Chapter 5

Conclusion

Cowards move in grooves, the brave chart out a new course. Passion and pragmatism, the influential forces of human life are diametrically opposed to each other. Many consider these as parallel lines which are always the same distance apart. However, they are stated to be the woof and warp of one’s experience. A study under the title “The Dialectics of Passion and Pragmatism in the novels of Manju Kapur” has focused on the interplay of these factors. The introductory chapter of the study has postulated that novels are not real life. Like all works of art- poems, plays, pieces of music- have been constructed or crafted. Yet it is believed that every form of art cannot be divorced from reality or from the society which urges its emergence and existence.

Indian writing in English came into existence after the collision of a vigorous British rule in India. It was Lord Macaulay who introduced English in the educational system. After that it began to take root and shoot, and now it is blooming and blossoming like a beautiful flower dispersing its fragrance in each and every corner. Indo-Anglian literature represents perhaps the most valuable contribution India has yet made to the world of books.

In the chapter on “Introduction”, the researcher has presented the origin and development of Indian Literature in English and contextualized Manju Kapur and her writings. Indian fiction in English generally begins with Mulk Raj Anand, though before him, there is a bulk of novelists particularly in Bengal who tried their pen to compose worth mentioning fiction. Mulk Raj Anand has tried his best to blow a revolutionary zeal to the deserted and the defenceless people of society. Through his
successful novels the novelist has done a marathon effort to blow the ashes of the unextinguished hearth.

The works of R.K.Narayan are entirely different from those of Mulk Raj Anand—the former is the champion of the cause of the vulnerable and the marginalized while the latter is never pre-occupied with any principle or notion as such. R.K.Narayan like a detached observer snaps a small group of men and their oddities; explores the inner thoughts and ambitions of the characters, creates an imaginary place like Malgudi which is ‘casterbridge’ of the novelist. In other words, R.K.Narayan strongly believes in the aesthetic or creative pattern of art rather than its suggestive and moral appeal.

Raja Roa, shows in his novels the spiritualism and mysticism of our age-long heritage, its rites and custom, decorum and decency. The tradition of social realism and new consciousness was further continued by Bhabani Bhattacharya. Manohar Malgonkar is somewhat different from that of Bhattacharya. Women novelists have also shown their extraordinary caliber in the realm of Indian fiction in English. The history of Indian women novelists got a new track. Markandaya’s novels which earned popularity in home and abroad. In all these novels, the common theme is east-west encounter and they portray women in different life-roles. The novels of R.P.Jhabvala ring the note of two things-urban middle class Indian life tinged with domestic problems of an average joint Hindu family, and an ironic study of the confrontation between occidental and oriental attitudes.

Mahasweta Devi has championed through her writings, the needs of the marginalized class. Arundhati Roy won the prestigious Booker prize for The God of Small Things, a book which registered a tremendous sale all over the world. Bharati
Mukherjee, Shashi Despande, Jhumpa Lahiri and above all Manju Kapur have mainly devoted their attention to profound social features and women issues that emerge in the gradual metamorphosis of the old order. Their fictional milieu is the Indian transition with its cultural, social and familial values. In each of their novels, one could sense the author’s urge for a way of living which would respond to the inner most yearnings of the Indian women for self-emancipation and self-dignity. The researcher has taken for her study the novels of Manju Kapur.

Manju Kapur teaches English literature at Miranda House College, Delhi University. Her first novel Difficult Daughters received huge international acclaim. This novel was published in 1998. Her second novel A Married Woman was published in 2002. Her third novel Home was published in 2006. Difficult Daughters was awarded the Commonwealth Writers Prize for the best first book (Eurasia) and was a number one best seller in India. The novel, The Immigrant was published in 2008 and the novel Custody was published in 2011. Manju Kapur, in her novels presents women who try to establish their own identity. The women of India have indeed achieve their success in half a century of Independence, but if there is to be a true female independence, much remains to be done. The fight for autonomy remains an unfinished combat. The researcher has taken up the present study because Kapur has shown through her works the women who choose, suffer and compromise.

