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Addressing heroines and despondency from the novels of Shashi Deshpande with special reference to that long silence

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Abstract

Deshpande's novels have a strong sense of feminine self-consciousness. A new generation of strong female characters has emerged, replacing those who were viewed as stereotypically weak or submissive. Women in middle class families are often the subject of Deshpande's novels, which paint a realistic image of current middle class family life. According to the author of the piece, middle-class ladies in Deshpande's *That Long Silence* are depressed. It is Jaya, the primary character, who is the focus of this story. Meanwhile, Jaya and her husband keep their lips sealed, further aggravating the issue. Ending up realising it's time for her to break the quiet and try to attain her identity as a unique individual by realising who she is and asserting herself.

Keywords: novels, novels writers, women

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the 20th century, Indian women novelists in English have centred their stories on the female woman. Their fiction often revolves with a woman's struggle for identity. For the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2000, Shashi Deshpande was acknowledged internationally for his work as one of India's top English-language authors. With *That Long Silence*, she got the Sahitya Akademi Award. Women's difficulties and problems play a major role in her writings because of her strong Indian sensibility. Her works portray a woman's desire for identification and remaking herself, a theme that runs across her female protagonists. Because she has a deep innate understanding of women's difficulties and dilemmas, she can paint an accurate portrayal of a modern woman. A sympathetic observer of women's emotional reactions and spiritual responses, she examines and interprets their plight sympathetically.

2. About Shashi Deshpande

He is a realist at heart. The female characters she has created are real people with verifiable credentials. She tells a convincing story with real characters, not a shady plot. She believes that life should be presented as it is, not as it should be seen. Many Indian novels deal with women's issues. The treatment, on the other hand, is sometimes tangential, and the novels wind up extolling the stereotyped attributes of the Indian woman, such as patience, devotion, and abject acceptance of whatever is meted out to her. While the heroines in Shashi Deshpande's novels are very different, they do so by destroying both the illusion of man's superiority and of woman as the epitome of all virtues. In every novel, the story begins with characters. In her novels, female characters play a major role. She makes real characters out of her everyday life and avoids constructing wooden characters to fulfil her desire because of a conscious effort to avoid doing so. As a novelist, she specialises at depicting female characters. Superwoman, on the other hand, does not sit well with her. "My characters have their own paths," she said in an interview. I've heard people argue that we need strong female characters in our stories. "However, the women I write about are how they are. (11) Because of their inner power, Deshpande's female characters are resilient and never give up. All of her heroines in her novels reject rites from the past. While expressing their disapproval, they reject useless practises such as circumambulating a tulsi plant.

3. Heroines of Shashi Deshpande

Shashi Deshpande's main focus is to portray the sorrow and conflict of the modern educated Indian woman stuck between patriarchal and tradition on the one hand, and self-expression, individuality, and independence for women on the other. Seine literature tackles women's quest to realise themselves as human beings, independent of their typical roles as daughter, wife & mom. As with her female protagonists, Shashi Deshpande's works continue in the same way. Her female heroines, Indu, Saru, Jaya, Urmila, and Sumi, are all shown to be in a state of bewilderment at the beginning of the work. It's a process of self-introspection, self-analysis, and realisation that unfolds over the course of the novel. Ultimately, they emerge more confident, more in control of themselves, and more optimistic about a bright and wonderful future ahead of them."

Shashi Deshpande produced flesh-and-blood female characters, but they weren't as severe as other female figures made by other writers on women, according to the woman. As a result of the male-dominated culture and society, her female characters are able to stand up and fight back. They have strong personalities that the patriarchy cannot crush and destroy. Throughout her stories, Shashi Deshpande portrays women's struggles and successes. It is through her works that the women's uprising for equality and emancipation against traditional voices and diverse ideas about women is brought to the forefront. On the one hand, her writings centre on the oppressed women of patriarchal Indian culture, and on the other hand, the rise of the new women, free and cognizant, who are capable of selecting their own fate and of self-determination. Shashi Deshpande is interested in women as individuals based on their abilities. This means that the females in this world must work hard to dismantle socially imposed gender stereotypes so that they can find their own place in this masculine environment.

