CHAPTER III

LOVE

Love, perhaps, is the most intricate emotion indefinable in single theme. It is a very broad term that can be narrowed to any extent. Geddes observes love as, a "euphemism". To him it means;

practically anything and all that one wants it to mean. It is a polite word for sexual intercourse. It is a word for the feeling of a mother towards her child. It is a word that is used for the feeling god has towards his children. It is the way we feel toward chocolate ice-cream. It is the word that is used to express patriotism. It is the word that is used in connection with the affection human beings have for human beings - the love of mankind.

The love between a man and a woman is only one of the expressions of human love. Expressing the greatest importance of a woman’s love in human life Radhakrishnan writes;

The great achievements of the world have for their inspiration a woman’s love. Geniuses like Kalidasa, conquerors like Napoleon, scientists like Michael Faraday and many other world makers and world foresakers, bear witness to the important part played by love in their lives. What stirs logical poets to their finest flights is the delight of the senses, the fruitful contentment as well as the total passion of love. A woman was the centre of the conflict between Ram and Rawana in the Ramayana, and the Torjan war was fought for the possession of a woman. The impulse of love is the fire of the heart of life itself, it is the voice of all creativeness...

While being itself individual, love becomes inseparable part of marriage...
and sex. Hence it is difficult to view it apart from marriage and sex. Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande both have dealt with different themes of love between men and women in their novels.

In Anita Desai's novels we do not find pre-marital love affairs or complications of love-marriages. Since her novels deal with the inner psyche of her characters, the theme of love becomes more difficult to comprehend. It has been presented in different perspectives within marriage such as lack of love between husband and wife, and extra marital love affair. She has also dealt with the importance of love, in making a personality.

Love has always been a binding emotion in the life of man. Whenever life lacks in love, the equilibrium is disturbed. Her novel *Voices in the City* delineates a non-balanced, unsatisfying and colourless relationship between the parents of Monisha, Nirode and Amla. This non-balance marital bond lacks the element of love and feeling of relatedness. Amla feels, that for her parents marriage was a sort of financial contract arrived at by her father to get economic support. She tells Dharma, 'I am afraid the marriage must have been something of a financial settlement and - and I don't know if my father did not regret it later.' *(p.205)* Therefore, the spouses hardly care for each other. They follow different ways of life while living together under the same roof. Amla's description of her father shows that he behaves in an obnoxious manner just to hurt his wife's feeling. Elements of sharing, togetherness or understanding do not characterise their relationship. Adopting and adapting is not in their temperament.

'Being polished and balanced like a well cut jewel', the mother *sufficiently* maintains a semblance of a conjugal relationship between them. After the death of her husband, she
discards the guise and starts enjoying her life in the company of Major Chadha, her neighbour, whom Nirode despises vehemently. He tells Amla, “She’ll tell you about love better than an outward hermit crab like myself can. Ask her about the love that made her swallow father whole, like a cobra swallows a fat, petrified rat, then spews him out in one flabby, yellow mess. Ask her about the love that makes her perch on her mountain top, waiting so patiently and surely for retirement and tedium and the last wrong twisting of lust to send Major Chadha - Chadha - into her open arms.” (P. 190).

This enigmatic and disturbing relationship between the parents sows the seeds of destruction and degeneration in the personalities of their children, particularly Nirode and Monisha. The love-hate relationship between the mother and son, which is product of dissonance in husband - wife relationship, does not let Nirode establish a straight smooth and meaningful relationship with anyone including his mother. Their incompatibility to communicate with anyone renders the children incapable of emotional warmth, understanding, consideration and confidence - the essential elements of a successful human relationship.

Their peculiar relationship affects Monisha - the most sensible of four children. Rejected by her parents she shrinks mentally within herself. Their rigid behaviour dries all springs of love and trust in her and instils in its place the negative feelings of fear and suspicion. On the importance of love in making a personality Saxton observes that;

love is important and apparently necessary for infant survival and adult well being. A person develops a capacity to love by receiving nurture and altruistic love in infancy experiencing himself as loved.
he perceives himself as lovable and others as loving. In other words, only after he has learned to love himself can he love others ...

In loveless atmosphere Monisha starts losing faith in herself and her life. Destitute of love she becomes introvert and abnormal. Unfortunately her introvert nature and her silence over every matter is taken as an inclination towards 'morbidity' by her parents. Taking it as an unhealthy tendency they decide to marry her off with a man unsuited to her tastes and temperaments thinking that, ‘it would be a good thing for her to be settled into such a stolid, unimaginative family as that just sufficiently educated to accept her with tolerance.’ (P. 199). Monisha devoid of love in her life is unable to give it to others too. Her equation with Jiban, her husband, is devoid of genuine love. She writes in her diary, ‘It is not there in my relationship with Jiban which is filled only by loneliness and a desperate urge to succeed, and one plunged me into the most calamitous pleasures and pains, fears and regrets, and never again will it possess me.’ (P. 135).

