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The Discourse of 'Love' and 'Marriage' in Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows*, and Namita Gokhle's *Paro: Dreams of Passion*

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Abstract :

In contrast to earlier novels of 1950s and 1960s, the women characters from the 1980s onwards assert themselves and defy marriage and motherhood. Many Indian women writers have depicted both the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman, rather than limiting the lives of women to one model. The cultural between tradition and modernity, suffered by a Hindu woman who is given a western education in India, and the experience of being caught between two cultures, has remained a prominent theme in writing among the Indian woman novelists during 1980's. In this research paper, the researcher proposes to discuss the issues of 'love' and 'marriage' in Shashi Deshpande's *Roots and Shadows* (1983) and Namita Gokhle's *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984). *Roots and Shadows* is story of the struggle of Indu, the protagonist, who has a lot of hurdles to cross and achieve freedom. Being suffocated in an oppressive male-dominated and tradition-bound society, she attempts to explore her inner self to assert her "individuality". She often wished to be free and unrestrained. The predicament of Indu represents the larger predicament of woman in contemporary Indian society where the new concept of Western education, economic independence and globalization has completely shaken the roots of old Indian culture and social values. Namita Gokhle's first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984), is set in the stylish and striving sections of Bombay and New Delhi. It pursues a group of characters who are obviously the product of their place and time i.e. post- Independence, urban, and westernized. It is a basically a story of Paro, the protagonist, whose desire for life and sex leads her, via cricketing princes, state ministers and Greek film directors, through gratifying quantities of glamour and degradation.

Both these novels consist of the latest burning issues related with women as well as those issues that exist in the society since long. Both the novels describe the whole world of women with simply stunning frankness depicting a glimpse of the unexplored female psyche, which has no ease of understanding. At the same time, both these novels also reflect that the women of modern era think on different lines.

Key Terms : The Discourse, 'Love', 'Marriage', 'Roots and Shadows', and 'Paro: Dreams of Passion'

It is needless to say that in the context of Hindu marriage, the traditional concept of superior husband and subordinate wife had been the guideline for the early Indian literature. In the traditional Hindu marriage, the wife merges her name, personality, life

style and in fact, her entire life into that of the husband. As we know that since the publication *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) by Bankim Chandra Chatterji, the first Indian novel in English and *The Hindu Wife* (1876) by Raj Lakshmi Devi, many writers have portrayed Indian women as long-suffering wives and mothers silenced by male-dominated society. For many years, for Indian writers as well as for the Indian women, the model of religious images of virtuous goddesses devoted to their husbands, like Sita and Savitri served as one of the powerful cultural ideals for women.

However, the process of industrialization, urbanization and westernization has shown the way to the breaking up of the concept of traditional Hindu woman and their perception of 'marriage' and 'love'. Due to the political, economic, cultural and socio-psychological changes in the life patterns and attitudes of the people of India, we do find the changed psyche of the modern women of India. The traditional concept of 'love' and 'marriage' as self-punishment and sex as a taboo is fast losing its importance. Promilla Kapur, the renowned sociologist says "now women aspire for natural companionship, respect, material comforts, and satisfaction of emotional and physical needs in marriage" (34)

As a result of the contacts with western philosophies and movements, slowly but steadily, the strength of the women characters which is certainly in contrast to the traditional picture of Indian society, has been focused upon in the Indian English Writing after independence. There are several Indian novelists who produced novels that revealed the truth of Indian societies and how women are being treated here. The struggle of an Indian woman for her true identity clearly emerges in the Indian English novels after 1960s.

It is needless to say that the image of women in the fiction has undergone a change during the last four decades. In contrast to earlier novels, the women characters from the 1980s onwards assert themselves and defy marriage and motherhood believe in 'western love and marriage'. The Indian English writers of this decade have raised the question against the relevance of such systems within the present socio-cultural discourse. Many Indian women writers have depicted both the diversity of women and the diversity within each woman, rather than limiting the lives of women to one model. The Indian woman who is given a western education in India and suffered by and the experience of being caught between two cultures, the traditional and modern, has remained a prominent theme in writing among the Indian woman novelists during 1980's.

