

**WOMAN AS PRISONER OF FOSSILIZED TRADITION AND VORTEX OF
MARITAL REALM IN SHASHI DESHPANDE'S *THAT LONG SILENCE***

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ABSTRACT

Shashi Deshpande's fictitious tales are chiefly dealt with self-autonomy and loneliness of female characters. Her main aim is to describe the human affinities, not the rationalized but experienced, and actual, not the traditional but described human relations, particularly the relationship between male and female. In all these the main center is female. For her writing the novel is her real conscious existence. She describes that eventually fiction is life-imagination. For Long, women in India and in other countries have been searching individuality and attempting to claim that they are just a being and can survive in the society where men also survive. In attempting to carve out a position for themselves, they have happened more and more cognitive to their place. Modern female's condition and her plight in the country are similar as those of men and her attempts to extricate herself from her sordid condition and carve out a position for herself in the patriarchal society have further diminished her place in the society. As a consequence, she experiences from loneliness more than her mates in the past. Her continuous hunt for self-assertion has proved meaningless. Loneliness, one of the major characteristics of Existentialists, is a fatal disease and meaningless in which man has been perpetually condemned to be free in the horrible surrounding of struggle.

Keywords: *Marriage, Hindu Wife, Cage, Dispossession, Deprivation.*

Female is the chief figure in all novels of Shashi Deshpande. Her female characters are born out of Indian situation. They belong to middle-class. Her theory of feminism is different from the theory of western feminism. In fact she has no theories; she discards them and she provides her own observation of the plea of Indian female enmeshed between tradition and modernity, between culture and nature. The troubles and tensions experienced by female characters in her fictitious tales are existential in nature. They happen for any female in the society. Their self-autonomy is self-alienation. The more the investigation for emancipation, assertion and meaning of life, the more it culminates in loneliness. This is the typical of an existential trouble of all female and male characters. Deshpande, however presents sympathy

for her female characters for the plea made by themselves through self-deceptions and illusions; towards the final part she gives a theme of humanism mingled with affection. Deshpande's six novels: *The Dark Holds no Terrors* (1980), *Come Up and Be Dead* (1983), *Roots and Shadows* (1983), *If Die Today* (1982), *That Long Silence* (1988) and *Binding Vine* (1993). All these novels present the middle-class female characters of Indian situation, their mismatch in their natural parts. These female characters are trained, able, courageous, aware and conscious with the troubles of altering society and conscious existence. *That Long Silence* (1988) defines the female's search for individuality; freedom and emancipation. The fictitious tale is significant for its description of the inner psyche. Jaya, the female protagonist, always desires to be free from male-oriented society. She operates towards that, but becomes helpless at the final part of the novel and strikes an agreement to the old traditional conscious existence. The writer uses the cinematic style of flashback to describe the story and the fictitious tale opens with Jaya, middle-class orthodox girl who does not return to her ancestral home after her marriage ceremony.

Through the presentation of Jaya's suppressed conscious existence, Shashi Deshpande has narrated existential themes of absurdity of existence. The novelist depicts a search for assertion and autonomy. Jaya is continuously ravelled by inner upheaval, provided to copious lamenting, incessantly evaluating her unsatisfactory life in a patriarchal society. Later, Jaya is inspired by the thought of being a non-entity. She begins laughing at everything-marriage. She realized a sense of anguish. Eventually the people are presented to observe that.

The present fictitious tale is perfectly presented by Shashi Deshpande as Jaya's own series of recollections, a first man account of both her past and present conscious existence, composed only for herself, and thus as a direct comment on one female's introspective evaluation, her absurd presence. In showing the basic gushing forth of existence. Shashi Deshpande narrates a spell-inducing story not in the full naturalistic style but with some magical realism who have come to unite with Gabriel Garcia Marquez, completing her heroine's world with ghosts that advises meaning hidden even in the most simple things. Toni Morrison followed the same pattern in her *Beloved*.

Before her marital relations with Mohan, Jaya has been dictated the significance of the spouse in the conscious existence of female. Vanitamami describes her that a husband is a sheltering tree. Ramukaka tells her of the thing that the content of her spouse and home depends completely on her. When Jaya departs home after her marriage, Dada has suggested her to be good to Mohan. The female characters in Mohan's family have been a

revelation to her. They are so minute about their parts, so well experienced in their works, so talented in the correct fields, so indifferent to everything else. Jaya has never observed a bright pattern before, and she has been affected by it. She attempts to pattern herself after these female characters. That way provides her, the awareness of working correctly and emancipation from guilt. So, when something is not completed well, or not on time, a button missing, or a meal cooked imperfectly, or too late, she has cringed in guilt. And when she has been appreciated for anything, she has been so pleased. At the same time, she has her own information about Mohan:

A husband and wife care for each other, live with each other until they are dead; parents care for their children, and children in turn look after their parents where they are needed, marriages never end, they cannot they are a state of being.