The second chapter is titled, “Choice.” The researcher has pointed out that though women in general are not given a choice of their own, the educated women strive towards that. Kapur’s novels depict that the traditional Indian society oppresses women. It does not help them choose a life of their own. The patriarchs of the household and the society have a strong say in everything. The passion or the feelings
of women have not been given any recognition. Women have to conceal their emotions, good or bad. It is due to this pressure, women have started revolting against it. When the need to go against the dictates of the elders arises, Kapur’s women find it difficult to manage the situations. It is in this context the researcher has analysed each novel of Kapur in which the protagonists are shown to come out with their choice.

Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* is based on the crisis in the value system of the modern society. The novel brings forth the issue of gender discrimination and the struggle of the Indian women under the oppressive mechanism of a closed society. Virmati is portrayed as a new woman of colonial India-challenging old outmoded attitudes towards women. The researcher has stated that Virmati has started exploring the possibilities for herself in education and economic independence.

Manju Kapur has joined the growing number of women writers from India, like Shashi Despande, Arundhati Roy, Githa Hariharan, Shobha De on whom the image of the suffering but stoic women eventually breaking traditional boundaries has had a significant impact. Manju Kapur’s female protagonists are mostly educated, aspiring individual caged within the confines of a conservative society. Their education leads them to independent thinking for which their family and society become intolerant. They struggle between tradition and modernity. 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 background. The novelist has portrayed her protagonists as a woman caught in the conflict between the passions of the flesh and a yearning to be a part of the political and intellectual moments of the day.
In her quest of identity, Virmati the central character of the novel, rebels against tradition. She is impelled by the inner need to feel loved as an individual. The title of the novel *Difficult Daughters* is an indication to the message that a woman, who tries in search of an identity, is branded as a difficult daughter by the family and the society as well. The story tells how she is torn between family duty and illicit love. Virmati falls in love with the Professor who develops an intimate relationship with Virmati.

Virmati has to fight against the power of the mother as well as the oppressive forces of patriarchy symbolized by the mother figure. In the patriarchal Indian society, marriage is a means of deliverance from being socially condemned and it relieves a woman from the sense of insecurity and uncertainty. To the older generation marriage is no reason to rebel, it was accepted as a part of life’s pleasure and was a phase of initiating certain Dharmas associated with social and religious institutions. Of course love was not the prerequisite or a desired basis for marriage. If Virmati’s mother, Kasturi, and Ganga seek pleasure in domestic work, Virmati struggles between the physical and the moral. Finally, she gives way to the dictations of the heart and the body. Defying patriarchal notions that enforce women towards domesticity, Virmati asserts her individuality and aspires for self-reliance through education. Virmati nurtures the desire to be independent.

Kapur’s heroines have their own passions. Their passions are nothing but a choice not everyone dares to make. They take a choice to walk down a path less travelled. They decide to pursue their passions whole heartedly. Virmati’s desire to continue her further education and determination to marry the Professor places her in a difficult situation. *Difficult Daughters* describes that how to step out of the
framework defined by men and patriarchal values and how to identify and create a tradition of their own. Virmati’s mother, a construct of patriarchy exercises her special prerogative to train her daughter into cultural mores so that she takes up the assigned role of a daughter, a wife and a mother without interrogation and learns the importance of self-sacrifice, and devotion. Susie Orbach reflects that inorder to prepare her daughter for a life of inequality, the mother tries to hold back a child’s desire to be a powerful, self-directed, energetic, productive human being. But Virmati’s body becomes a site of terrifying alienation, because she is not able to meet the demands of the society represented by the mother, as well as by the demands of her psyche.

Resistance to patriarchy starts with Virmati’s insistence on education and refusal for marriage. She believes: “One of the benefits of education is that it teaches us to think for ourselves” (102). She wants to live an intellectual life of mind, but the society in the guise of her parents reminds her that a woman is no more than a body and the patriarchal society permits no alternative to marriage and holds in pity and contempt those who attempt to thwart it. Virmati resists the colonization of her body, and becomes a self-directed woman of new generation and chooses her life partner.