In the case of Indian women, this "confrontation" between the traditional and the modern is especially relevant for the evolution of narratives of Indian English Women's Fictions of 1980's. In 1974, the report *Towards Equality*, issued by the Committee on the Status of Women in India under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, showed that Indian women continued to suffer great inequalities relative to men in different social areas like education economic, etc. There were many women's

organizations that were formed after 1975 to defend women's rights, addressing issues such as domestic violence or the continuation of the practice of dowry. These organizations also dedicated to research on the situation of women. This interest is also reflected in the academic world with the formation of the India Association of Women's Studies in 1981.

In the 1980s, we find many Indian English Women's writers like Anita Desai, Shashi Despande, Namita Gokhale, Nayantar Sahgal, Shobha De, Gita Mehta, Rama Mehta, and Gita Hariharan who bring to light the issue of 'love' and 'marriage' through the eyes of the woman in Indian societies. Thus, in this research paper, the researcher proposes to discuss the issues of 'love' and 'marriage' in Shashi Despande's *Roots and Shadows* (1983) and Namita Gokhle's *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984).

Roots and Shadows begins Indu, the protagonist, who comes back in her ancestral home after a long time after her marriage. Indu has a lot of hurdles to cross and achieve freedom. Being suffocated in an oppressive male-dominated and tradition-bound society, she attempts to explore her inner-self to assert her "individuality". Indu goes for a love marriage with Jayant and views marriage as gateway to freedom and marries Jayant, a man of her choice, defying her dictatorial family. She often wished to be free and unrestrained but very soon she realizes that a love marriage is not really a different from an arranged marriage in the freedom of choice that it offers to a woman. Indu makes adjustment in the name of love but understands that she has actually been deceiving herself. She reflects on her marriage with Jayant and says, "What was marriage after all, but two people brought together after cold-blooded bargaining to meet, mate and reproduce so that generations might continue." (*Roots and Shadows* 3). Then, she allows her to tear off the mask of self-satisfaction and self-delusion that she has put on in her personal life when she meets Naren, her childhood friend and fall in love with him. Thus, the predicament of Indu represents the larger predicament of the women in contemporary Indian society where the new concept of Western education, economic independence and globalization has completely shaken the roots of old Indian culture and social values.

Namita Gokhle's first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* is set in the stylish sections of Bombay and New Delhi. It pursues a group of characters who are obviously the product of their place and time i.e. post-Independence, urban, and westernized. It is a basically a story of Paro, the protagonist, whose desire for life and sex leads her, via cricketing princes, state ministers and Greek film directors, through gratifying quantities of glamour and degradation. Paro marries Babu, her college-mate, as a result of infatuation and then marries B.R., a businessman. Even after her second marriage with B.R., her life is not stable and she has an extra-marital relationship with "Bucky" Bhandapur. And B.R. divorces Paro.

Both these novels consist of the latest burning issues related with women as well as those issues that exist in the society since long. Both the novels describe the whole

world of women with simply stunning frankness depicting a glimpse of the unexplored female psyche, which has no ease of understanding. At the same time, both these novels also reflect that the women of modern era think on different lines.

The protagonist of *Roots and Shadows* is a young woman who has rebelled against her authoritarian and traditional joint family. Indu left home as a teenager to study in the big city, and is now a journalist; she has married the man of her choice. Nevertheless, she realizes that her freedom is deceptive; she has exchanged the orthodoxy of the village home for the conventions of the "smart young set" of the city, where material well-being has to be assured by sacrificing principles, if necessary. Indu returns to the family home after an absence of twelve years when her great-aunt, a childless widow dies, leaving her money to Indu. As she takes charge of her legacy, she comes to realize the spirit of the village women she had dismissed as weak.