Significance: Saru, the main character in her work *The Dark Holds No Terror*, breaks the patriarchal paradigm. Contrary to her traditional family's desires, Saru deconstructs the traditional education system and becomes a doctor. She fights back against the brother-fixation that has plagued her since she was a young girl. By marrying Manu (Manohar) of the lower class, she even supports inter-caste marriage. Again, the novelist puts to light the difficulties women experience when they enter the matrimonial core, which is governed by the husband's harsh patriarchal control. Saru (Sarita) is a doctor who is successful in the outside world, but a victim at home at the hands of her abusive husband. A person rather than a woman with an independent social image is the goal of the author. Women's socialisation is hindered by patriarchal ideology, social convention, and patriarchal ideology, all of which are shattered by this work. A woman's status in domestic and marital life is reflected in 'If I Die Today.' Education, economic independence, and motherhood have all contributed to the breakdown of marriages. As a traditional Hindu guy, you wish for a son who will be the sole successor to your family and possessions. To get a son, even the educated Dr. Kulkarni discreetly tortures his wife, making her totally dependent on him. In *Come Up and Be Dead*, women's troubles and risks are exposed as a result of their existence in society as a female sex. Men use murder as a means of oppressing women, as has been exposed in the case of violence against women. Furthermore, the book portrays females as victims

of traditional parents. Deshpande battles for women's independence from female dominance with Kshama, becoming economically independent and freeing herself from the marital institution, which in turn is the route for women's entire subjection to males, as a result.

In *Roots and Shadows*, 'Indu' rejects the dominant roles allocated to women in order to suit men's purposes, and she's not alone. Deconstructing gender and sexual disparities are part of her path in order to undermine the male autonomy reinforced by masculine culture. As a result of her resistance and protest, women have been victimised by the essentialism and biologism paradigms. Indu is a character in Deshpande who is unafraid of patriarchy and has the power to overcome it without hesitation.

Jaya's character in *That Long Silence* is also rebelling against women's mistreatment in our culture. A woman's true self cannot be found inside the confines of middle-class respectability. She is a self-aware, compassionate, and talented individual. Introspectively, she is on a path to self-actualization. Her individuality has been suppressed for so long that she has become psychologically unwell, anxious and psychotic. An act of protest in the form of inquiries about Indian women's rights and the status of gender equality. Apart from that, it's the character's attempt to present a female perspective on history.

Once again in *A Matter of Time*, death and decay are issues that Shashi Deshpande addresses. Marriage and married life as compared to its original purity and harmony are depicted over three generations. Male-female relationships are challenged by the main character, Aru. Through Deshpande, we can see how we have arrived at this point in time where tradition and modernity have come to a head. Between the old and new is Aru. In this way, Shashi Deshpande is deconstructing oppressive traditions and building a collective women's voice. As well as leveraging her rage and resentment for a beneficial aim, she's deromanticizing the picture established by males.

Deshpande reveals the Indian women of today who are neither demi-goddesses nor super-heroines with a fiery temper. As she depicted evil and death in a realm of mystery, she created characters that were memorable and engaging. As educated middle-class women, they're vulnerable due to an unbreakable tie to tradition. Their lives continue, but they return to society with a sense of self-awareness, self-realization, and a distinct voice of their own. It is driven by a strong desire to make an orderly civilization out of the chaos in the surrounding environment.

4. Authentic female characters of Shashi Deshpande

Shashi Deshpande, is a realist at heart. The female characters she has created are real people with verifiable credentials. She tells a convincing story with real characters, not a shady plot. She believes that life should be presented as it is, not as it should be seen. Many Indian novels deal with women's issues. The treatment, on the other hand, is sometimes tangential, and the novels wind up extolling the stereotyped attributes of the Indian woman, such as patience, devotion, and abject acceptance of whatever is meted out to her. While the heroines in Shashi Deshpande's novels are very different, they do so by destroying both the illusion of man's superiority and of woman as the epitome of all virtues. In every novel, the story begins with characters. In her novels, female characters play a major role. For her fantasy, she builds real-life characters based on her daily life