As A.V. Krishna Rao observes, 'The absence of the element of love makes her feel lonely, lost and bitter... she defines love as, 'an awake condition of the conscience’ but fears and avoids it because love then implies a sense of duty." Even she has no intimate relationship with her mother-in-law. Leave aside loving, she is even incapable of being friendly and cordial. Jiban requests her, ‘Be a little friendly to them. That is all they ask of you - a little friendliness. But contact, attachment friendliness are the things she fears and suspects. Even her sister Amla feels that ‘Monisha was as hard as she was mysterious, as unresilient as she was sensitive and as sarcastic as she was wounded.’ (P. 194). Even her husband Jiban does not love her. For him, his ties with Monisha have no special significance. He treats her as a separate entity, as an outsider.
and attaches more importance to his bond with his mother. It is due to lack of love and faith in his wife that he does not like the idea of his wife touching his money without his prior permission. No wonder Monisha feels completely alienated from him when she is accused of theft by her mother-in-law. Jiban does not defend her right on his money. He infact, thus quietly becomes the member of her opposite group. Jiban’s mother calls out, ‘Money has been stolen you know Jiban’s money’. I turned to look at Jiban standing disconsolately down in the courtyard below, and he did not look at me... from the other end of the balcony, his mother shouted ‘I will not have a thief in my house, I say, I will not have a thief in my house.’ (P. 137).

This callous behaviour, devoid of love on Jiban’s part, clearly betrays a lack of trust and understanding between the spouses. He shows no consideration for Monisha’s needs and in a way, denies her the basic rights of a wife. Had he understood her accordingly, things would not have been so difficult for Monisha. But when Monisha wants to talk about the incident he does not say why did you not tell them at once? He rather says, ‘why didn’t you tell me before you took it?’ Monisha naturally feels terribly hurt and humiliated. She finds herself living among strangers. Expressing her sense of anguish and disillusionment, after this unfortunate incident, she writes in her diary, ‘I am accused of theft. These pettiest of people. They think me a thief. To be regarded so low, it is to be laid on a level lower than the common earth. I find that I am alone here.’ (P. 136).

A loveless relationship with Jiban and others in the family and absence of any creative activity reduces her to a pathetic state where life becomes, ‘only a conundrum that I shall brood over forever with passion and pain, never to arrive at a
solution. Only a conundrum - is that then life -" (P128) Monisha becomes conscious of the passions of love lying dried in her when she fails to respond like the other spectators to the song sung by the street singers. Tormented by her inability to respond to these emotions of love, she blames her situation for her losing touch with "this essential instinct of theirs ... They put me away in a steel container, a thick glass cubicle (like Beckett's hero in the unnamable living in a jar) and I have lived in it all my life, without a touch of love or hate or warmth in me." (P247)

Monisha in the flash of a moment, terrified by her emotional vacuum discovers to her utter dismay that her life has been a tragic waste. Human life's true significance can be felt and enjoyed only in terms of contact and relatedness, but that blessed existence has been beyond her reach. The futility of being alone dawns on her. Her efforts not to touch and communicate with any one have deprived her of the essential wisdom of life. She sadly reflects, 'I have never touched anyone, never left the imprint of my fingers on anyone's damp palate.' (P 240) In a fit of uncontrollable emotional turmoil she ends her nightmarish, unhappy loveless existence.

In Fire on the Mountain Anita Desai deals with the problem of extramarital relationship in the society. Marriage has always been a sacred union of two souls in the Indian society and it is expected from the couples to keep its dignity by being faithful to each other sexually. Though there are various reasons for extramarital affairs in people yet the main reason may be found in the lack of love between the spouses.

Nanda Kaul, in Fire on the Mountain, wife of the Vice Chancellor, Punjab University, is an emotionally starved lady who is disillusioned of human bonds.
Now a widow, she recollects, her husband did not love her as a wife, he treated her as some decorative yet useful mechanical appliance needed for the efficient running of his household. She played the gracious hostess all the time and enjoyed the comforts and social status of the wife of a dignitary. But down deep she felt lonely and neglected. Besides this her husband carried on a life long affair with Miss David, the mathematics mistress. He loved her all his life but did not marry because she was a Christian. This had been a source of agony throughout her life. She now believes every attachment to be the preface of a new betrayal and all satisfaction as fake. Her bond with her husband did not involve her 'self'. It was full on the surface but empty at the core. She had suffered from the numicity, the disorder, the fluctuating and unpredictable excess. (P.30) The painful memories of the days when the Vice-Chancellor went to drop Miss David home haunts her even in the isolation at Carginano. On such occasions, she lost her 'composition and harmony.' Even she could not harmonise with children. They were all alien to her nature. She neither understood nor loved them. The pain of loveless relationship is so intense that it creates a sickness of soul which not only breaks up her marriage but also distrusts all attachments and affairs.

Though this is the dark side of the picture which is spreading very fast in the society and making human relationships distant and selfish yet we have the bright side of the picture too. Anita Desai is a very keen observer of human nature and understands well enough the importance of love for every successful relationship. Her next novel "Where Shall We Go This Summer?" depicts very beautifully the necessity of love to live a happy and meaningful married life.