Roots and Shadows outlines the mental state of a woman who goes through the conflicting experiences in her life. This novel is significant for its undiluted expression of the emotions, self-consciousness and dejections of Indu, the main character of the novel. Indu marries Jayant against her Akka's desire to prove herself a 'free' woman. In the process of surrendering her parental submission, she is slowly dragged into surrendering herself to the desires of Jayant in the name of love. She finds herself incomplete either in parental home or in the home of her in-laws. She critically views her own life saying that it is full of deception and pretensions. She views her post-marital relationship with Naren as less dishonourable than her pretensions towards Jayant. She criticizes love as she was deceived by it and she rather accepts 'sexual' instinct as real. Since the human relationship becomes a mutual adjustment between people, the so-called 'less powerful' is expected to submit to the 'more powerful' in the guise of 'love', 'sacrifice', 'devotion' and 'obedience'. Indu complicates her own life by leaving home to be trapped into Jayant. Shashi Deshpande shows the mind of Indu, as she desperately looks for freedom from bondage. She presents with all passion how the character retraces her past and how her mind develops from dreaming into deciding sensibly. Indu, once being attached to her parental home, detaches herself to be attached to her husband only to be detached and in the process loses control over her own life and get damaged only to be repaired finally. Indu shows that mind is responsible for all these changes. Finally she determines in her mind "to be herself", in the words of Sarabjit Sandhu "now she is a changed person who is aware of the stirrings of her conscience, her quest, her identity, her individuality, her place and role in the family and society" (110).

Indu experiences only disillusionment in sex and suffers a silent sexual humiliation with Jayant. She says,

Jayant and I...I wish could say we have achieved complete happiness. But I cannot fantasize. I think of the cries that had filled me earlier... I want to be loved, I want to be happy. The cries are now stilled. Not because I am satisfied,

or yet hopeless, but because such demands seem to me to be an exercise in futility. (23)

The system of new education has made modern woman conscious of futility or emptiness of the various long preserved notions and taboos about a woman. Indu, the protagonist, aspires to become independent and complete in herself, brushes aside all the age-old beliefs and false notion prevalent in the society. Since her childhood, it has been drilled in her mind by the women members of the family that the “women had no choice but to submit, to accept.” (17) Indu resents,

As a child, they had told me I must be obedient and unquestioning. As a Girl, they had told me I must be meek and submissive. Why? I had asked. Because you are a female. You must accept everything, even defeat, with grace, because you are a girl, they had said. It is the only way, they said, for a female to live and survive. (158).

She dreams that her marriage with Jayant would enable her to realize the need to belong, wanted, needed and loved, as she desired the freedom to express her true self to the world. Akka’s warning is not listened to by Indu because Akka had no good opinion of inter-caste marriages, “Such marriages never work. Different castes, different languages...it’s all right for a while. Then they realize...” (68).

Indu leaves her ancestral house and enters into independent and completely free zone, but very soon, she realizes the fruits of her decision. Both she and Jayant wanted to achieve complete happiness, but her marriage with Jayant suppresses her femininity and her human demands. She is physically and spiritually dissatisfied with her husband, who takes her for granted and expects her “to submit’. Her love marriage degenerates into a mere psychological affair and feels that she has abused her body’s purity. The paradox of the situation is that Indu is not completely happy with Jayant, but at the same time, she cannot live without him, she speaks about her incompleteness;

This is my real sorrow. That I can never be complete in myself. Until I had met Jayant. I had not know it...that there was, somewhere outside me a Part of me without which I remained incomplete. Then I met Jayant ... and lost the ability to be alone. (31)

