INTRODUCTION

Searching Selfhood

Literary texts express the author's experience and reveal the truth about his or her world and as they do so, they provide us with access to the universality of human nature. In Indian English writing the issue of coming to terms with a hostile world was explored primarily from the nationalistic, philosophical and sociological point of view, while in the psychologically oriented novels which gained currency in the 1960s, the emphasis was on individual's confrontation with existential uncertainty and his/ her need to assert his own understanding of the world.

Women's domestic fiction in several Indian languages is basically set in the autobiographical mode and speaks of personal relations, love, sexuality, discords and disharmony within the family and the drama of everyday life. Early Indian English fiction by women writers shared many of these traits; with the backdrop of native settings relating tales of native lore, for an assumed European or American reader. The need for a change in the fictional mode of expression was immediately felt at the turn of the 19th century, keeping in view a rapidly emerging new reality and the shifting social, political and economic orders.

As it evolved over the 20th century, the domestic novel began to reflect the changes or the striving for changes in the mind-set of the individuals, especially women. Even within the traditional Indian extended family, spaces and identities were subjected to negotiation and transformation. The shifting complexities of social reforms and modernity leading to confusion, restlessness and frustration as experienced by the
distraught wives, daughters and widows in Indian families, began to find expression in
the novels of the 20th century. Milestones of emancipation like higher education for
women began to threaten the domestic and sexual boundaries laid down by patriarchy.

In the late 19th and 20th centuries, changes occurred in the literary scene with the
women writers' initiative in restructuring of patriarchy and gender. Popular novels of
this period reveal the personal and social dilemmas related to morality and the
institution of marriage, which thwarted feminine aspirations. Many women novelists
center their writings on the marital relationships of their female protagonists and
intricately weave into the structure of marriage, the issues of power relations, gender
discrimination and the travails of women. The recurrent motif of marriage in women's
fiction in English, especially in the novels of the later part of the 20th century, is
presented as a battleground for the women protagonists, who are engaged in conflicts
between their selfhood and societal expectations.

Literature took up the task of posing, elaborating, analyzing and resolving
questions of gender and projecting their resolutions as female reality. Women's
literature began to challenge and recast the dominant ideology of women and
interrogated authoritative interpretations of the patriarchal society. Mainstream
literature had more often distorted the reality of women's lives and portrayed women as
men want them to be – projecting the virtuous, self-sacrificing image of woman along
with her feminine graces. The idea of the eternal female which was set up to
complement the male had incarcerated women and kept them within bounds for ages.
Gilbert and Gubar have written of women writers "enclosed in the architecture of an
overwhelmingly male dominated society" and thereby sharing a common impulse "to
struggle free from social and literary confinement through strategic redefinition of self, art and society." (Gilbert and Gubar xi, xii). The true female self began to struggle for release; to express their needs, desires and aspirations, with the scripting of the modern novel. Women writing thus attempted to express redemption from male bondage. As Elaine Showalter has observed “if we study stereotypes of women, the sexism of male critics and the limited roles women play in literary history, we are not learning what women have felt and experienced but only what men have thought women should be.” (Showalter 130). Women’s experiences, their needs, their anger and dissatisfaction which they had earlier concealed or felt too insecure to confront or even to recognize began to take form in the literary texts and at the same time affirmed the universality of patriarchal oppression.

Fiction concerning personal relations, emotional upheaval, the trauma of subjugation and suppressed yearnings and the strengths and failings of women began to be scripted. Since the 1920s, the pivotal theme of the domestic novel in India has been gender subordination and the resultant antagonism against an unchanging patriarchy. Literature by Indian women writers portray women undertaking journeys of self-discovery and searching for identity, while also freeing the text from the dependency on the literature produced by male authors. Post Independence women writers in English like Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal, Shashi Deshpande, Manju Kapur and Arundhati Roy are poised within the Indian social and intellectual milieu and their writings mark a society’s transition from an earlier pre-modern mode to a modern one. They project the predicament of the modern women who desire separate identities, who strongly resent the onslaught on their selfhood and their anguish at what life offers.
The women protagonists of this genre of novels represent the emerging New Woman who is self-reliant, well-educated and eager to express life on her own terms. Yet she feels deprived of a space of her own and stifled as she cannot voice her urges and aspirations. She is plagued by the dilemma of conforming to traditional norms, with which she has been moulded since birth and the desire to endorse her individuality and break free from the gendered bondage.