Sita and Raman in "Where Shall We Go This Summer?" love each other
but lack understanding and suffer from temperamental incompatibility. Sita is a very complex character, who is unable to love and understand anybody around her because of her loveless childhood. She never bothers for others’ problems and always looks at the things from her point of view. On being pregnant for the fifth time she gets too much bored with her life and decides to go to the island of Manori to have her delivery there. Raman, a very responsible person does not want her to go there because of the inconvenient life of Manori. But adamant Sita returns to Manori after twenty years of their marriage and tries to resolve the mysteries of her childhood there.

Sita’s escape to Manori turns out to be a blessing in disguise because at the island, she is distanced from Raman, from her life in Bombay. It helps her in coming to grip with the realities of life. She now examines it objectively. A short stay in the island makes her heart grow fond of Raman. Her coming to the island and consequent separation strengthens their waning relationship. Now Raman matters for her. She feels extremely happy in getting the news of his arrival.

When the time of his arrival approaches, Sita finds it difficult to control herself. Something very unusual happens to her. ‘Her agitation grew. The thought of his adult, quiet, critical company gives her a sense of sharp pleasure strongest of all - (she) felt rising in her a positive cyclone of feminine instinct, a mental reckoning of the clothes she had with her preferring this, rejecting that, seeing herself thus.’ (P.129) Raman also undergoes transformation during this separation. The monotony and boredom that had engulfed their relationship during the last twenty years gives way to loving expectations of meeting his wife. It is an important event for them and he expects it to be proclaimed by way of her dress. The immunity which he had developed for her unfitness
during those long years of living together has weakened. Her appearance matters to him again as it had mattered in the earlier phase of their married life. ‘Yet now having been separated from her for such a stretch he was startled again by her appearance - she saw it on his face.’ (P.130)

Raman has been sincerely concerned about Sita’s welfare on the primitive island. He asks ‘How are you?’ Sita now loves him and desires his intimate company. All of a sudden she sees things from another perspective. She, for the first time in their married life "steps into his shoes and realises the worries and anxieties that must have made him tense and anxious about her and the unborn child.” The two boys at home must also, have given him a tough time while she has been relaxing at the island. She suddenly admires him for his courage and determination to shoulder his responsibilities so ungrudgingly. He runs a factory which is not also without its own problems but he does not bother her with all these tensions. She concedes his superiority over her and is overwhelmed with deep sense of respect and admiration for him.

At this stage the interaction between Sita and Raman is characterised by positive emotion which "draws near to an act in relationship with another." They communicate with each other, and the revelations are unexpected and outstanding for them. Raman knows it for the first time that Sita has never been happy even for a moment in his or their children’s company. Sita is astonished to know that Raman could never guess, ‘her desires at the tedium and ugliness of a meaningless life.’ (P.145) Now Raman does not want to impose himself on her and keep her tied to him by way of a meaningless relationship. When he gives the news of his leaving island very soon to Sita, she feels rejected and released. It fills her with remorse to know that he has not rejected her out
of a frenzy but, because he is sick of her and her melodramatic ways. To Sita, this release comes as a surprise. She feels herself free, "all emptied out and tired, drama drained, passion spent." Suddenly she is overpowered by a desire to follow him. 'I have his triumph... he deserted that triumph.' Raman is also not happy in releasing her, in snapping their relationship. He also contemplates the possibility of leading life Sita's style on the island of Manori. 'It wouldn't be bad', he says, 'to give up the factory and come to live here. Do some farming I'd like that.' (P.151) Indeed they have come closer, Sita sees now charm and goodness in Raman and 'thought how nice he really was how much the nicest man she knew... together they walked up the stone steps to the grove.' (P.151) Usha Pathania concludes, "The cracks are sealed, the creases are removed and a new glow is imparted to their relationship - a happy glow a cherished togetherness".

The storm is over now, Sita shakes her hand angrily at the confusion, that muddle, that her life has been for the last twenty years. Here on the island she becomes aware of the real worth of her relationship that is love, with Raman. Both of them are wiser now. It is the immortal source of love that makes them achieve equilibrium in their relationship by way of compromise, adjustment and mutual understanding. Sita decides to follow the trails of Raman's footprint as she realises that 'neither sea nor sky were separated or contained - they rushed into each other in a rush of light and shade impossible to disentangle.' (P.153) Sita chooses to return to Raman and his world of comfort, security, dull, safe routine. She has resolved her existential dilemma, has come to know the power of love and by returning love, has saved herself, Raman and her children from disintegration and chaos. At long last the imbalanced relationship achieves balance and equilibrium. It is the hidden love for each other that comes forward and helps them resolve the problem of life. Sita discards her ego and mingles herself with
Raman. This reciprocal love is the key to live a happy married life. Expressing his views about love Chitre writes, "The essence of reciprocal love is having the capacity to stimulate and illuminate each other by being themselves and the ability to accept each other in the same way for being what they are." It is the existence of this love in their life that makes Sita finally reject independence and opts for togetherness. She realises that there are no values outside life and that an autonomous self can evolve only when the self flows out to the world in an effort to relate, belong, love and to be loved.