Marrying Jayant, Indu realizes that it is because of him that her life is meaningful in one view and also meaningless in another view. She wonders as to why she in all the way is trying to please her husband, feeling of having lost her independent identity. Her other aunts and for that matter, other woman had surrendered themselves to the concept of the ideal women, without any independent identity performing all the time the rituals of the traditional woman. Indu knows quite well that she can never fit herself into the ideal woman compartment, and that she could never think of performing the rituals of the traditional woman, which justified her existence in relation with a man. However in course of her own introspection of herself, she realizes that she is not very different from her conventional female counterparts, as she was unconsciously and

consciously trying to mould and change and shape herself according to Jayant's desires and needs. Till now, she was independent, intelligent, logical thinker and rational thinker, after her marriage, she becomes one of those archetype submissive Indian women, now, her identity is only an extension of her husband's. Marriage has taught her things like, deception, hollow and from affection to hypocrisy.

Jayant, on the other hand, in spite of his apparently western style of life, behaves like an average Indian male. Indu now feels that her marriage was something shameful in total commitment. In order to maintain the statuesque of her marriage, her sexual desires get repressed. She understands that her irresistible love for Jayant is quite disturbing and her total surrender to him is frightening. She is shocked to see, that, she is turning into an "ideal" Indian wife, obeying her husband's wishes and fancies. At a crucial time, she even thinks of leaving her husband, hoping to become whole self again, but she hangs on to her marriage, though beneath her skin, she knows her unwillingness to acknowledge her love, and her marriage as a failure.

Indu, was brought up in a traditional family under the patriarchal roof, going against was considered a treacherous act. But, the moment education and modernity crept; tradition became a disgrace to them. Kaka tells Indu "elders were to be feared, respected, obeyed. We used to sit up when they entered the room, and touch their feet when we went out... you youngsters now... you are a different breed altogether" (46).

Due to her non-real marriage and non-real love, Indu refuse to be a mother of a child. Religious tenants, cultural ethics, family as an institution have all condemned a woman's pursuit of sexual pleasure. It is only for the childbearing purpose, she has to be passive and submissive. Thus, Indu, having found her sexual personality being suppressed strives for expression and acceptance through an extra marital affair with her cousin, Naren. Indu meets Naren after twelve years and her heart turned over at the sincerity of his words. Reflecting on her first meeting with Naren, Indu reveals how Naren and she came closer,

...he laid his hand lightly, teasingly on my breasts, 'or this...' they moved downwards to my waist, my hips. I gazed at him unflinchingly while he went on... 'and you can't prevent a man from wanting to do this either'...and moved his face, his lips towards mine. His face, his eyes they were all blotted out now. I lost all my senses except one, it was so magnified, as if little nerve ends sprung up all over my body. And I was, yes, responding to him with ardour and warmth when I realised who it was. 'No, no' I cried out angrily, trying to push him. (78)

Though Indu tries to resist herself and pulls herself away from Naren in her first meeting, when she meets him next time we find the total surrender of her body and mind to Naren, she says,

And then, only then, he came closer and put his arms around me. Now I could no more think, but only feel. And there came to me an understanding of the relief that comes from defeat, from death. I lay down impelled by thrusting body,

feeling at first a passive dreaminess. Oh, blessed, blessed hardness. An ecstasy filled my body and I could not be still any more. There was a joyous sense of release, of passion I could experience and show and participate in. I clung to him convulsively, marveling that I did not have to hold myself back. And when it was over, we lay back, both of us, exhausted and shuddering. I said, 'Thank you Naren.' And languidly he lifted a hand to my hair and smile at me. Later he lay floppily, untidily, as men always do, in a kind of supine bonelessness. While I felt in myself an instance desire for activity. I got up and began to tidy myself. Naren, who lay watching me through half closed, drowsy eyes, said, 'You look like a bird smoothing its ruffled feathers.' 'I wish I could say the same to you', I retorted. (139)