Asth, in *Amariwed Woman*, shows her fondness for painting. When her desire is not recognized by her husband, she chooses to have lesbian relationship with Pipeelika. Nisha in *Home* chooses to love a low caste boy which shocks the orthodox family. Kapur depicts that in Indian homes, the socialization of the girl child is a complex process. The main purpose of which is to inculcate in girls the appropriate codes of conduct including self-effacement and self-denial and to train them to see their life primarily in terms of service to others. Nisha claims political space by
claiming authority over her body by having romantic relationship with Suresh, a low caste boy.

Nina in Immigrant, after knowing her husband, Ananda’s impotentiality, goes for an extramarital affair with a foreign man. The Immigrant presents female body as a physical site which is caught between the conflicts of mind/body dualism. Kapur shows how society relegates woman to a secondary social position by identifying woman with the body and not with the mind. The protagonist Nina believes in the superiority of “the life of the mind”, but is made to feel inadequate and insecure. Though Nina is financially self-reliant, like all other Indian daughters, she is a burden on her mother, a liability and a responsibility.

Shagun in Custody confronts her married life with Raman, who has not satisfied her wishes. Another protagonist Ishita, a divorcee is willing to be a second wife of Raman and also agrees to be step mother for his daughter. Kapur discusses these issues in the context of patriarchy, inter-religious marriage, family bond, male-female bond, co-existence of past and present in the socio-political facts. She has shown her woman protagonists as a victim of biology, gender, domestic violence and circumstances. Kapur thinks: “There is a man within every woman and woman in every man when manhood is questioned and womanhood is fragmented”(Nayak,137). By knowing the cause of problems of women in and out of the family, Kapur has focused on the reasons for the protagonists’ restlessness and their search for identity. 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. Freedom
movement was a major historical event and Kapur has blended with the lives of her characters. Kapur also points out the heroines’ choice to face the aggression of Western influences and heightened competition, and the subsequent effort to lead a liberated life.

The third chapter has been titled, “Suffering” which signals the truth that an indiscreet choice leads to suffering. Virmati’s alienation from family makes her a silent sufferer. She becomes bad tempered to her only child, who in turn blames her mother for the failures in her life. Ida, Virmati’s daughter, develops hatred towards her mother who comes in the way of her progress. Kapur has shown the gap in the mother-daughter relationship. In other words, the novelist has presented the fact that suffering occurs due to the character’s inability to choose between tradition and modernity. Only with Virmati’s death the ghost is laid to rest, and Ida becomes free to lead her own life, no longer threatened by the shadow of her mother. The novel depicts how a mother, traditionally an epitome of sacrifice and goodness, could become a symbol of selfishness and resentment to her children.

Thus the very title of the Kapur’s first book Difficult Daughters is assertive. By placing the adjective ‘difficult’ before ‘daughters’, the author sends the signal that characters in the novel are not soft and pliable. They are not likely to yield to pressures-familial and social, and are sure to carve out the unconventional course to meet their aspirations.

The suffering of Virmati is that she is very weak. She just cannot kick the Professor out of her life. The reason for this behavior is not love, but the lack of love. Virmati as a child received very little love. She wanted love and missed it till the professor came with his assurances of love braced with sentences from the English
literature. It is another example of a person being in love with the concept of love, rather than with another person. Virmati struggles through “the winds of misfortune” for the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual well-being of herself in the “bizarre obsessions of grief”

Kapur traces the actual process by which woman is womanised. Society allows a woman to enjoy her body and sexuality only in heterosexual intimacy. Kapur presents the reality of married life in a traditional society where a woman has to efface her personality and surrender one’s very existence. Astha in *A Married Woman*, realizes: “A willing body at night, a willing pair of hands and feet in the day and an obedient mouth were the necessary prerequisites of Hemant’s wife.” (231). She exerts her agency and interrogates socio-cultural constructs and discovers “many facets in the relationship between her husband and herself reflected power rather than love” (233).