Love is an important emotion of life that works as a source of inspiration, promotes into a healthy personality and makes life better than before. As psychological researches say it is a conscious or unconscious set of need satisfaction that one derives from a specific object or person like a wife, brother, mother or friend. That is an individual starts loving a particular object or person because certain conscious or unconscious needs which he considers important are being fulfilled while loving that person or object. In this situation sometimes it does not matter whether the other person is married or not because as Radhakrishnan writes, "much of the cause of love is in the lover, and the object is only an accident."

Perhaps, this is the reason very often we come across extra-marital love affairs in the modern Indian society. Amla - Dharma love affair in *Voices in the City* has been very effectively depicted by Anita Desai which presents before us the value of real love. Though the affair ends in rejection of each other but it certainly leaves a mark on us. It may also be said that extra-marital love that is always condemned by society, works to promote the life of people if practised morally, is one of the aspects of *Voices in the City*. 
Amla, the youngest of the four siblings in *Voices in the City* is a young aspiring girl who gets a job in Calcutta and comes to this city with a lot of hope and desire for a better future. A couple of days after her arrival she meets Dharma, a professional painter-artist. At once she feels attracted to Dharma and as Usha Bande puts it, "there is almost a case of love at first sight". It’s not one sided affair but Dharma an elder man married, and having one daughter of Amla’s age also feels the same towards her. He, instantly in the company of Amla dissolves his aloofness and becomes ‘chivalrous, tender, subtle and prophetic.’ (P.188) Amla, on the contrary, comes to realise the pleasure pain relationship of love and she ‘felt herself being torn, torn with excruciating slowness and without anaesthesia, from the Amla of a day, an afternoon ago.’ (P.186) Very soon she sees herself on the image of a love -lorn maiden. She knows that this relationship cannot continue for long time but she can not resist herself from plunging into it. She undergoes heavy internal conflicts. Her questioning conscience is never at ease.

She is reminded and advised many times by her well wishers, aunt Lila, Nirode and Monisha about the consequences of extra-marital love affair in the society, but she finds herself unresisted to Dharma’s charm and drawn to him again and again. Both of them understand the meaning and far reaching consequences of this kind of love but human beings as they are, they cannot resist themselves. The conflict increases between their heart and mind and sometimes we find reflections of this struggle in Dharma’s art and Amla’s dreams.

This love, though illegal in the eyes of society, works positively to sustain Amla and Dharma in their separate worlds. They become full of life, vigour and
start looking generously towards the problem of life. They start achieving goals in their separate fields. According to psycho-analyst Eric Fromm: "What they feel for each other is not love but 'Psychic symbiotic union' that is, a pattern of relationship in which two persons come close, develop strong attachment but remain physically independent, with no sexual attraction."

Amla and Dharma both are intellectuals and are aware of the negative end of their love but it is the power of love that keeps them intact and makes them charming and loving for each other. Amla's need to be loved and listened to is fulfilled by Dharma because he is a patient listener and Dharma's need to be appreciated in his art is fulfilled by Amla because she herself is a part of that art. Dharma himself admits that his portraits are inspired by Amla and that Amla has enabled him to see what the subconscious does to an impressionable creature, how much more power it has on them than sun and circumstances put together. And this is the revelation. That made me begin as a new era."

As a result of their relationship Dharma receives triumph in his art. Once again through his exhibition he finds himself amid his friends, critics, admirers, buyers and agents. Unfortunately Dharma ignoring his love pays full attention towards his art. The feelings for power and progress dominate his feelings for love and he becomes too much possessive to Amla. Amla who is also growing side by side in her life is said by Dharma that he does not want Amla to grow mature as he did not want his daughter to grow much. 'I wanted her the same, always the same beside me. But unlike her, you two are slipping out of the chrysalis - what a marvellous, soft, sleepy state of being that neither of you realised. I see you also turning into a bright insect, attracting moths.'
wh~n.:v~r
it
th~is.throughout its brief days ... I hate to see that change.' (P227)

Amla is understanding enough to realise the true position of her love at
the core of their relationship. His negligence of her and allegiance to his wife and above
all cruelty towards his daughter of her age moves her decide to break free from him, and
implementing her resolution she tears the invitation card of Dharma's exhibition and
goes to the horse-race instead with her friend Jit.