Should we call this act of guiltless post-marital relation with Naren as illicit relation or extra-marital relation or guiltless illicit relation or the sexual liberation as an assertion of Indu's individuality, her newly emerged identity? Should we be surprised at the way in which Indu sees 'marriage' and 'love' through her newly emerged identity? In this context, Jasbir Jain in her article "Positioning the 'post' in Post-Feminist: Reworking of Strategies" says, "...adulterous relationship does not lead to a sense of guilt, instead it liberates the psyche from falsehood when Indu has a physical relation with Naren, it is not infidelity to her husband, nor is it an involvement with him; it is merely the use of something she owns, in order to show that she cares for him as human being." (88) However in contrast to what Jasbir Jain believes D. Murli Manohar calls this act of Indu as 'guiltless extra-marital relationship' and argues "How can anyone bring in the 'physical relationship' with someone other than the husband and defend the woman's sexual act as 'something she owns' and call it 'caring for him as human being? Whether a woman has a physical relationship once or more than once, she is called 'infidel'."

Shashi Deshpande by presenting Indu in this manner is trying to analyze the double standards opted in our society, men are allowed to take any kind of liberties seeking sexual pleasure, even after they are married, but a woman has to be loyal to her husband. I think that Indu, is quite impressed by Naren's idea of detachment, and experiences a sense of freedom, and very openly talks about herself and her failures. The newly acquired sense of freedom, she got from Naren's friendship, makes her aware of her natural impulses. Initially, she rejects his love thinking that, it is monogamous, but later quite willingly offers herself twice. At that time, she doesn't mind love-making as a sin or crime, but the next day, she is quite worried and studies each and every action in terms of situation that pushed her way towards Naren. Her mind is often burdened with sin, crime, right and wrong. Indu says,

A part from wronging Jayant? Wronging Jayant? I winced at the thought. But had I not wronged Jayant even before this? By pretending, by giving him a spurious coin instead of the genuine kind? I had cheated him of my true self. That, I thought, is dishonorable, dishonest, much more than this, what I have done with Naren. (171).

According to her, the words like 'love' has no meaning and that there is no love in real life but present only in books and movies. Naren asks her what the truth about love is, she says,

The sexual instinct...that's true. The maternal instinct...that's true too. Self interest, self-love... they're the basic truths. You remember Devadas? I saw it with some friends. They sobbed when he died for love. But I could have puked. A grown man moaning and crying for love! God! How disgusting! (158).

Indu now gets a new knowledge' of life and understands the true meaning of freedom and fulfillment, now marriage appears, as a means for procreation. Behind the pretense of romanticism, sentiment and tradition, what was marriage after all, but two people brought together.... To meet, mate and reproduce so that the generations might continue ? (3).

Indu cannot achieve fulfillment, she therefore destroys the roots, eliminates her fears, and confronts her problems with courage and what she feels is right. Indu seems to be grown up with better understanding of the situation than that existed earlier in the family. She now substantiates her action and pronounces

Now I fell clean, as if I had cut away all the unnecessary, uneven edges of myself And free. But not detached. I would, I knew; never hanker after detachment any more. The very world brought back Naren's eyes as he lay on the grass near the tank, Detachment...it was for the dead, not the living. (180).

Indu now realizes that, her love is a uniting bond, which will help her to surrender herself to Jayant, so that their lives shall be full of harmony and peace. The curtain from her mind lifts up as she decides to reveal to Jayant, her whole life, her weakness and her strengths, her virtues and vices as well. She wants to go back to Jayant, as she loves and needs him, and wants to restart her life built on the foundation of honesty and decides to be her true self in relations with Jayant. Now onwards she is not going to suppress her feelings only to please Jayant. She really achieves freedom and decides to do what she thinks she should be doing. She also decides not to share her affair with Naren as she thinks that has nothing to do with the two of us and our life together. I think that Anita Singh is right when says, "She [Indu] suffers no guilt in her extra-marital relationship with Naren and decides not to tell Jayant about it [...]" (125) She returns home, equipped with that quality of courage to question and to find roots.