In these novels, questions are raised and conflicts crop up between the self and society and between individual freedom and traditional norms. However, absolute answers are not arrived at. Though solutions are elusive, the inner truths of human relationships are brought to light and every novel by the women writers stands out as a new discovery of man, woman and society. These novels based on the conflict between tradition and modernity; between questions and expectations and gender and power relations record a contest of various narratives. They display what is at stake in the clash between self and society. The literary exercises of the women writers are a record of the narratives of the beleaguered New Woman; of their male counterparts; their family members; the elderly women who are the torch-bearers of patriarchy and their peers who share similar plights as them. These narratives stand out as documents either of women’s struggles against a dominant ideology or their conformation to it.

I have selected four novels each of Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande, where I detect a definite clash of narratives between traditional values and the need for emancipation. Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande have been intimately associated with the introspective, psychological novel that also makes a metaphysical enquiry into the existential dilemma of human beings. They write novels which have turned inward to
examine “the flow of individual and collective consciousness, with its altered structure of relationship, its changed temporality.” (Bradbury 9). For Desai and Deshpande individual identity is the key to self-fulfillment. Their characters are primarily from the educated urban class, who acknowledge the twin influences of an Indian way of life and Western influences imbibed through education and an awareness of Western literature, philosophy and cultural ethos. The predicaments of the heroines are the result of socially entrenched norms which seek to relegate the individual to the periphery. Searching for individual identity or personal gratification is alien to the Indian cultural ethos, since a woman’s mind is moulded to serve her family first. But in the context of the rapidly changing Indian society, the heroines are poised in a crucial situation where conventional values and norms are being increasingly displaced by an individualistic approach and a distinctly individual identity becomes the cherished dream of every individual.

It would be worthwhile at this point, to make a brief survey of the critical reception to Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande’s works. Earlier criticisms and research works on Anita Desai have focused on the uprooted and marginalized identities of her characters and on their alienation; the psychological development of her female characters within the patriarchal Indian family structure; the relationship between post-colonial and feminist studies; Indian life and culture in post-colonial perspectives and on the complexities of human relationships. Besides there have been comparative studies of Desai with other writers. Intensive and extensive research has also been done on the issue of marriage, dealing with the suppression and sensibilities of the heroines;
the search for a fulfilling identity; the trauma of alienation and estrangement within marriage.

Cindy Lacom has examined the social contexts and ideologies of disabled characters in Desai’s novels and has demonstrated the relationship between post colonial and feminist studies and disabled persons (Lacom 138-54). Judie Newman has examined “the relation between discourse and history” in her works (Newman 37-46). Bharati A. Parikh compares the treatment of female relationships in Toni Morrison’s fiction with that in Desai’s novels, emphasizing the alienation of the characters in their respective cultures (Parikh 17-25). Richard Cronin examines Desai’s treatment of India and Indian life and culture (Cronin 45-56). Tony Simoes da Silva discovers that colonial appropriation of Indian cultural values persist in the post colonial novel (Silva 63-77). Sema Jena surveys Desai’s early novels and highlights the mental development of the female characters in terms of the patriarchal Indian family structure (Jena 16-34). Shyam M. Asnani examines the themes “alienation and incommunication” in Where Shall We go This Summer? stating that Desai’s fiction “grapples with the intangible realities of life” (Asnani 44-53). K. Chellapan examines existential themes of “being and become” contrasting her works to the Ramayana and Virginia Woolf’s To the Lighthouse (Chellapan 10-16). Uma Parameswaran studies the complexity of human relationships but finds their resolutions “too simplistic” (Parameswaran 221). Gabriele Anna compares Fire on the Mountain with Russian novels, for its mysteries, fascinations and romantic atmosphere (Annan 21). Shirley Chew studies the family element of Fasting Feasting and assesses it as a perpetuation of the patriarchal society (Chew 23). Usha Bande has pointed out that “Desai’s real concern is with the
exploration of the human psyche. Her forte lies in her characters – unusual, neurotic but not ready to accept life as it came. Her writings reveal inner realities and psychic reverberations of her character” (Bande 7). Jasbir Jain has assessed that Desai’s works deal with the absurdity of human life, with the existential search for meaning in it. He comments “The world of Anita Desai’s novels is an ambivalent one, it’s a world where the central harmony is aspired to but not arrived at, and the desire to love and live clashes – at times violently – with the desire to withdraw and achieve harmony” (Jain 47).