Though the affair ends negatively, it is clear enough to understand the
power of love and its active participation in one's career. Had Dharma realised the true
meaning of love and tried to keep intact loving with Amla, and Amla instead of thinking
her future as his wife, had tried to take it as inspiration, they could have reached the
farthest aim of their life. Usha Bande concludes in this connection:

Love, if her feelings for Dharma and Dharma's for her were to be
called 'love' has the power to break through the walls of separate-
ness, preserve one's integrity and unique individuality and help one
overcome his isolation and separateness. Amla and Dharma have ar-
tistic vision but unfortunately they are too wrapped in their psycho-
logical problems to realise true and mature love which could be an
active force, full of motivational energy, making it a central experi-
ence of life. What their conscience minds construct as love is an
illusion, created unconsciously though to relieve them of their isolations.12

Though the theme of love is not a separate theme to study in the novels
of Anita Desai yet it makes an inseparable part of marriage in her novels. We do not get
the description of adolescent or pre-marital love in her novels, nor do we get the de-
scription of love marriages or love between the people of two different statuses, but
there are incidents of love within marriage and outside it too. There is also place for childhood love as received by parents as an important factor in making an adult personality of a man. Since her method is to deal with the psyche of men and to examine their behaviour, she tells us of the new ways to evaluate different kinds of characters available in modern society, through portrayal of their mutual processes.

Shashi Deshpande, like many other women novelists, has limited experience, and hence her themes. Her main theme in four of her six novels is the predicament of marriage and that too from the point of view of women. Since love and sex are inseparable part of marriage they have also been discussed from the angle of women.

As far as love is concerned R.Mala observes, "Deshpande herself calls her creations "Thinking characters," whose new definitions of categories like love, marriage, sex are the feed back from the author's reading of the Western feminists." The definitions of love, marriage and sex offered by these sensitive, intelligent and educated women lend the essential female point of view to the marital problems in modern life.

Of the many types of love described by psychologists only the conjugal love has been given importance by Shashi Deshpande in all her novels. There is also description of adolescent love but on cursory level. Filial love has been dealt with only whenever it is necessary to promote the theme of conjugal love.

Writing for the contemporary Indian society Deshpande has very realistically represented the frustrations and declining values of love in the life of moder-
men and women. Three, out of four heroines of her novels have gone for love marriages. If we examine the situation and condition when love entered and took place in their life we find that the cause is rooted deep in the position of women in society.

As we know the position of women is changing day by day in the society and various emancipation movements have also been adopted by women, so the change in their meek and submissive nature is inevitable and obvious. Previously girls used to be rather obedient and enduring but now - a - days being aware of their individual existence and their rights they have become rebellious. And parents, by giving primary importance to boys and neglecting girls in comparison to them promote the spirit of rebellion in the changing nature of girls. Indu in *Roots and shadows* and Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* are examples of this. Indu is scolded by Akka (the eldest woman of the family) for talking alone to a boy in the corner of the library. Akka wants Indu to promise that such thing would never happen again. Indu, the representative of the modern woman can never endure it, she replies, 'And we were just talking. Is that wrong?'. It is not as if we were holding hands or touching and kissing ... ' and than 'I haven't done anything wrong. Nothing I need be ashamed of'.(P74) This shows the very changing nature of woman. On that day Indu decides to leave that house. Later she meets Jayant, proposes him for marriage, not because of true love but just to rebel against the traditional norms of society, to show her strength to her family. It is the reaction against an action designed to defy the power of that action.

This also happens with Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. Her brother Dhruva is given more importance in comparison to her, by her mother. When she is deprived of the puka in the evening on her birthdays (which was the main attraction)
Dhruva’s birthday), she feels neglected. Her excitement of being the centre of attraction never fulfills. She becomes so rebellious that on hearing the story of mythological Dhruva, pushes her brother off her Baba’s lap, with a cold and calculated move. Later she chooses medicine for her career and declares to marry a man of a different community. Her love for Manu too is not a love born naturally but it also is a reaction to her mother’s actions in her life. Her love for Manu and decision to marry him is nothing but revenge against her mother’s behaviour. Any how she wants to make her mother feel low.

Urmi’s love for Kishore in *The Binding Vine* is the result of Kishore’s sympathetic behaviour on her grand father’s sudden suicidal death. it is not a cool minded affair but a love started in a moment out of helping behaviour of Kishore when she was helpless both as a girl and as a person.

In all the three cases love takes birth in the adolescent age of the women protagonists and the reason is found either in the situation as in Urmi’s case or in the bad, partial behaviour of parents as in Saru and Indu’s cases.

Though the girls feel the passion of love with full potency yet how can we expect this love to reach maturity with their growing age! This is typical of modern age where girls due to growing impatience in their nature and having received liberty, very soon take steps, bold steps to show others how mighty they are. They also feel that they are different from others and more lucky in comparison to other girls, because they are the recipient of love. Saru, feeling the ecstasy of love, thinks, “It was impossible that I could mean so much to any human being. It was impossible that such things could happen to me. They happened to girls in movies and books, not to girls like me.
And Urmi believes in 'silky smoothness and velvety texture' of love when she experiences it.

Soon after their marriage the emotional, transcendental impression of love withers away and "it can be stated that Saru, Indu, Jaya and Urmi pursue the 'shadows' of romance and love but ultimately arrive at the 'roots' which is sex." These women feel love as a transitory emotion which instead of turning into spiritual love turns out to be merely a physical experience. These women being emancipated, having developed their ego see every relationship from individual point of view and when find themselves unable to assert within marriage, blame love for their failure. The denial of love in the name of sex by these women show the superficiality of the modern age.

Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* experiences love through the act of sex. 'Each act of sex was a triumphant assertion of our love, of my being loved. If I ever had any doubts, I had only to turn to him and ask him to prove his love for me. And he would ... again and again and again.' She is so much engrossed in his love that when he quotes a beautiful line from Keats to her, she marvels, not at Keats but at him for knowing so much, for remembering such lines, for saying them to her.

Jaya, in *That Long Silence* reveals her acceptance of love as "Love...?" Yes, what else could I call it but love when I thought of how I had longed for his physical presence, when I remembered how readily, almost greedily I had responded to his touch? what else could I name it when I thought of the agony it had been to be without him, when his desires, his approval, his love had seemed to be the most important thing in my life?"
Urmi recollects her eighteenth birthday when she had impatiently waited for Kishor. I can remember how I waited for him that day at my hostel gate from early afternoon on. And how, when I saw him hours later, getting out of a taxi, I ran across the road, uncaring of the traffic and threw myself into his arms' (P.164)

But soon after their marriage when these women discover that their chosen, forward mates are totally traditional in life, the idea of love starts fainting and hard reality comes before them. Frequently they change their views about love and we see Saru in *The Dark* .... realises, 'The fisherman's daughter couldn't have been more surprised when the king asked her to marry him, than I was by Manu's love for me. But the fisherman's daughter was wiser. She sent the king to her father and it was the father who bargained with him. While I .... I gave myself up unconditionally, unreservedly to him. To love him and to be loved.'

It shows that love which was an unbelievable feeling sometime before, is now an unbearable thought. She scorn the word now. Even she denies the experience of love. 'Love ... there was no such thing between man and woman. There was only need which both fought against in futilely the very futilely turning into the thing they called 'love'. Take away the word, the idea, and the concept will wither away?" (P.72) Hence for her 'the code word of our age is neither love nor romance but sex. Fulfilment and happiness came not through love alone but sex'. (P.133)

Jaya in *That Long Silence* analyses the illusionary nature of love. She compares it to a shield to cover oneself from the frightened feeling of being alone. She says 'love is a myth, without which sex with the same person for a lifetime would be unbearable' (P.79).
Indu in *Roots and Shadows* considers 'love' as 'an overworked word' 'overburdened by the weight one puts upon it' and realises that it is another word for human contact. (P88)

Urmi reads in Mira's diary, 'please' he says, 'Please, I love you. And over and over again until he has done. 'I love you.' Love! I hate the word; if this is love it is a terrible thing. I have learnt to say 'no' at last but it makes no difference, no difference at all what is it he wants from me? I look at myself in the mirror and wonder what is it there in me? Why does it have to be me? Why can't he leave me alone?.' (P66)

These changing views of love, soon after marriage show that the traditional concept of love, which used to give birth to a family and through it, a society, is fast fading out from the life of human beings. According to Hindu philosophy the culmination of love, considered to be in the feeling of spiritual love, has no existence in today's context of love. Looking at it from individual aspect soon men and women become bored with their passions and love seems to be a overburdened and over weighted word not an intense feeling to be of each other.

The emotion of love is all pervasive and has been respected by almost all the societies of the world. It takes many forms and expressions since the beginning of life. It has been called a tender emotion and mostly revolves round a woman in a couple. The woman has always been a source of inspiration for man and she has been most respected for her love towards her children which broadens her heart and assigns her a superior place in comparison to man. Anita Desai and Shahi Deshpande both however do not deal with love as a separate theme in their novels yet it is an inseparable
aspect of marriage and sex.

Continuity and change in human experience are unending but the change that we find in the theory and practice of love is bewildering. Love has always worked as a key emotion for happy life in the human society. It has nurtured and enhanced the desire of man to live well and present himself well before others. It has played as fuel to run the engine of family. But the modern practices of love are desperate. Love, which is the most essential part of both marriage and sex is sweeping fast from the society and what else can be more displaying the fact than the novels of both the novelists (both are the member of modern society) where we find total lack of love in main themes.

Lack of love dominates most of the couples of Anita Desai and Shashi Deshpande. Parents of Monisha and Nirode, Nanda Kaul and her husband, Tara and her husband, Monisha and Jiban and Saru's parents do not love each other. Though 1955 is hailed as the year of liberty in the field of marriage because it provided for divorce through Hindu Marriage Act, but the societal bonds are so clutching that individual partners do not feel emancipated even after divorce. In most of the cases they take it for granted that they have to live together however how many differences may be there between them.