Fed up with disintegration of the body, Astha wants to reinvent herself as a human being and get back her female body with its desires, aspirations, emotions, feelings and dreams and sets on her quest for a more meaningful life in her lesbian relationship with Peepilika, a widow. For some time, the female protagonist rejects the rules of a ritual bound society and challenges the patriarchal heterosexual power structures which have invalidated and stigmatized lesbianism/homosexuality. The lesbian pair creates their own world within the larger mainstream heterosexual world; thereby effecting a crucial reversal in the subject position. In the moments of their heightened ecstasy they are not mother, wife and daughter or property of patriarchal system, but individual selves who are the sole owner of their bodies. Overall it offers
simplistically sexual expression as the vehicle of female liberation. But truth is always bitter.

As days move on, the conflict between her roles of wife, mother and that of a lover makes her feel guilty and panicky. After sometime, Astha too realizes that any relationship, even that between a woman and another woman, becomes demanding after a length of time. Pipee wants Astha totally committed to her, but Astha is not willing to divorce herself from her old life. She wants to sail in both boats, keeping these two important parts of her life separate from each other.

In the novel, *Home* the principal character defiles the honour of the family and so her body becomes a site of abuse as her mother uses physical violence to bring her back to path of virtue. Nisha’s mother says that marriage is the only resort for women. As Beauvoir says: “Marriage is a destiny traditionally offered to women by society” (Beauvoir 444). The society perceives ‘woman as body’ and the body is viewed as a passport for attaining something as valuable as a marriage partner. As Nisha has to bear physical and mental violence, there is hormonal imbalance which causes severe eruptions on her body and Nisha faces humiliation as she is rejected in the marriage market as a pariah.

In *Home* Nisha consents to marry Arvind, a widower on the condition that she would continue her work. Marriage is a compulsion and social necessity for her, but business is her passion. After marriage, she does not transgress the new home as a center of repression but negotiate it for gradual appropriation of space without chaotically destabilizing it. She negotiates her sexual and social role and foregrounds the desire of the individual over the well–being of the family. She hopes someday she would move to the self–chosen role of business-woman: “One day she would
resurrect it, one day it would be there, waiting for her” (334). The writer depicts the dilemma of an educated and professional woman who encounters competing ideologies of traditional femininity and empowered femininity: emphasizing achievement but to a limited degree.

Similarly, in the novel Immigrant Nina marries Ananda who suffers from sexual dysfunction. As an Indian woman she is taught not to give importance to her sexual desires and so she contemplates: “Her husband was giving her the best of everything. Was she going to be so unreasonable as to demand penetrative orgasms as well?” (96). When Nina migrates to Canada her body is doubly alienated- one because of her race and another because of her gender. Subsequently her body becomes a site of conflict as she tries to hold onto the value system that she has inherited from her country while simultaneously attempting to find a niche and acceptance in the host country. Nina’s journey of self-affirmation takes her away from her uncordial husband to Anton. But passion becomes a painful experience when Anton underestimates their relationship. In Immigrant Nina discovers the infidelity of Ananda and this breach of commitment results in estrangement of companionship in marriage.

Kapur’s Custody traces the celebratory aspect of female body by presenting the female character Shagun who uses her sexuality as a tool to gain autonomy over her body after marriage. She challenges patriarchal mechanisms of surveillance and control. When her mother advices her to be faithful to her husband, she retorts: “Traditional versus modern values, individual versus society-this narrow social setup is all you know-that’s why you are afraid” (84). She now believes in Ashok who says, “Diana followed her heart and you must follow yours. We have only one life and
everybody wants to live it the best way they can” (85). Shagun’s act of sexual violation celebrates female sexual self-assertion embodied in a new feministic assumption that woman is a desiring subject with an intense longing for sexual expression, satisfaction and fulfillment. Shagun follows her heart and seeks a divorce from Raman and embarks on a new life with Ashok. Shagun succeeds in retaining her son with her after the divorcee. But she cannot do the same in the case of her daughter. And that upsets her. The court verdict ruins her peace.