Shashi Deshpande’s novels have the recurrent motif of her female protagonists searching for freedom and self-identity centering on the marital relationship of man and woman and the subjugation and silences of the heroines. The groundwork on Indian women writers by critics such as Chandra Mohanty, Susie Tharu, Meenakshi Mukherjee, K. Lalita, Lakshmi Homstrom and Malashri Lal among others lay down that it is essential to place the works of these writers in Indian, rather than Western feminist context. Amrita Bhalla extends a critical enquiry on it and focuses on gender and patriarchy in Shashi Deshpande’s novels. She highlights the major characteristics of Deshpande’s fiction as “a woman’s mental turmoil and introspection as she faces a dilemma or loss in her life; the house as ‘character’; the motif of ‘silence’ the re-imagining from a feminist perspective of Hindu mythology and religion; the vexed relationship between mothers and daughters; the importance placed on male heirs; and the inclusiveness of the novels’ endings (Bhalla 111). R.S. Pathak has said: “Deshpande’s novels have like those of Jane Austen, a narrow range. Her main concern is the urge to find oneself, to create space for oneself, to grow on one’s own.” (Pathak
According to Ram Sharma, the female protagonists of Deshpande, “who has the capacity to make free choices, being educated and hard working, need not depend on the choice of their husbands.” Yet, Deshpande’s “feminism does not uproot the woman from her background but tries to expose the different ideological elements that shape her” (Sharma 1-7). Arun Chullikkal comments that Deshpande “makes us question our everyday anxieties and helps us see, through the evolution of well-etched characters, the frailties and possibilities of human life” (Chullikkal n.pag). A.N. Dwivedi explores the recurrent metaphor of ‘silence’, ‘death’, darkness’, sunlight’, ‘binding vine’ in Deshpande’s novels, which characterize the joys, sorrows, failures, success, alienation, attraction, desperation and hope of human life (Dwivedi 197). Vimala Ramarao studies Deshpande’s use of myth and folklore: “Since many of her novels have women for the central consciousness, these devices are especially useful to the novelist as a means of illuminating the inner landscape of women’s minds” (Ramarao 208). Nalinabh Tripathi has observed that “the male female polarity is emphasized and a merger is not encouraged” (Tripathi 47). S.P. Swain has studied Deshpande’s novels in feminist perspectives, where the women are subjected to a psychic turmoil within the limiting and restricting confines of domesticity (Swain 87). Usha Bande has observed that Deshpande’s heroines “gain inner vision and the strength to reconcile after a prolonged period of pain and suffering” (Bande 193). Mrinalini Sebastian has commented that Deshpande “unlike the other post-colonial novelists, refuses to dwell on the issues of nationalism, caste and hybrid cultures” (Sebastian 146). Bijay Danta studies the recurrent themes of past memories in her novels. “Characters imprisoned in their memories dominate the narrative space of her novels. They keep revisiting their pasts in
a manner that threatens their present and future" (Danta 204). Mala Ranganathan studies human relationships, where the woman occupying the centre stage in a family seeks refuge from their sufferings (Ranganathan 71-78). Parul Dubey studies the various influences that a family has on the women characters in Shashi Deshpande’s novels (Dubey 1-10). Anne Collette studies the relationship between Existentialism, Materialism and Feminism in the novels of Shashi Deshpande (Collette 59).