(Deshpande1980: 127)

Caught this way in the orthodox order of Indian society, Jaya searches her identity as a human being. She has moulded herself to the desires of Mohan. She has discarded the service she needed to join, the child she aspired to adopt and the anti-price campaign she had desired to participate. Since Mohan abuses her of not caring about the children, of separating herself from him and his matters, she has ceased her works. She learns at last no interrogations, no answers only maintains silence. She is not able to narrate her concerns to incommunicable and callous husband Mohan, she is overwhelmed by a sense of loneliness. Eversince she gets married, she has performed nothing but only waiting. She waits for Mohan to return home, waits for everyone and everything. This mechanical way of waiting makes her conscious existence with the existential absurdity. The theme of absurdity and nothingness is the existential theme of demise. At one point of the fictitious tale Jaya creates it clear. There had been other waiting for her.

Jaya's physical relations provides her no contentment. She is not able to bear a silent, speechless sex. It becomes very mechanical. She accepts that she could live apart from him without a twinge. To Jaya, sex happens extraneous. She also felt the truth that it is the work of sex that actually affirms her seclusion. Bertrand Russel defines:

Love, like everything that is great and precious,
demands is own morality and frequently entails
a sacrifice of the less to the greater; but the
sacrifice must be voluntary for, where it is not,

it will destroy the very basis of the love for
thesake for which it is made.

(Russell 1959:215)

Mohan's detachment during and after the sex often makes her with a realization of seclusion and of hallucination. But lying there her body still hot from the touch of his body, it had happened to her in one awful moment- that she was alone. The touch, the happening together, had been not only temporary, but also entirely illusory as well. They had never come together, only their bodies had completed that. She has commenced to lament then sorrowfully, she silently scared that she would wake Mohan up, she is attempting desperately to relax herself. One can pay heed here the dissolution of a feminine ideology under the tension of marriage that ultimately spoils female's being:

Oh God! I had thought I can't take any more even
a that had refused to be Mohan's wife. Now I know
that kind of fragmentation is of possible. The child,
hands in pocket, has been with me through the
years, she is with me still.

(Deshpande 1989:191)

This condition of Jaya reminds us to Maya's situation in Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock*. Her husband is callous and difficult. She is secluded. He did not provide another opinion to her.

On numerous occasions, Jaya is perceived feeling a sense of absurdity and mechanization. Jaya experiences existential dilemma which is the result of human absurdity. She is surviving then without anything to design her being and her surroundings and she is watching towards nothingness and the absurdity, living the conscious existence of fear and dread. So she obtains no answers for her interrogations. But there was no reply to the question. It appears to be flung into an abyss. Nothing came back.

A female can never be angry; she can only be frustrated. The definition is given to the female sitting silently before the fire and the event where a female silently laments when her spouse is torturing her is meant for this revelation only. The demise of Kusum is example for the nervy mood of female characters. Jaya has also suffered silently who she lives lonely in a seedy flat opinion of her spouse who has departed away while an investigation into his suspected evil function is pursued and of the children who are away with a relative. In this curious condition, Jaya bears an actual disaster.

The kind of symbol the writer creates, use of its appropriateness to the existential themes of conscious existence. Jaya gives the statement about husband and wife as two bullocks yoked together. The picture of stationary train is dealt to present something meaningful in the sense that one's own revolution in it is merely our false imagination. The talk between Jaya and Mukta about rebirth is also connected to the chief concerns of the fictitious tale. It used to appear purposeless to her just one useless conscious existence after another, each one a cipher culminating in emptiness. She realizes that it provides her an opportunity to emancipate the failures of this conscious existence, doesn't it? If she has another conscious existence?

The point of modernism in Indian English Fiction reflects itself most effectively in the existentialistic genre. Shashi Deshpande's writings well describe this definition. *That Long Silence* is perceived to be more appropriate to the existential trend. The feeling of Jaya both as a female and human being narrates us this truth. The novel concludes when Jaya arrives to an end that conscious existence has always to be created possible. She is similar to Saru in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* (1980). All Saru needs to sleep in the night without any disturbance. To get up without anguish. Jaya talks not like a female emancipated from the tensions of either her womanhood or her humanity but a female explaining her existential condition in her own references, having it out on her own premises. Everyone experiences his own presence in reference to his observation of himself and of his own condition.

Jaya is not the representation of either social revolution or metaphysical element but of receiving of the human situation and the plea of her conscious existence as a female. it is a receiving with a dissimilarity however, an announcement that, as a female and as a novelist, she is attempting to cope. Because, existentialism is an effort to reconfirm an individual's identity which is in danger of being eradicated by illusions under the concerns of society. it also protects the individual despite his imperfections and demerits by narrating that he can transcend facticity in his own awareness.

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