Indu's acceptance of western values and her search for liberty with a precondition of tolerant growth and maturity of personality, despite the sinister conflict between tradition and modernity, ultimately results in her emergence as a human being evolving basically as a woman of determination not yielding to the dictates of the patriarchal society. S. P. Swain appropriately sums up Indu's growth thus,

The meek, docile and humble Indu of the early days finally emerges as a bold, challenging, conscious and rebellious women. She resigns her job, thus defying male authority, hierarchy and the irony of a woman's masked existence. Her self-

discovery is the frightening vision of the feminine self's struggle for harmony and wisdom. She is able to discover her roots as an independent woman, a daughter, a mother and a commercial writer. (95)

Marriage, sexuality and love as a subject of study has been left unexplored by most of the early Indo-English novelists, as it was overshadowed by the various socio-political problems that dominated the milieu. Shashi Deshpande, the eminent novelist has emerged as a writer possessing deep insight into the female psyche. Focusing on the marital relations, she seeks to expose the tradition by which a woman is trained to play her submissive role in the family. In her novel, Shashi Deshpande openly tells about a women's sexuality as a normal aspect of a human being life. Thus, the theme of marriage, sexuality and love as traced in her novel shows a development from tradition to revolt to affirmation.

Namita Gokhale (b. 1956) is a novelist who has grown and developed in the course of the four novels she has written in the last fifteen years. Her first novel *Paro: Dreams of Passion* (1984) deals with the upper crust of contemporary Indian society in metropolitan towns where the characters change sexual partners quicker than their clothes. It is basically the story of Paro and Priya, the narrator and an account of their experience of life. Paro due to her courage and becomes the symbol of emancipation and individuality. However, later, Paro is doomed to suffer from an atrophy of emotions and cynicism due to her unbridled freedom ending up as a disillusioned woman. Priya's identification with Paro adds to her misfortunate.

Paro: Dreams of Passion was an immediate success both in India and the West. The story is set in Delhi and Bombay. I think that since the writer herself stayed in Delhi and Bombay, the experience of staying in the two cities provided Gokhale enough material to write his first novel, which she intended as a criticism of the excessive pretensions of upper-class Delhi.

The novel begins with Priya, the narrator; she says "I am writing about them because I saw myself in her. B.R.'s secretary at that time, all of us at the office thought he was a real dreamboat." (*Paro: Dreams of Passion* 1) The narrator is youngish, sardonic Priya, who begins her story back in the sixties, when she was secretary and sometime lover to B.R., the owner of Bombay's Sita Sewing Machine Company. However, for a wife, B.R. chooses the charming, glamorous Paro, while Priya, obsessively envious of Paro, has to settle for an arranged marriage to Suresh, a lawyer from Delhi.

At first, Paro marries Babu, her college-mate, who is infatuated with Paro. There is no reference that why Paro breaks up her first marriage, but she describes how it was arranged, Paro says, "Then, in college, I met Babu [...] Man, did he fall for me like a tonne of bricks ! His father sent a proposal. Apparently, they hadn't heard about my rape-scene. Funny thing is that I wasn't raped, I loved every moment of it." (31)

The change of wind that has been blowing in the Indian society has been reflected quite openly in the novel. In contrast to the typical traditional culture of India. In *Paro: Dreams of Passion*, the women erotic references are introduced in a direct and frank manner by Ghokhale. Here we find the characters are portrayed with alcohol, drugs and adultery. Namita Gokhale openly discusses the issue of love, marriage and sex. At one of the conversations, she bluntly says, "I don't like the way some people have reacted to the book. They say it's very sexy...but the language, I've used is the way we normally talk. Don't you say 'shit' sometimes?" "And 'fuck'? Don't you say 'fuck'?"