The work done on the married women’s struggles for selfhood has stimulated my interest to work on similar areas hitherto unexplored. This thesis attempts to rediscover and find new meanings in the nature of women’s struggles for selfhood. I have taken up for study four novels of Anita Desai viz. – *Cry, The Peacock, Voices in the City, Where Shall We Go This Summer?* and *Fire on the Mountain*. And four novels of Shashi Deshpande viz. – *The Dark Holds No Terror, Roots and Shadows, That Long Silence* and *Small Remedies*. I have detected that the struggle for selfhood in these novels is based on conflicting narratives – the narratives of the society, of the husband and of the wife. The narrative discourses as presented by the character of the wife, are propelled by her need to create a separate space of her own and to fulfill her own desires and aspirations, instead of functioning as an automaton in the patriarchal society. Earlier studies on the predicaments of the women protagonists of Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande have dwelt on the travails, frustrations and oppressions that the married women are subjected to and on their struggles to seek selfhood. In my present study I propose to examine this repressive but necessary human relationship and study the specific narratives of the wives as they try to find fulfillment through their husbands, their disillusionment, their attempts to fulfill societal expectations, their
struggles for individuality and the survival strategies they adopt in their oppressed conditions. These narratives of the wives bring to light hidden aspects of their situations and events which call for thinking and action. The traditional values, societal norms, rituals and customs, together with the expectations of the patriarchal society form the master narrative of marriage which conflicts with the narratives of the wife. The objective of this study is to analyze the clash of narratives and to assess the wife’s struggles for selfhood. This study also proposes to find out whether the narratives of the wives have made them strong and rebellious crusaders or have perpetuated their submissiveness like that of their sisters of the previous centuries.

The novels are a record of women’s real experiences and therefore they apparently carry the impression of truth – which emerges when the prejudices are discarded and the rigid and ritualistic norms are defied. Truth is derived from interrogations and differences and not simply by repeating tradition or following laid down norms and codes. These differences form the narratives of the various characters of a novel which clash against a pre-existing narrative, or the master narrative. Conflicts in narratives are necessary because it is possible that the strange might be true and the familiar false. What may appear just and rational to one section of society may seem unjust, exploitive and oppressive to another section of society. Narratives therefore strive to unfold truths and establish identities. Thus the fictional world becomes the ‘real’ world since it expresses the conflicts and complaints which women confront in their everyday lives, which they were earlier programmed to keep suppressed. The attempts of the married women to certify their narrative versions of marriage can be interpreted as their struggles to establish their individuality.
The women writers concerned with gender issues find themselves at the center of a conflict between tradition and modernity. Though modernity threatens established values and is an indication of defiance and deviation from the norm — it is also an expression of the vitality of the human spirit. The women writers, critics and editors of anthologies are clearly controlled by the ideologies of their times as men are. Patriarchy takes shape and transforms according to different historical and social circumstances. Women writers too react differently to the patriarchal ideology and their works are not always restricted to women’s oppression or are feminist in character. For the Indian women writers the quest for selfhood of their protagonists has to be necessarily achieved within the contours of tradition, though the clear message sent out through their novels is that the individual is more important than the society. Feminist philosopher Mary Wollstonecraft opined that woman ought to turn her energy onto herself and to re-fashion her nature to emerge as a fit companion to the new man – the man who has relinquished patriarchal ideologies (Tharu and Lalitha 30).

Since man and woman are complementary to each other, the partnership ideal has been a dominant narrative of marriage, as held by society. Marriage is regarded as the ideal goal and destiny for individuals. There are instances galore in the Indian novels, where men are in pursuit of wives, mothers and elderly relatives search for suitable husbands for their daughters and nieces and young girls are made to parade before prospective grooms. Being conditioned by the belief that marriage is the centre of social life and social aspiration and a woman’s existence out of marriage is contemptible, women desperately seek fulfillment by tying the marital knot. Educated and self-reliant women, poised in the transition period of a changing society too are not
devoid of this partnership ideal. Existential insecurity and uncertainty make them feel inadequate and partial therefore they seek male companionship for physical, economic and emotional security. In the novels taken up for study in this thesis, marriage provides the setting for the heroines' development – from their subjugation, their quest, their self-discovery to their solutions.

Marriage which is the dominant element at the thematic level is also found to be present at the structural level of the novels. The writers of the concerned novels choose marriage as the setting for the drama of conflicts and self-realization. Thematically, the novels proceed from an acceptance of the partnership ideal with hopes of fulfillment, to disillusionment, discords and suffering to either escapes or compromises and finally conforming to the sanctity of marriage. In three of the novels taken up for study, the suffering of the heroines leads them to suicide, which is sought as the only perceived solution to their predicaments. Structurally too, the novels proceed to culminate in marriage – either accepting it or escaping from it.