Shagun’s sexuality is a source of empowerment for her. But Kapur presents another female character, Ishita, in the novel to show how the body disempowers a woman. Woman is defined by her bodily functions in contrast to man who is in absolute control and the seemingly flawless, Ishita, a young girl is married to Suryakanta to propagate the lineage of the family. Ishita is unable to conceive. She is stigmatized and rebuked by family and society which inflicts multiple psychological tortures by labeling her ‘incomplete’ and ‘worthless.’ As Reber comments that the child bearing has been viewed as a valuable gender-specific role to women. Therefore, women who are unable to bear children, experience a pervasive sense of personal failure. Her relationship with her body is marked by sense of alienation: “Hatred towards her body filled her. It had let her down in this most basic function and she had to live with the knowledge for the rest of her life” (63). Characters suffer not only due to their choice, but also due to the compulsion of the parents. Ishita is destined to marry a man for whom fertility alone matters. Hence she feels depressed.

The fourth chapter under the caption “Compromise” has dealt with the growth and development of the principal characters in achieving a win-win situation. Along with suffering are mingled hope and its renewal. By the end of the novel, Difficult
Daughters, when the readers have gone through the horror of partition, there is a feeling of upliftment. Ironically, Virmati and the Professor find some semblance of peace after the turbulent events of 1947. Ida too in reliving those years has exorcised her ghosts and is ready to begin life afresh. The novel depicts the triumph of the spirit, the longing to beat the odds, to conquer weakness and to move forward. What it seems to assert is that the forces of love and life are greater and more powerful than those of hatred and death.

If Viramti represents the forties of our century when the ideal of revolt was in the air, Ida represents the nineties of the metros, chiefly Delhi, where the juggernaut of absolute individualism is going ahead without hiccups. The domination of her mother has always instigated her to search for escape routes. Her position as a divorced woman obviously does not help matters. In order to survive Ida also strives for centrality. She fights the label of marginality that the society has cast upon her by assuming the role of the omnipotent creator. In her imaginative reconstruction, she frees her mother from the bounds of periphery and in doing so she asserts her own centrality as a creator of the central figure. By becoming Virmati’s creator Ida frees herself from the dominance of her mother. The ‘marginal’ now becomes the ‘central’ figure. Ida is thus bound to her mother as well as free from her. She is bound as the story she weaves must connect her to Virmati, while at the same time her superior position as a creator sets her free. She says:

This book weaves a connection between my mother and me, each word a brick in a mansion. I made with my head and my heart. Now live in it, Mama, and leave me be. Do not haunt me anymore.(258-9)
The daughter can escape the mother’s engulfment by recreating her mother. As Alice Walker contends in her essay *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens*, we may also conclude that Ida too like Alice owes a lot of her creativity to her mother. Virmati may not have penned her own words, but she certainly did have them in her secret chamber. “Our mothers and grandmothers, some of them moving is music not yet written. And they waited”(Walker 178) But they waited to let the daughters simultaneously rebel and recreate leading to a better and mature understanding between the mother and the daughter.

Unlike Virmati Ida was a pragmatic child who feels that mere passion cannot help anyone. Through Virmati’s marriage, Kapur has presented marriage as a right to sexual freedom under restriction. But in the case of the Professor and Virmati, sex is a celebration of the highest form of religion. In describing the status of love between them, Kapur has made it clear that marriage is the most coveted relationship which she recommends.

Kapur has treated love as a “human bondage” extending it to the lyrical expression in the subjective forms. Like the great philosophers of love, she has explored the various moods of love. She has hated, scorned, busted, loved and worshipped love in her fascinating pursuits after the affairs of the Professor and Virmati. Assessing love as a human ill and necessary evil she recognizes it as a trivial and mundane affair, but deals with it in a romantic fashion. Overriding the conventional morality she has made love a Shavian life force. She has presented love as a passion, and a kind of intellectual analogy.

In Virmati and Ganga she has exposed how woman’s love is not necessarily less pure than man’s. Kapur has not considered their longing for love unholy, but
rather as holistically modern in her approach to reveal the changing rainbow of our living relationships. Ida too realizes the nature of, love and she decides to lead a pragmatic life. The most important way in which any author arranges events is by controlling the viewpoint of the reader. When a novel is written in the first person, it is as if the novelist is the character telling the story. One of the most important effects in this method is that the novelist can invite the reader to judge the narrating character. The novelist can do this either by making the narrator say things which he or she expects the reader will or will not approve of or by making the narrator someone who is aware of his or her faults.