Gradually these couple become self-centred and do not bother for each other's feelings. Their self-centredness ends in frustration and ultimately leads to the avoidance and rejection of children's feelings. This in turn makes children feel unwanted and loneliness fills their life. It checks the healthy growth of a child and devoid of love he may turn neurotic in the end. And this happens with Monisha and Nirode in
Desai’s *Voices in the City*. It has also been illustrated through social scientific researches that it is love - the emotional feeling of warmth and tenderness - the degree of fulfillment and denial of which has a significant effect on the personality of a man. It plays an important part in establishing one’s self identity which is very significant for the very development of the self. Saxton observes similarly in “Love in a Paired Relation”:

> Despite differing view points, almost all observers agree that love is important and apparently necessary for infant survival and adult well being. A person develops a capacity to love by receiving nurture and altruistic love in infancy. Experiencing himself as loved he perceives himself as lovable and others as loving. In other words, only after he has learned to love himself can he love others.\(^{15}\)

And Monisha and Nirode both are devoid of the emotional warmth and love from their parent’s side. In deprivation of love from their frustrated and incompatible parents they become introvert and lose faith in life. Even after marriage Monisha fails to come to terms with life because she neither receives love from in-laws nor from her husband and is also unable to love them. Social scientists also observe that love provides the basic security essential to the person being loved and makes it possible for him to learn to love himself and others. It also helps him to belong to groups and identify himself with parents, relatives, teachers and others and thus helps him to absorb the various values of the social system in which he lives. Monisha is one among those who have never received love in their infancy so can never develop into a loving adult and consequently she does not find herself suitable for this world and commits suicide to end her life. Nirode, on the contrary, can never adjust himself in the society nor can he love any person hence remains unmarried in his life.
Love and understanding are only two things which count for balance in man-woman relationship. Saxton points out, “In the paired relation of marriage love has four major components: altruistic love, compassionate love, sexual love and romantic love.” If any of these emotions are lacking the relationship disturbs and the partners have to suffer mental agony. Anita Desai’s *Fire on the Mountain* focuses light on extra-marital love and its impact especially upon the wife. Nanda Kaul suffers the agony of her husband’s affair with an other lady. According to Burgess and Lock the emotional and intellectual development of the couple depends upon four things, “(i) companionship (ii) freedom of communication and acting (iii) emotional interdependence and (iv) sexual strivings.” These four elements are completely absent from the personal relationship of Nanda Kaul and her husband. Her husband fulfills his needs through his illegal love but his wife suffers her husband’s behaviour for her. It shatters her faith in life and not only makes her alien to her husband but also takes her away from such personal relations as her children.

The English philosopher Adam Smith once said that, “One of the strong driving forces in human beings is the necessity to be recognised and accepted by others.” Modern social researches also prove that the necessity to be recognised and accepted is so strong that husband and wife when can not fulfill each other’s demands of affection, try to fulfil it beyond their wedlock. Dr. Promilla Kapur observes in her study on working women in India in 1970, “The new trend is that they feel that a woman can love more than one man at a time for a specific purpose or for various and different kinds of intellectual or other satisfaction.”
*the City* of Anita Desai throws light on the necessity of being recognised by man and woman if not in marriage then outside of it. Through this affair Desai presents before us the importance of true love in promoting one's career, making one's life emotionally happy. It also supports Platonic love in a way. Dharma is a sensitive painter artist. He needs love and admiration for him as well as advice for his art. But he does not receive any of these emotions from his wife so he easily gets attached to Amla, an admirer of his art. It works positively in his life and art and he becomes more profound and accurate artist in his life, and sees the impression of Amla's personality in his art as a dawn of new era in his paintings. Amla also finds a true friend in him and discloses the secrets of her parent's relationship before him. It helps her to relieve her of that tension which has been continuously haunting Monisha and Nirode. Dharma's love helps her to become normal human being and she feels happy and lighter than before. If this had been confined to platonic love only they would have enjoyed it throughout their life but a little bit of possessive feelings departs them forever. Since both are the members of traditional Indian society where male members are always free to feel superiority and authority over females and Amla an emancipated woman of today can not bear his being possessive for her and breaks up the relationship. Though the affair ends negatively, yet Desai has successfully presented before us the value and utility of this new trend of love in the society.

In the modern society women are called free, emancipated and their status is supposed to be equal to men. But the scene behind an adult woman, the scene of her childhood tells a different story, and in most of the cases it is appreciation of one sex and rejection of the other by parents in infancy that counts in making an adult personality. Three out of four novels of Shashi Deshpande reveal the reasons of love-making.
as an immature decision by female members of the society. Indu in *Roots and Shadows* and Saru in *The Dark Holds No Terrors* are the victim of biased male privileged society. Indu decides to marry Jayant not because she finds her true life partner in him but because she wants to disobey her guardians and rebel against them. The reason for this revolt may be found in Akks's disliking of her conversation with a boy of her class.