The novels proceed on the model of the 19th century English novel by women writers, where marriage operates as a climactic point. The preoccupation of the British with issues of class stratification, property inheritance, economic survival and moral choice are found to culminate in the ritual ending of ‘happily married ever after’. Jane Austen reflected contemporary reality by repeatedly showing marriage as the only means of livelihood for women who did not inherit property. Marriage or the possibility of marriage propels the novels to reach the ultimate goal of marriage, just as the characters orbiting around the heroines – like the female friends, sisters, aunts and uncles facilitate a marital relationship. Jane Austen’s ironic observation of the marriage
of convenience is expressed in the famous first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*—“It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife” (Austen). In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet’s outspokenness and turning down of two marriage proposals is an attempt at endorsing her individuality. Yet the usual reward for hard achieved virtue for all Jane Austen’s heroines is marriage. The smooth surface of her novels is seen to conceal a tension between protest and acceptance, rebellion and conformity, held in equilibrium by the controlling device of irony. The quest of the spirited heroines, in the 19th century novels, for a full independent life is undermined, punished or replaced either by marriage or by death. It is necessary that however non-conformist or rebellious the heroine might have been, she would ultimately be made to accept the norms of society. The institution of marriage by its very nature implies subservience on the part of the woman and though the narratives held by the heroines clash against the orthodox social demands, paradoxically enough, they contribute to the force of the ending in marriage. The heroines, who are under social and economic pressures to marry, thereby conform to the narrative of marriage, as upheld by society. In the novels of Jane Austen, there is a parallel movement of the thematic and formal aspects, ending in marriage. It is evident that the social institution of marriage is valorized in Austen’s novels with only an undercurrent of irony against the dependency on a husband or the consumerism attached to marriage. An air of complacency prevails as the marriages take place at closure. Contrasting with Austen’s narratives of complacency, the Indian novels penned by women writers like Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande however, are narratives of complaint.
My thesis draws attention to these narratives of complaint. The novels taken up for study portray the oppression of the married women who are unable to voice their needs, desires and aspirations and are compelled to live a shackled life and follow tradition as a virtue. The married women are expected to be martyrs and epitomes of sacrifice and servitude. They suffer silently as pain gnaws away at their troubled inner selves. They desperately seek a space of their own and the freedom of their minds and bodies. Besides, they are plagued by a tug-of-war within themselves, between their obligations towards traditional norms on the one hand and their desire to endorse their individuality, on the other. The narratives of the stereotypical female dream of finding happiness through a man clash with the narratives of reality that the women protagonists confront in their marital lives, where they are expected to live out their lives according to the prescriptions of patriarchy. They seek freedom from male dictates yet the fear of being abandoned or widowed inflicts them. This thesis is an attempt to analyze these narratives of complaints and make an assessment of the solutions sought by the heroines. The narratives of complaint or the differences and conflicts that emerge in the marital lives of the protagonists act as tools of establishing an identity and a laying down of a truth – that woman is a human being with an identity more extensive than the one she has been saddled with for centuries – that of an object of procreation, preservation, carnal pleasure and servitude.

The novels develop on the basis of the interrogations of priorities and a reassessment of the self. Desai and Deshpande question the parameters of absolute truth and reality which are more meaningful to individuals than age-old societal norms. They depict characters who are caught in the cusp of a society in transition from the
conventional to the modern; where gender roles are re-defined; where the urban Indian family is re-structured; where professions for women become more important than domesticity; when ‘giving’ turns into ‘taking’.

Anita Desai’s heroines like Maya in *Cry the Peacock* (CTP); Sita in *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* (WSWGS); Monisha in *Voices In The City* (VITC) and Nanda in *Fire On The Mountain* (FOTM) are characters gripped by a restlessness which speaks of the changing social scenario. They are women who can no longer adjust to the complacent routine of life and long for a sensitive and understanding approach in their husbands and desire freedom to express their inner needs. Desai’s novels are restricted to an upper-class educated milieu, where intellectual pretensions, classical music and other facades of civilized life like bridge-parties and entertaining figure largely. Within this world the character of the wife is left to cope with the drudgery of routine existence from which patriarchy sets itself apart. Against this narrow backdrop of Indian life, Desai creates compelling stories of marital alienation, power relations and the trauma of suppressed desires, where women are left to cope with the very assault of existence itself, in a world which appears hostile and indifferent to human efforts and sensibilities. Desai’s exploration of the Indian sensibility in the context of a transitional socio-psychological order reflects the fundamental conflicts inherently present in a changing society.