Although as a reader we are close to the experience of the narrator, Ida, we must remember that the novelist is not presenting our experience. One of the pleasures of the first person novels is that we experience what, in ordinary life, we never can: ‘how the world looks to somebody else’ To follow Ida’s life is to be given another view of the world. Only first person novels can give us this, so it is worth asking ourselves whether we learn from them how other people think and feel.

The compromising measures undertaken by the centre character Astha are also clear as she grows in terms of her viewpoint. Though she finds a soul mate in Pipee, “Asthia thought that if husband and wife are one person, then Pipee and she were even more so. She had shared parts of herself she had never shared before. She felt complete with her”(243). Yet such a relationship can continue only between two people who are firm and strong and totally resolved to live together. Astha, however is not a strong woman. She could never be bold enough to leave her marriage and live with Pipee and so ultimately Pipee leaves for the U.S.A. and the relationship breaks up.
The roots of tradition, living up to the benchmark of the ideal Indian woman, sacrificing for family, putting self behind, devaluing herself, being content to live in the safety and security of husband, home and family—continually come in conflict with Astha’s post modern sensibilities that lead her to question initially established norms, to search for her identity, to long for a soul mate, to develop, and to enter into a socially forbidden relationship. Ultimately Astha grows and evolves through these conflicts and transcends into a talented woman, surer of herself and she feels more confident.

As her brush moved carefully over the canvas, her hand grew sure, her back straightened, she sat firmer on her stool, her gaze became more concentrated, her mind more focused. A calmness settled over her, tenuous, fragile but calmness nevertheless. She thought of her name. Faith. Faith in herself. I was all she had.

The narrative by Manju Kapur is straightforward. The author gives free rein to her imagination and brings her characters and situations alive. Kapur has not been unfair to her male characters. Hemant is totally real and believable character, who is the typical, insensitive, business oriented man but who also loves his family deeply. Astha’s relationship with her children is also brought out distinctively. The mother-son bond is etched out well, sparking jealousy in the daughter. This novel takes a bold step in looking at socially taboo relationships such as lesbian relationship.

The torrid affair between Astha and Pheelika Khan is that the two women cross social boundaries to find solace and understanding in each other’s arms. Kapur writes about sexual encounters without any literary inhibition. Her descriptions are unnerving and passionate. At the same time, the book ends on a note of inconclusive
compromise as the two women find their own ways, knowing they cannot have a future together. A complete analysis of Manju Kapur’s *Home*, shows the fulfilling of different needs of family in the span of three generations. The women in the novel come out as strong characters. A coin has two sides. It shows that each and everything has both the cases. Even the magnet has one positive pole and the negative pole. Life too is the same. Both ups and downs will make life interesting. The same exists in joint family. In this novel Kapur brings out some hidden truths within the family. Manju Kapur has tried to put lot of issues in this novel which are commonly encountered in a joint family and are usually kept under the carpet to protect family, honour and name.

Kapur’s portrayal of women particularly Sona and her obsession to become a mother seems real. And so is very wonderful transition of Nisha, from an innocent beauty to a strong willed woman. The ending again beautifully brings out how life can look up again with a slight readjustment of one’s expectations after suffering a blow. Nisha finds her happiness when she does not expect it. Nisha wants to be a business woman. She struggles for respect and importance. But at the same time she is not a heartless feminist. She returns to her roots whenever it is required by her family. She neither adopts extreme aggressive, revolutionary way, nor she is adhering to the stereotype role. She is a balanced personality who realizes her potential and rises as a good negotiator.

In the novel, *Immigrant*, the character realizes that extramarital relationship can never be a solution to sexual dysfunction. It is true that the novel shows the disintegration of marriage which is not built upon the rocks of mutual loyalty and individual fidelity. So the characters decide to go on their own way because falsehood
in marital relationship is dangerous. The story is set in the era when the great
migration to North America had just started after the US and Canada changed their
migration policies for Asians. But the feelings of isolation and dislocation that Kapur
describes in her simple prose would strike a chord with the present-day Indian
immigrants who have been trying to adjust to life in the west.

