly, the narration shifts through
her feminine consciousness. In her novels, three types of suffering women
characters reoccur with subtle changes.
The first type belongs to the protagonist’s mother or the mother figure, the traditional woman, who believes that her place is with her husband and family. The second type of woman is bolder, more self-reliant and rebellious. She cannot confirm to the mythological, submissive and surrender version of womanhood. The third type of women characters, are the women in between neither traditional nor radical in their ideas and practice. For example, Indu in *Roots and Shadows*, leaves her husband to seek refuge in her ancestral home. Being a woman herself, she sympathizes with women and in a conversation with Rati, Deshpande clarifies about the feminist approach in her writing, “If others see something feminist in my writings, I must say that it is not consciously done. It is because the world for women is like that and I am mirroring the world”. (Rati 60)

Kapur has presented her women characters in a different perspective. The women in the novels of Kapur seem to be the personification of new women who have been carrying the burden of inhibition since ages and want to be free now. The writer clearly shows the dilemma of women who carry the burden of being female as well as the added responsibility of being mothers to members of their own sex. In the traditional social milieu of the novel where mothers and daughters exist, marriage is regarded as the ultimate goal and destiny from which these women cannot escape. Kapur succeeds in presenting the real picture of
women in a male-dominated society. Her female protagonists are mostly educated, aspiring individuals confined within the limits of a conservative society. It is their individual struggle with family and society through which they plunge into a dedicated effort to carve an identity for themselves as qualified women with faultless backgrounds. Kapur says that writing in India tends to involve the family and community to a far greater extent than in the West. Here, women are often defined in terms of their roles. Equally Deshpande and Kapur present the central character as the middle class educated woman and they are a fit subject to show the clash between tradition and modernity. Women are generally gentle, dependent, submissive and passive. Within the family she is usually her husband’s yes-person; in the society, she is subordinate to man.

Both Deshpande and Kapur have their own feministic ideologies and styles of presentation. Their protagonists take different paths to reach their respective destinations and their self-identity. Deshpande’s female characters often traverse within their own boundaries. Seldom do they cross the barriers, and even if they do, they return to their own room. The characters try to defy patriarchal norms, yet they are forced to curb their soaring spirits. On the other hand, the women in the novels of Kapur are bold and are adventurous too. They are definitely the representations of the New Woman of India. In her novels, Kapur clearly states that education is the only weapon through which women reach self-sufficiency.
and thereby live with pride and self-identity. Both writers converge in marriage and deviate in revolt for Deshpande is traditional while Kapur is revolutionary. 

The narrative style of both writers is very simple and lucid.

Any good writer’s work should hold out great promise for the future research. Needless to say Kapur and Deshpande’s repertoire of writing too subscribes to this idea. These two writers lend themselves to transcultural studies in so far as comparison between themselves and American women writers such as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and Canadian writers like Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence and Judith Wright. Further Kapur and Deshpande can also be compared with other Tamil writers such as Lakshmi, Sivasankari, Vaasanthi and Indumathy.

The portrayal of woman in Indian English fiction as the silent victim and up holder of the tradition and traditional values of family and society has undergone a tremendous change and is no longer presented as a passive character. One could see the emergence of New Woman in the heroines of Kapur and Deshpande who do not want to be rubber dolls for others to move about as they please. Defying patriarchal notions that enforce women towards domesticity, they assert their individuality and aspire for self-reliance through education. The characters of Kapur and Deshpande nurture the desire of being independent and leading lives of their own. They want to shoulder responsibilities that go beyond a
husband and children. These women are not silent rebels but are bold, outspoken, determined and action oriented. All protagonists know that they cannot depend on others to sort out the domestic situation and proceed to tackle it on their own. In spite of getting education and freedom the women protagonists of Deshpande and Kapur blossom into new woman in the real sense. Though they dare to cross one patriarchal threshold, they are caught into another, where their free spirits are curbed and all they do is adjust, compromise and adapt with their feminine sensibilities according to the circumstances. Both Shashi Deshpande and Manju Kapur envision the world of the new woman with feminine sensibility. They echo the words of Toni Morrison in Jazz “What is the world for if you can’t make it the way you want?” (Morrison 116)

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THESES AND DISSERTATIONS


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