and avoids producing wooden figures at all costs. As a novelist, she specialises at depicting female characters. Superwoman, on the other hand, does not sit well with her. "My characters have their own paths," she said in an interview. I've heard people argue that we need strong female characters in our stories. "However, the women I write about are how they are. (11) Because of their inner power, Deshpande's female characters are resilient and never give up. All of her heroines in her novels reject rites from the past. While expressing their disapproval, they reject useless practises such as circumambulating a tulsi plant. Both Indu (Roots and Shadows) and Saru (The Dark Holds No Terror) refuse to take part in such rites, which are supposed to extend the lives of their husbands' wives by increasing their longevity. The refusal is a sign of their independence and ability to see their lives on their own terms. A woman, she says, shouldn't be considered to be just a collection of such functions. She must be judged on the same level as her male counterpart based on her abilities.

5. Despondency in that long silence

Despondency is a state of low spirits caused by a lack of courage. In addition to melancholy, it can entail thoughts of hopelessness. In that state, a person would feel abandoned and alone, unable to make any decisions, and everything around them would appear to be in shadow. As the name suggests, it is marked by low spirits and hopelessness. The feeling is one of profound despair, as if the world is falling apart. A sense of pessimism, depression, discouragement or gloom and inadequacy are also included. It genuinely stems from a combination of real-life experiences. It comes from the Latin 'despondens' which means 'to lose courage or give up'. Also known as "acedia," it was once considered one of the "seven deadly sins." 0

There are several reasons why people feel depressed. Positive emotions might help someone who is anxious or depressed come up with inventive solutions to their difficulties. Despite the fact that both good and evil exist in everyone's lives, what separates people from others who suffer from bad things or sadness is their attitude towards them. All people must learn to perceive their life in a more positive light, even when they are in distress.

As depicted in *That Long Silence* by Deshpande, middle-class ladies are depressed. Shashi Deshpande has written three novels. This is the first of her novels to be published outside of the United States of America. After presenting one episode after another, Deshpande moves back and forth thematically until the end of the narrative. One of the reasons for the success of her writings is the representation of real-life experience. What you heard was the modern Indian housewife's stillness. Silence is seen as a patriarchal symbol in many cultures.

Deshpande is a champion against women's oppression when he feels depressed. She wants to be with a man and a woman. In her presentation, she makes a compelling case for equality. In keeping with her commitment to realism, she chose to focus on the lives of women in the middle and lower classes, considering that they make up the bulk of the population. Desire to voice her protest in the form of revolutionaries is what makes Deshpande's protagonist a woman who is willing to face life's challenges. In a desperate attempt to avoid isolation and the self-preservative negativism that results from the psychological

representation triggered by the social structure of family, she makes a desperate last-ditch effort.

6. Conclusion

With *That Long Silence*, the winner of the Sahitya Academy Award for fiction, we learn how disillusioned Jaya, who is unhappy in her marriage and in her life, finds herself again. Who is Jaya, and what does she do? Her husband is named Mohan, and she is his wife. She is the mother of Rahul and Rati. They were both writers who had abandoned serious work in favour of a weekly piece about Seet, a chubby woman who had a pea brain but was sly and cunning. A woman who did not ask questions was Deshpande's Jaya. She learned early in life that when women ask questions, particularly "Why?" or "Why this injustice?" they hang in the air, refusing to go away, raising eyebrows at her audacity. 'Jaya' was linked to 'Mad Kusum,' who had jumped into a well and drowned, but died from a fractured neck because there was no water in the well' For as long as Kusum lived, Jaya was confident in her mental stability because if Kusum was insane, then Jaya must have been "normal." Jaya has no idea who she is after Kusum's suicide. Maybe it's just Mohan's wife who's chopped off the pieces that didn't want to be Mohan's wife? Deshpande utilises this story to offer a clear picture of what a woman like Jaya's life is like. "Stay at home, look after your offspring, and keep out of the rest of the world," she advises. According to all appearances, hers was a happy family, her husband was in a high-ranking position, and they had two children, both boys, with her. There's nothing left to say.

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