All the female protagonists of Kapur are caught up between tradition and
modernity in their middle class status. In their social milieu they appear educated,
modern, intelligent, sophisticated, bold and assertive. Their maladjustment in rapidly
changing modern world makes them crave for more space for themselves. Hence they
try to transcend the social norms. But mere efforts—without clear objective, strong
will, power and planned action are not enough.

All the protagonists ultimately return to the traditional mode of life perhaps
with the realization, that home is the centre around which one has to resolve for
various reasons. If one aims at peace and contentment, one can get it through the
principle of pragmatism. Although Kapur has given the instances of adultery,
extramarital sex, incest and promiscuity in her novels, what is important is the fact
that the novelist through the fate of such characters disapproves all of them. Positive
aspects of the institution of marriage and family have been projected.

Inimical conditions can come up and damage even the most steady
relationships. Gender does not count. Stability does. It is equally true with men and
women alike. Women in Kapur’s novels fight the male dominance in their own way,
not by over throwing their marriage or discarding their home and children, but by
balancing their new found individuality with their traditional roles of mother and
wife. The crusade against the male centered world is taken up by firmly creating a
place for themselves in the male world rather than destroying the male presence altogether. Manju Kapur’s writings can be compared with any writer irrespective of nationality to establish the truth that a compromise after an unintelligent choice and suffering is preferable to fussy individuality which poses many a problem.

It is true culture is an integral part of human life and an individual without values is a ship without an anchor. Examples are plenty in literature and life to denote the collapse of people on account of loss of one’s own tradition and culture. But Kapur feels that some prefer selfhood to tradition. In other words, in the battle between tradition and modernity, there are a few who make compromises between the two. The analysis of the chapter ‘Compromise’ enables us to round off the findings of the study. In *Difficult Daughters* Virmati chooses to lead a life of passion breaking all boundaries. The price that she pays for being indiscreet is her emergence as a second wife to Harry. Virmati does not want her history to be repeated in the case of her daughter. But Ida goes in for a divorce, for she feels that freeing oneself from the shackles of namesake marriage is easier than to stoop to incompatible marital relationship. In the case of *A Married Woman* one is given to knowledge that lesbian relationship can offer only an interim solace, and family togetherness is the lasting factor in the life of every married woman. Astha gives up Pipee and decides to offer love and care to her ailing husband and children. In *Home*, the protagonist oscillates between business and family, besides a concealed traumatic incestuous past. At last she comprehends that business can wait but not her physical age and potency. For her thoughtful attempt, she gets a double delight, both literally and metaphorically. She gives birth to twins. She also gets back her business.
The novel *Immigrant* depicts the problem of preparing oneself to integrate to and get implanted in an alien culture and native land where adultery and disloyalty appear to be inescapable experiences. Nina and Ananda betray each other and finally conclude that falsehood may glitter for a while in the sense that, it may comfort a person for a while. But all that glitters is not gold. One has to act truthfully at least to one’s own conscience and likes. Therefore, Nina leaves her husband and looks for a new life in the company of dependable and trustworthy friends. In *Custody*, Shagun is comfortable in her second marriage with Ashok. Of the two children she is able to win the love and attention of her son, Arjun. Raman, Shagun’s former husband, realizes that a loving wife, first or second, is the only solution to bring domestic harmony. For him, it works out only through his second wife, a divorcee. In fact both are divorcees and therefore they are more cautious in keeping themselves away from further ruins. Roohi, the young girl remains in their custody as a reward for their sincerity and togetherness.

As one man’s food is another man’s poison, Kapur hesitates to offer any standard solution to any problem. Life is not mathematics. And therefore, the novelist helps the readers to comprehend and compromise according to their individual stance. Kapur’s characters are not stock characters. They are individuals. Each has a specific line of thinking and adaptability. According to Kapur the ball of life is always in one’s own court to play the game well. Kapur can be compared and contrasted with any contemporary writer, male or female, in order to gauge the importance of the self, the family and the society.