Saru in *The Dark Hold No Terrors* is a victim of the biased behaviour of parents. Her parents are partial to her brother Dhruva and perform Pooja on his Birthdays while she is even deprived of honour of calling her friends on her Birthday. This makes her feel so alien for her parents that against her mother's wishes she chooses medicine as a career and later decides to marry Manu, a man of an other community, just to make her mother feel low. Duberman in *Marriage and Other Alternatives* observes, "From birth we must treat all infants alike, avoiding even differences in the colors in which we dress them, which evoke differential treatment for boys and girls."20

This partial behaviour of parents works negatively in making the personality of female child and she takes the most important decision of her life without any consideration. She decides to marry not to make her life happy but to give pain to the tradition bound parents. As a result of immature decision their marriage starts declining some years after their marriage. Days soon after marriage spent in a reverie make them feel made - for - each - other couple and they find themselves the luckiest persons in the world. Every incident produces laughter and they feel happy. But a long company with the same person makes them see reality and from the flight of imagination they descend to earthly reality. Social researches proclaim that it happens because of the lack of love and understanding between the couple. Reik observes in this connection.
If one’s love is based on an unreal and glorified image of the partner the relationship is liable to be short-lived because the continuous or prolonged contact with the loved one would expose the reality. Imperfections do appear and the unreal image is shattered and disillusionment with the love partner occurs and love feelings are diminished.  

Saru, Urmì and Indu all the three discard feelings of love in their life and repent the decision of marriage. They feel unable to communicate with their husbands, feel the incompatibility of temperament and above all in making an understanding relationship with their husbands. Even they detest the very thought of love in their life. Lantz and Synder explain this state of life in the modern ladies, “To fall in love is easy, since it is often based primarily on sexual consideration, to remain in love acquires the ability to build and maintain a stable relationship. To accomplish this task a person must know what he wants, must understand his wishes, and must be able to maintain consistent feeling and to respond to the changes and growth of the partner in the relationship.” It seems modern woman, though growing in wisdom and education, is lacking patience and understanding the two important characteristics of traditional Indian woman. This makes her suffer in life.

This is one side of love as depicted by the two novelists in various novels but we also have an other and brighter side of love that is the binding vine of different relations in the society and which has been given importance by both the sensuous novelists. Anita Desai is aware of deep feelings of love embedded in man-woman relationship and its importance in life. Therefore her Where Shall We Go This Summer? deals with the theme of love as winning emotion necessary to lead a happy life. Both Sita and Rama in Where Shall We Go This Summer? love each other but Sita is...
a normal human being. She, like Monisha is deprived of love in her childhood which checks her to express her love for Raman. Sita, in fact, does not realise the feeling of love with him. It makes their life unbearable and she decides to go away from her house. This distance, physical as well as emotional, gives her full chance to analyse her behaviour and she comes to know the need of love in life. Love was always there in her but circumstances made it difficult to give expression, so as soon as she meets Raman she unburdens her heart by saying everything to him and goes back to him. This act of yielding before her husband makes her lighter and helps to make their life better than before.

It shows that love needs compromise. It also needs surrender before each other's emotions. "Love in the state of idealization", according to Stekel, "is finding one's self in another. One subjects oneself only to one's own ego or to its bipolar opposite. Our ideal is our counter sexual ego. That other self is as we would like to be (if we were of the other sex)." Her Maya, Monisha do not merge their egos into their partners hence suffer the degradation of conjugal relationship while her Sita and Sarah compromise with life having dissolved their egos into their husband's, thus uniting in one, so they lead normal happy life. Love, thus, is a broad term and if felt in this way gives us true pleasure that spiritual pleasure which takes us away from the anxieties of this world and helps to receive salvation (moksha).

Man - woman love relationship is one of the aspects of love but it is not the whole meaning of love. It is just a 'Sangam' to make us reach our destination. When we stop here and involve ourselves only in the physical love of husband - wife relationship soon we get bored and feel exhausted in the monotonous relationship. We should
always be aware of our not staying in one state of love and be always ready to switch over to the other states. In this way only true meaning of love could be achieved by human beings. Shashi Deshpande’s *The Binding Vine* deals with this spiritual meaning of love in life. It is a story of three women of different ages who are exhausted of physical love but are unable to achieve true love in life. In the confused state of mind Urmila the youngest among them, tries to understand the need and value of true love with the help of the experiences of two other women in the novel. Her saying in the end:

And yet, I think of Vanaa, heavily pregnant, sitting by me, holding my hand during the pains before Kartik was born, I remember Kishore’s face when he first saw Anu, I think of Akka crying for Mira, of Inni’s grief when papa told her about his illness, of papa’s anguished face watching her, of the touch of grace there was in Shakuntal’s hand when she covered me gently at night while I slept, of the love with which she speaks of her sister, of sandhya... Is this it, the spring of life Mira was looking for? (P.203) 

shows that she has understood the real meaning of love and is ready to switch over the last stage, the generalised love for every fellow being. This, perhaps, is the real essence of love in life.

It can be said in conclusion that both the novelists very realistically depict the fast fading love on the marital screen of society, with all their problems and dangers for the coming generation. They also seem perfect in their task of social reformer when following the age old tradition of India they teach in the manner of old sages and saints, the path to reach ultimate reality through love, following its sacred form of husband-wife relationship.
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Man and woman stake the whole charm of life on two decisions: calling and marriage. To take pleasure in one's task, to love and be loved are the two winning cards in the great game which calls for prudence of decision.

-Pierre Hamp.