Priya starts with an adolescent crush for her boss, the great B.R. The first time she visits B.R., she is spellbound by the luxury and the tranquility. Priya herself narrates her first meeting B.R. in these words

The sapphire carpeting, the dazzling white of the walls, the Ajanta fresco painted on the drawing room wall, all held me in incredulous thrall ... A strange beatification, a feeling of utter lassitude, overtook me. I forgot that my nails were as chewed and bitten as a school girl's pencils, and that my sandals had gaping mouths in them. I felt beautiful. And beloved. He undid my plait and let it lie loose about my shoulders. His soft white hands caressed my neck. His fingers were long and slim. Perfect half- moons rose mystically from each cuticle. I was mesmerized by his presence and the music. His hand slid softly down the front of my blouse and began stroking my breast. I pretended to be lost in the music as not to have noticed. (5)

But within a month, to Priya's utter sorrow, B.R. marries Paro, aggressive, bold, a Brigadier's daughter from Delhi. It is believed that B.R. marries Paro out of infatuation. Even after this marriage, Paro's life is not happy and stable, she has an extra-marital relation with "Bucky" Bhandapur. This extra-marital relationship is known in public as Bucky is a test cricketer. Their relationship becomes the talk of the city and ultimately reaches to B.R. He divorces Paro considering her as "a woman of easy virtue.". Here what needs to think upon is that B.R. himself was involved in several affairs even and after her marriage with Paro. Had Paro not been involved in any extra-marital relationship, than what?

Now, after leaving B.R. and several lovers, Paro is a daring, a prototypical "bad girl" and, in the decade that follows, Priya will remain basically loyal to Paro through ups and downs. She witnessed Paro's suicide attempts; her affairs with a flaky Minister's son, a sadistic politician; her marriage to a homosexual European filmmaker; and even Paro's apparent attempt to seduce her conventional hubby Suresh.

Priya is a Machiavellian observer who records what she sees, even if the view contradicts her dream visions. Her secret diarist's eye is sharp on the precise description of status, aspiration, influence and wealth in the office where the secretaries asked eagerly "Is it Arranged or Love?"; The richest material for Priya's observation comes in

the vicinity of Paro, whose hunger for life and sex leads her, via cricketing princes, state ministers and Greek film directors, through gratifying quantities of glamour and degradation. The route is marked by noisy scenes in restaurants and untidy tries for suicide

Paro, who marries more than once in her life for satisfaction of her body and mind, does not find shelter anywhere at the end. It is very difficult for a reader to understand the psyche of Paro, and how she perceives love and sex. For instance, at one of the parties, Shambhunath Mishra, the famous politician, and “a sinister minister”, who is as “black as the night”, appears and Paro asks “I am Paro and this is my party. And who may you be?” He replies “My party is the Congress Party; and I have come here to see Avinendra, to congratulate him.” Very surprisingly we see that within an hour both Paro and the sinister minister are in bed together. It is very difficult to understand why Paro surrenders her body to Mishra without any purpose. It may be because in her own words “He is so ugly, so repulsive that he makes me feel beautiful.”

At the end, Priya is also asked to take a divorce for having a pre-marital and post-marital relation with B.R. when unlike Indu of *Roots and Shadows*; she confesses it to her husband. Priya feels no hesitation when she confesses it but her husband suggests “in that case I think we would be best to advised to live apart, at lease for a while.” (129) Being an advocate, he knows it very well that it is very easy for him to get the divorce in such a situation. J. N. Chaudhary, in his field study of “Illicit Relations”, finds “The premium on illicit sex conduct is secrecy, and if it is proved or discovered, it may become for a married man or a woman, a sure ground for filling a suit for seeking divorce under adultery.” Priya has no regrets about her affairs rather she asks for alimony for her maintenance. She says, “What about maintenance? Suresh generously assures her that he will not escape his responsibilities. Thus, both Suresh and Priya get divorced.

Thus, Both *Roots and Shadows* and *Paro: Dreams of Passion* are a reflection of Indian society of the time, seeking the balance and compromise between the persistence of traditional values and the acquisition of ideas from the West. Both these novels offered a realistic view of contemporary Indian women of middle class, often caught between the constraints of an ancient tradition and the liberties of a new India increasingly influenced by Western ideas.

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