A person’s quest for identity is a commonplace theme in Western fiction, but this quest assumes difficult proportions in the Indian context, because the individual bereft of sustaining support has to battle against the stronghold of traditional values and morals. The individual has to assert herself decisively to affirm control over her life.
The question of individual freedom; the value of individual assertion and the limits set by the unalterable and uncontrollable aspects of life are woven into the fabric of Desai’s novels and are revealed through the various narratives.

Shashi Deshpande works on a canvas different from the sophisticated upper-class ones of Anita Desai. Deshpande’s fiction is restricted to the struggling strata of society; living in middleclass comforts where the characters are educated and are aware of the vitality of individual freedom. Deshpande writes about the subjugation and silences of women; the breakdowns in communication and the falsehood that marriages and families contend with. The writer and her women protagonists appear to share a crisis: “Middle class. Bourgeoise. Upper caste. Distanced from real life. Scared of writing. Scared of failing.” (Deshpande 148). Her novels speak of the fears and dilemmas that inflict the female protagonists and their relationships with their husbands, their parents and their peers. Behind the façade of a happy contented marriage of Sara in *The Dark Holds No Terror* (DHNT); Jaya in *That Long Silence* (TLS); Indu in *Roots and Shadows* (R&S); Madhu in *Small Remedies* (SR) exist a beleagured wife who “had stopped speaking except for the essentials of daily living” (Deshpande 148). Her novels are revelations of the hidden fears, anxieties, desires, aspirations as well as the compulsions of women who are exploited and incarcerated in their marital lives.

By focusing on the narrative of the married woman, Deshpande foregrounds the cultural angst of women wrestling with the need to have a greater control of their own lives and most significantly for the need to choose to a small degree, the kind of life they would like to. The women residing in the small towns of Karnataka and Maharastra; who had their roots in caste and community oriented families move on to
the shadowed anonymity of a seemingly casteless and non-communal metropolis of Mumbai. This transit reflects the transit of a society as well as the search of an individual for selfhood. Deshpande's novels go beyond the apparent gender bias because her women protagonists are rebels who shake off customary obligations and become assertive about their individual needs.

Individual fulfillment and self-discovery become the goals of the literary endeavours of both Desai and Deshpande. Their writings overlap the distinctions between the literary and social texts and become the documents which cry for a change in the social mind-set. As Susie Tharu and K. Lalitha say of women's writings "It is an aesthetic that holds the promise of the many worlds that will appear as the old universalism fades and begins to look dull and simplistic; its self-confident posturing melodramatic, the tastes and feelings it nourished somehow decadent and sentimental" (Tharu and Lalitha 39).

The thesis opens with a study of the relationship between the institution of marriage and society. Chapter 1 studies how marriage as a social relationship connotes roles and reciprocal expectations related to each role. It studies how the Hindu marriage laws lay down the norms and codes for a virtuous wife and thereby determines her status in society. It also makes an assessment of the position of the married woman through the ages and finds out how successful she has been in reaching her goal of individuality and emancipation in the patriarchal society.

In order to establish one's identity, questions need to be raised and self-assertion needs to take shape. The deviations from following laid down conservative rules and the expressions of one's own version become the narratives of an individual. Chapter 2
studies the multiple narratives of marriage as existing in society and the heroines' reactions to these narratives — which lead to conflicts and struggles for their identity. The narratives of marriage, of the married woman portray the oppressions she is subjected to and her restlessness to seek an identity of her own other than the one prescribed by patriarchy.

Chapter 3 makes an assessment of the sufferings and subjugation of the married woman in the novels of Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande. This chapter studies the strategies adopted by the heroines to survive in the patriarchal world; the forms of resistance they adopt against the dictates of patriarchy and the struggles they carry out to establish their own identity.

Though the heroines seek emancipation and selfhood, paradoxically enough they are incapable of walking away from their marriages. The traditional values which they have imbibed since childhood, has an irrevocable grip on them. Chapter 4 studies the peculiar dilemma of the heroines, of their need to conform to the traditional values of marriage and at the same time rebelling against them.

The heroines finally arrive at solutions to their dilemmas. They do this by maintaining a balance between tradition and modernity and between protest and acceptance. The concluding chapter studies the solutions adopted by the heroines and finds out whether it is an achievement of their goal of individuality or a mere resignation to unchangeable circumstances.
Works Cited


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